An investigation into digital place marketing practices of selected South African local municipalities and communities

by

Thomas de Ridder

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of the *Master's Degree of Urban and Regional Planning (Research)* in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

April 2018

Supervisor: Prof Verna Nel
Co-promoter: Dr Daan Toerien

Declaration

I, Thomas de Ridder, declare that the Master's Degree research dissertation that I herewith submit for the Master's Degree qualification in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a list of references.

_____

Thomas de Ridder (student number: 2007143734)
Bloemfontein, 12 January 2018

Abstract

Places such as town or city municipalities and communities should market themselves to attract and retain skilled middle and higher income residents, businesses, investors and tourists because these typical place marketing target audiences are key role players in local economic development. However, as the world economy becomes increasingly globalised, these target audiences are more mobile than ever and therefore places compete directly with each other to attract and retain them. It is therefore increasingly important for places to deliberately engage in place marketing, and to do so efficiently.

Modern place marketing practices necessitate the use of digital marketing channels because these are the media channels most used by the desired target audiences, as opposed to traditional media for information searches to make place selection choices. Today, the most efficient place marketing channels are websites, blogs, social media, online review and directory sites, wikis and mobile apps.

The research hypothesis for this study is that South African municipalities and typical stakeholder groups within those municipal areas that naturally assume the role of marketing of their towns or areas do not make proper use of digital place marketing practices. Twenty South African municipal areas (local municipalities and their main towns) were selected as case studies to test this hypothesis. The actual digital place marketing activities of these municipalities or towns were compared to digital place marketing best practice, using evaluative web content analysis research methods. This entailed searching the internet and social media for the places' web and social media presence and digital marketing practices and to assess the quality thereof. Actual digital marketing practices of the case study places were measured against a list of criteria using a rating scale devised by the author. This enabled the comparison of actual practice against ideal digital marketing strategies as identified during the literature research part of the dissertation. The results clearly show that digital place marketing practices are poorly adopted by the case study places.

Key terms

Place marketing, place branding, investment attraction, digital marketing, digital place marketing, online place marketing, small town, rural development, municipal marketing, city marketing, city banding, web content analysis.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Definitions

City: A city is a large settlement, as opposed to a smaller settlement which is a town. The distinction between town and city is not very clear in South Africa and varies widely across the world (Bjelland, Montello, Fellman, Getis & Getis, 2013: 350). For the purposes of this study, metropolitan municipalities are considered cities, and falls outside the scope of this study because the focus is on smaller municipalities and their towns and surrounding rural areas or hinterland.

Digital presence: The sum of deliberate marketing messages by the marketer as well as user-generated content by customers and content generated by other organisations on the internet and other digital media (including paid, earned and owned media) about the marketer's brand, products, services and activities, all of which contribute positively or negatively to the marketer's brand perception. It serves an intentional or unintentional place marketing and brand-building purpose (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11).

Digital marketing: Any electronic means of marketing, or usage of the internet or other digital means as a marketing tool, including the application of digital technologies, platforms (desktops, mobile phones, tablets, and other digital platforms) and media for marketing purposes (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 12; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11).

Digital marketing channels or platforms: Digital communication techniques or touch points through which target audiences can be reached, such as search engine marketing, websites, email marketing, online adverts, online directories, social media platforms, mobile apps, online public relations, etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11-12, 29-34, 421, 478-538, 657, 686).

Marketing: A business function that oversees the efficient transfer of sufficient quantities of a product or service of a suitable quality and price to the customer. The main components of marketing are product (or service, i.e., producing or selling the "right" product), price (i.e., setting the right price sufficiently low to be affordable to the target market but sufficiently high to cover costs and earn optimal profit), place or distribution channel (i.e., physical space and logistics of transfer of the product/service to the customer) and promotion (i.e., awareness creation, advertising and techniques to

stimulate increased purchase) (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 28-29). In the context of place marketing, the "product" to be marketed is the place itself and its place attraction factors; "price" is the cost of living, visiting or doing business, including local rates, fees, licensing costs, property and leasing prices, etc.; "promotion" is place marketing messages, including advertising and digital marketing practices; and "place" is the marketing channels along which the marketing messages are distributed (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993: 18-20, 162).

Netnographic research: Netnography is a widely used qualitative research technique that involves gathering of insights through online interviews, and analysis of user-generated content from social media platforms, discussion forums, chatrooms, blogs and other electronic resources (Bengry-Howell, Wiles, Nind & Crow, 2011: 3).

Place: A specified geographic area, e.g., a particular rural area, settlement, town or city (small or large), state, district, province, country or region delineated by political administrative definition, convention (formal or informal) or as otherwise specified for a particular purpose (Bjelland et al., 2013: 349-359). Note that this study will focus on rural areas and smaller settlements as opposed to large cities.

Place attraction factors: Place attraction factors are the features and benefits of a place that different target audiences value; in other words, what attracts target audiences to a place – also referred to as pull factors (Bjelland et al., 2013: 79-82).

Place marketing: Deliberate efforts made by leaders of a place to improve a place to better meet the needs of its target audiences, and to create awareness of the place's attractive features/characteristics, with the aim to retain or attract suitable target audiences or their investment to a place (Kotler et al., 1993: 18-22).

Place branding: Deliberate efforts made to attach positive associations to or project a favourable image of a place, including any observable or conceptual links or associations with a place to distinguish it from other places. Place branding is a component or a specific strategy of place marketing (Dinnie, 2008: 14-15; Kotler & Keller, 2012: 144; Wood, 2014: 117).

Rural area: An area of lesser population size and density compared to an urban area. The distinction between urban and rural is not well defined or agreed upon in academic and administrative spheres in South Africa and abroad. For the purposes of this study, rural areas are considered the low-population density areas that surround towns and small cities and are mainly used for agriculture, mining, tourism and other low-intensity land uses, and may include small settlements that do not perform significant urban functions (Bjelland et al., 2013: 350).

Stakeholders: People or organisations with a vested interest in place marketing, and who will benefit significantly from successful place branding efforts. Stakeholders in a place marketing context usually include local politicians, businesses (all businesses, but especially those providing products or services to the different target audiences, e.g., major employers and tourism businesses), property owners, residents, etc. (Kotler et al., 1993: 22-33).

Target audiences: Persons, businesses or investors that the place marketing efforts are directed towards, i.e., the target market of a place's marketing efforts. Typical audiences in a place marketing context include businesses (including industry and investors), residents and tourists (Kotler et al., 1993: 22-33).

Town: A settlement of significant size performing some urban functions but still smaller than a city and larger than a rural settlement (Bjelland et al., 2013: 350). Also see "City" and 'Rural area'.

List of Abbreviations

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

LED: Local Economic Development

MMS: Multimedia Messaging Service

SMME: Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise

SMS: Short Message Service

CHAPTER 1: *INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND*

1.1   Introduction and background

Many small towns in South Africa were established to fulfil an important spatial economic role at that particular time in history. Many small towns have acted as central places to service surrounding farmers. Some were established to house thriving mining communities. However, economic, demographic and technological changes challenged or changed the original purpose of these towns. Mechanisation of farm work and consolidation of large numbers of smaller farms into fewer large farms reduced the number of families living on agricultural landscapes so much so that agricultural towns' hinterlands now have much smaller numbers of families to serve. In addition, advances in transportation infrastructure and technology enabled remaining rural households to travel much further to larger, more distant towns or cities for a larger variety of products and services. The result of abovementioned factors is that the local market size is reduced, causing a contraction of the local economy. It is, however, not only agricultural towns that experience economic distress; mining towns lose their main source of income as the mineral resources become exhausted. Consequently, mines scale down and eventually close down (Kotler et al., 1993: 2-20).

To cope with such declining traditional economies and to adapt to the changing macro-economic, social and technological environment, these towns need to reinvent themselves by finding a new purpose or pursuing a new, more viable economic niche. They must reposition themselves to fit into a new economic reality. To do so, they need to attract new businesses, industry and investors to establish a new economic base. They must also attract new and appropriately skilled residents to supply the human resources needed by the new industries. Then, they need to attract, or at least retain, middle and higher income residents, tourists, more businesses and more investors to supply the income base for further local economic development. This is what is referred to as place marketing (Kotler et al., 1993: 2-20). In conclusion, places should market themselves to attract and retain skilled middle and higher income residents, businesses, investors and tourists because these typical place marketing target audiences play a vital role in local

economic development. Because the world economy is increasingly globalised, these target audiences are more mobile than ever, and places compete directly with each other to attract and retain them. It is therefore increasingly important for places to deliberately engage in place marketing, and to do so efficiently (Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Kotler & Keller, 2012: 28, 30; Nel, 1994: 1; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: ix).

Place marketing facilitates local economic development (LED) in several ways. Many linkages are direct and strong, while others are indirect or induced. As mentioned above, place marketing directly increases demand for local products and services, thereby generating income for local businesses and for local government in the form of taxes, rates and fees. Income earned could then be utilised to facilitate further LED, and will induce more income generation through the local economic multiplier effect (Kotler et al., 1993: 6-18; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: ix). An increased demand for local products and services also increases direct job creation in the local labour market. Spending by those who are employed due to place marketing efforts will contribute to further job creation in the form of indirect and induced job creation. In addition, job creation will stem from place marketing because it attracts and retains entrepreneurs, businesses and investment (Kotler et al., 1993: 3-20). The attraction of highly skilled persons leads to inward skills transfer and skills retention, which are important factors in LED (Bjelland et al., 2013: 52-54). (See section 1.2 for a more detailed explanation about the links between LED and place marketing.)

Place marketing contributes to infrastructure development, which is an important component of LED, in 3 ways. Firstly, there is increased pressure on local government to establish and maintain proper infrastructure as demanded by the target audiences. Secondly, there is an increased demand for proper infrastructure; therefore, the private sector is increasingly motivated to invest in such. Lastly, due to the increased revenue generated arising from the positive effects of place marketing, more funding will be available for infrastructure establishment and maintenance (Kotler et al., 1993: 39; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: 1).

As mentioned above, place marketing can be used as a tool to slow, stop or even reverse the outflow of investment, businesses, talented residents and tourists. In fact, one of the

most powerful tools to facilitate LED is to deliberately market a place and create a favourable place image amongst target audiences, and to emphasise the positive place attraction factors in such marketing messages (Kotler et al., 1993: 14-20). In terms of a formal definition, place marketing refers to deliberate attempts made by managers of places such as towns/cities, areas, districts or regions, nations or states, tourist destinations or even a single location to attract tourists, investment, businesses or residents (Dril, Galkin & Bibik, 2016: 47-48; Kotler et al., 1993: 18-22; Wood, 2014: 108).

Digital place marketing refers to the use of electronic tools or channels such as the internet, social media and mobile devices to accomplish place marketing goals and to reach above-mentioned place marketing target audiences (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 12). Digital place marketing holds huge benefits for smaller places above traditional place marketing because it is significantly more cost efficient and affordable for smaller places, and barriers to implement it are much smaller (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 12; Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 442). Even if affordability is not a factor, digital channels and digital marketing techniques cannot be ignored, and is in fact a requirement because place marketing target audiences increasingly use digital media as opposed to traditional media to search for information and make place selection choices (Morrison, 2013: 369-371).

Today, the most efficient place marketing channels are websites, blogs, social media, online review and directory sites, wikis and mobile apps (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 22; Morrison, 2013: 369-371). However, smaller towns and rural municipalities and communities lack the capacity to implement good governance and LED in general, including skills in place marketing (Rogerson, 2009: 29-34). It appears that South African municipalities and their main towns are slow to adopt the practice of place marketing, especially digital place marketing, which is presented as the main hypothesis of this study (see section 1.3). This study will focus on digital place marketing and will explore digital place marketing strategies that smaller communities in South Africa may utilise as part of their LED efforts, by examining appropriate literature. Then, the actual digital place marketing strategies adopted by 20 case study towns will be explored and compared to what potential strategies could have been reasonably possible.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether selected municipal areas in South Africa do use digital place marketing strategies efficiently. The research hypothesis is that South African municipalities and typical stakeholder groups within those municipal areas that naturally assume the role of marketing of their towns or areas do not make proper use of digital place marketing practices. Twenty South African municipal areas (local municipalities and their main towns) were selected as case studies to test this hypothesis. This dissertation will identify digital place marketing strategies (through a literature study) that smaller communities can use to attract and retain businesses, industry, investors, residents and tourists. Then, the actual digital marketing practices of the selected South African case study towns and rural communities and the local municipalities they fall within will be identified and assessed through qualitative content analysis as the primary research method.

1.2   Problem statement

Most rural areas and smaller cities and towns in the world, including in South Africa, lose, or experience difficulty to attract or retain, capital or investment, talented residents, entrepreneurs and tourists, especially if the place is remote or lacks quality place attraction factors, as described in Chapter 4. Rural and small-town decline is a widespread problem in South Africa and many other parts of the world. With only a few exceptions – such as growing mining towns – most smaller towns and rural areas in South Africa are experiencing small-town and rural decay and a net outflow of capital and highly skilled people. Even larger regional towns with well-diversified economies and conditions favourable for economic growth (such as being situated along major transport corridors), with favourable climates, hinterlands with high potential for agricultural development, etc. do lose investment, highly skilled residents, and businesses to the largest metropolitan regions, such as Cape Town and Johannesburg (Coates, 2016: 39-40; Kotler et al., 1993: 4-14; Wessels, 2012: 10-12).

The forces of rural and small-town flight and urbanisation are so strong and persistent that many governments and academics realise that it is inevitable that most small towns will continue to decline and eventually "die", and this process should be allowed to follow its

natural course while providing an acceptable level of public services, without growth interventions aimed at chasing unlikely future growth, unless there is a good reason why a town will be able to retain or grow into a viable local economy (Coates, 2016: 39-40; Plummer, Tonts & Argent, 2017: 1-3; Wirth, Elis, Müller & Yamamoto, 2016: 72-73). The following section provides an overview of the most important causes of small-town and rural decay.

1.2.1 Causes of small-town and rural economic decay

Rural areas and smaller towns are in economic distress due to several causes. Advances in transport technology, such as faster, more fuel-efficient and affordable vehicles, innovative transport services and systems, and more extensive transport infrastructure make it increasingly possible for local consumers to travel to and spend their money in more distant, larger towns and cities which offer a larger range of higher quality products and services. For the same reason local firms procure from more distant suppliers in the region, which causes significant economic leakage from the small town to the benefit of nearby larger towns or cities (Coates, 2016: 39-40).

As per the Keynesian, the New Economic Geography and the Urban Economics theories of regional development, larger centres also grow faster than smaller towns and rural areas in a particular region because the larger centres benefit from economic agglomeration effects and increasing levels of specialisation, attracting more people and capital away from surrounding smaller places. In accordance with Michael Porter's clustering theory, firms in such clusters gain powerful competitive advantages over firms in smaller or isolated places, which further fuel city and large-town growth at the expense of smaller places in the region. Larger, growing centres can offer increasingly better employment opportunities and lifestyle amenities to workers and better business opportunities to businesses and investors. Therefore, agglomeration effects cause larger towns and cities to attract investment, businesses, residents and workers, especially highly talented workers, away from smaller towns and rural areas in the region, causing small-town and rural decay. The same forces apply at national and global level, where faster growing provinces or countries attract investment, businesses, residents and talented workers away from less attractive or slower growing places, especially in recent

years due to increasing freedom to move across borders (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 501-521; Kotler et al., 1993: 4-14; Pike, Rodriguez-Pose & Tomaney, 2017: 60-82, 99-136; Wirth et al., 2016: 62-67).

Marxist and radical political-economic explanations for the decay of some regions also emphasise agglomeration effects, referring to larger, growing and more affluent cities as "core" areas that benefit from the capitalistic forces they exercise over lagging rural areas and small towns (termed "peripheral" areas). These rural areas or small towns are exploited as source areas of cheap labour, natural resources and powerless or indebted consumers (as opposed to empowered trading partners), trapped by circumstances of low wages, lack of capital, and economic dependency (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 254-268; Pike et al., 2017: 83-90).

The economic multiplier effect works together with agglomeration effects to enable larger towns and cities to grow at the expense of smaller towns and rural areas. The Keynesian approach to economic growth states that the economic multiplier is a vital mechanism of local and regional economic development. The economic multiplier effect can be described as the cumulative and self-reinforcing increases in economic activity and output through input-output relationships and interactions between firms, households and government in the local economy (referred to as "economic actors"). Income spent by one economic actor becomes income to many other actors, and when they spend that income it becomes income to even more actors. However, the multiplier effect can be both positive and negative. A reduction in local spending, e.g., when the average income of local firms or households fall or if they start buying from distant rather than local firms, can cause a cascading drop in income in a local economy, known as "economic leakage". Economic leakage is one explanation why growing, larger towns and cities in a region that profit from agglomeration-induced growth benefit at the expense of smaller towns and rural areas in the same region (Pike et al., 2017: 71-74, 185-186; Plummer et al., 2017: 2).

Another major driver of local and regional economic development (and decline), according to the Keynesian approach to development, is exportation. Exportation entails the sale of locally produced or sourced goods and services to buyers from outside the local or regional economy, who may be citizens, firms or government buyers from a neighbouring

town, a city in the region or a neighbouring or more distant region, a foreign country, etc. Income from exports represents valuable monetary injections into a local economy, allowing it to grow economically, which would have been very difficult or even impossible without such export income. Exportation allows exporting firms in a place to specialise in the production and marketing of something that it is regionally or globally competitive in, based on its resource endowments. As a place produces more of a particular product due to access to larger export markets, it benefits more from economies of scale and gains more expertise and capital and becomes even better at producing that particular product, making the place even more efficient and competitive at producing it. Exportation may also contribute to further growth of a place due to additional agglomeration and multiplier effects if specialised value-chain partner firms that supply to or otherwise link with local producers of the export product become established locally. As the exporting place grows due to agglomeration and multiplier effects, and as its export competitiveness grows, it also contributes to the phenomenon that larger growth cores in a region grow at the expense of smaller declining places that are less able to compete, not only in terms of producing that particular export product but also to attract investment, businesses and skilled workers, in general. Therefore, economic decline may be attributed to places being unable to find something they are (or can be) regionally or globally competitive at producing, or to them becoming less competitive at producing or less efficient at marketing a particular export product, which leads to decreased sales and eventual closure of local exporting firms, which in turn will set into motion a downward spiral of negative multiplier effects and collapse of agglomeration effects (Kotler et al., 1993: 24, 32-33, 260-288; Pike et al., 2017: 70-74).

An alternative but related explanation for the decline of previously prosperous manufacturing and exporting areas is that of "flexible accumulation". The Theory of Flexible Accumulation explains the decline of many typical industrial or manufacturing towns very well: typical mass-production-orientated factories from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had to adapt to modern advances in engineering, work design, supply-chain innovations and rapidly changing customer needs which value tailor-made products above mass-produced goods. Ability to outsource, to adopt flexible management and production practices, to specialise in the production of only a specific component as

opposed to a complete product, and to tap into global supply chains became vital for competitiveness. Those manufacturing firms and the less innovating industrial regions that house them, which could not adapt to these changing demands, declined or collapsed altogether (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 12-21; Kotler et al., 1993: 326-327; Pike et al., 2017: 99-104).

Attempts have been made throughout the industrialised world to de-industrialise the economy by focussing economic development and educational and training policies on the growth of the service or tertiary sector, while deliberately neglecting the industrial or secondary sector decline. Although South Africa did not directly adopt deindustrialisation policies, development focus did shift away from industrialisation in favour of the government and social service sectors, and re-industrialisation efforts were not very effective. Re-industrialisation in South Africa was also hindered by an unfavourable business climate caused by crime, re-distribution that favours the politically influential rather than the poor, excessive government regulation, poor governance, policy uncertainty, poor labour relations, and poor education (especially regarding technical- and engineering-related skills) (Kantor, 2017: ix-xiii, 6-8, 25; Sunde, 2017: 436).

Deindustrialisation policies are aligned with stage, cycle and wave theories of and approaches to LED discussed below. However, the deindustrialisation approach failed to create jobs and income as was hoped for and the number of jobs lost were more than the number of service jobs created because services are difficult to export and firms in the tertiary sector have less forward and backward economic linkages than firms in the secondary sector; therefore, the tertiary sector is associated with a smaller multiplier effect than the secondary sector. This caused severe local economic decline in historically industrial towns and cities throughout South Africa and the rest of the industrialised world. Today, there is a re-appreciation for the learnings of the Keynesian approach and Theory of Flexible Accumulation, which state that a strong, competitive and globally integrated secondary sector is the backbone of a vibrant and diverse regional economy (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 14, 23-24; Kotler et al., 1993: 312-314, 326-327; Pike et al., 2017: 72-74, 99-103).

The theories of evolutionary and institutional economics explains that a town or rural area may fall into economic decline because the local market mechanisms, firms, institutions and skills of local workers are so strongly geared to serve a particular historically important economic sector that it fails to adapt or convert to alternative economic sectors more aligned with modern realities. As macro-economic realities change, a place should gradually abandon the old economic ways (referred to as path destruction) and change its economic activities and focus to take advantage of new opportunities (referred to as path creation). However, some places remain locked into their economic history and remain loyal to its old economy (referred to as path dependence), which leads to local economic decline (Pike et al., 2017: 105-109). Studying historically important, but now declining local industries, is especially useful to understand the fate of many small towns and rural areas throughout the world that depended on farming communities in their hinterlands. Although the farming sector has not necessarily declined, it does not create as many jobs as before due to mechanisation and consolidation of small family farms into larger agribusinesses, resulting in massive rural flight as farmers and farmworkers and their families migrate to larger towns and cities in search of alternative employment (Coates, 2016: 39-40; Plummer et al., 2017: 1-3).

The New Economic Geography spatial theory of LED attributes the economic decline of many small towns and rural areas to geographic isolation or poor transport infrastructure investment which increases transportation costs to major regional markets. This reduces the ability of local firms to benefit from economies of scale and to specialise, which in turn makes smaller isolated places significantly less competitive. It also attributes local economic decline to the inability of local firms to innovate or to learn, which reduces the positive effects of economic agglomeration. Along with theories related to sustainable economic development, it also attributes economic decline to negative agglomeration economies of scale (diseconomies or negative impacts of economic agglomeration), such as environmental degradation, pollution, congestion, and natural resource depletion (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 16-19, 188-194, 210-226; Pike et al., 2017: 121-128).

According to the Innovation and Knowledge Economy theories of local and regional development, places that fail to adopt new technology, embrace innovation, transfer and assimilate knowledge from outside, support local workers to engage in lifelong learning,

and be creative and attract creative workers from outside become isolated from modern knowledge and the creative global economy, causing economic stagnation and decline. Poor skills amongst workers and managers in local firms, including technical and management skills and skills needed to adopt new techniques in the workplace, is cited as one of the most important reasons for local economic stagnation and decline. Although it cannot be expected from smaller towns and rural areas to establish hubs of innovation, such as universities or science parks, such smaller places can and should establish partnerships or connections with regional and even global centres of innovation in the economic sectors relevant to the place, and should empower and encourage local citizens and businesses to be creative and innovative and to engage in lifelong-learning, modern telecommunication infrastructure and global learning platforms (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 16-19; Moseley, 2003: 34-39; Pike et al., 2017: 110-118).

The skills of the workforce are a major determinant of labour productivity, along with work ethic and attitude, wage expectations, demands of labour legislation and labour unions, and capital per worker. Levels of labour productivity are an important determinant of competitiveness of local firms, and in cases where labour productivity is persistently low or diminishing, it could be a major contributor to local economic stagnation or decline. Smaller towns and rural areas may be especially vulnerable to forces that reduce labour productivity, such as capital flight and the tendency of better skilled or more ambitious workers to migrate to larger cities (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 19-21, 272-294; Pike et al., 2017: 63-78, 123, 130, 250).

Another important reason rural areas and smaller towns are more prone to economic and social decline is poor governance. Smaller places have less bargaining power to attract highly talented officials, have a lower budget to deliver quality services and the local populations are smaller in number and likely to be less educated and economically less powerful than residents of larger cities. Therefore, smaller places are less able to hold municipal officials accountable for good governance. Neo-classical theories of LED state that a negative result of poor governance is poor coordination and misallocation of local factors of production and failure of such factor markets, resulting in lower production, lower income generation and increased investment outflow, which result in even lower

productivity and a further increase in investment outflow, causing a downward spiral (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 635-636; Pike et al., 2017: 60-65).

In terms of the Keynesian approach to economic growth, poor governance has a negative effect on exportation (which could be devastating for the local economy, as explained above) because it establishes a poor climate for business and investment, making local export firms less competitive at a regional or global level (Pike et al., 2017: 71-82). In general, poor governance and corruption is a major cause of economic stagnation or decline and can cause a deterioration of place attraction factors (described in Chapter 4), making the place less attractive to live in or invest or do business in; therefore, attracting or retaining such target audiences will be difficult (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 356-366, 635; Pike et al., 2017: 205-249).

In conclusion, the flight of capital and talented residents is caused by the complex interactions of factors such as the cumulative damaging effect of business cycles and its interaction with taxation and inflation at local level; economic concentration of industry; reduced barriers of movement of goods, capital and people due to globalisation; technological advances; global competition; and social and political factors. Smaller towns and rural areas are especially hard-hit. The result is local economic stagnation or decline because these target audiences are important to facilitate LED (Kotler et al., 1993: 4-14). The socio-economic effects of small-town and rural decay will be discussed next.

1.2.2 *Effects of small-town and rural economic decay*

The economic and social effects of above-mentioned rural and small-town economic distress can be severe. It causes suboptimal use of land and other local resources; weakening of land and housing markets; degradation of the natural and built environment; reduced economic activity and reduced demand for factors of production, including labour; a reduction of income to entrepreneurs, investors, businesses and households; and rising levels of unemployment. High levels of unemployment cause social and political instability, poverty, and reliance on social grants as sole source of income to those who can access such grants. In turn, reliance on social grants causes several social and economic impacts, including reduced levels of motivation to become entrepreneurs or find

employment due to an often unrealistic attitude of entitlement and expectation that the government must provide them with income, free education, housing and municipal services; social and political unrest in case such state-dependent citizens protest against a perception that such benefits are flowing at a too slow pace towards them; and additional pressure on government budget, which results in less funding being available for other crucial government priorities (Chikulo, 2013: 52; Alexander & Kane-Berman, 2014: 25).

Local economic decline because of the above causes reduced municipal income in several ways, including lowered revenue from rates and taxes due to outflow or flight of investment, businesses and residents. Therefore, less funding for public spending is available, which contributes directly to a lack of infrastructure maintenance and poor delivery of other municipal, public and private services, including essential services such as education and health services. This, in turn, causes a further outflow of businesses, investment and residents (especially talented, creative, and well-qualified workers) in a self-reinforcing downward spiral of local economic decline. It is especially the flight of middle-income residents and highly skilled workers that causes most concern because they are the most prone to flight due to their high degree of mobility. They are highly mobile because they have the means to move and resettle elsewhere and are more likely to possess the skills in demand in other labour markets. Loss of their higher levels of income translates directly into reduced buying power or local economic base of the remaining local population (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 484-491; Pike et al., 2017: 181-190; Wessels, 2012: 2-6). Outflow of tax-paying residents and businesses is a common problem facing rural municipalities in South Africa who struggle to raise their own funds to finance their service delivery mandates due to a limited local tax base (FCC, 2013). The following section will elaborate on how the re-establishment of a solid and diverse business community could reverse the process of small-town and rural decay.

1.2.3 Role of entrepreneurs, investors and businesses to curb small-town and rural economic decay

Entrepreneurs, investors and businesses can play a vital role to re-establish the economic base and to reverse economic decline of small towns and rural areas as described above. The more businesses can be attracted, the more diverse the economy becomes and the

more opportunities for even more businesses present themselves. These business opportunities attract investors that attract even more businesses. An increasing number of businesses attract an increasing number of workers and residents, which increases the local consumer market size and local purchasing power, which even further attracts more businesses, investment, workers and residents. According to the Keynesian approach to local and regional economic development, this self-reinforcing cycle of growth (through agglomeration) enables a place to compete more successfully with other economic growth centres in the region or country that also compete for the attention of investors, businesses and skilled workers. Attraction of new businesses that supply to or buy from existing local businesses also creates networks of forward- and backward-linked supply-chain partners, which enhances economic multiplier effects, causing even further local economic growth (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 63-76; Moseley, 2003: 59-69; Pike et al., 2017: 71-82).

Stage, cycle and wave theories of LED propose that development occurs in a linear series of stages, from primitive to advanced, where underdeveloped towns or rural areas have simple economies dependent on natural resource extraction, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries or mining (primary sector). As the local economy grows, the focus turns to processing and manufacturing industries (secondary sector), then to service industries (tertiary sector), then to knowledge and creative industries (quaternary sector). These theories emphasise how LED can be accelerated by the deliberate attraction of businesses of more advanced sectors, and by supporting local businesses to produce higher value-added products or services at increasingly higher levels of productivity. Additionally, these theories emphasise the need for a town or local economy to reach a certain threshold size or critical mass before agglomeration effects kick in and a higher level of economic development can be reached (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 2-24; Pike et al., 2017: 91-99). Businesses should not only be attracted or established locally but should be continuously supported to: adopt modern and flexible production technologies and tap into global supply chains (as per the Theory of Flexible Accumulation); look for new business opportunities (evolutionary and institutional economic approaches); establish regional and global innovation and knowledge-sharing links and partnerships and engage in innovation and lifelong learning (innovation and knowledge economic theories); adopt sustainable and ethical production and operational practices (New Economic Geography

and sustainability theories); and export their products to the outside world (Keynesian approach to development) (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 12-21, 71-75; Pike et al., 2017: 72-143).

An expanding business sector needs appropriately skilled persons to act as entrepreneurs, business owners or managers, and employees. Several LED theories and approaches mentioned in this section (especially the New Economic Geography and Innovation and Knowledge Economy theories as well as both endogenous and exogenous development strategies) emphasise the importance of human resources, skills development of local people and attraction of highly skilled people from outside to enable economic growth, entrepreneurial development and business expansion. In conclusion, a larger and growing business sector attracts more residents, skills and investment, causing levels of income to households and the municipality to raise, resulting in increasing living standards and levels of service delivery. Business attraction and support initiatives as explained in this section are not only core economic growth strategies but are also core functions of place marketing, as explained next (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 16-19; Pike et al., 2017: 110-128, 222-226, 250-251).

1.2.4   *Role of place marketing to curb small-town and rural economic decay*

Local governments and communities may attempt to mitigate, stop or reverse above-mentioned outflow of investment, capital, businesses, entrepreneurs, skilled workers, higher and middle-income residents and tourism interest through place marketing, i.e., to market the place amongst investors, businesses, skilled residents and other place marketing target audiences such as tourists (Kotler et al., 1993: 14-20). Place marketing can play a crucial role to attract and retain entrepreneurs, investors and businesses. In fact, the core function of place marketing is to attract such target audiences, in addition to tourists and highly skilled workers, to the place (Kotler et al., 1993: 22-33). Entrepreneurial development, as well as growing and sustaining existing businesses, are not only key strategies for LED as explained above (referred to as endogenous growth approaches), but are also core functions of place marketing (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 71-75; Kotler et al., 1993: 28-29; 328-338; Moseley, 2003: 48-69; Pike et al., 2017: 205-226). Likewise, the attraction of larger external businesses and investors are also core functions in both the domains of LED (referred to as exogenous growth approaches) and place marketing

(referred to as investment and business attraction) (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 126-127; Kotler et al., 1993: 27-28, 30-32; Pike et al., 2017: 229-251).

Export promotion is one of the main functions of place marketing; therefore, place marketing can directly contribute to LED through export-related growth mechanisms as explained above. Business attraction incentives, which are one of the tools in place marketing, are also one of the most important economic development tools in the Keynesian approach to development because local firms often just need a relatively small push or a little assistance from the local government to overcome the minimum threshold to attain sufficient economies of scale to compete successfully at a regional or global level (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 23, 551; Kotler et al., 1993: 32-33; Pike et al., 2017: 72-84). Tourism promotion is also a form of export because through the tourism sector the place "exports" its tourism amenities and experiences to tourists from afar, thereby earning an income from outside the local economy (Moseley, 2003: 47-58; Kotler et al., 1993: 23-26, 195-199).

Another important aim of place marketing is to promote the place and the local retail, entertainment and other spending opportunities it offers to local residents and businesses in the form of "buy local" campaigns. The more local firms and residents can be convinced to spend their income or procure goods and services locally, the better it is for LED because local spending increases the local economic multiplier, which could swing this powerful economic development mechanism from negative to positive, as explained above (Moseley, 2003: 27-31, 48; Pike et al., 2017: 71-74, 185-186).

In terms of local human capital development, to attract from outside and retain highly skilled or creative workers is a central aim of both the exogenous approach to LED and place marketing (Kotler et al., 1993: 26-27; Pike et al., 2017: 249-251). In addition, providing quality opportunities for education, training and continuous skills development to residents and workers is recognised as essential by both place marketing and endogenous approaches to LED (Kotler et al., 1993: 118-121; Pike et al., 2017: 222-226).

Place marketing and LED theories also share commonalities in terms of amenities and lifestyle. Providing natural amenities and making a place more attractive, clean and free of congestion and pollution through the responsible management of diseconomies is

central to both place marketing and sustainability orientated approaches to LED (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 194-207; Kotler et al., 1993: 99-135; Pike et al., 2017: 138-143; Sachs, 2008: 57-155; Wirth et al., 2016: 64, 73). Furthermore, post-developmentalism theories and approaches to economic development emphasise the importance to rethink what the goals of economic development should be, and to empower local people to decide for themselves what they want from development and what economic, social and lifestyle changes within their own towns or neighbourhoods they see as desirable. This coincides with the approach of place marketing that emphasises the importance of researching the lifestyle needs and preferences of target audiences, and their own or bottom-up vision for development, and then to design the place to incorporate such place attraction factors or amenities (Kotler et al., 1993: 91, 297-300, 318-320, 338-342; Moseley, 2003: 135-141; Pike et al., 2017: 144-148; Wirth et al., 2016: 73).

Digital place marketing techniques as opposed to that of traditional place marketing are becoming more important because place marketing target audiences use digital media (Morrison, 2013: 369-371). However, it seems that smaller municipalities and communities in South Africa are not yet ready to engage efficiently in digital place marketing, which is the hypothesis for this study.

The approach that this dissertation takes to study place marketing coincides with the main aim of the Marxist and radical political economic vision of economic growth; i.e., how the tool of place marketing can empower lagging places such as small towns and rural areas to compete more successfully with larger towns and cities (established and growing centres of economic control) to attract investment, businesses, skilled workers and other forms of capital, thereby creating a more equal society across geographic space (Pike et al., 2017: 83-90).

1.3   Research questions, hypothesis and objectives

The research questions addressed by this study are:

- Question 1: What digital place marketing strategies can smaller communities in South Africa potentially use to attract and retain desired target audiences?

- Question 2: To what extent do places use these digital place marketing strategies in practice?

The main research hypothesis of this study is that South African local municipalities and communities do not properly utilise digital place marketing techniques.

The overall research objectives of the dissertation are as follows:

- Objective 1: Identify a reasonable range of possible digital place marketing strategies from the literature that smaller communities in South Africa can employ for their own place marketing objectives.
- Objective 2: Identify which of these possible digital place marketing strategies are indeed employed.

1.4 Rationale and significance/justification of the study

Some of the most significant socio-economic problems faced by smaller communities throughout the world, including South Africa, are (Kotler et al., 1993: 3-14; Nel, 1994: 1):

- Loss of middle-income consumer base, causing the buying power of the local market to keep shrinking.
- Inability to attract skilled persons; therefore, local businesses may find it hard or impossible to build their human resource base with a suitably skilled or talented workforce, which compromises their competitiveness and viability.
- Inability to attract or retain businesses, industries or investment, resulting in local economic stagnation or decline and job losses.
- Inability to attract sufficient numbers of visitors or tourists; therefore, tourism businesses are faced with very limited or no growth potential.

All the above very common and significant challenges that smaller communities face may be partially or fully addressed by place marketing strategies, because the primary aim of place marketing is to make the place more attractive to the above target audiences (Dril et al., 2016: 47-48; Kotler et al., 1993: 3-14; Nel, 1994: 1).

Regarding the importance of place marketing: marketing is often regarded as the most important activity of an organisation (which may also be a place, town or region) because it keeps revenue coming in, which is the lifeblood of the organisation. All other business functions, e.g., finance, production, human resources, etc. are dependent on the demand for their products/services created through marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2012:28). Place marketing does not only benefit the local government or local businesses but broader society as well. It has a key role to play to "make the world a better place" by forcing place managers and marketers to improve the local place attraction factors that in turn improve local people's lives. Taking a place marketing approach deliberately focusses attention on place attraction factors as discussed in Chapter 4, which directly improves the lives of local residents. It contributes to job creation and economic development by stimulating demand for products and services (Kotler et al., 1993: 1-20; Kotler & Keller, 2012: 28).

Place marketing has various advantages for places. It increases demand for local products and services, thereby generating revenue for local businesses and for local government in the form of taxes, rates and fees (Kotler et al., 1993: 5-7, 12, 18-20; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: ix). It generates, or at least attempts to preserve, local jobs directly (in case employers or businesses are recruited or retained) and indirectly (due to increased demand, as mentioned above) (Kotler et al., 1993: 9, 12, 18-20). Furthermore, place marketing increases quality of life for the local population, because efforts to increase the attractiveness of the place directly benefits the residents (Kotler et al., 1993: 37, 39). It prevents depopulation (e.g., rural flight) and urban degeneration by attracting, or at least attempting to retain, middle and higher income residents and consumers, highly skilled workers, entrepreneurs, businesses and investment (Kotler et al., 1993: 7, 18-20, 26-27). The afore-mentioned factors facilitate Local Economic Development (Kotler et al., 1993: 22, 74-76; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: ix), as described in section 2.5.

To realise the above-mentioned positive impacts of place marketing, it must be realised that competition between places to attract desired target audiences is intense. The place market can be described as a buyers' market where the target audiences have the upper hand. Therefore, it is essential for places to engage in efficient, competitive place marketing (Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Kotler et al., 1993: 9-10). Overall, having a place

marketing strategy is a win-win situation for the place as well as the businesses and residents in it (Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: 1).

Place marketing has been growing in importance in recent years because there are several forces that have led to the rise and increasing importance of place marketing. Several political, economic, social and environmental changes or trends contribute to the increasing relevance for place marketing, for example:

- Political freedom: As political freedom grows and smaller states or regions become increasingly consolidated into larger political units, businesses and people have more freedom to move from less attractive to more attractive places. For example, after the fall of Apartheid, Apartheid laws were abolished and the former homelands were integrated into the Republic of South Africa, allowing any South African to move to or live, work or open a business in any part of the country. There is also increasing cooperation within the SADC region, allowing for more movement within these states (Nel, 1994: 1). Migration from one country or continent to another is also facilitated by easier access to migration permits and political pressure on host countries to accommodate illegal immigrants (Bjelland et al., 2013: 78-90).

- General tendency to migrate: People tend to migrate quite easily between locations as they attain higher levels of socio-economic development. The motive behind this high degree of mobility is to pursue better opportunities at different locations. For example, in the US, UK and Australia, about 20% of the population change location each year. Therefore, it is essential to deliberately engage in place marketing to attract this moving population of target audiences, or at least to try avoiding losing them to other locations (Badcock, 2002: 17).

- Due to deregulation of the economy, adoption of free market principles and privatisation, it is easier for jobs, people and capital to shift from less attractive to more attractive places. Because governments reduce regional development incentives and associated subsidies, place marketing is possibly the only viable tool to attract investment (Bjelland et al., 2013: 81; Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Nel, 1994: 1).

- Increased global competition for the attention of investors, businesses, highly skilled residents and tourists: The increase in competition is fuelled by the factors

mentioned above. Increasing competition is probably the most important reason for the increasing importance of place marketing (Dinnie, 2008: 17; Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Kotler et al., 1993: 9-10).

- Economic pressure and recessions: There is a growing need to attract and retain job- and tax-generating businesses. For example, the decline of the coal mining industry was a major contributor to the rise in interest in place marketing in the UK in the early 1990s (Bjelland et al., 2013: 81; Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Nel, 1994: 1).

- Improving transport systems: As transport infrastructure becomes more interlinked and transport technology improves, it is easier and more cost effective for people and goods (therefore, jobs) to move from less attractive to more attractive places (Nel, 1994: 1).

- Water resource availability and environmental pressure: Because South Africa can be classified as a semi-arid country, water availability and drought has always played an important role in the movement and establishment of people and businesses, and this force may intensify as the climate is changing and pressure on water resources increases (Nel, 1994: 1). Water resource availability differs drastically between the different watersheds or regions within South Africa. Although almost all regions in this country already experience water shortages as an important limiting factor in terms of LED, those areas with relatively more water shortages will find it especially difficult to attract future investment, industries and residents (Hedden & Cilliers, 2014: 1-3; Turton, 2012: 1-2).

- Lifestyle and environmental preferences: New generations tend to emphasise a higher quality of life more than a higher income. Lifestyle and environmental preferences are a major force behind migration (Nel, 1994: 1).

- Demographic shifts: People tend to move away from overpopulated areas or areas where one culture or subculture displaces another (Bjelland et al., 2013: 81).

1.5   Overview of research methodology

During the literature review phase of this study, the various digital marketing channels or techniques that smaller towns or rural municipalities and communities can potentially and

realistically employ to market themselves amongst place marketing target audiences were identified. After this, a qualitative research technique, namely content analysis, and more specifically, evaluative qualitative web content analysis, was used as the main research method of this study to assess the effectiveness of actual digital marketing practices of 20 local municipalities and their main towns. Web content analysis is a qualitative research technique that objectively and systematically describes and analyses web content, including text and audio-visual content in websites, social media profiles and other digital communication channels, to study its effectiveness to create a favourable brand and its likely persuasiveness from the target audiences' perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 144-145; Niewenhuis, 2007: 101; Creswell, 2013: 190; Mouton, 2001: 165-167). Basic steps followed in conducting the web content analysis were as follows (Herring, 2010: 233-250):

Step 1: Formulation of the research questions and hypothesis.

Step 2: Selection of case study municipalities and content to analyse. The 20 municipalities were selected based on municipal governance and service delivery performance (as assessed by Good Governance Africa) to include ten generally well-managed and ten generally poorly managed small town or rural municipalities (BusinessTech, 2016; Yende, 2016). The types of digital content to be analysed were limited to the most important digital media or channels identified and described in Chapter 2, namely the websites, blogs, electronic or email newsletters, social media, travel directory and review site listings, online communities and discussion forums, mapping service listings, wikis, online advertising and mobile apps of the case study municipalities or their communities.

Step 3: Definition of categories and development of a coding scheme, including a digital place marketing practices assessment criteria list and assessment scale. Codification of content allows for systematic and objective analysis of content to obtain a deep understanding of the content (Creswell, 2013: 194-202; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005: 213-215).

Step 4: Primary data research using the digital place marketing practices criteria list and assessment scale. The assessment criteria used are reflected in categories or themes in

a systematic coding scheme (see Annexure 1), and are thoroughly described in the literature review chapters of this dissertation.

Step 5: Analysis and interpretation of the selected case study towns' digital place marketing practices.

(See Chapter 5 for a detailed description of the research methods adopted, including more details on the above steps.)

1.6   Ethics statement

This study made use of an unobtrusive research method, namely qualitative content analysis. Research was done on the existing digital presence available in the public domain, with no interaction with any role players and no recording whatsoever of personal information or any form of user-generated content. Therefore, the ethical issues associated with this study are negligible, which is reflected in the approval of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (see Annexure 2).

1.7   Scope and limitations

It is well accepted that local economic development planning is an interdisciplinary subject, overlapping with disciplines such as geography, sociology, economics etc. As discussed in sections 1.1 and 1.2, place marketing (and increasingly the digital aspects of place marketing) is also considered a core component of an effective and comprehensive LED strategy. Although LED strategies often target only some target audiences such as tourists (generally known as destination marketing or tourism promotion), investors (investment promotion or investment incentives) or businesses (entrepreneurial or business support or export promotion), sections 1.1 and 1.2 also discussed the importance of adopting the comprehensive definition of place marketing which emphasises the importance of targeting a broader range of target audiences in an integrated manner, which, in addition to the abovementioned target audiences, also include skilled workers and higher and middle-income residents. Adopting the broad

definition of place marketing is important for this study because it focusses on modern place marketing practices, i.e. using digital marketing, which is a new, little explored field of research, and for such a pioneering work it was decided to take a reconnaissance approach, i.e. to start at a broad level to lay the foundation for future research into more specific aspects of digital place marketing. Furthermore, adopting a broad definition of place marketing as part of an LED strategy is particularly important for smaller or rural municipalities which do not have the resources to establish units that target the different target audiences separately as highly specialised disciplines. Therefore, in practice, the LED planner at a typical small municipality acts as a generalist who should have the knowledge to attract the broad range of target audiences, whereas LED planners in large cities are likely to benefit from a team of specialists in tourism marketing, digital marketing, entrepreneurial and business support, investment promotion etc. Adopting the broad definition of place marketing also explains why the literature review is longer than the average dissertation – it includes background to the most essential modern (digital) place marketing best practices that a typical small town LED practitioner should take into account, and it provides a basis for the coding framework described in the methodology chapter which enables the systematic and thorough assessment of the digital place marketing practices of the municipality. Specifically, the study focusses on and is limited to the following:

- Topic: Digital as opposed to traditional place marketing strategies and strategies for small towns and rural areas as opposed to the broader range of more elaborative strategies that larger cities with a broader skills base and larger budgets may have to attract and retain talented residents, entrepreneurs, investment and tourists. Therefore, the 20 case study places were limited to local as opposed to metropolitan municipalities.
- Geographic area: All case study areas are limited to South Africa. However, due to the systematic and universally applicable methods adopted, places in other countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries, will also be able to extract lessons from this study.
- Timeframe: Web content analysis was conducted from November 2016 to July 2017, which represents only a snapshot of the digital marketing practices and

content generated at that point in time. The digital landscape changes constantly; therefore, findings of this research may quickly get outdated.

1.8   Brief chapter overview

The structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction – This chapter explains the purpose of this study, states the research objectives and provides a broad introduction to the potential role of place marketing to address economic decline of towns and rural areas.

Chapter 2: Literature review on place marketing, particularly digital place marketing – This chapter provides an overview of the concept of place marketing in general and digital place marketing in particular. Potential digital place marketing strategies, techniques and channels reasonably implementable by towns in South Africa are identified and described.

Chapter 3: Literature review and theoretical framework on target audiences of place marketing – This chapter elaborates on the typical "target market" of places, i.e., the different market segments that a town aims to attract through its marketing messages, which includes investors, businesses, skilled workers or residents, and tourists.

Chapter 4: Literature review and theoretical framework on place attraction factors – This chapter provides an overview of features or characteristics that make a town attractive for typical place marketing target audiences.

Chapter 5: Research methodology – This chapter describes the research methods and tools utilised in this study.

Chapter 6: Results and discussion – This chapter presents the results and discusses it in detail.

Chapter 7: Conclusion – The last chapter provides a short summary of the dissertation and concludes whether the research objectives were met, research questions answered and hypothesis supported. The chapter also makes recommendations to guide towns and

their municipalities and communities to improve their place marketing practices, and outlines recommendations for future research.

1.9   Conclusion

Chapter 1 started with a description of the crisis of economic decline that many South African small towns and rural areas face, and provided an explanation for this crisis, in general, and in terms of the trend of outflow of capital, businesses and skilled workers or residents with buying power, in particular. Thereafter, the concept of digital place marketing was introduced and its potential role in curbing the outflow of capital, businesses and skilled residents was explained. Then, the research objectives were stated, i.e., to identify potential digital place marketing strategies that small-town or rural municipalities or communities can realistically use to attract and retain the above-mentioned groups, and the degree to which they currently use such strategies in practice. Lastly, the research methodology was briefly explained, and the ethical considerations and scope and limitations of the study were addressed. Overall, the study can be justified due to the importance of the problem to be studied, and can be considered doable because a suitable research methodology was identified, and ethical issues were found to be negligible due to the unobtrusive nature of the research method. Digital place marketing, which was only briefly introduced in this chapter, will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: *LITERATURE REVIEW ON DIGITAL PLACE MARKETING*

2.1 Introduction

This study aims to identify digital place marketing methods that are appropriate for smaller or rural municipalities and towns, and then to investigate the degree to which they are used in practice. This chapter systematically lists and discusses the range of digital place marketing methods, strategies, or channels that such small communities in a South African context can use. This listing serves as a theoretical framework and description of best practices against which actual digital place marketing endeavours of the case study municipalities or communities will be assessed (see Annexure 1). This chapter starts with an overview of the concept and practice of place marketing in general, and digital place marketing in particular. It provides an overview of the knowledge, arguments and critiques in the disciplines of digital marketing in general, and digital place marketing in particular.

It appears that the theoretical framework adopted in place marketing literature is developing fairly independently from that of conventional products, services and corporate marketing. It also appears that the theoretical frameworks adopted by conventional products, services and corporate marketing are more advanced, more systematic and subject to more scrutiny compared to place marketing. This is understandable because more researchers focus and generate literature on conventional products, services and corporate marketing. It is also likely that significantly more money is spent on conventional products, services and corporate marketing research than on place marketing research.

This study attempts to unite the topics covered in place marketing with the well-proven and systematic framework of conventional products, services and corporate marketing, with a special focus on digital marketing. This chapter on digital place marketing, along with the following two chapters on target audiences of place marketing and place attraction factors (Chapters 3 and 4, respectively) form the literature review part of this study that develops a systematic framework of thinking and arguing about digital place marketing. The concept of marketing in general will be introduced in the following section.

2.2 Marketing

Digital place marketing evolved out of the discipline of marketing. Marketing can be formally defined as the management, business or organisational tasks dealing with the identification of human needs and subsequent development, production, anticipation and creation of demand for and delivery of products and services that fulfil those needs in an efficient and financially sustainable manner (adapted from Kotler & Keller, 2012: 28-29). To create sustainable or ongoing demand over the long term, the product or service should truly satisfy the need of the customer. In the case of place marketing, the town should offer place attraction factors at a satisfactory level to meet the needs of place marketing target audiences. If the place does not, it is less likely to be considered as a home by skilled employees or entrepreneurs, or as a place of investment for investors or a place to be visited, with significant negative impact on job creation, deterioration of skills and taxpayer base, and general loss of vibrancy of the place (Blythe, 2012: 5).

The activity of marketing is conducted by a marketer. A marketer is a person or entity (e.g., a municipality, local investment or tourism promotion organisation, etc.) who attempts to draw the attention of another party, called a prospect or target audience, to get a response, such as a purchase, vote, donation, behavioural or attitude change or other form of reaction (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 30). In the context of place marketing, the marketer is a municipality, local tourism marketing organisation or local business that wants to attract investors, businesses, entrepreneurs, talented or skilled workers, tourists or other target audiences, as described in Chapter 3. Several entities or concepts can be marketed and branded, including tangible products or goods, services, organisations, financial products, experiences, events, real estate, persons, information, knowledge, ideas and places (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 29-30; Wood, 2014: 108).

The focus of this study is on the marketing of places. A Tourism Destination Management Organisation's main purpose is to market a place as a tourist destination (Cantoni, Kalbaska, Marchiori & De Ascaniis, 2016: 5.3), whereas one of the important tasks of local government or a municipality is to market the place amongst all important place marketing target audiences, including tourists and skilled residents and especially investors, businesses and entrepreneurs. The terms "marketing" and "promotion" are often used

interchangeably; however, promotion is a sub-activity within marketing. Promotion is defined as initiatives deliberately undertaken to entice potential customers to buy a product or adopt an idea. Promotion is the element of the marketing mix that deals with communication with potential customers, including convincing them to buy a product. Marketing communication methods are used to promote something or to influence potential customers to become aware of, think and feel positive about, interact and engage with, and eventually buy a brand, and to build and maintain relationships with customers (Wood, 2014: 166).

Communication with potential customers occurs through various marketing communication channels or elements of the promotional mix (Belch & Belch, 2015: 16), including advertising through traditional broadcasting (TV and radio), print (newspapers, magazines, brochures, etc.), outdoor or out-of-home media, digital marketing (online, mobile and social), personal selling, direct marketing (mail and direct messages), sales promotion techniques, public relations with emphasis on publicity (Belch & Belch, 2015: 28; Wood, 2014: 17), as well as events and sponsorships, point-of-purchase displays and packaging, branded entertainment (including product placements on TV or movies, etc.), and word-of-mouth (Belch & Belch, 2015: 28). This dissertation examines marketing of places such as towns, rural areas and municipal areas – discussed next – using digital marketing channels.

2.3   Place marketing

As mentioned above, several entities or concepts can be marketed, including places such as towns, regions, etc., which is referred to as place marketing. Place marketing refers to marketing that includes positioning, branding and promotion of towns/cities, areas, districts or regions, nations or states, tourist destinations or even a single location, aiming to attract tourists, investment, businesses or residents (Dril et al., 2016: 47-48; Kotler et al., 1993: 18-22; Wood, 2014: 108). The aim of place marketing is to convince place marketing target audiences to invest in, open a business in, move to or visit the place, or if they already do any of these, to visit the place more, invest more locally, expand local businesses, and to not consider relocation to another place (Blythe, 2012: 4; Kotler et al.,

1993: 22-33). A target audience, target market or market segment is a specific group of potential buyers or customers on which the marketer focusses marketing efforts and whose members' specific needs are particularly well met by the product or service, e.g., the youth market, young and single professionals, the Black middle-income group, etc. (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 30).

In the case of place marketing, target market segments are referred to as target audiences. The term 'target audiences' will be used in the remainder of this study, and includes potential and existing investors, businesses, residents, skilled workers, and tourists, described in depth in Chapter 3. Places should engage in marketing, including the development of a marketing strategy to increase demand, increase market share and promote itself in very much the same way that companies do. The strategic marketing planning process has universal application as a tool for marketing, whether it is applied to products, services, persons or places. The marketing process for places is very much the same as that for conventional products, services and corporate marketing in terms of formulation of marketing objectives, selection of marketing strategies, identification of resources required for efficient marketing, formulation of specific steps to be undertaken and their incorporation into boarder management structures, and monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Specific marketing strategies are also the same but need to be applied to the concept of place rather than a product, service or corporation; e.g., where a product's packaging needs to be improved, a place's visible appeal needs to be improved (Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: ix, 2).

Place marketing has been one of the most innovative elements of urban development during the past two decades and can be applied at single-venue scale (e.g., a single resort), multiple-venue scale (e.g., a resort group), project scale (e.g., an urban regeneration or flagship development project), local scale (e.g., a town or city), district scale (e.g., a tourism district or industrial development corridor), provincial scale (e.g., KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority), national scale (e.g., Brand South Africa) or international scale (e.g., Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa) (Pike, 2015: 26-33; Smith, 1994: 2). However, place marketing is by no means a new concept. It has been practiced throughout history, especially in the basic form of distinguishing a specific place from other places, referred to as place positioning. For example, Greenland was

promoted in the eighth century amongst potential settlers by Viking explorer Leif Erikson (Ashworth & Voogd, 1994: 39; Pike, 2015: 23-25).

By the early 1990s, South African local authorities had started to recognise the need for place marketing; however, their marketing efforts tended to be limited to promotion (Nel, 1994: iii), and has not improved much since. Recently, place marketing literature started focussing strongly on marketing of a place amongst tourists, as opposed to marketing of a place amongst a broader target audience that also includes residents, businesses, "Place of Origin" brands and other target audiences (Dinnie, 2008: 13-22). This study attempts to move away from this overemphasis on tourists by also including a much broader target audience and related marketing focus.

Although place marketing can be conducted spontaneously or informally without any formal plan, it is most optimal if its implementation is formally planned. Planning to market a product, service or place is not worth anything if it is not implemented in practice. A Marketing Plan, also known as a marketing implementation or management plan, should be developed and implemented to put marketing best practices and techniques into action. A place marketing plan is a strategy prepared in a systematically structured and realistically executable form that guides the process of meeting the needs and wants of target audiences better than competing places (Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: 2).

It is possible, however, for a place to attempt to attract target audiences without a place marketing plan. Most places do not have a dedicated marketing plan. Rather, components of the marketing plan or the needs of specific target or sub-target audiences are addressed in a variety of other planning documents, such as an integrated development plan, LED strategy, tourism plan, rates/tariff policies, investment promotion policy and other formal and informal documentation. However, such a fragmented approach may fail to construct a coherent place brand image. In addition, certain potentially important target or sub-target audiences may be overlooked. The consequence will be inefficient strategies leading to lost opportunities of revenue and business stimulation and of other potential positive impacts of attracting the desired target audiences. Therefore, places that develop a dedicated place marketing plan in a systematic manner will probably achieve higher place marketing and brand-building success because efforts are focussed in a systematic

rather than haphazard manner, which enables better assessment of desired future scenarios, and the selection of correctly formulated objectives and most efficient key strategies (Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: 2).

Various factors are important if a place marketing plan were to be efficient. Firstly, place marketing should be based on sound theory and best practice, and should be adapted to local circumstances and the specific needs of the specific target audiences. In addition, it should actually be implemented or executed in practice as opposed to having a plan on paper but which is not followed (in other words, it should not be "gathering dust on a shelf"). Implementation of the plan should also be monitored, evaluated and amended to take corrective action, if needed; therefore, flexibility to adapt is important (Kotler et al., 1993: 311-345; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: 2).

As described in the section on stakeholders in place marketing, various parties have an interest in place marketing and may be involved in the development of a place marketing plan, either as the leading party developing the plan or as stakeholders consulted during the process of drafting the plan. Several stakeholders may most likely benefit most directly from place marketing and therefore initiate and drive a formal place marketing plan or take the leading role in developing it (Kotler et al., 1993: 34, 40-42; Nykiel & Jascolt, 1998: 1). The first of these is government (at local, district, provincial or national level), often in the form of an entity devoted to economic growth or tourism promotion, including municipal majors or managers, or urban planning, LED or business development departments. Another is local tourism promotion organisations or associations (government or private, formal or informal), or major businesses or an association of businesses involved in tourism, e.g., hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers and transport businesses, travel agents, tour operators.

More stakeholders that may benefit are business associations (e.g., a local chamber of business which aims to stimulate the economy through place marketing); labour unions, which aim to increase job creation and general stimulation of the local economy to improve the labour market; real estate developers or agents, architects, or local property associations or major property owners who seek to increase local property value or obtain financing for property developments through place marketing; and other major businesses

or industries which may benefit from place marketing, e.g., financial institutions and utility companies.

2.4   Digital place marketing

Place marketing conducted through digital channels or methods such as the internet or social media, or the discipline of digital marketing applied to places, is known as digital place marketing. Digital marketing refers to any electronic means of marketing, or usage of the internet or other digital means as a marketing tool or channel (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 12). It is also defined as the activity of achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies, platforms (desktops, mobile phones, tablets, and other digital platforms) and media (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11). The narrow definition of digital marketing generally focusses only on online channels, including the internet or websites and related "online" channels such as email, social media and mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. However, the broader definition also includes electronic billboards, electronic information kiosks, fax-on-demand and other electronic channels (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 13).

The scope of this study is limited to the narrow definition, focussing only on the main digital marketing channels, i.e., websites, blogs, email or newsletter marketing, social media, online directories and communities, mapping services, wikis, digital advertising and mobile apps (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11-12, 35). Digital marketing is also referred to as internet, web-based or electronic marketing; however, the term digital marketing is increasingly popular because the underlying technologies and data are digital in nature (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 13). The term "digital" is much broader than "internet" and captures the large variety of modern digital technologies, media and platforms much better (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11).

Digital place marketing refers to the practice of using electronic tools, platforms or channels to promote a place such as a town, city, region or country. It is where the concepts of place marketing and digital marketing merge (Pike, 2015: 73, 147). Digital place marketing is very important because place marketing target audiences increasingly

make use of digital channels to make destination choices (Morrison, 2013: 369-371). It is essential for a place to have an online presence because a large percentage of the global population use the internet to research places and make destination choices (Google Inc., 2015).

Employing digital methods for place marketing purposes has several advantages. With digital marketing, it is possible to reach a very large audience (the masses) across the world (global reach) at low cost (therefore, affordable). It is easy and cost efficient to store and update information, and can be made available immediately and at any time of day or night or outside normal business hours, therefore providing for highly flexible distribution of marketing content (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 12; Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 442). It can use multimedia in a rich and interactive manner, can tailor information to a particular target audience member, and can directly link or redirect the user to other sources of related information (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 12).

Furthermore, as digital marketing is interactive and social, there are opportunities for community building and to meet in the social needs of target audiences. It allows for immediate feedback, brings target audiences and place marketers from any part of the world together without needing to travel, lets target audience members interact with and advise each other, and makes it easy to find detailed information on and compare places. Information can be provided in a variety of formats (multimedia), e.g., text, pictures, 360-degree views, videos, animations, comments, etc. Digital marketing and associated technologies provide opportunities to track, monitor and measure individual target audience members' online behaviour, thereby gathering valuable market research data on user habits, preferences and other insights (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 25; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 59-63; Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 442). Because this data can be attached to a specific target audience member, it is possible to customise, personalise or tailor marketing messages and possibly even the place offering itself to the specific needs of the particular user (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 27; Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 442; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 63).

In spite of the importance of using digital channels in place marketing, most small organisations, including smaller municipalities, smaller tourism marketing organisations

and smaller local businesses and tourism establishments, still do not use digital media to a satisfactory degree and do not have even a basic, well-functioning website in place, which puts them in a very disadvantaged competitive position (Google Inc., 2015). Digital media have increased the marketing reach of competitors to the global level; therefore, it is important to utilise digital marketing opportunities to attract investment, businesses, talent and tourists because competing cities and towns from all over the world will (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 22).

A key concept in digital place marketing is content. Content is what drives digital marketing – it is one of the main factors that motivates target audiences to visit websites and other digital channels. Content may include information, downloadable or streaming media in the form of text, articles, case studies, white papers, posts of other customers or social media users, photos, audios or podcasts, videos, graphics, infographics, interactive graphics and interactive elements and tools that organise information or provide solutions, such as product selectors (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 44, 126; Handley & Chapman, 2011: 6; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 158, 404, 482). Content may be developed in-house (by yourself), may be outsourced to other people to develop or may be developed by users or existing or potential customers or place marketing target audiences themselves, known as user-generated content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 44; Handley & Chapman, 2011: 6-7; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 404). Quality content plays an important role in establishing trust and credibility, which is crucial in marketing, especially for organisations that do not have a well-established and widely recognised brand (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 86; Handley & Chapman, 2011: 8).

The main advantages of content in electronic as opposed to traditional paper-based format is that it has environmental and cost benefits, visual quality can be very high, and it can be updated instantly without need for reprinting. It can be searched for easily and be delivered instantly wherever the user is currently located. In addition, it will not go out of stock, while the content is searchable, and embedded links to additional information can be provided (Morrison, 2013: 393-394).

The marketing value of content is so important that it has evolved into a subdiscipline of digital marketing, namely content marketing. Content Marketing is defined as making

useful, relevant and interesting content available that potential customers really want to see and that they cannot easily find somewhere else. Content marketing is also essential to attract the attention of customers, to engage customers (referred to as customer engagement), to gain permission from customers to send them regular marketing messages (referred to as permission marketing) and to maintain good customer relations with them, referred to as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 44; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 404). Content marketing should be considered a high priority by all types of organisations because (with online sales promotion as possibly the only exception) absolutely all digital marketing channels, including search platforms, websites, social media, email, etc., depend on content to gain user attention, receive visitors and generate leads and sales (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 449; Handley & Chapman, 2011: 4-12).

The most important digital marketing media, channels or tools from a place marketing perspective and applicable in a South African context are described in the next section.

2.5   Digital marketing channels or tools and multi-channel marketing

Digital marketing channels, also referred to as digital media channels or digital marketing platforms, refer to digital communication techniques or touchpoints through which target audiences can be reached, such as search engine marketing, websites, email marketing, online adverts, online directories, social media platforms, mobile apps, online public relations, etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11-12, 29-34, 421, 478-538, 657, 686; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 391-414). Digital channels or media are generally classified into three categories. Paid media is paid for by the marketer, such as digital advertising, display advert networks and affiliate marketing. Owned media is created and owned by the marketer, such as its own website, social media profiles, blogs, email campaigns and mobile apps. Lastly, earned media is marketing exposure created by other people, without compensation, such as publicity; word-of-mouth – or its online version, called word-of-mouse; user-generated content; viral marketing; blogs; and conversations on online communities and social media generated by people not paid by the marketer, such as

customers, customer advocates and other influencers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11-12; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 391-414).

The terms "digital marketing channels" and "digital marketing tools" or "techniques" overlap considerably and are often used interchangeably. However, digital marketing tools or techniques can be defined as the actual use or implementation of digital marketing channels for marketing purposes (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 32-36). For this reason, the list of criteria used in this study to assess digital marketing practices of the case study places, as outlined in Annexure 1, is a mixture of both digital marketing channels and tools.

Digital marketing channels may also refer to the physical platforms that facilitate digital interactions between the advertiser and the target audience, such as personal computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, wearable devices, interactive TV, digital signage, etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 12-15, 657; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 94-122, 208-210). However, this study will focus on the narrower definition of digital marketing channels, as outlined above; therefore, the physical devices will not form part of this study (apart from referring to the importance that content should be reachable through a variety of physical devices, especially mobile devices).

To select the most appropriate communication channels, of which digital marketing that this study focusses on is one such channel, is one of the most important considerations in place marketing (Wood, 2014: 17). Different customer segments or personas are likely to have different digital media-use patterns; therefore, it is important to consider the typical buyer persona(s) and research their particular digital media usage patterns to reach them optimally (Heinze et al., 2015: 2, 4). A website or social media profile alone is insufficient to reach modern target markets. It is necessary to be present on several digital media platforms to increase chances of being noticed and found, because different target markets and individuals have different customer journeys or digital media consumption patterns. The practice of employing a diversity of marketing channels is known as multi-channel marketing and should not only include different digital media but traditional media as well (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 232).

This study, however, focusses on digital place marketing channels only. An important goal of this study is to explore the digital presence of the selected case study places. Digital presence is the sum of deliberate marketing messages by the marketer as well as user-generated content by customers and content generated by other organisations on the internet and other digital media, including paid, earned and owned media, about the marketer's brand, products, services and activities, all of which contribute positively or negatively to the marketer's brand perception. It serves an intentional or unintentional place marketing and brand-building purpose (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 11). Although a website alone is not sufficient for place marketing purposes, it is still the most important one; hence, websites will be discussed next in considerable detail. Focus will then shift to other digital place marketing channels, including blogs, e-newsletters, social media, online directories and discussion forums, digital map services, wikis, online advertising, and mobile apps.

2.5.1 Websites

Websites are essential for place marketing because it is the most important channel to reach several key place marketing target audiences. Websites are the most important marketing tool to attract investment; hence, it is extensively used by investment promotion agencies as their main marketing tool. Websites are also the most effective marketing tool to attract tourists. Highly skilled workers also use a destination's website as an important tool to consider possible relocation. For these reasons, websites can be considered as an essential place marketing tool (Morrison, 2013: 371-372; Pike, 2015: 73, 79).

A website should be used as the main hub or platform to which the other digital and communication channels converge and from where main content is distributed (Ryan, 2014: 43-44). An information hub's purpose is to facilitate communications with customers, tourists and other relevant stakeholders (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 213-214, 393; Morrison, 2013: 373-375). A major advantage and use of websites is that they can, at a low cost, host and distribute large quantities of information that are relevant to target audiences, are easy to find and understand, can be written to be persuasive because the organisation is in full control of this medium, can be equipped with tools (e.g., interactive comparison tables to help customers make a final purchase decision), and can be rounded

off with a direct call for action (e.g., to visit or invest) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 83). For these reasons, although other common digital marketing tools appropriate for places will also be considered, this study focusses mainly on websites as a major place marketing tool, and website content will be assessed in depth.

To analyse the place marketing effectiveness of a website, different aspects of a website will be discussed systematically, which represent the coding framework presented in Annexure 1. Firstly, the website should provide information on place attraction factors, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. A website should also reflect the place's competitive position and desired brand image; present information tailored to the information needs of the specific target audiences; be interactive, easy to navigate and to find what the user is looking for (referred to as information design); pictures and other rich media should be effectively used. In addition, content should be fresh and persuasive, aesthetically attractive, free of errors, in the language preferred by key target audiences, accessible to the visually challenged, easy to view on small screens (e.g., mobile phones), contain useful links to other relevant information sources (referred to as directory functionality), and should integrate with social media so that a user can easily share website content with other people, all of which will be discussed in subsequent sections (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 174-228, 393-394).

2.5.1.1 Destination description and information in terms of key place attraction factors

Information provision was originally the main purpose of websites. Although modern websites have many more functions, providing information is still a vital function of a place marketing website (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 34; Google Inc., 2015; Morrison, 2013: 372-373). Consequently, websites with relevant, quality information are essential for all place marketing and tourism destinations. For many destinations, websites are the most important tool used by tourists to select a destination and plan a trip (Morrison, 2013: 372-373). The website should be a one-stop shop where every prospective or current tourist or other stakeholder can access information and advice on the destination, including downloadable visitor guides (Morrison, 2013: 373-382).

The specific type of information that the different place marketing target audiences (investors, businesses, prospective highly skilled residents and tourists) are interested in can be diverse but as a minimum, the website should provide information related to the place attraction factors relevant to the information needs of the target audiences. This includes information on regional connectivity, population and market size, proximity to other tourism destination areas in the wider region, transport, basic municipal services, technology and ICT infrastructure and services, real estate, financial services, the local economy and positive expectations for growth, job opportunities, the local labour force, education and healthcare facilities, the environment, social capital, governance, safety, retail and cultural amenities and recreation, tourism attractions and facilities, attractiveness of the landscape and townscape, natural resources and cost competitiveness. (See Chapter 4 for details on the above place attraction factors, including what matters most to specific types of place marketing target audiences and their likely information needs about these place attraction factors.)

In addition to a general description of place attraction factors, a municipal or local tourism promotion website should also present this information in such a manner to enable the reader to quickly grasp what specific place attraction factors the place offers better than other places in the region. These outstanding place attraction factors should be of most interest to the specific types of target audiences the place wishes to attract most, which relates to place positioning and differentiation, discussed in the next section.

2.5.1.2 *Positioning, differentiation and branding*

One of the most important functions of a municipal or local tourism marketing website is to clarify the destination's positioning; in other words, to differentiate the place from other places in order to give a convincing argument why target audiences should choose the given place above other competing places (Morrison, 2013: 373-375; Pike, 2015: 220-227). To do this, a place should start its place marketing efforts by researching the broader external and internal environment (PESTEL Analysis, an acronym that stands for political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors) and then conducting a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) Analysis to determine what he

place can offer target audiences competitively, and what place improvements is most needed (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 28, 181; Wood, 2014: 10, 36-42, 333-345).

After the SWOT analysis has been completed, the place marketer should use this as a guide to broadly identify or define specific target audiences on which the place should focus its place marketing efforts (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 32; Wood, 2014: 72). Then, the marketer should research and identify their specific needs and preferences in terms of the place attraction factors, as described in Chapter 4. This is done in order to identify what specific place attraction factors they value most, and how the place can be positioned for competitive differentiation, so that these specific target audience groups know that their specific needs will be met most closely by the particular place (Wood, 2014: 52). The identification or defining of specific target audiences and their particular needs forms the basis of the development of a positioning strategy, which entails the identification of a gap or position in the market that the town could fill. It identifies a set of place attraction factors that the place can offer better than other competing places can, which should also be place attraction factors that are important to the specific target audiences that the place wishes to attract. This indicates what position in the mind of the target audiences the place should adopt (On the Mark, 2005: 4; Wood, 2014: 82).

Target audiences must be made aware of how the place is different in a manner that fits their needs better (differentiation) and why it is better (best in a particular set of important place attraction factors) compared to other competing places. This should be clearly communicated to the target audiences through the place brand and place promotional messages on the website and through other forms of marketing communication (Ries & Trout, 2000; Temporal, 2010: 47; Wood, 2014: 12, 82-83). Positioning is important because it differentiates the town from other competing places, therefore making it "stand out" above the competition (Ries & Trout, 2000; Wood, 2014: 82-83). Every town should create the perception in the mind of the target audiences that it is different in something special or important; thus, it should strive to be the best in that particular differentiator or set of place attraction factors.

The town's positioning should also be compatible with and directed by its main competitive strategy, also called a grand or generic competitive strategy or a Unique Selling

Proposition (USP). Positioning and a main competitive strategy are very closely related and can even be interchangeable concepts. Positioning is a major pillar of branding and should inform the branding strategy. Every town must have at least one widely communicated unique selling proposition but also not too many because then confusion or brand dilution or overextension may occur. The place must also, through broader place marketing efforts, let the target audiences know clearly what the place's unique selling proposition is. The unique selling proposition must appear in the slogan, vision and mission statements and communication to target audiences and reflect in all development strategies and the place's brand image because the target audiences must both be made aware of this difference and actually perceive it as different (Temporal, 2010: 47). The concepts of competitive strategy, positioning and branding are strongly interlinked: branding, which is discussed next, should be informed by positioning and positioning informed by competitive strategy.

Branding communicates or reminds the target market what position the product occupies relative to other competing brands, how it is different and superior (Ries & Trout, 2000; Wood, 2014: 117). In the context of place marketing, a place brand refers to utilising the place's name, slogan, logo, symbols, unique designs or other features, such as a building (e.g., Hillbrow Tower to identify Johannesburg) or a landscape feature (e.g., Table Mountain to identify Cape Town) to identify the place. A place brand refers to a name, word(s) or a term, sign, symbol, design or any combination of these that identifies the particular place and conveys a message about how (or create the impression that) it differs from other competing places, thereby differentiating it from the competition (Dinnie, 2008: 14-15; Kotler & Keller, 2012: 144; Pike, 2015: 6, 175-177; Wood, 2014: 117). The brand emphasises that it is different and better in terms of image and features, and more relevant to meet in the target audience's particular needs (Blythe, 2012: 135).

Branding is especially important for websites or other forms of digital presence because physical cues of quality are absent in the virtual world (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 262; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 85-89). Having a unique, distinctive name rather than a common or generic name is of particular importance to online branding. If the name is not unique, it will be difficult to find it online, which can create confusion, and stronger competitors will overpower any search results (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 87, 266-

267; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 7). In conclusion, a place brand and positioning statement should clearly reflect place attraction factors that are important to the specific target audiences it wishes to attract (Pike, 2015: 168-188); however, this reflection should come out very clear on the website so that each target audience group can easily find information tailored to their specific needs, as discussed next.

2.5.1.3 Destination description tailored to the specific information needs of key place marketing target audiences

Good content is the most important aspect of a website, especially for place marketing and tourism-promoting websites (Morrison, 2013: 377-382). Content should be interesting, appealing, relevant and useful to the target audience (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 404). Topics covered, and depth of coverage, depend on the specific information needs of specific place marketing target audiences (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 54; Madden, 2016). The target marketing audiences, as discussed in depth in Chapter 3, are skilled workers or residents, tourists, businesses and investors.

In conclusion, each of the above target audience groups has very different information needs, and a municipal website should make it easy for these different groups to find the information they are interested in. However, information should not be presented in a static, text-only way; it should be presented in an interesting and interactive manner, which will also make it easier to funnel the right type of information to the right type of target audience group. Interactivity of a website will be discussed next.

2.5.1.4 Interactivity and three-way communication

Interactivity on websites is becoming increasingly important as expectations for instant online gratification, personalisation, online socialisation and integration across all platforms grow. Because there is so much content on the internet and competition for customer attention is so intense, it is essential to engage with customers to grab and, especially, keep their attention. Customer engagement involves regular, deep, interesting and meaningful (to the customer) interaction and involvement, including conversations with customers so that they develop a strong psychological, emotional, intimate and physical bond with the brand. Customer engagement can occur via social media, posting,

photo- and video-sharing sites, blogs, discussion forums, commenting and reacting on others' posts and comments (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 44; Nahai, 2017: 110-118).

Technology enables a two-way dialogue between the customer and organisation as opposed to a one-way monologue from the organisation to the customer, as was the case with traditional advertising. However, further recent advances in technology and business models now enable a trialogue, i.e., a three-way communication between organisation, customer and other customers. With this type of communication, the organisation acts as facilitator of customer-to-customer conversations through online communities, social media, reviews and comments. A high level of interactivity is important for customer engagement and customer relationship building (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 424-425; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 62).

Interactivity and three-way communication consists of the following main components:

Enquiries, complaints and feedback:

It is important to encourage feedback from a municipal or tourism marketing website. It should be very easy for the website visitor to find the feedback form or contact number, and to submit complaints and enquiries. There should be a variety of contact options because different people prefer different communication channels. Contact options should include physical address, a map and clear directions, email address, telephone and fax numbers, social media information, and an online form to fill in (Google Inc., 2015). Obtaining feedback is important to minimise the probability of negative word-of-mouth spreading, losing customers and other negative consequences from disappointment, and to provide customers with an opportunity to vent their frustration with the destination and its businesses before they vent it with other people or just simply take their business elsewhere (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 194, 197). An efficient system for customer complaints handling is crucial and a minimum and basic requirement for a website. It is important to not only make it easy to complain but to also deliberately invite target audiences to complain or provide feedback, such as suggestions and compliments, directly to the appropriate people in decision-making roles (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 195; Wood, 2014: 18, 100).

Online communities and discussions on the website itself:

This can also be referred to as stakeholder-to-stakeholder-to-place communication. Potential or existing customers, tourists or other interested stakeholders should be enabled to interact with each other and the place marketers on the website itself, which may be a particularly powerful marketing tool to attract tourists to a place (Morrison, 2013: 382-384). Creating communities on the website is a further step beyond building relationships, where a website can be a platform where people with the same interest can meet, interact, share ideas and learn from each other, with the host or marketer learning and gaining insights, ideas and information from them. This will enable the marketer to develop new or further improve their products, refine their marketing strategies, and to build relationships with an entire community of customers. This is a powerful tool because becoming part of a community satisfies the need for belonging, which is a basic human need, and enables the host to attract customers and establish strong and long-lasting relationships with them. Creating a community around a product is such an important marketing tool that every business or organisation should seriously consider utilising it (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 65).

Online interactive tools:

Online interactive tools include calculators, decision support, planning, note taking, booking, site selection and other tools. Unlike traditional information sources such as brochures, websites can and should provide information in a much more attractive and interactive, therefore more relevant, manner using relevant interactive tools (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 62-63, 161, 741; Morrison, 2013: 373-375). Websites are often used for planning and research; therefore, one very useful tool is to provide the visitor with the ability to make and organise notes and selected content that is conveniently saved for later reference and amendment, and even sharing it with others. This is especially useful and considered best practice for tourism promotion websites, where visitors can, for example, put together their own travel guides, itinerary, interactive maps and live webcams and highlight activities, accommodation, eating and drinking places, destinations and events they wish to visit, tools for itinerary development based on length of stay, interests, etc. and share it with others (Morrison, 2013: 372-382).

One interactive tool highly relevant for place marketing is surveys for market research purposes to find out more about target audiences and their needs and concerns (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 500; Morrison, 2013: 373-382). Another important tool for place marketing-orientated websites is price comparison functionality because target audiences increasingly use the internet to compare different options, of which price is an important consideration. If prices are not provided in an easy-to-compare format, places may be disregarded for further consideration (Madden, 2016).

e-Commerce and e-government capabilities:

This includes, e.g., paying, buying, booking, renting, transacting or receiving services online and is a common and important goal for place marketing-orientated websites. Of particular importance to tourism marketing websites is the capability to make bookings, e.g., for travel or accommodation arrangements, appointments, events, etc. (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 34, 65; Google Inc., 2015; Morrison, 2013: 373-375). Place marketing target audiences increasingly demand convenience by obtaining and paying for services online; therefore, municipal and local tourism promotion websites should incorporate e-government and e-commerce functionality. A website should allow for online payment because the ability to make an immediate and convenient payment directly after making a purchase decision on the same website where the purchasing decision was made is required at this crucial step in the buying process, otherwise the customer may be lost. It also facilitates the development of good customer relationships over the long term with target audiences (Cao & Yang, 2016: 283-284; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 83).

To increase efficiency and transparency and thereby contribute to a positive business and investment climate, distribution of legislation, proposed amendments to legislation, legal notices, tenders available and awarded, and other government and policy decisions should be on an easily accessible e-government platform so that it is accessible online. It should also be published in English, amongst other languages. Opportunities for public review, performance assessment and accountability should also be built into the e-government system (OSCE, 2006: 29). Government websites, including that of local governments, should enable small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) to utilise e-government services (OSCE, 2006: 121).

For tourism destination marketing, typical e-commerce activities that enhance the website's effectiveness include booking and paying for travel tickets, accommodation, attractions, events and activities; renting a car; applying for travel documentation; and buying other tourism products (Cao & Yang, 2016: 284). The payment experience should be simple and fast (Google Inc., 2015). Some very important ways to gain the trust of site visitors to pay online is by separating ordering and payment and by letting a credible third party handle payment, such as a bank or a specialist online payment firm (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 64). Making it very clear how much the customer will pay in total (without any hidden costs), for what and why, is also essential to build trust and credibility (Nahai, 2017: 29-30). The website should allow for both standard credit card payments as well as an option to order by phone or mail (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 83; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 295-301).

Customer relationship management capabilities and customisation to individual user level:

Customer relationship management (CRM) concerns adopting measures to sustain a business relationship with existing clients and maximising sales to them over the long term. Digital or electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) is the practice of using digital technologies such as database records of customers' circumstances, activities and interests; one-to-one marketing or personalised messages; online customer service; email; or social media marketing to sustain a business relationship with existing clients and maximise sales to them and encourage their continued usage of the online or digital services or platform over the long term (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 300, 302; Nahai, 2017: 172-173). This is usually in the form of a user-account section on the website, where a specific user can log in, which may contain a variety of CRM and other services and interactive tools (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 60).

As in the case of the offline world, getting new digital customers requires much investment. It is important therefore to develop long-lasting relationships with existing online customers, and to retain and further expand business with them (Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 445). To retain online customers, one must provide a convenient and pleasant user experience, engage them, offer good value and provide good customer service (Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 446). Good customer service and experience is important

because it is often an important part of the place brand experience, it raises the place brand image and therefore builds place brand equity, and it can increase loyalty and retention because it is an opportunity to develop an emotional connection with the target audiences (Temporal, 2010: 28, 38; Wood, 2014: 99).

A municipal or local tourism promotion website should have the ability to provide customer service and support. Online or digital customer service includes the use of digital tools to facilitate customer services; i.e., ensuring that customers have a pleasant experience so that they will become loyal customers over the long term. Examples of such support include call-back and online technical or live-chat support and self-help services such as instructions; user manuals; repair guides; direct contact information of the correct person to talk to; problem-solving tools; complaints, ideas or general feedback submission; and a frequently-asked-questions section (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 34, 66; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 302, 631; Google Inc., 2015; Nahai, 2017: 114-118, 172-173). Web or digital self-service is the practice of using technology to enable customers to find solutions themselves rather than relying on the help of staff, such as frequently-asked-questions sections, social media collaborative support, user-friendly error detection and handling, etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 304-307).

Personalisation, customisation or one-to-one marketing is the ability to treat visitors as individuals and address their individual needs as opposed to treating them as just another generic visitor, and is considered a very important best practice for place marketing websites (Morrison, 2013: 377-382). It entails the practice of customising marketing and customer service communications such as email and push notifications, web pages and other forms of content and offerings ideally for a particular individual based on information known about the particular individual (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 300, 322; Nahai, 2017: 115, 171).

Apart from custom marketing messages and individualised customer service, the individual can also be presented with highly targeted recommendations on other products or services the individual is most likely to be interested in, and with more personally relevant and accurate search results. Propensity modelling is the practice of making product or service recommendations based on data gathered about the particular

individual user, including profile data, search and browsing behaviour, interests, previous purchases, etc., which is desirable because it make searches easier and showcasing or further recommendation of products more relevant to the user, and can lead to increased sales (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 340; Nahai, 2017: 39-40, 171).

Custom findability is the practice of incorporating findability measures, i.e., using search terms, sorting or featuring of most relevant items, and bundling of related or complimentary items to be relevant to a particular user as opposed to the average user (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 402; Nahai, 2017: 150-152). However, because it is expensive to tailor for one customer only, organisations usually tailor marketing messages and offerings to a group of customers or a narrowly defined market segment with very similar needs and interests, using technology to benefit from economies of scale, known as mass customisation (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 300, 322; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 770).

There are several methods to gather information about a particular user's interests and needs in order to customise marketing communication to them as individuals, e.g. to explicitly ask them to check boxes that represent different topics they are interested in, by monitoring what content they view, etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 322-323; Nahai, 2017: 171).

As mentioned above, the ease of use of a municipal or local tourism promotion website and the ability to find relevant information quickly is an integral part of providing a good customer experience. This falls under the topic of information design, which is discussed next.

2.5.1.5   Information design

Information design or architecture is the organisation and presentation of information in such a manner that it is easy and quick for users to find, process, understand and apply the information and answers that they were looking for on a website (Nahai, 2017: 72-75). There are various factors that are important determinants of good website information design. The first is findability, which is the assessment of how quick and easy it is for a user to find what they are looking for. A high degree of findability is important because it

improves the user experience and conversion rates (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 402; Nahai, 2017: 73-74).

Furthermore, the most important information and call to action should be provided in the top of the page so that, if the reader does not scroll down or read much further, the most important content has already been seen. The more important the information, the nearer it should occur to the very top. Any information provided "below the fold", i.e., below the screen to which a user must scroll down to see, is much less likely to be seen. Therefore, the initially visible part of the screen before a user starts scrolling down should always provide some key points and preferably the call to action as well, and this prime space should never just be filled with photos or used unproductively (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115; Keegan, 2016; Madden, 2016).

Quick links or a site map could facilitate easy navigation though the site (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 60; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 221). A site map is a tree structure almost like a "table of contents" that lists every web page on a website, which should clearly outline the content of the site (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 109).

More headings and sub-headings with short paragraphs can be used rather than long blocks of text (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115; Google Inc., 2015). Headings must be short and highly descriptive to guide the visitor as to what sections should be read and what can be skipped, depending on their individual interests (Google Inc., 2015). Headings and their orders should indicate the importance of different concepts, while long sections of text that do not indicate different concepts and its importance should be avoided, a common problem with many websites (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 60).

Wording in general should be short, concise, to the point in short paragraphs and especially in bulleted lists (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115; Google Inc., 2015). Important words and phrases that need to be emphasised should be in bold print (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115). The desired information should be provided with the right level of detail as desired by the target audience. Information overload should also be avoided, a common problem with many websites (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 55, 57, 60).

A website should be very easy to navigate and easy and quick to find desired information or answers (Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 446). The menu structure, links and graphical user interface, including wording, buttons, font, icons, etc. should be easily understandable and designed to guide the visitor to navigate easily, quickly and intuitively to the desired information (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 57; Morrison, 2013: 377-382). Poor navigation is a common problem with many websites (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 60).

Duplication of information on different pages should be avoided. Each page should focus on one particular topic or purpose, and information divided between pages should be in a logical and intuitive manner (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 55). Content should be grouped according to themes or topics and subtopics that belong together, according to how the target customer groups organise concepts in their mind and how they think through concepts to get to a certain piece of content or solution (Ansari, 2016).

In conclusion, information should be logically grouped and presented in a manner that is easy to understand. Apart from the design and organisation of text-based information, pictures and rich media can also facilitate ease of finding and understanding information, as discussed in the following section.

2.5.1.6 Pictures and rich media

Digital place marketing should make generous use of pictures, video, audio and other forms of rich media because it makes marketing messages more persuasive and can convey information very efficiently and fast. Pictures that are attractive, grab attention or interest and convey information about the content can be a very effective marketing tool (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 394-403; Madden, 2016). Rich media combine visuals, animation and sound, a common form being videos (Belch & Belch, 2015: 505). Video has been well received and widely adopted by the industry, is very effective, is exploding in growth and has huge potential for further development; therefore, organisations should strongly consider this marketing medium (Belch & Belch, 2015: 505; Keegan, 2016).

Podcasts are audio recordings or short video clips that are made available on websites or distributed via RSS feeds. It is particularly useful to distribute information related to events at just the right time for maximum impact, and is very suitable for destination marketing

purposes to attract tourists to a place. A major advantage of podcasts is that it can be produced at low cost, easily and quickly. In conclusion, any website with a place marketing goal should make ample use of pictures and rich media (Morrison, 2013: 393). However, as discussed in the next section, content should be recent, fresh and up to date, whether it is in the form of text, pictures or rich media.

2.5.1.7   Freshness of content and quality of news or articles

It is important to keep website content relevant, recent, fresh, and to regularly update the website to reflect any situational or promotional changes (Google Inc., 2015; Nahai, 2017: 83). Content should never be outdated or contain information that is not relevant anymore, which is especially important for tourism promotion sites where travel advice, events, etc. may quickly become outdated (Morrison, 2013: 377-382).

News and articles on a municipal or local tourism promotion website can be a very powerful place marketing tool because it provides many opportunities to distribute persuasive messages to the target audiences, and it provides opportunities to drive additional traffic directly to the website in case readers share interesting articles with their connections on social media. Regularly updated news and articles are a common indicator of content freshness. It is an opportunity to illustrate that not only the town's online presence but also the town itself is alive, vibrant and well maintained, an important place attraction factor, as discussed in Chapter 4. To be effective, the content should be of interest to target audiences, and new articles should be added on a regular basis (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 54; Morrison, 2013: 377-382). Apart from the requirement that website content should be relevant and fresh, it should also be persuasive so that it can attract the attention of place marketing target audiences and convince them of the advantages that the place has to offer, which will be discussed next.

2.5.1.8   Persuasiveness of web copy and call to action

For a municipal, local tourism or community website to have any place marketing value, it needs to be persuasive; in other words, it must convince website visitors that the place

is worth visiting, investing or opening a business in, or to relocate to (Nahai, 2017: 4). The following principles could be considered to make web copy or content persuasive:

- Culture, subculture and social class compatibility: the message should be consistent or at least compatible with the values, norms, customs, lifestyles, interests, behaviours and meanings of cultures, subcultures and social classes of the target market segments (Belch & Belch, 2015: 132-133; Nahai, 2017: 11-15).

- Reference group compatibility: reference groups are the groupings of people with whom a person wants to belong to or be associated with (i.e., aspirational group), does not want to belong to or be associated with (i.e., dissociative group) or actually belongs to or associates with (i.e., associative group) (Belch & Belch, 2015: 134). To be effective, the marketing message needs to be compatible with the associative and especially aspirational groups, while it should not associate with the dissociative group.

- According to the Cognitive Response Approach, a marketing message will be more effective when: the message contains arguments that resonate with the target audience's perceptions, as opposed to counter arguments or arguments that do not; the target audience has a favourable attitude towards the source, as opposed to having negative attitudes towards the source of the message; and the target audience likes or enjoys the advertisement, or at least feels neutral about it, as opposed to disliked adverts (Belch & Belch, 2015: 169-171).

- Per the Elaborative Likelihood Model, the persuasiveness of a message depends strongly on how it is processed, i.e., how much the potential customer thinks about and evaluates the message content and arguments (Belch & Belch, 2015: 1172-1173).

    o The message and arguments may be considered in depth, i.e., through the central route to persuasion, which occurs for high-involvement products when the purchase is very important to the person and if the person has the knowledge or mental ability to process relevant information (Belch & Belch, 2015: 172-173). In this case, a marketing message should contain sufficient information and strong arguments that are difficult to refute, while factors

described below under the peripheral route to persuasion are not important (Belch & Belch, 2015: 174-175).

  o The message will not be processed in depth if the person is not motivated to think carefully about the purchase, e.g., for low-involvement products, or in case the person lacks knowledge or capability to make an informed choice (Belch & Belch, 2015: 174-175). In this case, the person relies on cues that must be well presented in the message, such as likability, authority, being an expert and attractiveness of the presenter, celebrity endorsement, and the presentation of the message (e.g., music, graphics and other creative techniques, and repetition of the message) (Belch & Belch, 2015: 175).

- Celebrity endorsement can be highly effective for low-involvement products and when the target audience lacks the ability to evaluate relevant product or marketing message information (Belch & Belch, 2015: 175).

- Source credibility: the message source should be viewed as credible, which is the degree to which the source is perceived to be trustworthy; in possession of relevant knowledge, skills and experience; and objective as opposed to biased (Belch & Belch, 2015: 185; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 390; Nahai, 2017: 61-63).

- Source similarity: the message source or spokesperson should be quite like the target audience, i.e., from the same culture, subculture, socio-economic group, occupation, industry or other aspect of market segmentation (Belch & Belch, 2015: 189; Nahai, 2017: 62).

- Source familiarity: the source or spokesperson should preferably be known to the target audience (Belch & Belch, 2015: 189).

- Source likability: the source or spokesperson should be likeable, i.e., liked by the target audience based on his/her physical appearance, personality, behaviour and other personal traits (Belch & Belch, 2015: 189).

Persuasive content must be accompanied with a request to the target audience to act upon the persuasive message. Every website, in fact, every page on a persuasive website, should include a clear call to action; i.e. urge the visitor to do what you would like them to do, e.g. to call, visit, make a booking or appointment, sign up for membership or a newsletter, donate or buy, all in very easy and clear steps to follow (Google Inc., 2015;

Madden, 2016; Nahai, 2017: 84). A clear call to action is important to convert distantly interested website browsers into high-priority place marketing leads or actual visitors, investors or new residents, otherwise they may just move on and eventually forget about the content (Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 446). The call to action, whether in the form of pure text, a button, text box or another type of user-input element, should attract strong visual attention and should be visually pleasing. In addition, persuasiveness of a website as well as information design, discussed earlier, should also be accompanied by a visually attractive and efficient design to be most effective, as discussed next.

2.5.1.9 Aesthetics of design

Visual design, i.e., the aesthetic aspects of website design, should combine information design and interaction design principles to create an attractive user interface (Ansari, 2016). Visual design of a place marketing website should adhere to several principles. Graphics, colour, icons and pictures should be used to guide the visitor through the information and interaction, help convey information and highlight key points, and create the desired mood (Ansari, 2016). Reliance on uncommon fonts should be avoided (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 58) as well as excessive use of animation because it may slow down downloading or be disruptive (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 59), or convey a poor image. In addition, organisation/place name and logo should be included and form part of the overall theme (Google Inc., 2015), and design and all elements of the website, even error messages, should be aligned with the desired brand image (Ansari, 2016).

The visual design of a place marketing website should also be attractive, professional looking (as opposed to an amateurish look and feel), and consistent throughout the website (Google Inc., 2015). Overall, it should be appealing to the target audience (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115). Attractiveness is particularly important for a tourism promotion website (Morrison, 2013: 372-373). Photos of the place, place attraction factors, key persons and facilities are important to grab attention and to describe the place in a visual manner. It also helps to establish credibility when actual photos are used rather than generic or stock photos. These photos should be of high quality (Google Inc., 2015). Furthermore, colour should be used amply and efficiently because visual appeal is important for internet users and contributes significantly to functionality, attraction of

attention, message conveyance, navigation through information, emotional appeal and brand building. Different colours used should not clash, and text, icons and other elements should be clearly readable against the background. Colours that are "too busy" or create a too dark background should be avoided – this may reduce readability (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 58; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 632).

From the above, it is clear that a municipal and local tourism promotion website should be visually stimulating, colourful, vibrant, stylish and attractive in order to be persuasive. However, in addition to visual attractiveness, being error free is another important determinant of the persuasiveness and effectiveness of a website because errors may damage the credibility of the marketing messages and brand image that the website wishes to convey, as discussed in the following section.

2.5.1.10 Error free (technical, factual, language, browser compatibility)

To make a good impression amongst target audiences, website pages and sections should load correctly. There should be no broken links or dead ends, no missing information or pages indefinitely "under construction". There should also be no technical or coding errors. Only technology that is viewable on all browsers, including older browser versions, should be used, and should not require plugins that some viewers may not have. Furthermore, "Flash" technology which is outdated and often causes download errors yet is still commonly used in websites should be minimised or avoided. Website content should be factually correct and written using correct spelling and grammar and proper language in the appropriate language(s), as discussed in the next section (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 58, 64, 115; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 201).

2.5.1.11 Languages of target audiences

Place marketing websites should be available in the home language of all major target audiences, or at least in a language they are highly proficient in, including large resident groups and major investor and tourist target groups who might be from different countries (Ansari, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 86-88; Morrison, 2013: 372-374). Localisation is the translation or cultural adaption of content, products and services, units, currency, etc. to meet the language, cultural and other needs and circumstances of customers in or

originating from a particular place, and is very important to attract tourists (Cantoni et al., 2016: 4.2-4.3; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 76-78). Website content developers should use Hofstede's theory of cultural differences as an important framework for understanding the culture of target audiences (Cantoni et al., 2016: 4.2).

2.5.1.12 Accessibility to visually impaired people

To ensure that the website is accessible to all or as many as possible target audience members, it is important to accommodate visually impaired users as well as users that are not necessarily blind or poor-sighted but who do not have perfect vision. These visitors can be accommodated by avoiding very small font sizes, avoiding font colours that are not easily distinguishable against the background colour, and by using a clear and descriptive writing style that will enable blind people that listen to screen readers to clearly understand the content as it is automatically read from the screen. Making the website accessible to visually impaired people also covers the requirement that a website should be easy to read and understand in general (Ansari, 2016; Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 115; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 221-222). Websites should not only be viewable by people with poor vision but also by general users who use small screens like that of a mobile phone to access the website, as discussed in the following section.

2.5.1.13 Mobile friendliness or responsiveness of website

Because mobile devices are becoming increasingly important, it is essential to tailor a website and other forms of online presence to be easy to read and navigate on small screens and on a variety of devices and browsers (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 114; Google Inc., 2015). In fact, it is recommended that mobile devices, especially cell phones, should become a major focus for place marketing efforts, especially to attract tourists (Morrison, 2013: 391). Tablets have the advantage of being much more convenient to carry around compared to a personal computer or laptop, although it is not as easy to carry as a mobile phone (Morrison, 2013: 391). It is, however, easier to view content on the larger screens of tablets compared to the small screens of phones (Morrison, 2013: 391). For these reasons, tablets have become very popular amongst tourists, who often take them with them on their trips and use them extensively to gain relevant information. Therefore, it is

essential that destinations provide information, websites and apps in a format suitable for both tablets and cell phones (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 5; Morrison, 2013: 391).

When evaluating a website for mobile-phone friendliness, several criteria should be considered. First, because small screens can only accommodate a limited quantity of information in a reader-friendly manner, it is important to place visual focus on the most important information (Google Inc., 2015). However, content that appears on the normal (large-screen) website should not be deleted or permanently hidden on smaller screens since many users still want to be able to access the full website content from their small screen should they wish to do so (Van Lent, 2016). Second, mobile-device users strongly prefer to scroll vertically/downward as they scan through the content, as opposed to scrolling horizontally (to the right). Therefore, horizontal scrolling should be avoided by rather stacking content on top of each other in a column as wide as the mobile device's screen. In fact, horizontal screening on a small screen is a major indicator of poor, non-responsive design (Van Lent, 2016). Third, users must be allowed to zoom in to the screen because content is often displayed too small to be legible on a mobile screen; therefore, zooming by the reverse-pinch touch screen gesture should be enabled (Van Lent, 2016).

In conclusion, website users expect to access website content and use it conveniently from anywhere using any device, including their mobile phones. They also expect to find all the information they need in one place, or at least to find useful links to the information they need should the website not host all the information they are looking for, which will be discussed next.

2.5.1.14 Information gateway or directory functionality in the website

Even very small organisations such as a local municipality or a local tourism promotion organisation can turn their website into an information gateway or portal by providing links to or a mini directory of other related or relevant websites and information sources (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 54, 60, 116; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 179, 720). This provides crucial digital marketing and other advantages to the website owner. It increases the site's usefulness to visitors; improves search engine rankings (search engines list websites with portal functionality higher up in search results); drives significantly more traffic to the website, thereby increasing online exposure significantly and can directly generate

revenue in the form of advertising- or commission-based sales; and it enables the website to act as an intermediary or marketplace, which may provide marketing advantages to several stakeholders, including the listed organisations, which may be local businesses seeking customers or investment (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 54, 60, 116; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 24, 64-65, 94-96). However, linking to irrelevant, random or off-the-topic content should be avoided, a common problem with many websites (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 60). In addition to linking to other relevant information sources, the website should also link to and from the social media pages and blog of the municipality or local tourism promotion organisation, as discussed in the following section.

2.5.1.15 Integration with social media, blogs and other marketing initiatives, and ability to share website content

Websites enable visitors to link to, share via or otherwise interact with social media platforms in the form of widgets, etc. It is very important to take advantage of opportunities to integrate the organisation's social media profiles and other social media functionalities with the website, especially to enable users to share website content with their connections on social media, and to use social media to drive visitors to the website. Common examples include municipalities to distribute community news or notices, or local tourism marketing organisations to promote local events, attractions, holiday packages or to distribute other promotional messages to potential visitors. Another reason why it is important for a municipal or local tourism promotion organisation's website to be well integrated with other digital marketing platforms is so that a coherent, reinforced message that builds towards the place brand can be formed (Morrison, 2013: 382-384; Scarborough & Cornwall, 2015: 445). Integration with blogs is also important: if the municipality or tourism marketing organisation has a blog, which is the next topic of discussion, a direct link to the blog should be provided on all social media accounts as well as on the website (Smith, 2016: 57).

2.5.2   Blogs

Closely related to a website and often confused with websites is a blog. A blog is a platform on which the place marketer can regularly write about a particular topic or topics that are

of interest to target audiences. The content of blogs should be informative and engaging and may contain significant soft selling, explaining why the reader should visit, invest in or move to the place, but only very limited hard selling (Smith, 2016: 59). A blog may often look like a website or can often be fully embedded into an important part of a website. In fact, it is regarded as best practice to have a blog that is an embedded part of the website. Nevertheless, the look and feel, or theme, of the blog should be the same or very similar to the place's website (Google Inc., 2015; Smith, 2016: 56-58).

Ideally, a blog on the website should be the main channel of regular communication with target audiences, while social media act as support platforms to amplify or extend reach further; in other words, the blog on the website should host the full version of regularly distributed content and updates, while social media platforms host a relevantly scaled down or tailored version of the content (Heinze et al., 2015: 3.4). This is essential because target audience members use different social media platforms and it is unlikely that a single social media platform that all the target audience members use can be used, while a much broader target audience population can indeed be reached through the website and blog (Heinze et al., 2015: 3.4). The website and social media can be used to share and further distribute information from the blog (Morrison, 2013: 387-388).

Blogs are highly effective as a marketing tool and may be the most important inbound marketing tool available. In fact, it is essential for just about every organisation, including place marketing organisations such as municipalities or local tourism marketing organisations, to have a blog. Blogs provide the place marketer with the opportunity to showcase relevant place attraction factors, promote the place and direct traffic to the website (Google Inc., 2015; Smith, 2016: 56-58). Blogging can be a very efficient form of word-of-mouth, online and eventually offline. Information from blogs is generally regarded by place marketing target audiences as more credible compared to advertising by the advertiser, but is not as credible as word-of-mouth or other forms of user-generated content (Morrison, 2013: 387-388).

Blogs are an important way to supply information to potential and existing customers, especially for tourists since a large percentage of tourists use blogs to consider destinations and plan trips (Morrison, 2013: 387-388). Although blogging can be a

powerful tool to attract all types of place marketing target audiences, it is especially effective to attract tourists. Blogging makes a significant impact on and is an effective tool for tourism-related place marketing (Morrison, 2013: 386). Although blogging does not attract as much interest amongst tourism promotion organisations as social media does, it actually attracts more and growing numbers of tourism-related content writers and readers than social media (Morrison, 2013: 386).

Three broad categories of tourism bloggers exist which have an impact on or is used as a place marketing tool (Morrison, 2013: 386). The first category is ordinary customers or tourists blogging about their travels or product experiences (Morrison, 2013: 386). There are many blogging sites that focus on particular industries, where ordinary people can blog about their experiences related to the particular topic; e.g., tourists can blog about their experiences on Travelblog.org, TravelPod.com, Travellerspoint.com, etc. (Morrison, 2013: 388). The second category is professional or semi-professional bloggers making a living from blogging about a particular industry, product category or topic such as travel and destinations (Morrison, 2013: 386). The last category is businesses or organisations wishing to promote their product through their own blogs (e.g., tourism promotion organisations using blogs as a marketing tool and to make available information and stories about the place), which often replaces traditional press or news releases (Morrison, 2013: 386, 388).

The discussion so far considered blogs maintained by the place marketer, which may be a municipality or a local tourism marketing organisation. However, blogs of significant place marketing value may also be maintained by place marketing target audience members themselves, for example, visitors to a place who write blogs about their experiences within the particular place. Blogging by customers or other stakeholders is an excellent source of user-generated content for a destination, and is a very effective place marketing tool. A major advantage of such user-generated content, apart from being perceived as more objective (and therefore credible) than content generated by the place marketer, is that it can be produced in large volumes at no effort or cost to the place marketer (Morrison, 2013: 387-388).

Whilst regular content releases such as interesting articles about a place may be released in the form of a blog, which is stored on the website or on the internet, thus openly available to anyone exploring the internet, it may also be released in the form of e-mail newsletters. In this case, it is not freely available on the internet but does, however, enable more control over targeting of specific place marketing target audiences compared to blogs, as described in the next section.

2.5.3   Electronic or email newsletters

A newsletter or marketing email is a promotional message sent by the place marketer to a potential customer or target audience member in the form of a conventional email or an electronic newsletter sent via email (Heinze et al., 2015: 2.3). Newsletters are very important marketing tools and should be strongly considered by most types of businesses, organisations and places (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 64, 181; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 408-409). Email is the most common and in many circumstances the most efficient form of digital marketing (Heinze et al., 2015: 2.3; Ryan, 2014: 203). Because target audience members are unlikely to read pure marketing-orientated email, and email marketing, if unsolicited, is considered spam, the best results are obtained if emails contain useful content that customers would be interested to read, while the marketing message is subtler; it should therefore be managed as content marketing (Schneider, 2015: 200). Promotional offers distributed via email are also a very effective marketing method, especially to attract tourists to a destination (Morrison, 2013: 377-382).

Website visitors should be enabled and actively encouraged to sign up for newsletters, through which they are updated on new content, events and promotions, and other forms of marketing communications (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 64). In fact, opportunities to let potential or existing customers sign up for newsletter emails should be actively and creatively sought at any possible contact point (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 184). However, for South African legal, ethical and customer-relationship purposes, it is important to gain permission from people to send them emails and to make opting out easy and with immediate effect (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 186). Contact information sourced when opting in should be kept to a minimum, and all information does not have to be gathered at once,

because a lengthy sign-up process will cause many people to abandon the process (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 186-187).

Whilst websites, blogs and electronic newsletters, discussed up to now, entail the distribution of place marketing messages mainly in one direction, from the place marketer to the target audience, with little opportunity for interaction, social media present many more opportunities for organisations or places to interact directly with target audiences and to facilitate a two-way communication with them, or for target audience members to facilitate conversations between themselves. Social media is the next topic of discussion.

2.5.4 *Social media*

Social media can be defined as digital platforms where people, often with common interests or sometimes real-life relations, connect or meet and form social networks, communicate, and create and share content, activities, experiences or thoughts with each other, driven by the need to experience a sense of community and belonging (Belch & Belch, 2015: 507; Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 226-227). Social media marketing is defined as "using social media to achieve marketing goals" in various aspects of the marketing mix and activities, especially promotion and public relations, but also product development, pricing, distribution and others (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 231). There are two forms of social media marketing (Keegan, 2016). The first is where an organisation has a free profile(s) and actively engages with customers on social media, as discussed in this section. These are usually content orientated (Keegan, 2016). The second is where the organisation places paid advertisements on social media (Keegan, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 412), as discussed in section 2.5.8.

Social media marketing is widely used by destination marketing organisations throughout the world, and is effective in attracting tourists to a place (Morrison, 2013: 384-385). Because many marketable aspects of a place, including tourism experiences and several types of place attraction factors, are intangible and cannot be observed beforehand, target audiences rely on others' opinions expressed in social media to make destination choices (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2). Places most successful in attracting tourists make extensive use of social media (Morrison, 2013: 382-384). These places attain great place marketing

success by encouraging people to generate interesting or fun text or photo or video content themselves, which is then shared with others; or, a destination marketing organisation may select some of this user-generated content for its own promotional messages (Morrison, 2013: 382-384).

Social media marketing has various advantages. Marketing on social media is affordable even to the smallest of organisations (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 236). Social media is where the attention of target audiences is; it is a major medium that many people use for many hours per day (Keegan, 2016). In addition, it is highly engaging and can connect with target audiences at a personal level; therefore, it is possible to develop a deep understanding of specific segments of target audiences and their very specific needs (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 236; Heinze et al., 2015: 3.2). It allows for a fast, almost instant response rate (Heinze et al., 2015: 3.2). Overall, social media is a very effective marketing tool for place marketing (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 236; Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2; Keegan, 2016) and, in case a social media initiative goes viral, it can rapidly translate into massive brand building (Keegan, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 411).

Using social media for place marketing, however, also comes with some disadvantages. Social media content or activities are more short term compared to search engines and some other digital and traditional marketing channels (Heinze et al., 2015: 3.2). The place marketer may have very little control over the conversations taking place on social media, and can often only try to initialise conversation about the place and respond to conversations of others (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 225; Wood, 2014: 171). Furthermore, social media activities require continuous effort and commitment because the marketer cannot drop out once engagement has been initiated, because dropping out may cause serious reputation damage (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 236). Social media requires a new mind-set and skills compared to traditional marketing, including insight into social media, innovation and openness (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 236). Lastly, users may spread negative messages on these networks. Marketers should respond as quickly as possible and in a friendly manner to negative comments or complaints (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 195). (The principles regarding dealing with negative comments, as discussed in section 2.5.5, also apply to social media.)

Note that, ideally, the organisation's blog, preferably as part of their website, needs to be the main platform of communication with potential customers, while social media is for support or to further extend reach. For this reason, the place marketer cannot have only a social media platform, because only registered users for most platforms, including Facebook, can reach the organisation's profile; therefore, unregistered users of a particular social media platform cannot reach the profile, while a website or blog can be reached by anyone (Heinze et al., 2015: 3.4). Social media activities should be coordinated with other marketing activities and messages on the different social media platforms and other digital and traditional marketing platforms, and it should reinforce rather than be inconsistent with the place's positioning and desired brand image (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 235).

Social media can be used for various place marketing purposes or objectives. It can be used as a major source of information about a place and its attraction factors, especially in the tourism industry because most tourists do use social media to gain information for destination selection and trip planning, and they use social media as an information source more than any other platform (Morrison, 2013: 387-388). It can be used for driving traffic or more visitors to the website and blog (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509; Morrison, 2013: 387-388), and to share information from the website, blog and blogposts and other forms of content to a wider audience (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 58, 62, 330; Morrison, 2013: 388).

Furthermore, social media can be used for building trust since target audiences tend to trust their social connections, who talk favourably about the place, more than deliberate place marketing messages (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 238). It can also be used for brand building and creation of a favourable place brand image due to increased exposure (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509; Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 238), maintaining relationships with target audiences (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 238-239), and for online or digital reputation management, where negative rumours about the place is monitored and appropriately responded to to minimise reputational damage (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 241; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 243).

Although there are hundreds of influential social media platforms, it is dominated by just a few, as discussed in the following sections, which provide an overview of the largest

social media platforms and general guidelines regarding the selection of the most appropriate platforms to use for place marketing in a South African context. The first platform to be discussed is Facebook, the most popular social media platform in South Africa and most other parts of the world (Belch & Belch, 2015: 507).

2.5.4.1 Facebook

Social networking platforms enable people to meet, connect and form networks with each other, of which Facebook is the most popular in South Africa for maintaining less formal social connections (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 229). Facebook is ideal to target the general public (Smith, 2016: 61) and is essential to have for most organisations (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509). Facebook is a social networking platform where users have a personal profile or page that can "befriend" other users for online social interaction. Users can also "like" businesses or organisations with Facebook profiles, after which the user will then "follow" the business, instantly receiving posts that are sent out by the business (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 243). Facebook facilitates easy formation and organisation of communities, allowing for spontaneous interaction through a very simple and user-friendly interface, which is a major contributor to its enormous success (Keegan, 2016).

In order to use Facebook as an effective place marketing tool, a few basic principles must be adhered to. First, it is important that the place marketing organisation is correctly classified as a place or organisation rather than a natural person or another inappropriate entity so that it will be easily found if people search for it and what it has to offer (Smith, 2016: 61). An appropriate logo or an attention-grabbing image relevant to the place should be used as the cover picture (Smith, 2016: 61-63). This logo or picture is important because it will show on every post and comment (Smith, 2016: 62). Second, the "About" section on the profile is very important because it appears on the highly visible main page, which creates the important first impression; therefore, it needs to be short (2 – 3 sentences) and contain a persuasive message that differentiates the place from other competing places, and should have a link to the place's website (Smith, 2016: 62). The place marketer should encourage target audiences to "like" the Facebook page and to share the marketing messages and content with friends in their network (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509; Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 243; Smith, 2016: 62).

The third basic principle that should be adhered to when using Facebook as an effective place marketing tool is that the place marketing organisation should make full use of opportunities to post information, photos or videos showcasing place attraction factors, promotions, news, events, etc. (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509). Only content that place marketing target audiences will be truly interested in should be posted using an interesting mix of content formats, including images, videos, music, polls and other (Smith, 2016: 63). This content should not be boring or repetitive (Smith, 2016: 61). It is important to engage with the network, encourage discussions, and react to questions (Smith, 2016: 60, 64). Lastly, Facebook is particularly appropriate to share new information, events and launches, and to facilitate conversations with the target audience; therefore, full use should be made of opportunities to do so (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 243-244).

Overall, Facebook is a highly effective marketing medium (Smith, 2016: 61). A major advantage is its very large reach and huge population (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 243; Keegan, 2016). It also has an extensive database with rich information of individual users, which makes highly targeted marketing possible (Keegan, 2016). In addition, Facebook is very well utilised by tourism marketing organisations and can be a very effective tool to attract tourists to a place (Morrison, 2013: 384-385). Another social media platform which is not nearly as "social" as Facebook but which is also highly effective for place marketing purposes is YouTube, which is the next topic of discussion.

2.5.4.2   *YouTube*

Video-sharing and -hosting platforms enable users to share and access content in the form of video, of which the most commonly known is YouTube (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 229). Video-sharing sites, and YouTube in particular, are well utilised by tourism organisations and can be a very effective tool to attract tourists to a place (Morrison, 2013: 384-385). YouTube is not only a video-hosting platform; it is a very powerful search engine as well. In fact, it is the second largest search engine after Google, used for searching for and sharing videos providing information, education, entertainment, etc. (Heinze et al., 2015: 5.1, 5.2). People enjoy watching videos, and it is becoming the preferred way to search for information and entertainment (Smith, 2016: 74). It is a very powerful and cost-effective marketing tool that should be strongly considered (Heinze et al., 2015: 5.1, 5.2).

In fact, presence on a major video hosting platform such as YouTube is considered a must for most or almost all organisations (Smith, 2016: 74). YouTube is very well utilised by tourism marketing organisations and can be a very effective tool to attract tourists to a place (Morrison, 2013: 384-385). Furthermore, it can attract large numbers of visitors to the website and blog (Heinze et al., 2015: 5.1, 5.2).

2.5.4.3 *Twitter*

Micro-blogging platforms, of which Twitter is the most popular, enable a person or organisation to create short messages and broadcast it to all other users who choose to "follow" them (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 229; Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2). Twitter is a micro-blogging platform where users broadcast short messages (often their opinions) or micro-blogs, and read and possibly share or re-tweet messages of other users that they decided to follow (Keegan, 2016). The main aim of places on Twitter is to get target audience members to "follow" the place because people are likely to buy and recommend those brands that they follow (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509).

The most important determinants for marketing success on Twitter are:

- The account name should resemble the organisation or place name as closely as possible (Smith, 2016: 65).
- The account picture and account description should be clear, attention grabbing and reflect the organisation's brand or key place attraction factors (Smith, 2016: 65-66).
- There should be a clear call to action, e.g., to visit the organisation's physical location or website, sign up for a newsletter, follow on another social media platform, etc. (Smith, 2016: 66).
- Quality of content: tweets should be interesting and relevant, and pictures should be used often (Heinze et al., 2015: 5.3; Smith, 2016: 66).

Twitter is the best channel through which to communicate directly with customers (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509). It is ideal for communicating short messages and the best social media platform to establish connections with potential and existing customers (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509). Twitter is well utilised by tourism marketing organisations and can be

an effective tool to attract tourists to a place (Morrison, 2013: 384-385). Twitter is also used with great success in a place marketing context; e.g., it is utilised as an excellent tool to build relationships with and gain feedback from residents and businesses (Belch & Belch, 2015: 512). Twitter is excellent to respond to customer complaints and enquiries, to monitor the market or industry, and to retweet important or valuable information (Belch & Belch, 2015: 512).

In conclusion, the main advantages of using Twitter for place marketing include its ability to reach a large number of people fast, target specific audiences, and build networks. Additionally, it is a powerful marketing tool; therefore, any place marketing endeavour should thoroughly consider using Twitter for marketing purposes (Heinze et al., 2015: 5.3).

2.5.4.4   LinkedIn

Like Facebook, LinkedIn is a social networking platform that enables people to meet, connect and form networks with each other, although LinkedIn is more for formal, business-orientated social connections (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 229). It is a professional network where users can engage with other businesses and groups, build professional relationships, have conversations, blog, and build interest into their businesses (Heinze et al., 2015: 5.4). Furthermore, LinkedIn is the best channel through which to connect with very specific business sectors or occupational groups of people (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509). In addition to the company or organisational profile, employees who may play a role in marketing directly to potential customers should also open their own personal accounts, promoting their skills as part of the larger organisational offering. This is because, often, a potential client could easier search for and identify skills required through personal profiles, and because an individual may proactively post content and engage in other marketing and connecting activities more focussed and flexibly than what an organisation can (Smith, 2016: 67-68).

When designing a LinkedIn profile, there are certain best practices to consider. In the "Overview" section, it is important to make sure to enter all the relevant details. The "Description" section should be very well, concisely and persuasively written because that section creates the very important first impression, stating who the person or the organisation is, what they do and why people should connect with them. A link to the

organisation's website, other social media profiles and other promotional material should be added on the LinkedIn profile. In addition, groups relevant to the individual or company's niche can be joined, and if it does not yet exist, a new one can be created. Lastly, regular "status updates" or posts with interesting, informative or otherwise important questions or content from the blog should be written, and the account holder should start connecting with more relevant people or businesses (Smith, 2016: 62-68).

2.5.4.5 Pinterest

Pinterest is an idea- or interest-based platform or scrapbooking site where users display collections of pictures related to a topic of interest on their pin board, and can view the pin boards of others (Keegan, 2016). A user opens a profile or pin board, on which they place pictures of their particular interest, i.e., of hobbies, favourite vacation spots, travel destinations, etc. (Keegan, 2016). From this, communities that are interested in particular topics emerge, and they can like, tag as favourites, re-pin and share pictures (Keegan, 2016). Pinterest can be well utilised as a marketing platform by municipalities and especially by local tourism destination marketing organisations, because this platform lends itself very well to the showcasing of attractive, interesting features of a place, especially tourism- and lifestyle-related place attraction factors (Keegan, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 179, 215, 465). Marketing efforts could be well targeted because the different themed pin boards will be seen by people interested in a particular topic (Keegan, 2016). It is easy and involves very low cost to initiate and maintain, and the organisation does not have to take or own the pictures; it can simply bring together an aggregation or collection of pictures from others, as long as it contributes to their central idea or theme and is interesting enough to share (Keegan, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 465-466).

2.5.4.6 Flickr

Photo-sharing and -hosting platforms enable users to share and access content in the form of photos and increasingly videos as well, of which the most commonly known are Flickr and Instagram (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 229). Flickr is a photo management and sharing platform with huge potential as a place marketing platform. Photo-sharing platforms in general and Flickr in particular are very well utilised by tourism marketing

organisations and can be very effective tools to attract tourists to a place. In addition, one of the reasons for Flickr's success for tourism marketing is because it links directly to TripAdvisor.com (Morrison, 2013: 384-385).

This concludes the discussion on social media platforms, which should clearly be an integral part of any place marketing endeavour. Digital marketing channels or platforms, discussed so far, including websites, blogs, electronic newsletters and social media profiles, are mostly characterised by the place marketer having a large degree of control over the content and where most dime on digital place marketing needs to be spend, especially to develop interesting and high-quality content. From here onwards, the discussion will shift to digital marketing channels that are mostly established and maintained by third parties over which the place marketer has little control. However, it is still important to monitor what is being written about the place, and to participate in discussions or submit information where possible and if it can add value to such third-party content. One such a channel, or rather a grouping of related and often integrated channels, is directory and review sites, online communities and discussion forums, which will be discussed next.

2.5.5   Travel directory and review site listing, online communities and discussion forums

Travel directories and review sites, online communities and discussion forums, which will be defined and described in depth in the following sections, present opportunities for places and local businesses and attractions to get listed, often for free, on the internet and on mobile apps. This can provide very valuable exposure to a vast diversity and large numbers of local and foreign target audiences, ranging from potential tourists and tour operators seeking accommodation or attractions to visit, to regional business leaders and investors seeking local partners or suppliers, to consumers in the region seeking products or services that could be supplied by local businesses (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 82-83, 230; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 24, 86-87, 96, 403, 669).

2.5.5.1 Online directories or portals

An online information gateway or portal is a website or part of a website that lists or provides links to other relevant or more detailed sources of information and to providers of products or services, organisations or news on the internet that the user is likely to be interested in, usually categorised by topic in the form of a directory or search engine functionality, and in some cases associated with personalised news or free email services (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 82-83; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 24, 96, 669). A good portal enables users to find contact details in one place, often faster or easier than using search engines and other means to search, because the portal owner has already gone through the trouble of classifying and bringing relevant information together by theme, sector or subtopic (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 83; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 179, 346).

A place, its attractions and businesses should be listed on as many relevant directories as possible (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 79, 82-84), and in each listing, as much information as possible should be provided, including videos, photos and links to the website and other forms of online presence of the place (Google Inc., 2015). Important directories to attract tourists include www.sa-venues.com, www.southafrica.net, www.places.co.za, www.safarinow.com, www.wheretostay.co.za, www.tripadvisor.co.za, www.roomsforafrica.com, www.lekkeslaap.co.za, www.booking.com (reservation service, not really a directory), etc. The local government or tourism promotion organisation should actively encourage these directories to list local attractions and should encourage local tourism establishments to get listed on these. Online directories or portals may also include functionality that facilitates the formation of online communities, which is the next topic of discussion.

2.5.5.2 Online communities and discussion forums

Discussion forums are websites or apps where users share thoughts, ideas and advice, ask questions and provide answers (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 230). It consists of threads that contain a remark or question asked by a user, which are then replied to by other users, forming a discussion (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 230). Examples of discussion forums relevant to destination marketing include TripAdvisor Travel Forum and Fodors.com (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2).

Online communities are people who have common interests and share a passion for something, share thoughts and discuss their interests, and assist each other with advice and product recommendations. Online communities can be a very powerful marketing tool and is an excellent platform to connect with target audiences. If there is not an online community that an organisation or brand can tap into, such a community can be started by using a platform where members can connect, such as Google+, a blog, video channel or photo distribution platform, or other social media – whatever medium will be appropriate to get people talking online. The content, platform and activities should be designed to encourage active participation, engagement, interaction and relationship building between members themselves and with the organisation. Content that is passion-filled, insightful, with practical how-to-tips, funny or otherwise interesting and engaging, and consistent with the brand should be created and regularly updated for the community (Google Inc., 2015; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 695). Place marketers should engage constantly or very regularly with the community, otherwise opportunities for promotion may be lost or vibrancy of the community may decline (Heinze et al., 2015: 2.7). Note that discussion forums and online communities are often part of review sites (Morrison, 2013: 386), as discussed below.

2.5.5.3 Review and rating sites

Review sites are websites or apps where customers review and often rate products or services they used, which are read by other potential or existing customers. Examples relevant to destination marketing include TripAdvisor.com and Trustyou.com (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2). Review and rating sites may be a very powerful marketing tool in case the place is likely to receive favourable reviews (Google Inc., 2015; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 780-783). Reading other people's reviews can be very persuasive in convincing someone to make a specific choice (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 403). Reading of reviews is a very common method target audiences use in making purchase decisions (Google Inc., 2015). Of all forms of user-generated content, review sites are the most accessible, prevalent and opinionated, and have a strong influence on reputation formation of a destination brand (Cantoni et al., 2016: 8.2). A major advantage of review sites is their credibility, because people trust the objective opinion of other customers more than advertising or promotional messages (Morrison, 2013: 386). Therefore, place

marketing target audiences should not only be allowed but satisfied ones should also be encouraged to review and/or rate the place and its attractions and businesses on the place's website, on review sites, directories or other relevant platforms (Google Inc., 2015).

There are dedicated review sites for different product categories or industries. Travel review sites are sites where tourists who visited a particular accommodation, eating or drinking establishment, or a particular attraction or place, or otherwise used a particular service can write a review about and/or rate their level of satisfaction with it (Morrison, 2013: 386). TripAdvisor is the world's most widely used tourism review site (Morrison, 2013: 386). Visitors discuss the facilities, services, food, location and other topics on these types of platforms (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.3). Note that review sites are often part of discussion forums or portals, as discussed above, and traditional travel guide or magazine publishers often also have online review sections, such as the Thorn Tree travel forum (Morrison, 2013: 386). Place marketing best practices for these types of platforms have much in common, as will be highlighted in the next section.

2.5.5.4   *General principles of place marketing through online communities, discussion forums, and review and rating sites*

Online communities, discussion forums, and review and rating sites, i.e., opinions and actual experiences of others, are very important if a brand wants to establish trust, especially if the brand is not well known (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 86-87). Because many marketable aspects of a place, including tourism experiences, are intangible and cannot be observed beforehand, target audiences rely on others' opinions expressed in discussion forums, rating and review sites and online communities to make destination choices (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2). These platforms are widely used by tourists at different stages of a trip (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.3; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 780-783). During the trip-planning phase, it is used to consider the place amongst other competing places, then to get ideas for attractions to consider at the destination. This is a critical stage in destination marketing because at this point the place will have been selected or discarded, or even not thought of in the first place. After the trip, these platforms are used to share experiences and give advice to other potential visitors, once again critical for destination

marketing (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.3). Due to the conversational nature of these types of public platforms, comments, compliments or complaints often arise about a place, which should be managed well, as recommended in the next section.

2.5.5.5 *How to respond to comments, compliments or complaints on public platforms*

Because the above-mentioned platforms play such an important role in influencing the decision-making process, it is important to constantly monitor and react appropriately to it where needed (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.3; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 569). Although the ideal reaction depends strongly on specific circumstances, there are certain best-practice principles that apply (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.3). Firstly, the main argument should be identified and an understanding of it from the customer's perspective should be shown. The complainant should always be addressed politely and respectfully as an individual, by name, with clear and rational reasons or arguments to state the facts or the organisation's side if needed. If the comment is true, it should be acknowledged as such. If it is partially true, that should also be acknowledged with an explanation of why it is only partially true. If it is false, it may be denied in a polite but firm manner, while proof or a good argument is provided. If the complainant only provides general dissatisfaction without giving any reasons, and even if the complainant is unreasonable, gratitude can simply be expressed for the feedback and possibly dissatisfaction that he/she did not enjoy the experience. Businesses can develop a policy or even a standard reply format to improve consistency (Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.3).

To conclude, online portals and communities, discussion forums, and review and rating sites provide opportunities for very valuable exposure of a place to a very large number of target audiences. However, a place should also be literally "placed on the map" so that it is easy to find the physical location of lesser known places and to discover key features of the place itself in more detail should a target audience member become interested in knowing more about the place or travelling through the region, as discussed next.

2.5.6 Mapping service listings

A powerful way for places to get noticed, especially amongst tourists, and to be discovered by new place marketing target audience members, is to get listed or embed photos, details or other content on mapping services such as Google Maps, Google Earth, Garmin, TomTom, etc. (Keegan, 2016; Morrison, 2013: 394). A large and growing percentage of residents of and visitors to a place use GPS and apps with GPS-enabled functionalities to find products and services and to discover amenities that a place has to offer. In fact, mapping services can be considered a very important place marketing tool, especially with tourists, including business travellers, as the place marketing target audience (Morrison, 2013: 391-393).

Place marketing target audiences can use mapping services for several purposes. They can use it to be directed to a specific place, venue, or business address that they entered into a GPS or map service, or a supplier of a particular type of good or service (e.g., nearest doctor or restaurant). They can do this by using, e.g., Google Maps, Bing Maps, TomTom, Garmin, etc. (Keegan, 2016; Morrison, 2013: 391-393). They can also use mapping services such as Google Earth, Google Maps, etc. to explore a place from their device using a virtual map. This is why it is important to not only get listed or geo-located at the spot where a particular place of interest is located but also to include photos, details and other content on the map to provide opportunity to persuade the user to visit, buy or do whatever action is desired (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 515-520; Morrison, 2013: 394). Furthermore, place marketing target audiences can use the geolocation functionality on an app to direct them to a particular location or to notify them what businesses or places of interest are nearby from where they are currently situated (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 515; Morrison, 2013: 391-393).

From the above, it is clear that every municipality and local business community should make a deliberate effort to get listed on and provide additional useful information to mapping services. Directories, portals or aggregation sites often link their listed businesses on map services; therefore, it is important to get listed on such sites as well, as discussed in section 2.5.5. Another technique to get noticed by a very large population

of potential target audiences is to get listed and properly described on wikis, which is discussed in the following section.

2.5.7 *Wikis*

Collaboration platforms are websites or apps that facilitate people to work in groups to create something. These platforms include wikis, e.g., Wikipedia and Wikitravel, where knowledge-related content are developed. When a person does an internet search for a town, city, province, country or destination, Wikipedia is often one of the highest-ranking search results that appears. Therefore, it is very important to ensure that the place and its attractions, amenities and key businesses, products and services are listed on Wikipedia, and to provide tourists, potential investors, prospective residents and other target audiences with sufficient information to make a destination decision (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 230; Cantoni et al., 2016: 6.2; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 160).

Wikitravel is a wiki specifically for travellers. It is a free online travel directory and a very efficient digital marketing channel to attract tourists to a destination (Cantoni et al., 2016: 7.3). There is also a wiki specifically developed to share knowledge, history and other information relevant to tourists, investors and especially new or existing residents about local places and their features, amenities and neighbourhoods – see https://localwiki.org/regions. Some cities or places can also build their own wikis, such as https://daviswiki.org for the city of Davis in the USA and http://ka.stadtwiki.net/Hauptseite for Karlsruhe in Germany. These place wikis could play an important role in community building, publicity for local businesses and could contain valuable information for tourists, residents and entrepreneurs and investors exploring business opportunities. Overall, wikis are a simple but very efficient place marketing tool that any municipality should make good use of.

Whilst the digital marketing channels described so far have only limited or no ability to direct marketing messages in a highly targeted manner, there is no channel or tool more efficient to deliver very specific messages to very specific types of target audiences than online advertising, which will be discussed next.

2.5.8   *Online advertising*

Advertising occurs when an identified or known sponsor pays for the placement of a message to promote a product, service or idea in a chosen medium, which is presented in an impersonal and non-interactive manner to a large number of potential customers (Belch & Belch, 2015: 17; Blythe, 2012: 196; Kotler & Keller, 2012: 254). The message is usually presented at a specified time (Belch & Belch, 2015: 17). There is no opportunity for immediate interaction except in direct-response advertising, and in digital advertising, which will be assessed in this study (Belch & Belch, 2015: 17).

Online advertising is the transmission of paid promotional messages to potential customers on the internet (adapted from Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 126-127). The advantages of online advertising are that it can be tailored to an individual user based on time, context, location, browsing history and other factors (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 127; Nahai, 2017: 84). It can also be distributed instantly, worldwide and potentially at a very low cost. It becomes increasingly important to augment self-created content or media with paid digital media because of increasing competition in the digital space (Heinze et al., 2015: 2.6). It is essential to optimise paid media exposure very carefully to avoid wastage of expensive advertising (Heinze et al., 2015: 2.6). Even if a user does not click on an advert or follow through with a call for action, the mere presence of a digital advert does contribute to brand awareness and brand building, especially if exposure is frequent, and can be particularly effective to introduce new brands, or to remind customers of a particular brand when the need for it is present (Keegan, 2016). Often, users remember a brand from previous advert exposure only at a later stage when the need arises (Keegan, 2016).

There are several types of online advertising applicable to place marketing, as described below, including paid search engine advertising, affiliate marketing, reciprocal advertising, site or blog sponsorship and paid social media adverts.

2.5.8.1   *Paid search engine advertising*

When an internet search engine user searches for something, they type certain key words into a search engine like Google. The search engine then returns not only a list of results

but also a small number of sponsored links at the very top of the results page. These sponsored links are paid search engine adverts. In other words, paid search engine advertising is when a link (or short advert with a link) to the advertiser's website is listed along with search results based on how appropriate or relevant the search engine deems the advertiser's offering, depending on what key words the search engine user searched for (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 70-71; Google Inc., 2015; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 396-399). There is no payment to display it, only if the user clicks on it, i.e., adopts the pay-per-click advertising model. Additionally, advertisers bid for key words and advert placement, which makes it very affordable as a place marketing tool, even for very small or cash-strapped place marketing organisations (Belch & Belch, 2015: 504; Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 70, 88; Google Inc., 2015). Paid search engine advertising can be very cost efficient and effective to reach place marketing target audiences because it is highly targeted and because internet users have already indicated with their search terms that they are interested in the advertiser's type of offering (Keegan, 2016).

2.5.8.2 *Affiliate marketing*

With affiliate marketing, the advertiser places their advertisement on someone else's (the affiliate's) website and agrees to pay that website owner a fee if someone clicks on the advertisement, which will direct the user to the advertiser's website (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 130-131; Heinze et al., 2015: 2.4; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 410-411). Apart from the obvious objectives of enquiry or lead generations and sales, an affiliate program can also create awareness and build the brand of the advertiser due to increased exposure (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 132-133). To be effective as a place marketing tool, it is important that the place marketing organisation and the affiliate are a good match; e.g., it makes sense for a local tourism promotion organisation to advertise on the website of, for example, a travel-gear shop in a nearby city, but it will not make sense to advertise on an unrelated website that will not be visited by place marketing target audiences (Heinze et al., 2015: 2.4).

2.5.8.3 Reciprocal advertising

Reciprocal advertising entails mutual agreement between the advertiser and another business or organisation to place each other's adverts/links on the other's website (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 137). It can be a valuable place marketing tool because it contributes to: increased exposure because the place marketing organisation can tap into the traffic of the other websites; place brand and reputation building, especially if the partner website is of a reputable brand; increased organic search engine traffic, because search engines will give the website higher ranking in search results as external linkages are a key factor in search engine optimisation; and enhancement of the place marketing organisation's own website as a source of information, because users may come back to the website as they know they can find links to other valuable sources of information (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 139).

2.5.8.4 Site or blog sponsorship

Site or blog sponsorship is a form of online advertising where the advertiser pays or sponsors a website or blog owner for the opportunity to place their advert on their website/blog, thereby supporting or sponsoring the site or blog owner to maintain their content. It can be financial sponsorship, where the advertiser pays the site or blog owner to maintain the section themselves, or content sponsorship, where the advertiser not only pays but also provides some or even all the content of the sponsored section (Belch & Belch, 2015: 503). Site or blog sponsorship can be a very efficient place marketing tool because the advertiser gets exposure to the audience of the sponsored site, tapping instantly into their possible extensive network of readers on topics highly relevant to place marketing, e.g., niche travel, sector-specific businesses and investment, etc. (Keegan, 2016).

2.5.8.5 Paid social media adverts

Unlike social media marketing that involves having a free profile, engaging with and providing content to potential customers, as discussed in section 2.5.4, social media advertising involves placing and paying for adverts on social media (Keegan, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 412). Because social media platforms have extensive information

on potential customers' demographics, location, interests and behaviour based on the pages users visit and "like", who they associate with, and other information at individual user level on their databases, it is possible to target advertising messages in a very precise manner, which makes social media advertising highly effective, especially on Facebook (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509; Keegan, 2016; Nahai, 2017: 84). Twitter adverts are different from Facebook in an important way: connections are not based on close and personal ties but rather on interest (Keegan, 2016). On Twitter, like on Facebook, it is also possible to place advertisements and promoted tweets that any targeted users, not necessarily only the organisation's followers, can see (Keegan, 2016). Promoted tweets can be a very powerful form of advertising, especially location-based advertising, where it is possible to target specific types of people in a specific area (Belch & Belch, 2015: 509; Nahai, 2017: 84).

In conclusion, online advertising provides opportunities to direct highly targeted place marketing messages to highly targeted target audience members in a cost-efficient manner, and should be part of a place marketing campaign. The last digital marketing channel to be discussed is mobile applications, which may overlap with several other channels described above. For instance, all major social media platforms and review sites are also available as mobile apps.

2.5.9   Mobile marketing and mobile apps

Mobile marketing is the design and usage of websites, email, SMSs and apps, optimised for the small screens of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets and wearable devices such as smartwatches to interact with, provide information and promotional material to and sell to customers. Mobile marketing is an important strategy for multi-channel marketing to provide customers with a variety of methods to conveniently obtain information and to buy a product (Wood, 2014: 169). Mobile marketing also refers to reaching potential or existing customers for marketing purposes via their mobile devices, using a variety of techniques or technologies such as mobile-friendly websites, SMS, MMS, voice messages, unstructured supplementary service data (USSD), Bluetooth, and mobile apps (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 196-197). Increasingly more people use smartphones and other mobile devices such as tablets, smartglasses and -watches to

visit websites, social media and to search for information about products/services. These mobile devices are overtaking conventional desktops and laptops as platforms to access the internet (Google Inc., 2015; Heinze et al., 2015: 2.5).

An overwhelming majority of tourists use their cell phones to plan trips before travelling and use it to gain destination information while on trips, with this figure expected to increase rapidly (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 68-69; Morrison, 2013: 391). Cell phones are mainly used by tourists to search for restaurant and weather information, and for accessing maps and navigation (Morrison, 2013: 391). Although a normal website that is designed to be mobile friendly may be sufficient to enable users to access information from their mobile devices, mobile accessibility is now so important that mobile apps should rather be utilised.

A mobile app or mobile device application is a computer program running on a smartphone or tablet that provides a specific service of great value to the customer, such as delivering messages, information, content, updates or advice (Bothma & Gopaul, 2015: 211). Apps provide an improved user experience compared to normal internet browsers because they are faster, instantly available on the user's device, and can include much more functionality than a website (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 13). Apps can combine information gathering, coordination and processing, agglomeration from dispersed sources, sensor input on the device, geolocation, search functionality, alerts, camera, augmented reality, etc. to produce very useful services (Keegan, 2016; Laudon & Traver, 2018: 515-520).

A possible disadvantage of apps is that many apps are rarely used because users may be reluctant to download it, or if downloaded, it is rarely used and soon deleted if it does not provide regular and significant value. For an app to be successful, the user should want to use it often; it should thus be very entertaining or very useful to the user (Keegan, 2016). Another disadvantage of apps is their relative high cost and complexity to develop. Apps need to be developed in different programming languages and according to the rigid specifications of the different mobile device operating systems: i.e., iOS for iPad and iPhone, sold via the App Store; Android for most other mobile devices, including Samsung, sold through the Google Play store; and Windows for Windows phones, sold via the

Windows Store. Currently, new technologies are emerging which enable app developers to use a single programming language (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 13).

There are several advantages to using mobile apps for place marketing. Because mobile devices are very personal, close to and constantly exposed to users, they provide unprecedented exposure and opportunities for functionality and marketing (Keegan, 2016). Mobile devices have ever-increasing computing power, sensors and ability to integrate information and uses, presenting huge and creative opportunities for marketing (Keegan, 2016). They can replace or reduce the need for books, guides, brochures and other physical forms of information; therefore, users can get information easier, faster and without the need for physical printing, distribution or fetching (Morrison, 2013: 389-391). Furthermore, it is possible to distribute larger quantity but better targeted information instantly – exactly what is needed by the particular user, when and where it is needed (Morrison, 2013: 389-391).

More advantages to using mobile apps for place marketing is that apps can monitor the user's use of information and can therefore generate useful marketing data, further improve the information or product, and amend information immediately as the user's information needs to change (Morrison, 2013: 389-391). In addition, because an app can sense the user's exact geographical location, it can provide a variety of location-aware and relevant services and search results, referred to as local e-commerce (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 68-69). Due to the advantages described above, apps can improve the user experience to such a degree that customer loyalty can be significantly increased, especially in a destination marketing context (Morrison, 2013: 389-391). Overall, mobile apps can be very efficient as a place marketing tool, especially to attract tourists to a place, because it can make the user more fully aware of the advantages of visiting the place and of the full range of attractions available. It also makes planning easier and greatly increases the actual trip experience (Laudon & Traver, 2018: 790; Morrison, 2013: 382-384, 389-391).

Apps are used for place marketing purposes mainly in the form of Mobile Electronic Tourist Guides (METGs) by several tourism destinations, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Seoul, Australia and Spain (Morrison, 2013: 389-391). These electronic guides or apps provide

a variety of tourism-related information on a particular destination, very much like the very popular traditional printed destination guides, such as Lonely Planet and Rough Guides, and can even provide niche tourism-related information (Morrison, 2013: 389-391). It is especially useful for tourists because geolocation can make location-based information highly relevant and ease the navigation and trip-planning process (Morrison, 2013: 389-391; Nahai, 2017: 84).

A special type of tourism marketing app is Tourism Radio, a new place marketing tool currently available in Cape Town and a few other places in Southern Africa and the world. Tourism Radio is a radio service that broadcasts a combination of local music and pre-recorded talks or information on the local destination and specific points of interest, broadcasted as a GPS detects the place that is being approached or passed by. The app, which includes a GPS, pre-recorded content and a device to tap into the vehicle's sound system, is distributed by car hire companies or the local destination marketing organisation. Recently, the trend is that Tourism Radio is moving away from radio towards becoming a conventional mobile app (Morrison, 2013: 392-393).

This concludes the discussion on digital marketing channels. To conclude this chapter on digital place marketing, the concept of overall level of digital maturity will be discussed next, which serves as an overall indicator of the level of efficiency to which digital marketing channels are employed for place marketing purposes.

2.6   Overall level of digital maturity

Adapted from the generic Stage Model of Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2016: 193) and the Digital Business Maturity Model (Heinze et al., 2015: 1.4), the level at a given time that an organisation adopted digital technology in marketing and other business functions, can be classified according to six levels (0-5):

Level 0: No digital presence at all, and the organisation is not discoverable through online searching.

Level 1: Very little, incidental presence. The limited presence is usually not deliberate but only or mainly due to other people or organisations who write about or rate the organisation or its products or services (user-generated content on social media or discussion forums, and rating or review sites), or the organisation is listed in online directories. Although there is a small chance that target audiences may become aware of the organisation through online searching (poorly discoverable), they will not become aware of the full range of products or services available, and will not be able to find crucial information in one place or at all, such as contact information and information to make an informed purchase decision.

Level 2: Static website and/or basic social media page. The organisation made a deliberate attempt to obtain permanent digital presence, either in the form of a static website with only organisation and product/service information and contact information (brochureware), and/or a social media profile (usually Facebook). The organisation is reasonably discoverable through online searching (possibly on the first page of search engine queries); however, due to small digital presence, discoverability is still poor, especially in competitive markets. Although some basic information is provided, it is not sufficient to make an informed purchase decision.

Level 3: Simple interactive website; fairly vibrant social media page on at least one platform; significant digital presence; even some operations are digital, while others are still traditional. Interactive tools include searches, retrieval of current information (e.g., product availability and latest price; user can contact the organisation via a form directly from the website), and basic social media sharing functionality. The organisation is well discoverable (possibly within the top three results of search engine queries) through online searching due to a significant digital presence, innovative social media activities and fairly efficient search engine optimisation. Although sufficient information is provided to make an informed purchase decision, digital technology is not used to present it in a persuasive manner.

Level 4: Fully interactive website, vibrant social media pages on at least two platforms, good use of other digital marketing platforms, following digital marketing best practice, and trying to achieve significant more efficiencies through digital technology. Interactive

tools include simple e-commerce or e-government functionality, including making of payments, functionality for social media sharing and user-generated content, online customer service (e.g., live chat and help desk), and possibly basic customer relationship management functionality. The organisation is highly discoverable (possibly the first result of search engine queries) through online searching due to an extensive digital presence, extensive and innovative social media activities and best-practice search engine optimisation. Digital technology is well utilised to present information in a persuasive manner.

Level 5: Fully interactive website, vibrant social media pages on at least three platforms with success in viral marketing, excellent use of other digital marketing platforms, setting new, innovative trends in digital marketing well ahead of its time, CRM, personalisation functionality, and advanced interactive tools such as product visualisations. Future orientated, proactive, and using digital technology as a competitive advantage.

2.7   Conclusion

Chapter 2 started with an introduction to the discipline of marketing and then explained how marketing is applied to places such as towns, rural areas or regions. Thereafter, the sub-discipline of digital place marketing was introduced. The bulk of the chapter was devoted to the identification and description of a variety of possible digital place marketing channels or strategies that municipalities of communities or small towns and rural areas in a South African context can utilise to attract investment, businesses, skilled workers and tourists. It became clear that every municipality or community, even those without staff skilled in digital marketing or place marketing, and even under severe financial constraints, should be able to utilise at least some digital marketing strategies or channels due to the low cost and ease of use of some of these channels. This chapter has provided a review of digital marketing practices to facilitate the transfer of place marketing messages to target audiences, and emphasised the importance of using digital marketing channels best placed to reach specific types of target audiences that the place wishes to attract. However, to do this it is essential to know exactly who the target audiences are, or at least which subtypes of target audiences most emphasis should be placed upon, and

what their specific needs are. The following chapter will discuss target audiences in more detail.

CHAPTER 3: *LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON TARGET AUDIENCES OF PLACE MARKETING*

3.1 Introduction

In the context of place marketing where the place is the "product" to be marketed, the target customers are those persons or entities that the place should aim to attract as businesses, investors, buyers of exported goods, visitors or residents (Kotler et al., 1993: 23-33; Dril et al., 2016: 48).

A place should first decide which types of target audiences, and how many, it wishes to attract based on its competitive position, growth goals and LED strategy, acknowledging that it cannot attract any or all types of industry, all tourism types and all types of residents because of limited resources and competitive constraints (Kotler et al., 1993: 26, 32; Ulaga, Sharma & Krishnan, 2002: 400). After specific types of target audiences have been identified, their needs in terms of place attraction factors, described in Chapter 4, should be researched so that it can be decided whether the specific target audiences can realistically be pursued, and if so, what infrastructure and other improvements need to be made for the place to be more attractive to them. After that, the place's marketing communications should be tailored to the information needs of such groups (Giles, Bosworth & Willett, 2013: 5; Kotler et al., 1993: 26; Ulaga et al., 2002: 395, 400).

3.2 Businesses, industries, entrepreneurs and investment

One of the main aims of place marketing is not only to attract new businesses, industries and investment from outside but also to retain and expand existing local businesses and facilitate the entrepreneurial establishment of new businesses from within (Kotler et al., 1993: 27-32). The following is a summary of the main methods that a place can use to

grow its local economy, that are relevant to place marketing (Kotler et al., 1993: 27) and especially useful for small towns and rural communities (Scorsone, 2002):

- Retention of existing businesses by treating local businesses as satisfied, loyal, long-term clients by keeping rates and taxes at a reasonable level, providing great service and other important place attraction factors valued most by local businesses (Kotler et al., 1993: 27-28; Scorsone, 2002).

- Expansion of existing businesses by providing them with support such as training, finance, customised infrastructure, etc. so that they can grow (Kotler et al., 1993: 27-29). As part of support activities related to expansion of existing businesses, local businesses with export potential can also be supported to export their products/services or attract clients from afar, therefore enabling income from other areas to flow into the local economy (Kotler et al., 1993: 28; Scorsone, 2002). This is a major target audience and specialist field in place marketing called export promotion, discussed in section 3.3.

- Supporting entrepreneurial development within the local community by providing entrepreneurial support such as an entrepreneurship development agency that provides relevant training and advice, provides or arranges for financing and assistance to secure contracts or clients from government or the private sector, provides research park or business incubation space, etc. (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 71-76; Kotler et al., 1993: 29; Mirta, 2012: 12). This can also serve as a form of import substitution to reduce economic leakage (Scorsone, 2002). Entrepreneurial development is of particular importance because it is essential for economic development (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 64-68; Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 28), yet entrepreneurial spirit and skills are lacking in South Africa (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 98). Access to a variety of entrepreneurial support services could be a very important place attraction factor for entrepreneurs (OSCE, 2006: 118-119).

- Attracting outside businesses or investors to invest in or establish their main or regional headquarters, manufacturing plants, property developments or other business units or projects locally (Kotler et al., 1993: 30-31; Scorsone, 2002).

- All places should develop local markets and encourage residents, including surrounding rural residents, to buy locally and use local service providers rather

than travelling to other towns or the nearest city in an effort to increase the local economic multiplier and reduce economic leakage (Scorsone, 2002).

The attraction, retention and expansion of businesses, industries and investment is important for a place because they are sources of jobs, tax and rate income to local government, business income for other businesses and personal income for households, thereby keeping the economy going (Kotler et al., 1993: 27). Businesses, entrepreneurs, employees and management systems recruited from other regions of the country and world introduce new skills, ideas and technology into the local economy, therefore playing an important role in diffusion of technology and skills transfer (Bjelland et al., 2013: 53-54). Furthermore, it is important to attract and retain small- and micro-business entrepreneurs because they are the backbone of the local economies of many small towns and of rural economies with strong, well-diversified economies. They are major sources of employment (Mirta, 2012: 10), providers of essential products and services, and stimulators of further economic growth within the different value chains (Mirta, 2012: 5, 11). Entrepreneurs may enable significant local and regional economic development even when such entrepreneurial activity is based on low technologies (Mirta, 2012: 5). Lastly, a diverse local economy reduces the need for locals to buy from outside; therefore, the local economic multiplier will increase and economic leakage decrease, leading to economic growth (Scorsone, 2002).

Direct investment refers to investment made into local businesses, entities or projects by investors from other, outside areas, e.g., from another municipal area, district, province or even country. Direct investment differs from indirect investment in the sense that indirect investment refers to investments where the investor does not have much control, knowledge or concern over the specific project or locality of the investment, e.g., equity shares where investors invest their money into companies listed on stock exchanges at national level. On the other hand, direct investment refers to a situation where the investor has more control, knowledge or concern over the specific project or locality of the investment, e.g., a specific business, entity or project at a specific place (Investopedia, n.a.; IMF, 2017).

Direct investment (general, not necessarily foreign) differs from foreign direct investment in the sense that foreign direct investment (FDI) refers to investors from other countries,

while <u>general</u> direct investment refers to investors not necessarily from other countries, as they may also be from other areas within the same country (Investopedia, n.a.; IMF, 2017). FDI attraction is important because it can lead to significant economic growth. In fact, the rapid growth of the Chinese economy can mainly be attributed to FDI (Mirta, 2012: 5). A strategy that attracts FDI may be even more important for broad-based economic growth and local entrepreneurship development as an indirect impact than a deliberate strategy aimed at stimulation of local entrepreneurship directly (Mirta, 2012: 5). However, firms, projects and capital attracted through FDI initiatives tend to be mobile and may easily relocate to other regions or countries if the returns on investment is poor or local investment climate deteriorates, with dire consequences for the local economy. Therefore, it is important to maintain an investment-friendly business environment (OSCE, 2006: 18-20, 46, 51, 100).

It is important to attract direct investment because local businesses need capital to expand their capacity. Investment projects need capital to be initiated, which can be provided via direct investment to supplement local savings which may be very low. This will lead to global integration, growth, increased productivity and competitiveness of local businesses, job creation, skills development, income and tax generation and technological diffusion (Dupasquier & Osakwe, 2006: 243-244). Places should research and understand how businesses and investors make decisions on where to locate and invest (Kotler et al., 1993: 27). (See Chapter 4 for a discussion on common place attraction factors.)

In general and to summarise, businesses value factors such as a favourable economic climate; a business-friendly regulatory environment; initiatives to establish and support the growth of businesses, such as relocation inducements and business incentives or subsidies; a stable political system; strong social capital; a local culture that is supportive towards business development; ample availability of natural resources; suitably skilled workers; training institutions; good transport, telecommunication and utilities infrastructure; availability of technology and capital goods such as machinery, plant, equipment and suitable building stock; and favourable spatial effects such as business agglomeration, cluster effects and access to markets (Kotler et al., 1993: 27; Mirta, 2012: 5-14; Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 25-28). Businesses also value place attraction factors that residents value, such as good schools and a good quality of life (discussed in Chapter 4),

so that they can attract high-quality employees and their families (Kotler et al., 1993: 27). In fact, a major problem that businesses in rural areas and small towns face is the difficulty of attracting highly skilled employees and their household members, who may prefer city life above small towns and rural areas. Consequently, ensuring that the town is attractive to live in could be an important location factor for most businesses (De Hoyos & Green, 2011: 171). Overall, access to a variety of entrepreneurial, industry and business support services could be a very important place attraction factor for entrepreneurs, businesses and investors (OSCE, 2006: 118-119).

To focus place marketing efforts on businesses, industries and direct investment should be considered a high priority for all places who wish to develop or sustain a sustainable local economy. Although a diverse local economy is desirable, it is not possible to attempt to attract any or all types of businesses and industries because some industries may be detrimental to others, cause local resource degradation, or the place may not have the required resources or a competitive advantage in the particular industry. This is why the broad target audience is subdivided into a number of sub-target audiences so that it will be possible to distinguish between the different sectors in place marketing efforts (Kotler et al., 1993: 31-32). It is especially important to focus on the attraction or establishment of businesses that enhance agglomeration effects, or form part of a local industry cluster or otherwise an important value-chain partner to other local businesses (World Economic Forum, 2014: 8). For areas with high unemployment, attraction of labour-intensive industries will be important (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 29).

Table 3.1 provides an overview of industries that are commonly targeted in place marketing efforts, and why they are often pursued.

Table 3.1: Business- and investment-related place marketing target audiences

Industry	Why it may be important to focus place marketing efforts on this particular industry
Primary sector businesses (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and mining)	
Agribusiness (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, game farming, hunting and related value-chain activities)	It is important to attract and retain farmers and agribusinesses because agriculture is an activity of major importance or potential importance in many rural areas. Rural areas are often covered by land of which a high percentage is mostly, and sometimes only, suitable for agriculture and no other viable land use. A large number of towns were established as agricultural service centres and continue to perform that function. Socio-economic decline of rural areas is often due to the decline of local agriculture; therefore, investment in local agriculture, attraction or retention of good farmers and support to agribusinesses could reverse this negative trend (FAO, 2006: 1-14; Ngomane, 2012)
Mining, quarrying, mineral beneficiation and related value-chain businesses	Place marketing is important to stimulate the mining industry in mineral rich areas through various mechanisms. Firstly, it attracts small-scale mining operations and promotes small-scale mining opportunities, and facilitates Black Economic Empowerment and development of disadvantaged groups, which could be especially beneficial in developing areas with ample mineral resources (Hilson & McQuilken, 2014: 104-106; Hilson & Osei, 2014: 92-93; Shen & Gunson, 2006: 428-429). Secondly, it attracts businesses that supply essential products and services to mines so that large local mines rather buy from local than outside suppliers, leading to local job creation and an increased local economic multiplier effect associated with the mine (Lydall, 2009: 112-114, 119; Morris & Fessehaie, 2014: 25-29, 34-36). Furthermore, place marketing has the potential to attract mineral beneficiation/processing businesses (Morris & Fessehaie, 2014: 25-29, 34-36).
Secondary sector businesses (processing, manufacturing, energy, water and construction)	
Processing and manufacturing businesses (heavy and light industries)	Heavy and light industries may be important sources of employment and sources of income from other areas, especially if locally produced goods are sold on the district or national market or exported. It also stimulates further investment and general business activity and indirect and induced employment in the local economy (Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 14-15). Industrial place promotion is well established in the developed world and

Industry	Why it may be important to focus place marketing efforts on this particular industry
	rapidly industrialising countries, and competition between places for industry is intense, especially in periods of economic downturn and unemployment (Gold & Ward, 1994: 1; Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 9-24).
Installation, maintenance and repair businesses	Businesses need technology and capital goods such as machinery, plants, equipment and suitable facilities, which need to be installed, maintained and repaired (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 25-28). A lack of locally available installation, maintenance and repair services is often an important limiting factor in LED and increases the cost of doing business, especially in the case of smaller towns, rural areas and underdeveloped economies (Batten, 1995: 318; Badcock, 2002: 25; Keyser, 2009: 126-143; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 46, 50, 67, 119; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5, 8).
Energy, water and related utilities and businesses	Energy, especially electricity, is an essential for businesses, industries and modern comfortable living. Energy is increasingly becoming an important issue that holds economic growth back. Alternative energy generation at local level by small businesses is an important component of sustainable development in several of the more progressive regions in the developed as well as developing world. Therefore, it is important to attract enterprises or locally develop entrepreneurs involved in the production of energy using more sustainable or renewable methods compared to the current mainstream nuclear or coal-fired power plants operated by large, centralised entities (such as Eskom). (Huttunen, 2012: 549-552; Thompson, Herrmann & Hekkert, 2014: 1-3). In addition to electricity, several industries, especially some types of manufacturing businesses, have a need for gas, steam, hot or chilled water, and chilled or pressurised air. For a place to attract such industries in the highly competitive industrial attraction sphere, being able to provide such services is essential (Gold & Ward, 1994: 1). Water, also, is a basic human need and an essential natural resource or production factor in the economy. Almost all industries are directly or at least indirectly reliant on water. Water is a major location factor for many industries, especially in water-scarce countries such as South Africa (Pender, Marré & Reeder, 2012: 10-11).

Industry	Why it may be important to focus place marketing efforts on this particular industry
Real estate businesses and projects	Property developers have the capital and skills to establish modern, viable and vibrant major new developments in a place. It is especially important to attract property developments that will contribute to the built stock that is in short supply or make the place more attractive to important target audiences (Adams & Tiesdell, 2013: 19, 29; Kloos et al., 2012: 162; McManus et al., 2012: 25; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 46, 50, 130-131; Sager, 2014; Pender et al., 2012: 10; Thompson, 2014c), including regeneration projects to improve or otherwise modernise deteriorating or absolute properties (Thompson, 2014a, b & c), as well as viable flagship projects that could act as a nucleus for further development, raise the profile of and act as a marketing tool for the place (Smith, 1994: 3-5).
Tertiary sector businesses (services, wholesale, transport and logistics, retail, restaurant, recreation, and tourism businesses)	
Financial service providers	Financial services are essential to maintain and grow a modern local economy and are an important place attraction factor, and hosting providers of specialist financial services may increase the power and status of the place (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 424-428; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mayr, Meurer & Vogt [cited in Hall, 2002]; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 56-57; OSCE, 2006: 45, 74-75; Pender et al., 2012: 10; World Economic Forum, 2013: 7).
Professional, scientific, technical, security or business support service providers	Attraction of a **variety of services that are essential for other businesses and households** reduces costs of doing business, facilitates further economic growth and creates a **variety of quality job opportunities** (OSCE, 2006: 36, 40, 80-81, 130-131; Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 25-28; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5-6, 8). Hosting providers of professional and specialist business services may increase the power and status of the place, especially in case head offices of regional, national and multi-national businesses are located in the place (Mayr et al. [cited in Hall, 2002]).
Wholesale, transport and logistics businesses	These businesses facilitate trade, improve market development, reduce transaction costs and increase competitiveness of a place, and may enable the place to better utilise logistical opportunities due to its location (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 211, 227, 640).

Industry	Why it may be important to focus place marketing efforts on this particular industry
Retail, food and beverage businesses	A variety of shopping, eating and drinking options are important place attraction factors for various target audiences, including residents and tourists, and it increase the local economic multiplier effect and community vibrancy (Keyser, 2009: 114-115; McManus et al., 2012: 26; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Merrilees, Miller & Herington, 2011).
Tourism businesses	Tourism businesses are needed to deliver the products, services, amenities and infrastructure needed to attract tourists (discussed in section 3.4 as a separate target audience).
Community organisations and social care providers	The presence of these organisations and providers is an important location factor for some target audiences, including highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs and especially wealthy retirees (De Noni, Orsi & Zanderighi, 2014: 224). These services play an important role to build a sense of community and civic participation (McLeod, Scheufele & Moy, 1999: 315).
Health service providers	Presence of health service providers, including clinics, hospitals, sanatoria, nursing homes, mental health institutions, rehabilitation centres, diagnostic services, and health care practitioners and specialists is important because they are major place attraction factors and are important for economic development (De Noni et al., 2014: 224-225; McManus et al., 2012: 25; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). Higher level healthcare facilities could attract people from beyond the borders of the place and may therefore lead to an inflow of income from outside, as a form of medical tourism (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).
Providers of arts, culture, entertainment, recreation, sport and other opportunities for socialisation	A variety of such options are important place attraction factors for residents and tourists. It may also reduce economic leakage and increase the local economic multiplier effect because local people will have more local recreation and related options and therefore may have less of a need to travel to other towns or cities for those purposes. It may also bring the community together, create friendships and build social capital (De Noni et al., 2014: 218, 224-225). Hosting creative industries related to popular and high culture is particularly effective to attract investment, highly talented and

Industry	Why it may be important to focus place marketing efforts on this particular industry
	skilled residents, and tourists, and to raise the power and status of the place (De Noni et al., 2014: 218, 224-225; Mayr et al. [cited in Hall, 2002]; McManus et al., 2012: 26; Mirta, 2012: 5; Sager, 2014).
Quaternary sector businesses and organisations (research, knowledge, information, innovation, education and skills development, and government)	
Information and communication businesses	These businesses play an important role in innovation and technology transfer, increase productivity of local businesses, contribute to high-quality job creation and income generation, and contribute to LED, especially if published goods and online services are sold to the outside world (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 28; World Economic Forum, 2013: 8). Local broadcasting and publishing enterprises may contribute to the creation of a sense of community, local identity, local culture and pride, have social and recreational value, and provide advertising and publicity opportunities to local businesses, thereby contributing to local market development (Badcock, 2002: 25; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; McLeod et al., 1999: 315; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5).
Education and training providers	The presence of education providers is a very important place attraction factor and ranges from baby day-care through to pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and training opportunities for enrichment, career advancement and continuous professional development for all ages. These institutions could contribute to the local community in several ways. The presence of educational and training institutions is a major place attraction factor and source of economic growth (Griffiths & Wall, 2012: 16-19; Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 25). In case of students recruited from afar, there is an increased inflow of income into the local economy in the form of student fees and local spending of student allowances (De Noni et al., 2014: 224-225).
	Furthermore, educational and training institutions are important vehicles to transfer technology, skills and knowledge from the outside world into a local community through student contact with lecturers, known as expansion diffusion (Bjelland et al., 2013: 52-53). This is of particular importance in South Africa since the labour force lacks appropriate skills (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 96).

Industry	Why it may be important to focus place marketing efforts on this particular industry
	Additionally, the place will experience: increased innovation due to the larger number of innovative persons that these institutions attract and because they establish an environment conducive to innovation, including the provision of opportunities to exchange ideas (Bjelland et al., 2013: 53-54); increased entrepreneurship, especially but not limited to high-technology industries (Batten, 1995: 314; De Noni et al., 2014: 224); and an increase in the local youthfulness, vibrancy, and intellectual and creative spirit of the host community, and opportunities for local people to reach self-actualisation (Rykun, Yuzhaninov & Vychuzhanina, 2015: 359-360, 363-365).
Government entities (public service providers, seat of government and general government attention)	Public sector policies and investment focus development attention selectively and unfairly on certain areas to the expense of other areas. This causes not only underdevelopment but also out-migration from such neglected areas, which are often rural areas and small towns (Pacione, 2005: 78). The public sector is a major employer; therefore, it is a sector that could aid significantly in job creation and inflow of income from national government level (SALGA, 2015). Local representation of government service providers may result in better public service delivery, which is important because availability and quality of public services is a crucial location factor to all place marketing target audiences (Keyser, 2009: 126-143; Kotler et al., 1993: 27-32; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 46, 50-51, 67; Pender et al., 2012: 10; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5). Hosting the seat of government may increase the power and status of the place (Mayr et al. [cited in Hall, 2002]).

Source: Author

3.3 Export markets (Outside customers of locally produced or "place of origin" brands, products and services)

The development of export markets is another major aim of place marketing (Kotler et al., 1993: 32-33) and entails various factors. Firstly, it supports local businesses to export to outside markets (Kotler et al., 1993: 32-33; Scorsone, 2002). It also creates a demand in outside markets for locally produced products and services (Kotler et al., 1993: 32-33).

Another place marketing concept related to export markets is the development of "place of origin" brands; i.e., products produced in the local area and branded particularly to be from the local place and distributed to outside markets in the rest of the country or world (Clifton, 2014: 122-124). The place brand projects positive images or connotations about the place in the mind of the consumers of the product (Kotler et al., 1993: 32-33). The brand of the product mentions clearly where it was produced, which could be as subtle as the words "Made in …" printed in small print on the label, or it could be highly visible by appearing in the brand name or logo itself. Geographical indication is used to indicate more formally protected brands registered under intellectual property rights but is, however, losing its power because it is increasingly seen as voluntary rather than strict legal protection (Marie-Vivien, Bernard, Boutonnet & Casabianca, 2017: 1).

Place-of-origin brands link a specific brand to a place, e.g., *Olof Bergh Solera Brandy* from the Breede River Valley area, or it may only broadly link the product category to an area, e.g., perfume brands from Paris, chocolate from Switzerland or Belgium, whisky from Scotland, carpets from Turkey, champagne from the Champagne region of France, or quality cars, pharmaceuticals and precision instruments from Germany (Dogana & Gokovali, 2012: 761-762). Place-of-origin brands not only apply to physical goods for export but to services produced locally as well. Apart from tourism examples where local tourism experiences are closely linked to the image of the place, examples of place-of-origin service brands include receiving a prestigious Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard education. Place-of-origin brands benefit local producers because it enables product differentiation, charging a price premium, lower marketing costs, and higher sales and

profits. This in turn leads to more income flowing into the place and further job creation, which stimulates LED (Dogana & Gokovali, 2012: 762-764).

Lastly, locally owned or distinctive brands, products and experiences, i.e., brands, products or experiences not part of a national or multinational company or franchise, add to the place's character and uniqueness, which will help to differentiate the place from other competitive places in the minds of residents and tourists (Haven-Tang & Sedgley, 2014, 59-61). For example, Stellenbosch has a variety of restaurants and coffee shops that provide a unique eating experience compared to most other places in the country, where national franchises dominate the restaurant market.

To focus place marketing efforts on export market development should be considered a high priority for all places, including the smallest towns and rural areas, since all places need to trade with the outside world to maintain a sustainable, modern and attractive local economy and society. All places need to import products and services from outside and therefore have to export something to earn income to pay for such imports (Kotler et al., 1993: 32; Scorsone, 2002).

3.4   Visitors/tourists

Tourists are widely recognised to be an important target audience for place marketing efforts (Dinnie, 2008: 221). Tourists are people travelling to an area on an occasional, infrequent or once-off basis for a variety of purposes, as explained below. The following types of tourism can be distinguished:

- Cultural tourism focusses on the experience of the following types of culture:
    - o Popular culture, e.g., art and theatre (Hughes, 1996: 707-709).
    - o Ethnic tourism, which focusses on the ethnic uniqueness of local people in either contemporary culture or authentic tourism, i.e., the way people currently live (Buhalis, 2000: 102), or traditional culture, i.e., how people used to live in the past (Yang, 2010: 561-564).
    - o Historical or heritage tourism, which focusses on the historic heritage of the place, e.g., Stellenbosch (Hughes, 1996: 707-709).

- o Creative tourism, which lets the visitor actively engage in and experience authentic local contemporary culture, connecting with local people (Wesgro, 2015: 12).
- Events tourism focusses on attracting tourists to particular events, e.g., festivals, shows, etc. (Getz, 2008, 403-404, 421-422). Large events could serve as a major boost in terms of investment as well as awareness creation for places (Gold & Ward, 1994: 2).
- Sports tourism focusses on sports events and exercising (Gibson, 1998, 46-49).
- Ecotourism focusses on the natural resources or scenic beauty of an area (Das & Chatterjee, 2015: 4).
- Alpine tourism focusses on mountain activities and views, such as mountain biking or hiking, as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism focussed on mountainous terrain, and ski in some regions of the world (Buhalis, 2000: 102).
- Seaside, lake or dam tourism focusses on leisure activities associated with the beachfront or beach view and other water-related activities (Buhalis, 2000: 102).
- Adventure or outdoor tourism focusses on physical activities and outdoor recreational activities, e.g., hiking, horse riding, quad- or field biking, 4X4 trails, bungee jumping, etc. (Weber, 2001: 360-364).
- Agri-tourism, farm-based tourism or rural tourism focusses on the appreciation of farm life and farm products (Buhalis, 2000: 102; Park, Doh & Kim, 2014: 201-202). South Africa's rural communities could benefit greatly from agri-tourism; therefore, development of this sector should become a priority (Pillay & Rogerson, 2013: 50-52).
- City/town/urban tourism focusses on night life, urban amenities and attractions, usually associated with large, vibrant cities but which may involve smaller cities and towns as well (Buhalis, 2000: 102; Pearce, 2001: 927-928).
- Medical or recuperative tourism focusses on delivery of a relaxing experience and place to recoup for patients who underwent surgery or who wish to recover or alleviate a medical condition, or tourists that travel far to receive medical care they cannot access back home (Connell, 2013: 2; Crush & Chikanda, 2015: 313-314, Moghimehfar & Nasr-Esfahani, 2011: 1431).

- Volunteer tourism focusses not only on meeting in the needs of volunteers but also to benefit from their services (Wearing & McGehee, 2013: 120-127).

- Sex or romance tourism focusses on fulfilling the sexual needs of visitors (Bauer, 2014: 21; Ryan & Kinder, 1996: 507, 516-517).

- Educational tourism focusses on travelling scholars from distant schools, colleges, universities, and even independent groups or individuals seeking an educational experience, or learning that takes place unintentionally during travels. Note that long-term full-time students are generally classified as student residents (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer & Benckendorff, 2012: 909-913).

- Business and industrial tourism focusses on the needs of travelling businesspersons, government officials and other official visitors, which can be a steady yet modest form of income to most towns, especially those with a thriving business community, strong agricultural or mining sectors and places that are seats of municipal or higher hierarchy government (Buhalis, 2000: 100-101).

- Luxury tourism caters for the growing number of very rich people in the world (Wesgro, 2015: 14).

- Conspicuous leisure is the growing trend amongst individuals to show their social status by experiences such as from travel, adventures and activities rather than through possession of luxury consumer goods; this trend may be driven by the rise of social media (Frijters & Leigh, 2008: 1937-1938; Wesgro, 2015: 13).

Places may benefit from attracting tourists because, firstly, tourism is an important source of income from outside since tourists spend locally on food, accommodation and other products and services, which has a further multiplier effect on local income, job creation, and tax generation for local government (Kotler et al., 1993: 23). Tourist amenities also benefit local people, thereby making the local community more attractive to live in and reducing the outflow of middle and higher income residents and young people. Additionally, tourism in itself is an important place marketing tool because tourists may spread positive word-of-mouth information about the place, and may decide to invest themselves (or influence others such as their employer or wealthy or powerful social connections) into the place after experiencing positive aspects of the place during their visit (Ries & Trout, 2000). Tourism, especially events, educational, business and industrial

tourism, could play an important role in technology diffusion to the benefit of the local community. This is referred to as expansion diffusion and occurs when local persons or businesses are exposed to and adopt new skills, knowledge or technology from outsiders (Bjelland et al., 2013: 53).

Focussing place marketing efforts on tourists should be considered a high priority if the place scores high on place attraction factors associated with tourists; it has a competitive advantage in tourism, and tourism is a potentially viable growth industry. Place marketing should attempt not only to attract more visitors in general but also to attract them during off-seasons so that tourism facilities are optimally utilised throughout the year (seasonal spread). Place marketing should also attempt to make visitors aware not only of the main tourist attractions in a few tourism hot spots but also of other less known attractions off the main tourism routes and nodes so that the benefits of tourism could spread throughout the area (geographic spread) (Wesgro, 2015: 28). Place marketing should aim to persuade existing tourists to stay longer and to spend more money (Kotler et al., 1993: 24). Place marketing should not only attract visitors from outside but also from within. Local residents should be persuaded to make use of local tourism or leisure opportunities (Wesgro, 2015: 30).

3.5   Residents, including skilled workers

The residents of a particular place are the persons and households residing in that place. In a place marketing context, residents not only include current residents but also potential residents yet to be attracted. Residents are usually reluctant to relocate and are therefore difficult to attract due to a phenomenon known as labour or geographic immobility, which could be attributed to the following reasons (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 336-337):

- Search costs and lack of information about jobs available elsewhere, wage rates and other labour-market conditions.
- Not qualifying for a job in another place due to insufficient skills, qualifications or experience.
- Occupational immobility, i.e., the reluctance or incapability to change occupation.

- Cost and inconvenience of relocation.

- Not wanting to leave family and friends behind.

- Cost of housing at the new place, and possible loss of house assets at current/old place.

- Concerns about the availability and quality of place attraction factors such as schools at the new place.

- Discrimination by employers based on, e.g., race, gender, religion, etc.

- Wages may be lower in the new place.

It is important to attract and retain residents because they form the local tax- and rate-payer base and participate in general economic value creation, which generates income for the local government. They also form the local consumer base or market, which generates income to local businesses (De Noni et al., 2014: 218-220). Furthermore, they act as a local labour market pool providing the essential factors of production of labour and skills to local employers (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 25), and act as a potential pool from where the essential production factor of entrepreneurship could raise (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 28). Residents are also a source of social relationships. Social interaction is one of the main determinants of the social sustainability of a place and is a major place attraction factor (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 46-47, 60, 72, 101-124; Kloos et al., 2012: 180-185; Pender et al., 2012: 10).

Table 3.2 identifies subgroups of residents that are commonly targeted in place marketing efforts.

Table 3.2: Resident subgroups as place marketing target audiences

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
Unskilled and semi-skilled workers	Provide the essential factor of production of semi-skilled labour that enables local businesses, industries and institutions to function competitively (Badcock, 2002: 24).	When local economic growth is held back by the fact that unskilled or semi-skilled workers are in short supply (i.e., when unskilled and semi-skilled labour is a limiting factor in the local economy), which may be a problem in some developed countries, especially during periods of economic boom (Kotler et al., 1993: 26). However, the South African labour market as a whole and the labour markets at local municipal level for all municipalities do not experience a shortage of unskilled and semi-skilled labour, as indicated by the high unemployment levels (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 96).	Emphasis is mainly on job opportunities, while liveability may also play a role (see Chapter 4 for detail).
Highly skilled or talented persons or knowledge workers. This group is particularly difficult for small towns and rural areas to attract	They contribute to entrepreneurship development, the development of the local high-tech or creative industry, and general competitiveness of local businesses (Badcock, 2002: 24). They also contribute to diffusion of technology into the place, referred to as relocation diffusion (Bjelland et	It should be considered a high priority for all places that wish to prosper, especially when a lack of skills is an important limiting factor in the local economy, which slows local economic growth down, as indicated by the inability of local employers to fill vacancies for skilled positions for certain occupations.	Emphasise high-quality job opportunities, education, cultural, lifestyle and environmental amenity-related

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
and retain (Kotler et al., 1993: 26).	al., 2013: 53-54), as well as the general vibrancy of the local economy, society and culture (Bjelland et al., 2013: 52-53).	Scarcity of skilled workers available to both the public and private sectors is an important limiting factor in the South African economy, especially management, technical and specialist or professional skills (Mohr & Fourie, 2004: 96; Municipal Demarcation Board, 2012: 148-153).	place attraction factors (see Chapter 4 for detail).
Middle and higher income residents	They increase the purchasing power and therefore enlarge the size of the local market. Purchasing power and market size are very important determinants of local business viability, job creation and investment attraction. A relative large middle and higher income population also serves as a very important source of tax and rates income to the local government (De Noni et al., 2014: 218-220, 224-225).	The benefits of attracting this particular subsegment makes them a high priority for all places under all circumstances, which is relevant to all sustainable local economies. The smaller the place, the less important it is to focus on higher income groups, but the middle-income groups should always be well catered for. Of course, resources should not be directed away from lower income groups, but it is the presence of strong middle-income appeal that should attract or retain highly skilled higher income and other groups that will accelerate further growth to	Emphasise lifestyle and environmental amenity-related place attraction factors (see Chapter 4 for detail).

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
		the benefit of lower income groups (De Noni et al., 2014: 218-220, 224-225).	
Young working adults are persons in the 18 – 35-year age category who are not studying full time and are employed.	They are at their peak concerning physical performance, some skills areas, mental performance, creativity, innovation, and adoption of new technology, and are therefore a very important human resource to the benefit of local businesses and organisations. They are often also a source of entrepreneurship and contribute significantly to social capital of a community. In addition, like students, they provide a youthful and lively atmosphere to the place and make the place more attractive to other young people (De Noni et al., 2014: 219).	They should be considered a high priority for all places with an aging population that wish to be socially and economically sustainable, since an aging local population and net outflow of young talent and skills will lead to economic stagnation and decline, low levels of innovation and loss of social capital (Kotler et al., 1993: 26).	Emphasise entertainment and social-related place attraction factors (see Chapter 4 for detail).
Wealthy retirees are generally older persons from higher and middle-income groups, retired from full-time employment (Gustafson, 2002: 903).	These retirees do not require jobs, thereby placing pressure on the local labour market, yet they are a source of investment and local income in the form of taxes/rates and local spending, and many older people can still make very valuable contributions to the	When the area has a high competitive advantage in terms of place attraction factors important to retirees, in which case it may sometimes be a better strategy than trying to attract industries with incentives, and any sustainable community should at	Major place attraction factors for retirees are affordability; a pleasant or warm climate; natural

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
	local economy or society in case they are only partially retired (still work although reduced hours) or do volunteer work. Therefore, they can contribute significantly to LED even if that economy has very few resources, is geographically isolated or has a very high unemployment or very low employment growth rate, or in case development of environmentally destructive industries are not desired (McGhie, 2013; Poudyala et al., 2008: 240-241; Sheng, Simpson & Siguaw, 2014: 55; Viallon, 2012: 2073-2077; Wong & Musa, 2014: 141).	least strive to be a decent place where its existing citizens can retire (Poudyala et al., 2008: 241).	amenities; a peaceful/quiet, clean, attractive, and safe destination; shopping convenience; and access to medical facilities (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 68; Sheng, Simpson & Siguaw, 2014: 64-65; Viallon, 2012: 2082-2085; Wong & Musa, 2014: 141-142).
Teleworkers or telecommuters are service or knowledge workers, often in higher income brackets, who work for	Telecommuting is an important and growing phenomenon in the new information-driven economy (He & Hu, 2015: 1). Some telecommuters contribute to inflow of income	When the place performs exceptionally well in terms of all the place attraction factors important for residents in general (i.e., the place is considered very pleasant to live in),	Good telecommunication infrastructure to enable them to

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
significant periods of their working time from their home and use the internet or similar means to communicate with their employer or clients (McInerney, 1999: 69-70; He & Hu, 2015: 2-3, 16).	from outside sources, i.e., their distant clients or employers, which may have a significant positive economic impact because they tend to be higher income individuals (He & Hu, 2015: 2-3, 16). In addition, they place relatively little demand on local transportation infrastructure, especially during peak hours, compared to conventional workers (He & Hu, 2015: 1) and do not influence the local job market as they work for clients or employers outside of the place (Handy & Mokhtarian, 1996: 231).	but has a very limited local job market and potential for growth.	telecommute, i.e., to "work over the Internet" (Handy & Mokhtarian, 1996: 229).
Daily commuters are people who commute or travel daily between the local community where they live and another nearby area where they work (Pierrard, 2008: 565). Although not as prominent as in some other regions in the world, commuting is significant in	Daily commuters are a source of income from outside (i.e., they receive compensation from their clients or employers in the nearby area) because they spend some of their income locally, pay local property tax and rates and increase local property value, yet they do not place pressure on the local labour market. Income generated from commuters may be such a	When the place is situated sufficiently nearby (for a daily return trip) a large metropolitan area, or another town that has a lively labour market but does not perform as well in terms of attraction factors for residents, or are more expensive to live in. Note that in case a community loses residents who only work locally while living in a nearby location, that community may	More emphasis on transport, especially availability, affordability and safety of public transport, variety of options for modes of transport, and

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
South Africa, where commuting is mostly from smaller towns or sub-places to larger metropolitan areas, although commuting from larger to smaller places and even between small towns also occurs but in small numbers (De Jong & Verkoren, 2012).	significant source of revenue for a place that it may be worth focussing place marketing efforts strongly on this type of resident group in order to compete successfully with other nearby places for their attention (Guo, 2009: 148-149). Commuting may also stimulate regional economic development and benefit not only commuter source/living areas but commuter destination/work areas as well. One example is Stellenbosch, where more than half the people working in the town commute from other areas (De Jong & Verkoren, 2012).	experience loss in taxes and other forms of income, while competition in the local job market will increase in case commuters compete for jobs in skills areas that are not a limiting factor in the local economy; therefore, such places may benefit from place marketing to attract local workers not only as employees but residents as well, or from de-marketing to discourage commuters from entering the local labour market (Guo, 2009: 148-149; Pierrard, 2008: 576).	good transport infrastructure to the distant place of work (St-Louis, Manaugh, Lierop & El-Geneidy, 2014: 168-169). Less emphasis on job availability within the local community (Pierrard, 2008: 565-566).
Second-home weekend, seasonal or holiday residents are people who own or rent local residential property and reside in the local community during weekends, certain seasons or holidays only. They work and live in	They place few demands on local infrastructure for most of the year and do not absorb jobs in the local job market, yet they spend locally on goods and services (consumption spending) and pay local property tax, rates, etc.; therefore, they can be considered high-income, low-expense customers to local government. They also	Could be considered a high priority when a place performs exceptionally well in terms of place attraction factors for both residents (except the work- and educational-related factors) and especially tourists (especially in terms of natural beauty), and when the place is situated close enough to large or wealthy centres or airports to travel from during	Emphasise lifestyle, recreational and environmental amenity-related place attraction factors, image of idyllic country living and possibly

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
another area during the work week, outside the holiday period or during other seasons, which may be a nearby urban centre or even an overseas country (Baker & Mearns, 2012; Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010: 202).	increase local property value, generate revenue from property sales, and provide income to building contractors and building renovators (Litvin, Xu, Ferguson & Smith, 2013: 90-91; Rye, 2011: 264-265). Second-home owners may also use their often powerful social, economic and political influence to benefit the local community and to build social capital and community leadership (Gallent, 2015: 106-108). Although there may be negative economic impacts such as raising property value and increased water and electricity usage during peak occupancy periods, the overall economic impact tends to be positive (Litvin et al., 2013: 91; Pienaar, Campbell & Visser, 2010: 10).	weekends and holidays (Baker & Mearns, 2012).	traditional ways of life, and proper transport infrastructure to reach the place (Baker & Mearns, 2012; Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010: 202-203).
Full-time students at local primary, secondary and tertiary educational and vocational training institutions may not	Presence of a university is particularly beneficial for entrepreneurship development and the establishment of new or advanced technology firms in the local community	Should be considered a high priority for all but the smallest places (given that such small places do not even perform an important central place function). It is	Good educational institutions, accommodation, transport and

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
only originate from the local community but may also be attracted from the surrounding rural areas or even a much wider geographic area in case of respected secondary and tertiary education institutions.	(Leten, Landoni & Van Looy, 2014: 1398-1401, 1409), for general economic growth due to agglomeration effects and for stimulation of a local manufacturing sector (Liu, 2015: 36). In general, it is important to attract and retain students from the local community as well as from a broader geographic area because they provide a youthful and lively atmosphere to the place, their spending power and that of their lecturers'/teachers' may be significant, and they cause an influx of income from external sources (government subsidies to education, student fees/expenses paid by parents and bursary-providing organisations, and tourism income derived from visiting family and friends). Proper local educational infrastructure is also an important location factor for many other target audiences and may reduce the outflow of youth. It also directly contributes	especially important for places that have high-quality secondary and especially tertiary educational institutions (Bruning et al., 2006: 125-129).	telecommunication infrastructure, recreational facilities for youth, safety (see Chapter 4 for detail).

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
	to diffusion of technology and skills into the local community. The local community and businesses may benefit from research and availability of a well-educated pool of prospective interns and potential employees and volunteer or community development activities undertaken by students (Bruning, McGrewb & Cooper, 2006: 125-129; Fini, Grimaldi, Santoni & Sobrero, 2011: 1113-1114, 1125-1126; Siegfried, Sanderson & McHenryc, 2007: 546-550, 556-557; Supriyadi, 2012: 299-301, 304-305).		
Surrounding rural residents are people living in the broader rural area surrounding the town (central place). This includes farmers, farm workers and other people living on farms, small holdings, communal farming areas, nature reserves, rural tourism establishments,	It is important to attract surrounding rural residents to the town under consideration as opposed to other competing towns or cities in the region because they are potential customers of local businesses in the town (central place), thereby increasing the local market size to well beyond the market size of the town itself. Surrounding residents can also contribute to local social capital and, as	Should be considered a high priority for any place that performs an important central place function for the surrounding area, particularly agricultural centres that face rural decline (Elshof et al., 2014: 297-298; McManus et al., 2012: 20-22).	Factors that make a place an attractive central place for surrounding farmers include a vibrant community spirit and social capital, quality job and educational

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
forestry and fisheries workers, and residents on other rural properties. It also includes residents of even smaller towns or settlements that rely on the central place under consideration for higher order central place functions (McManus et al., 2012: 20-22).	a larger interconnected community, reduce the occurrence of "rural flight" which is a major threat to small towns and rural areas. (Elshof, Van Wissen & Mulder, 2014: 285-286; McManus et al., 2012: 20-22)		opportunities and health care facilities, housing, safety and low crime rate, variety of shopping opportunities and a clean and pleasant physical environment (McManus et al., 2012: 24-27).
Diaspora and migrant workers: Diaspora refers to people who once lived in the place and usually grew up in it but moved away to other areas, usually larger towns, cities or foreign countries. Migrant workers only temporarily leave the place to find better	They often have an emotional linkage with the place and often still have family members remaining behind; therefore, it is possible for a place to benefit from the socio-economic and political influence of diaspora over the wider region (Le, 2011: 2409-2410; Vaaler, 2013: 28-29, 44-45; Wang, Zhang & Ni, 2015: 1-3), and to attract investment in the form of remittances and charity	Should be considered a high priority when a relatively large number of people leave the area. Positive impacts from diaspora and migrant workers are especially strong in cases where diaspora remain together and maintain their culture and sense of community in remote locations (Vaaler, 2013: 26, 44-45).	Social capital, including retained social ties with their home town (see Chapter 4 for detail).

Resident or worker subsegment	Benefits of attracting/retaining this particular subsegment	When to focus place marketing efforts on this particular subsegment	Summary of important place attraction needs, if different from resident/worker group in general
employment elsewhere but intend to return some time in the future. (Li & Zhou, 2015: 174; Vaaler, 2013: 27-30)	donations (De Brauw, Mueller & Lee, 2014: 37; Le, 2011: 2409-2410).		
Local residents and staff	Through place marketing efforts, local residents and staff should be encouraged to act as place brand ambassadors and proud citizens and to buy from local businesses, known as internal marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 37, 195; Wood, 2014: 18, 100).		

Source: Author.

3.6   Conclusion

Chapter 3 introduced the concept of target audiences, i.e., the groups of people or entities that a typical municipality or town may wish to attract to stimulate the local economy, such as investors, businesses, residents such as skilled workers, and tourists. It was stressed that target audiences are a core component of place marketing, and that it is of utmost importance to know exactly on which target audience groups place marketing efforts should be focussed. Every place cannot be targeting every type of target audience group due to competition between places, therefore it is essential to identify what the strengths and weaknesses of the place are and in what industries or economic sectors the place are competitive as described in the previous chapter, then position the place as an attractive place in the minds of the most appropriate target audience groups as described in this chapter. Throughout the discussion of each target audience group it was highlighted that the typical needs of each of these groups differ; therefore, the place should be able to provide in the specific needs of the specific target audiences it wishes to attract. These needs, as it relates to places, are referred to as place attraction factors, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: *LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON PLACE ATTRACTION FACTORS*

4.1 Introduction

Rural areas are declining and continue to lose people and capital to cities as the global economy places less emphasis on natural resources and more emphasis on human resources, innovation, collective creativity by linking creative minds, and business linkages (Batten, 1995: 318). Over the next 30 years almost all growth will occur in urban areas (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013: 2). Therefore, the little growth that will occur in rural areas, towns and small cities will probably be concentrated in the more viable towns and small cities, while less viable rural areas, towns and cities will continue to deteriorate rapidly. Thus, it is important to properly investigate place attraction factors for small towns and rural areas.

Place attraction factors are the features and benefits of a place that the different target audiences value; in other words, the things that attract target audiences to a place, referred to as pull factors. The lack thereof can repel target audiences, referred to as push factors (Bjelland et al., 2013: 79-82). Place attraction factors are critical in place marketing. It is well known in marketing that to have the product right is extremely important since any efforts in trying to sell something that customers do not want or like will be unsuccessful over the long term (Bennett, 2010: 4, 297-298). The same applies to places, so it is important to make sure that the place attraction factors are sufficient to meet in the demands of target audiences (De Noni et al., 2014: 224-225). Furthermore, thorough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of a place is essential for the development of a positioning, branding and place promotion strategy, all of which are core components of place marketing (Pike, 2015: 184-196). Various place attraction factors have been identified as important place characteristics or features for place target audiences, such as investors, businesses and industries, entrepreneurs, residents (including highly skilled and talented workers), and tourists. Each of these place attraction factors will be discussed in this chapter.

4.2   Regional connectivity

The place should ideally be well connected to and not too far from larger towns or cities in the region, which is a major attraction factor for all main place marketing target audiences (Keyser, 2009: 126-143; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Sager, 2014; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5), with excellent regional transport infrastructure (OSCE, 2006: 60), including short travel times, frequent, direct travel linkages (Keyser, 2009: 143) and proximity of an international airport (OSCE, 2006: 20).

4.3   Local and regional population and market size and proximity to markets and tourism source areas

Access to markets, whether local or regional markets or easy access to more distant major markets, is a major competitiveness and place attraction factor to investors, businesses and entrepreneurs (McManus et al., 2012: 24, OSCE, 2006: 36-38; World Economic Forum, 2013: 8). A relatively larger local or regional population, and higher average income, is very important to business with local clientele because it translates into a larger market size, allowing businesses to attain economies of scale and therefore increased viability and profitability (McManus et al., 2012: 24; World Economic Forum, 2013: 8). A large and growing population may cause an economy to grow, thereby contributing to macroeconomic stability and a positive business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 36-38).

A vibrant, growing economy needs new skills and ideas, well-educated youth, and inflow of wealth and capital from middle or higher income households (Debertin, 1993: 3). A young and well-educated workforce is considered an important characteristic of a favourable business and investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 20).

A larger and wealthier population in the local town or region translates into a stronger local and domestic tourism market (Keyser, 2009: 133, 143). Relative proximity or easy access to large, more distant, non-domestic markets may translate into stronger local tourism demand (Keyser, 2009: 133, 143). Furthermore, being situated near to or having easy

access from more distant major existing or potential tourist origin areas is an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development. It is also an attraction factor to tourists and tourism businesses because tourists tend to travel to nearer rather than further destinations, mainly because travel time and costs are major location decision criteria for tourists (Keyser, 2009: 133, 142-143).

4.4   Proximity to other tourism destination areas in the wider region

Proximity to tourism destination areas, whether locally, as discussed in section 4.22, or in other places but still near enough for a day or weekend visit is an important place attraction factor for residents (McManus et al., 2012: 26; Sager, 2014, Pender et al., 2012: 10). Proximity to other tourist destinations in the broader area is also an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development, and attraction factor for tourists (Keyser, 2009: 143). This is because of interdependencies between destinations – often, tourists visit several nearby destinations in a single trip, and destinations can work together to market and operate their destinations more efficiently (Keyser, 2009: 140-143).

4.5   Local transport infrastructure and services

Availability, condition and cost of using local transport infrastructure, including roads, bridges, railways, a local airport, and public transport services are critical competitiveness factors and location decision factors for investors, businesses, skilled workers, residents and tourists because it directly influences transport costs, time and convenience of people and goods (Batten, 1995: 314, 318; Keyser, 2009: 126-143; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 46, 50; Pender et al., 2012: 10; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5). Freedom from traffic congestion is a well-recognised place attraction factor for skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3).

4.6 Electricity, water, sanitation and waste management services

Availability, reliability, quality, cost competitiveness, as well as the cost and time required to establish a physical connection to basic municipal services, including electricity, water, sanitation and waste management are critical place competitiveness and attraction factors for all place marketing target audiences, especially investors, businesses, skilled residents and tourists, because it directly influences the cost of doing business, availability of critical business input, health, quality of living and comfort (Keyser, 2009: 126-143; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 46, 50-51, 67; Pender et al., 2012: 10; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5).

4.7 Technology and ICT infrastructure and services

Availability and cost competitiveness of information and telecommunication (ICT) infrastructure and services, as well as other forms of new technology for consumers, industries and other sectors, and skills to use and maintain it are increasingly important for local businesses and industries to grow, or at least to remain competitive. These factors are also important to enhance efficiency, increase innovation and to maintain a high standard of living, and become an expectation of all important place marketing target audiences, especially businesses, skilled workers and the tourism sector (Batten, 1995: 318; Badcock, 2002: 25; Keyser, 2009: 126-143; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 46, 50, 67, 119; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5, 8).

4.8 Real estate (land, housing and buildings)

A variety of decent, reasonably priced and suitable housing options for households at different life-cycle stages and with different income levels and personal style preferences is an essential location factor for skilled workers and residents, and the quality thereof is especially important for people with families and businesses who, in turn, wish to attract talented employees who may have families (Kloos et al., 2012: 162; McManus et al., 2012: 25; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Sager, 2014).

Retailers and other business tenants prefer a wide variety of shop and office spaces, differing in terms of location (accessible to their clients), aesthetic appeal, style and affordability (Adams & Tiesdell, 2013: 19; Thompson, 2014c).

Architectural design of prominent local buildings or a unique and attractive local building style may also be an important attraction factor to both skilled residents and tourists (De Noni et al., 2014: 220, 225).

Industrial space should be appropriately zoned and serviced and affordable and located near transport infrastructure, resources and markets. It is considered an important component of local physical capital stock (Pender et al., 2012: 10). Industrial parks or appropriately clustered industrial land are considered a basic infrastructure component of the modern economy that is considered by investors and businesses, especially SMMEs, as one of the most important attraction factors for some areas (OSCE, 2006: 46, 50, 130-131).

Access to affordable land is important to establish a positive business and investment climate because land is essential to establish modern facilities that meet the specific needs of its users (OSCE, 2006: 70). Greenfield land is important because brownfield/existing land and facilities may not necessarily meet in the needs of the specific users (OSCE, 2006: 70). Land that is already serviced by utilities may be especially useful because utility infrastructure is considered by investors and businesses, especially SMMEs, as one of the most important attraction factors (OSCE, 2006: 46, 50). Many businesses and investors will not consider land that they cannot own due to long-term investment and commitments needed to develop the land and the associated project or facilities, especially in case of possible disputes with the owner; therefore, a balance between leasing and owning options is important (OSCE, 2006: 70).

4.9   Financial services

The presence of branches of major banks, and a variety of locally available financial products and services, is a very important location factor to attract, retain and develop local businesses and entrepreneurs, and skilled workers (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer

LLC, 2015: 2-3; OSCE, 2006: 45, 74-75; Pender et al., 2012: 10; World Economic Forum, 2013: 7). It is also important for tourists to have access to branches of internationally connected banks, money transfer services, automated teller machines (ATMs) and currency exchange facilities (Keyser, 2009: 114-115, 143). Apart from being an important place attraction factor, the presence of financial services, especially branches of well-known banks and other financial institutions, could also assist with the smooth re-allocation of financial capital and keeping money circulating in the local economy, thus reducing economic leakage (Diehl, Alexandrova-Kabadjova, Heuver & Martínez-Jaramillo, 2016: 1-7).

4.10 Diverse and vibrant local economy and cluster formation

Investors, businesses and entrepreneurs are attracted to a diverse, vibrant local economy where local markets function efficiently, competition is fair, and economic sectors form mutually beneficial clusters (OSCE, 2006: 36, 40, 80-81, 130-131; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5-6, 8). Although not a direct tourism attraction, a diverse local economy makes a diversity of products and services available that tourists may require, thereby increasing convenience and product/service quality and establishing a solid base from which tourism businesses can source from (Keyser, 2009: 137-141, 143). However, for this study, destinations' showcasing of the local economy to specifically attract tourists will not be assessed because it will be covered by the more direct tourism attraction factor indicators discussed in this chapter, such as retail, restaurant and accommodation establishments, tourism attractions, basic utility and ICT services, and health care and financial services.

4.11 Positive expectations

To be attractive to investors, businesses, skilled workers and residents, the public and especially the business community should have optimistic economic, political and social future expectations of the place (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 56-59). Optimism has a direct impact on increased inflow of investment or retaining of capital and competitiveness

of the local economy and therefore plays an important role in the attraction and retention of businesses and investment as a place marketing target market (World Economic Forum, 2013: 5). Positive expectations can be presented by a municipality or place in the form of growth projections, outlook for key industries, key resources that can be exploited and other key opportunities and strengths identified in a SWOT or similar analysis.

4.12 Job opportunities

The presence of employment opportunities is one of the most important place attraction factors for skilled workers, residents and families (McManus et al., 2012: 25; Sager, 2014). However, the mere presence of job opportunities alone, although good enough to attract unskilled and semi-skilled labour, is not enough to attract other target groups. Jobs also need to be of sufficient quality in terms of remuneration, working conditions, job enrichment and opportunities for career progression and promotion to higher job levels. There also needs to be a variety of different jobs, depending on the interests, skills set and qualifications of job seekers (Debertin, 1993: 2-3).

High quality and diversity of job opportunities is a major place attraction factor for all resident groups except wealthy retirees, and is especially important for middle and higher income residents and highly skilled persons, including families and businesses who wish to attract talented employees who may have families (De Noni et al., 2014: 224; Sager, 2014; Debertin, 1993: 2). Highly skilled and talented residents have sufficient bargaining power in the labour market in that they are not "desperate" for just any jobs. Therefore, they place more emphasis on satisfying jobs and living in a pleasant place, valuing other higher order attraction factors such as educational facilities, cultural attractions and social aspects of the place even more than jobs (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).

4.13 Work ethic, wage expectations, skills and labour productivity

A local workforce that is willing to work hard for a moderate but fair wage is a major determinant of business climate, especially if the workers are young and skilled (OSCE,

2006: 20). It is also one of the most important business location and investment criteria (OSCE, 2006: 46), and is an important place competitiveness factor for tourism businesses and thus an important place attraction factor for tourism development (Keyser, 2009: 129-130, 140, 143).

A well-educated local population with the availability of workers who already have the required skills set as required by the employer, and ease of recruitment are important place competitiveness factors for investors, businesses and entrepreneurs (Debertin, 1993: 3; Keyser, 2009: 126-143; OSCE, 2006: 20). Labour costs and productivity are some of the most important location decisions for businesses and FDI, and are determinants of a positive business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 46).

4.14 Educational, vocational training and research facilities

The availability of proper educational facilities, including high-quality schools, is one of the most important place attraction factors for entrepreneurs and residents, and is particularly important for highly skilled workers – even more important than job opportunities (De Noni et al., 2014: 218; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Pender et al., 2012: 10). Educational infrastructure is a basic social infrastructure component that is considered by investors and businesses, especially SMMEs, as one of the most important attraction factors (OSCE, 2006: 46, 50). It can also attract students from neighbouring or more distant towns and even from other countries, leading to additional inflow of income (De Noni et al., 2014: 224-225).

The presence of universities and institutes of technology, along with a strong throughput of quality graduates, could be an important attraction factor for relevant industries (especially knowledge-based industries) and businesses (including large businesses) to integrate with the global economy (Batten, 1995: 314) and establish macroeconomic stability and a favourable business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 20, 36-38). The same applies to research institutions (Batten, 1995: 314). Innovation and availability of knowledge is also important to establish a favourable business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 20).

Skills development through vocational education and general training is important to increase workforce productivity and ability to utilise new technologies or best practice, which could enable local businesses to remain competitive and to grow (World Economic Forum, 2013: 6). Vocational education is neglected in many economies, which reduces their competitiveness (World Economic Forum, 2013: 6). Furthermore, local availability of an already skilled workforce, and opportunities for skills development and training in tourism are important place competitiveness factors for tourism development (Cantoni et al., 2016: 5.2-5.3; Keyser, 2009: 116, 129-130, 142).

4.15 Healthcare facilities and services

The presence of quality healthcare facilities, medical services and a range of essential medication is an extremely important place attraction factor (McManus et al., 2012: 25). Presence of sufficient hospitals as well as medical services are well-recognised place attraction factors for highly skilled workers, residents and entrepreneurs (De Noni et al., 2014: 224-225; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). It can also attract visitors from the region (residents from neighbouring or more distant towns), leading to additional inflow of income (De Noni et al., 2014: 224). Quality and reliability of medical services and facilities capable to serve tourists, including capacity during peak tourism seasons when demand may be high, as well as availability of medication are also important place competitiveness factors for tourism development, and attraction factors for tourists (Keyser, 2009: 132, 143). The availability of quality emergency services is also important as an attraction factor, especially for tourists (Keyser, 2009: 126-143), but also for businesses and residents in small towns and rural areas that do not have medical facilities (Edwards, Birks, Chapman & Yates, 2016: 109-110).

4.16 Healthy and disease-free environment

Low risk of being exposed to infectious diseases or other diseases associated with polluted water or air or troublesome or destructive animals or insects is a well-recognised place attraction factor for highly skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2;

Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). Low risk of major outbreaks of disease and government preparedness should they occur are important factors to establish a favourable business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 25). A healthy and disease-free environment is also an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development (Keyser, 2009: 126-143). Clean air is a valuable component of local natural capital (Pender et al., 2012: 10), and is a well-recognised place attraction factor for highly skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). A healthy, disease-free environment can also be an important selling point for tourism destinations (Keyser, 2009: 132, 138).

4.17 Social capital, including sense of community, community vibrancy, outsider acceptance, family values and spiritual development

Social capital, an important place attraction factor for residents and tourists, can best be explained by discussing its core components:

Sense of community:
This refers to the perception of community members or individuals living in a particular area that they are a part of the community and belong there (Kloos et al., 2012: 27, 179). It also refers to the strength of bonding between community members, which stems from the perception of interdependence (i.e., that their needs will be met by both giving to and receiving from others), trust and familiarity, and the stability of these bonds (Kloos et al., 2012: 179). A strong sense of community is a very important place attraction factor (McManus et al., 2012: 24), particularly for residents as a place marketing target group.

Community vibrancy:
A very important place attraction factor is that a community should look "alive" to the outside observer and be perceived as alive and vibrant by residents (McManus et al., 2012: 24). Even if there are plenty of entertainment activities and a lively social scene, if it happens out of the public eye the community may still look "dead". Life and activity in streets is considered a major place attraction factor for residents and tourists (Gehl, 2010: 25). This is an important place attraction factor for residents and is particularly

important for highly skilled workers, even more so than job opportunities (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).

Outsider acceptance:

Because place marketing efforts aim to attract people from outside (i.e., "outsiders"), new residents should feel welcome and accepted so that they can truly integrate and benefit from being part of the local community. Respect for human diversity amongst members of the local community is therefore important. This diversity may be based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, socio-economic status, income, age and other characteristics (Kloos et al., 2012: 28). The level of internationalisation in a place is an important place attraction factor for highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).

Attitude towards visitors:

Local community attitude towards the further development of the local tourism industry, as well as local community acceptance of and attitude and friendliness towards tourists are important place competitiveness factors for successful tourism development (Keyser, 2009: 129, 139, 142).

Family values:

Being a good place to raise kids, or to live as a family, is a very important place attraction factor for residents (Sager, 2014).

Personal freedom:

A sense of personal freedom within a community is a well-recognised place attraction factor for highly skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3).

Spiritual development:

Local opportunities for spiritual development is a major determinant of well-being and happiness within a community (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 47). Purpose in life is also a major determinant of well-being and happiness (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 46), and spirituality is an important mechanism to introduce purpose in life (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 234-236). Spirituality also contributes directly to various other domains in positive

psychology and community psychology, including social support, health, personality integration, altruism, coping and general well-being and happiness (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 233). Therefore, the presence of opportunities for spiritual enrichment could be considered an important place attraction factor. In fact, many towns in South Africa were established and grew because surrounding farmers were attracted to the churches there (Toerien & Marais, 2012).

Social services:

The availability of quality social services such as services for children or the elderly, disabled, poor or unemployed is an important place attraction factor for residents, including highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs and especially wealthy retirees. It can also attract visitors (residents from neighbouring or more distant towns) from the region, leading to additional inflow of income (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).

Youthful population:

A significant pool of young people increases community vibrancy, innovativeness, economic resilience and sustainability of a local economy and society, and makes the place more attractive to highly skilled workers, businesses and other young people (De Noni et al., 2014: 219).

4.18 Governance (local governance, politics, corruption, legal, regulatory, licensing, zoning, and taxing system)

Good local governance is a major place attraction factor for all place marketing target audiences. Its components and importance for place marketing can be explained as follows:

Political stability:
A stable and efficient political environment is a well-recognised place attraction factor for highly skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). Political stability and efficient succession from one ruler or administration to the next is one of the most important place attraction factors, especially for the business and investor target audiences, and is essential to establish a positive business/investment climate

(OSCE, 2006: 46). This is, amongst other reasons, because political stability is an important criterion for long-term investment decisions and to reduce risk (OSCE, 2006: 24-34). Political stability is also an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development (Keyser, 2009: 132, 142).

Corruption:

Corruption, dishonesty and lack of transparency in the political, government and business environment reduce the competitiveness of the local economy (World Economic Forum, 2013: 5), and is a major inhibitor of investment and SMME development (OSCE, 2006: 30, 118), in part because it directly increases cost of doing business (OSCE, 2006: 45). Freedom from corruption, especially in police and administrative services that relate to tourists, is an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development (Keyser, 2009: 132). It is estimated that corruption can increase cost of an investment up to four percent, which is highly prohibitive in investment terms (OSCE, 2006: 30).

Local law, regulations and licensing:

To be attractive to investors, businesses and entrepreneurs, a local economy should be free from overregulation, and licensing to trade or permission to conduct business should be fair, easy to understand and fast to obtain, and should not significantly increase cost of doing business or cost of living (OSCE, 2006: 67, 120-121; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5). A sound legal framework and absence of unnecessary red tape or overregulation are important factors determining the competitiveness and business/investment climate of the local economy (World Economic Forum, 2013: 5; OSCE, 2006: 20). These are also important place competitiveness factors for tourism development and attraction factors for tourism businesses, and the travel documentation application and administration process may play an important role in attracting or deterring tourists (Keyser, 2009: 129, 142). Unnecessary red tape or overregulation increases cost of doing business (OSCE, 2006: 45), which is especially detrimental to SMME development (OSCE, 2006: 118-119). Regulations should be flexible to accommodate the needs of the particular place and businesses (OSCE, 2006: 66-69). Law and regulations should be stable – it should not change regularly or unexpectedly so that investors can be assured that when they make an investment, the risk that their investment will be threatened by changing legislation will be minimal (OSCE, 2006: 27). Changing legislation and policy contribute directly to the

risk of doing business or investing in the area (OSCE, 2006: 45). Legislation and regulatory requirements should be written in plain language, clear, simple and unambiguous (OSCE, 2006: 121).

Law enforcement:

Legislation is only effective if it is well enforced, and economic development and a positive business/investment climate is strongly dependent on an efficient court system and proper law enforcement (OSCE, 2006: 87). Proper law enforcement is a well-recognised place attraction factor for highly skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). It is especially important for SMME development (OSCE, 2006: 119) because SMMEs generally do not have the power or capability to "stand up for themselves" as large businesses do. Contract enforcement is also very important because dishonesty and lack of trust between customers and clients reduce the competitiveness of the local economy (World Economic Forum, 2013: 5) and threatens the positivity of the business/investment climate because risk of breach of contract contributes directly to increased risk of doing business or investing in the area (OSCE, 2006: 45).

Taxation:

Local taxes and rates should be set fair, reasonable and simple to calculate. Taxes that are distortionary, burdensome or too high reduce the competitiveness of the local economy (World Economic Forum, 2013: 6; OSCE, 2006: 19) because it directly increases cost of doing business (OSCE, 2006: 45). A high tax rate or complex tax system can be especially detrimental to SMMEs (OSCE, 2006: 118) and FDI (OSCE, 2006: 45-47, 118).

Local government financial management:

The local government should manage finances in an efficient, transparent, fair and corruption-free manner, in the best interest of the broader public. Uncontrolled spending, lack of transparency and suboptimal allocation or wastage of government finances reduce the competitiveness of the local economy and is not conductive to a positive business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 42; World Economic Forum, 2013: 5).

4.19 Crime, public safety and security

Crime should be minimal and strictly controlled because safety is a very important place attraction factor (McManus et al., 2012: 26), especially for highly skilled workers, residents in general, families, and businesses who in turn wish to attract talented employees who may have families (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Sager, 2014). Incidence of crime against tourists is an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development (Keyser, 2009: 132, 142).

In addition to low levels of general crime described above, security in terms of no or a low threat of terrorism, war, and political instability (and government preparedness should it occur), and general safety of people, assets, investments and data is extremely important to establish a favourable business/investment climate (OSCE, 2006: 25). Low security causes cost of doing business to increase due to higher insurance and additional "danger pay" to employees (OSCE, 2006: 25). Security, including low probability of terrorism and unrest, is an important place competitiveness factor for tourism development, and freedom from terrorism and unrest is an important tourist attraction factor (Keyser, 2009: 132). Safety and security is such an important place competitiveness factor and contributor to development that it has dictated development throughout human history, entire cities being established in areas of safety, e.g., growth of trade route nodes along safe areas in medieval Europe (Batten, 1995: 19).

Incivility is observable signs or indications of neighbourhood disorder. Physical incivility includes graffiti, abandoned or ill-maintained buildings, litter and vandalism. Social incivility includes loitering, gang activity, illicit activity (e.g., drug sales, prostitution) and public drunkenness. Presence of incivility may lead to increased fears of crime, anxiety, depression and withdrawal from the community (Kloos et al., 2012: 28).

4.20 Retail-, food- and beverage-related amenities

A variety of shopping, eating and drinking opportunities is an important place attraction factor, especially for highly skilled workers, residents and tourists (Keyser, 2009: 114-115;

McManus et al., 2012: 26; Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3; Merrilees et al., 2011). It can also attract visitors (residents from neighbouring or more distant towns) from the region, leading to additional inflow of income (De Noni et al., 2014: 224). The most important determinants of the attractiveness of a retail area are the tenant mix (i.e., a broad and deep range of goods that are conveniently made available nearby each other), and a pleasant, vibrant atmosphere (Teller & Reutterer, 2008: 137).

4.21 Arts, culture, entertainment, recreation and sports

A variety of local arts, culture, entertainment, recreational and sports opportunities catering for all ages, and a variety of interest groups for all ages should be locally available to make the place attractive to residents, entrepreneurs and tourists (De Noni et al., 2014: 224-225; Keyser, 2009: 115; McManus et al., 2012: 26; Sager, 2014). It can also attract visitors (residents from neighbouring or more distant towns) from the region, leading to additional inflow of income (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).

More sophisticated recreational opportunities associated with arts and creative activities is an important place attraction factor for talented residents and even plays an important role to attract technology and FDI (Mirta, 2012: 5). Cultural amenities or overall cultural appeal is one of the most important attraction factors for highly skilled workers, even more important than job opportunities (De Noni et al., 2014: 218, 224-225). Historical and traditional cultural resources and sites, monuments, historical buildings and districts, unique religious buildings, sacred sites and places where important historic events occurred may attract tourists (Keyser, 2009: 89).

Leisure activities, cinemas, theatrical and musical performances are well-recognised place attraction factors for highly skilled workers and residents (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3). An attractive place offers a variety of recreational activities and opportunities that families can do together (Sager, 2014). These opportunities should appeal to all people, young and old (Thompson, 2014c), and are important for family well-being and happiness (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 119). There should be both indoor and outdoor recreational activities, and the availability of indoor recreational activities is

especially important for places that experience long periods of unpleasant weather, such as long, cold winters or extended periods of rain (Keyser, 2009: 115; Sager, 2014).

4.22 Tourist attractions, activities, services and accommodation

A diversity of high-quality tourist attractions and proper, competitively priced tourist accommodation facilities in relative proximity is an important place attraction factor for tourists and tourism investment (Keyser, 2009: 126-143). Affordability and value for money are also important location considerations; therefore, cost of visiting the place compared to competitor destinations, especially accommodation prices, should be reasonable for the targeted tourism market segments (Keyser, 2009: 142). Quality tourist infrastructure, attractions and activities and other amenities that tourists value may not only attract tourists; it may also make the place significantly more attractive to other place marketing target audiences, such as residents (including skilled workers, entrepreneurs and wealthy retirees) and businesses and investors (De Noni et al., 2014: 224; Sager, 2014; Ries & Trout, 2000). It may also enhance town-brand attitude amongst residents, thereby enhancing local pride and sense of community (De Noni et al., 2014: 224).

4.23 Attractiveness of urban design, nature and climate

A beautiful environment is a major place attraction factor for businesses and residents (Thompson, 2014a). It is regarded as one of the most important measures to create place attachment or loyalty, and also creates a positive place reputation and can even reduce anti-social behaviour (Thompson, 2014a). A beautiful environment may even compensate for lower pay (Henderson & McDaniel, 2005: 92).

A unique or attractive local architecture or building style could be an attraction factor of significance to residents, especially highly skilled workers, and tourists. Houses and buildings should not necessarily be of the same style because it may create a dull visual experience but should, however, in most cases not be too different or architecturally incompatible at neighbourhood level – there should be a balance between monotony and

variation (Thompson, 2014a). Attractive and successful towns and cities are characterised by having unique streetscapes, where one street can be distinguished from another, and more importantly, where the streetscapes of the particular place is different from that of other places (Adams & Tiesdell, 2013: 14). A focal point such as a statue, clock tower, public art, water feature, garden, etc. in a central area or park can add to the sense of place, place identity, and can serve as a place differentiator, especially if these elements are grouped complementarily or in combination with a park, public furniture, recreational area, information plaques, etc. (Thompson, 2014a). Amenities being concentrated at a focal point is especially important for small towns or places with low visitor numbers to create vibrancy, even though the local population or visitor numbers may be small (Gehl, 2010: 71).

Parks and other forms of man-made open green space are important place attraction factors, especially for families and businesses who in turn wish to attract talented employees who may have families (Sager, 2014). A positive relationship exists between the presence of attractive natural environments (including man-made parks and gardens) and level of life satisfaction and happiness (Crompton & Hoffman, 2013: 68). A beautiful landscape with scenic beauty surrounding the place, and opportunities to take a scenic drive in the vicinity is a very important attraction factor for residents and tourists (Keyser, 2009: 89; McManus et al., 2012: 26; Sager, 2014). Interesting archaeological and palaeontological resources, interesting geological formations of tourism value (as opposed to mining value, covered in the next section), mountains, caves, geysers, hot springs, beaches and marine areas, fauna and flora, conservation areas, natural history museums and interpretation centres may attract tourists (Keyser, 2009: 89-90).

A pleasant climate is considered a very important place attraction factor (McManus et al., 2012: 26; Henderson & McDaniel, 2005: 92) to attract residents, highly skilled workers and businesses (Mercer LLC, 2007: 2; Mercer LLC, 2015: 2-3), as well as tourists (Keyser, 2009: 89). There are exceptions, however: some tourism market segments, e.g., skiers, are attracted to cold, snowy climates (Keyser, 2009: 89).

4.24 Exploitable natural resources

Natural resources such as fertile soil with cultivation, irrigation and high grazing potential, flat topography, and an agriculturally favourable climate free of extreme weather events and disease outbreaks are considered important components of local natural capital stock, and are attraction factors for investment in agriculture and agro-processing and for businesses and workers involved in the agricultural value chain (Debertin, 1993: 5; OSCE, 2006: 25; Pender et al., 2012: 10). Forestry and wood processing-related investment and businesses are attracted by fairly cheap land and high precipitation (Smith, 2006: 402-408). Investors, businesses and entrepreneurs interested in the fisheries sector are attracted to areas with a coastal front with nutrient- and therefore fish-rich waters in the case of wild marine fisheries (Anderson & Seijo, 2010: 3-9, 231-248; Hunter, 2011: 7-25), or to the presence of clean water, low-cost fish feedstock and, possibly, natural ponds in the case of aquaculture (Lucas & Southgate, 2012: 4-10, 18-46, 52-61). Mining and downstream mineral beneficiation-related investment, businesses and workers are attracted by exploitable mineral resources (Kesler & Simson, 2016: 7-9). Because industry, businesses and future residential developments need water, there should be reliable sources of raw water for new developments to attract new businesses, industries and future residents (Baumann, Boland & Hanemann, 1997: 2-6).

4.25 Cost competitiveness

Costs of living, doing business and visiting a place are critical place selection criteria for the main place marketing target audiences of skilled workers or residents, investors or businesses, and tourists, respectively (Keyser, 2009: 126-143; OSCE, 2006: 17; The World Bank, 2016: 9).

4.26 Conclusion

Chapter 4 introduced the concept of place attraction factors, i.e., characteristics of a place that 'pull' typical place marketing target audiences to a place, such as infrastructure of

sufficient capacity and in a good condition, social amenities, a low crime rate, job or business opportunities, quality education and healthcare facilities, good governance and efficient public service delivery, etc. It was emphasised that some place attraction factors are more important than others to particular groups of target audiences, and therefore, as also discussed in the previous chapter, it was emphasised again in this chapter how important it is that a place must design its mix of attraction factors according to the needs of its particular target audiences. This chapter concluded the literature review chapters of this study. Now that the background has been set, the research methodology will be described in depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: *RESEARCH METHODOLOGY*

5.1   Introduction and general research design

In short, this study started with a thorough review of place marketing and digital marketing literature to identify the various digital marketing channels or techniques that smaller towns or rural municipalities and communities can potentially and realistically employ to market themselves amongst place marketing target audiences. Then, evaluative qualitative web content analysis, which is a qualitative research method (see section 5.2), was used to study the actual digital marketing practices of 20 case study local municipalities and their main towns. Case study research is a qualitative research technique which focusses on the in-depth analysis of a single or small number of units of interest to extract deep insights, which would have been otherwise difficult using other research techniques (University of Surrey, 2017). The 20 case-study local municipalities were selected based on general municipal governance and service delivery criteria (see section 5.4) to include ten generally well-managed municipalities and ten generally poorly managed municipalities. This study is therefore a combination of various research methods, including literature review, qualitative content analysis and case study research. The combination of content analysis and case study methodologies is considered an innovative and potentially powerful research method (Bengry-Howell et al., 2011: 2-4). However, qualitative content analysis was the main research technique used in this study, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Survey research and interviews with LED planners or persons responsible for place marketing has not been chosen as research techniques because this study is limited to the actual digital marketing footprint of the municipality, not the reasons behind the footprint, otherwise the scope of this study (which is already stretched to the maximum as explained in section 1.7) would have been too broad. However, further research as discussed in section 7.5 will benefit from research techniques involving discussions with persons associated with place marketing.

5.2   Introduction to evaluative qualitative web content analysis

This study used qualitative content analysis as the primary research method. Content analysis is a qualitative research technique that objectively and systematically describes and analyses any form of recorded human communication, such as text in newspapers, magazines and websites, social media conversations, audio-recorded conversations, audio-visual content in videos or interactive websites, etc. The aim of such analysis is to study or extract meaning from: themes or topics of discussion; occurrence of and relationships between concepts in communication; context, attitudes, intentions or motives of the author; and public opinion; and, as is applicable to this study, analyse the effectiveness and persuasiveness of the communication material. Although content analysis is a qualitative research method, it does contain elements of quantitative analysis, such as the identification of parameters or scores for specific elements, referred to as a coding framework or an assessment rubric (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 144-145; Niewenhuis, 2007: 101; Creswell, 2013: 190; Mouton, 2001: 165-167).

Codification of content allows for the systematic and objective analysis of content and to obtain a more specific, measurable, replicable and deep understanding of the content beyond general impressionistic observations, which is considered an important advantage of this research method (Creswell, 2013: 194-222; Welman et al., 2005: 213-215). Other important advantages of content analysis include its unobtrusiveness and its ability to analyse large volumes of data in a cost-efficient manner. Ethical issues are therefore very limited, as discussed in section 1.6. Disadvantages of content analysis is that it can be time consuming and laborious. It also bears the risk of subjective interpretation, which may compromise the reliability and validity of the results (Chakravarty, 2013). Reliability, in the context of qualitative content analysis, refers to the need for the coding scheme (see section 5.5) to consistently produce the same results, irrespective of what researcher is doing the coding work, and to be able to repeat the study and expect the same results from a second research attempt. Validity, in the context of qualitative content analysis, refers to the ability of the coding scheme to accurately reflect the true quality of the content that has been analysed. To manage reliability and validity concerns, the researcher did all analyses himself, which addressed the issue of inter-coder reliability. Another and more

important mitigation measure was to develop a clear and extensive coding framework based on the clearly described digital place marketing best practices as set out in the literature review chapters of this dissertation (Creswell, 2013: 201-203).

The coding framework that was developed for content analysis for this study can be seen in Annexure 1, while Chapter 2 serves as the description of the coding framework used during content analysis, with further supportive descriptions provided in Chapters 3 and 4. Overall, the assessment criteria used in this study are clearly reflected and captured in detailed categories or themes and subcategories and subthemes in a systematic coding scheme (see Annexure 1), and are thoroughly described in this dissertation and well supported with references to the literature based on plausible and widely accepted theoretical considerations, which reduce the risk of both reliability and validity issues (Kuckartz, 2014: 78, 102, 151-155).

Although content analysis as a research method is well established for traditional media such as written and printed material, its application to the digital world is in its infancy. Some scholars, such as McMillan (as cited in Herring, 2010: 233-238), believe traditional content analysis techniques can be directly applied to online content as well, because it does not matter whether content is in printed or digital format. However, digital or online content does differ to some degree from traditional printed content, such as the fact that online content is dynamic (changes often) and, due to hyperlinks that connect the reader to other pages, the sample size of content to be analysed can be huge and unclear (e.g., the sample website can link to many other websites). These scholars propose some minor adjustments to the traditional content analysis methods to accommodate these differences, such as to limit sample size to only the main page or most important pages of a website, or the first page or first few results of a search-results page (Herring, 2010: 233-250).

Three basic types of qualitative content analysis exist. The first and simplest type is thematic content analysis which focusses on the simple identification of categories or themes in a text. The second and more advanced type is evaluative content analysis which takes thematic content analysis a step further by evaluating the degree to which categories or themes are covered in a text, which may range from no coverage at all to

very well or completely covered based on a standard description of subtopics or content that should ideally be covered or that could be regarded as full coverage. The last and most advanced type of qualitative content analysis is type-building content analysis which takes evaluative content analysis a step further by identifying multidimensional patterns and links between concepts and builds models and theories based on insights gained. It also involves in-depth analysis using additional qualitative research techniques such as grounded theory and discourse analysis (Kuckartz, 2014: 65-70, 88, 103-112). This study adopted the evaluative content analysis approach. For this reason, and because analysis is applied to web or online content, as mentioned above, the exact or detailed description of the main research method adopted by this study can be described as "evaluative qualitative web content analysis". Basic steps in conducting an evaluative qualitative web content analysis study are as follows (Herring, 2010: 233-250):

- Step 1: Formulation of the research questions and hypothesis
- Step 2: Selection of case study municipalities and content to analyse
- Step 3: Definition of categories and development of a coding scheme, including a digital place marketing practices assessment criteria list and assessment scale
- Step 4: Primary data research using the digital place marketing practices criteria list and assessment scale
- Step 5: Analysis and interpretation of the selected case study towns' digital place marketing practices

This study adopted and successfully implemented all the above steps. Each step will now be explained in more detail.

5.3   Formulation of the research questions and hypothesis

As required by qualitative content analysis as a research technique, the first step was to formulate the research questions and hypothesis for this study (Herring, 2010: 235-241). The first research question identified was "What digital place marketing strategies can smaller communities in South Africa potentially use to attract and retain desired target audiences?", which led to the second question, namely "To what extent do places use

these digital place marketing strategies in practice?" The hypothesis was that South African local municipalities and communities do not properly utilise digital place marketing techniques. The rationale behind the research questions and hypothesis is described in depth in Chapter 1 and will not be repeated here.

5.4   Selection of case study municipalities and content to analyse

Qualitative content analysis requires that after the research questions and hypothesis are identified the sample of text or content to be analysed should be identified. More precisely, for this study, it meant that the municipalities or towns to be focussed upon (case study selection) and the types of digital content to be analysed needed to be clarified (Herring, 2010: 234-244). Regarding the types of digital content to be analysed, focus was limited to the most important digital media or channels identified and described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5), namely websites, blogs, electronic or email newsletters, social media, travel directory and review site listing, online communities and discussion forums, mapping service listings, wikis, online advertising, and mobile apps. The case study municipalities were selected to include ten generally well managed and ten generally poorly managed municipalities, based on the Government Performance Index which in turn is based on municipal governance and service delivery performance, as compiled by Good Governance Africa (BusinessTech, 2016; Yende, 2016).

Only local municipalities were included, not metropolitan or district municipalities. Although it was attempted to select the ten best and ten worst performing municipalities, the list was adapted to include a broader spectrum of municipalities; otherwise, almost all best performing case study municipalities would have been from the Western Cape and almost all worst performing case study municipalities from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It was attempted to include at least one municipality from each province, with the selected municipalities still falling within the top or bottom forty South African municipalities. Based on these selection criteria, the selected best managed (strong) municipalities include:

- Swellendam Local Municipality in the Western Cape province, which includes the towns of Swellendam (main town and seat of government), Barrydale, Buffeljagsrivier, Infanta, Malagas and Suurbraak.

- Hessequa Local Municipality in the Western Cape province, which includes the towns of Riversdale (main town and seat of government), Heidelberg, Still Bay, Albertinia, Gouritz, Jongensfontein, Slangrivier and Witsand.

- Bergrivier Local Municipality in the Western Cape province, which includes the towns of Piketberg (main town and seat of government), Velddrif, Porterville, Aurora, Eendekuil and Redelinghuys.

- Swartland Local Municipality in the Western Cape province, which includes the towns of Malmesbury (main town and seat of government), Moorreesburg, Darling, Abbotsdale, Chatsworth, Grotto Bay, Kalbaskraal, Koringberg, Riebeeck Kasteel, Riebeeck West, Riverlands and Yzerfontein.

- Emthanjeni Local Municipality in the Northern Cape province, which includes the towns of De Aar (main town and seat of government), Hanover, Britstown, Burgerville and Griesenkraal.

- Metsimaholo Local Municipality in the Free State Province, which includes the towns of Sasolburg (main town and seat of government), Deneysville and Oranjeville.

- Kouga Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province, which includes the towns of Jeffreys Bay (main town and seat of government), Humansdorp, Cape St Francis, St Francis Bay, Hankey, Oyster Bay and Patensie.

- Lesedi Local Municipality in Gauteng province, which includes the towns of Heidelberg (main town and seat of government) and Devon.

- Kwa Sani Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province, which includes the town of Underberg (main town and seat of government).

- Govan Mbeki Local Municipality in Mpumalanga province, which includes the towns of Secunda (main town and seat of government), Bethal, Evander and Trichardt.

The selected worst managed (weak) municipalities include:

- Ingquza Hill Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province, which includes the towns of Flagstaff (main town and seat of government) and Lusikisiki.

- Mkhondo Local Municipality in Mpumalanga province, which includes the towns of eMkhondo (previously Piet Retief, main town and seat of government) and Amsterdam.

- Greater Giyani Local Municipality in Limpopo province, which includes the town of Giyani (main town and seat of government).

- Mbhashe Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province, which includes the towns of Dutywa (main town and seat of government), Elliotdale and Willowvale.

- Maphumulo Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province, which includes the town of Maphumulo (main town and seat of government).

- Engcobo Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province, which includes the town of Ngcobo (main town and seat of government).

- Ndwedwe Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province, which includes the town of Ndwedwe (main town and seat of government).

- Greater Taung Local Municipality in North West province, which includes the towns of Taung (main town and seat of government), Reivilo and Pudimoe.

- Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality in Limpopo province, which includes the towns of Marble Hall (main town and seat of government) and Elandskraal.

- Kagisano-Molopo Local Municipality in North West province, which includes the towns of Ganyesa (main town and seat of government), Morokweng, Piet Plessis and Pomfret.

After case study towns had been selected and types of digital channels or media to be analysed (in other words, the digital footprint of the selected case study municipalities) had been identified, the next step was to identify specific concepts, themes or categories that needed to be assessed in the digital content, which will be discussed next.

5.5 Definition of categories and development of a coding scheme, including a digital place marketing practices assessment criteria list and assessment scale

After case studies or sample content to be analysed have been identified, the research technique of qualitative content analysis requires that a literature review must be conducted on the broader topic of investigation to identify more specific elements to "look out for" or consider in the text or content to be analysed. These elements include themes, subthemes, categories and subcategories of the topic under investigation, or specific concepts that directly relate to the research questions (Herring, 2010: 235-241). Therefore, a coding scheme or systematic framework of digital place marketing best practices was developed based on literature research on digital marketing best practices and general digital marketing research methodology proposed by Kannan and Li (2016: 4-10), Fernández-Cavia, Rovira, Díaz-Luque and Cavaller (2013: 7-11) and Feeney and Brown (2016: 3-8, 11). This framework became the basis of a list of criteria (see Annexure 1) against which each case study municipality's digital marketing practices, or digital presence, were assessed on a scale, as explained in the next section. Each assessment criterion was described individually in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5).

5.6 Primary data research using the digital place marketing practices criteria list and assessment scale

After the assessment framework had been developed (see Annexure 1), the primary data research phase started, where the content to be analysed was assessed against the criteria listed in the framework. The approach to conduct the evaluation of the content was based on the method recommended by Kannan and Li (2016: 4-10) which provide a broad and generic framework to assess digital marketing practices in general. This method was adapted for places, as opposed to general digital marketing practices, by incorporating the method proposed by Feeney and Brown (2016: 3-8, 11), which focusses on the researching of digital marketing practices of smaller municipalities, and that by Fernández-Cavia et al. (2013: 7-11), which focusses on the researching of digital marketing practices of tourist destinations.

This assessment scale enabled the evaluative assessment of the actual digital marketing practices of each case study municipality. This enabled actual digital marketing practices to be compared against what ideally should have been done by the case study municipalities to market themselves amongst target audiences in the new digital economy. The rating scale measures actual performance or implementation of each criterion (digital place marketing channel or practice) on a scale of zero to 5 (adapted from Mathews, Bianchi, Perks, Healy & Wickramasekera, 2016: 823):

- 0: Not implemented at all.
- 1: Very poor implementation.
- 2: Poor implementation.
- 3: Satisfactory implementation, minimum expected, just good enough, but not outstanding, and does not serve a marketing differentiation or brand-building purpose.
- 4: Good implementation, per best practice or "by the book".
- 5: Excellent implementation, more than best practice, innovative, helps to set the place apart from other places that implement digital marketing according to best practices or "according to the book" (a score of 5 indicates that the place "writes the book", they don't just follow it).

A satisfactory level of performance, as used during data analysis and discussion in Chapter 6, is considered to be an average score of 2.5 out of 5 or higher.

5.7 Analysis and interpretation of the selected case study towns' digital place marketing practices

The actual digital marketing channels and practices utilised by the case study towns, including the degree to which they showcase their place attraction factors on these digital platforms, was compared to theoretical best practice using the methodology explained above. Digital marketing performance of the case study municipalities was then analysed and compared against each other and against the ideal or theoretical performance, as presented in Annexures 3 and 4, and discussed in Chapter 6. This chapter also includes

the synthesis of the analysis and generalisations that were made about performance in specific categories or themes in digital place marketing. Lastly, conclusions are drawn in Chapter 7. The original research question, i.e., whether smaller towns or their municipalities in South Africa use digital place marketing channels and techniques sufficiently, is also answered in Chapter 7. This chapter also addresses the main research hypothesis, i.e., that South African local municipalities do not properly utilise digital place marketing techniques. Broad, overall recommendations are also made to improve digital place marketing by municipalities and their communities in a South African context, at a strategic or policy level.

5.8   Conclusion

Chapter 5 described the research methods adopted for this study, namely qualitative web content analysis, where the web content of 20 case study municipalities, including their websites, blogs, electronic or email newsletters, social media, travel directory and review site listing, online communities and discussion forums, mapping service listings, wikis, online advertising, and mobile apps were assessed. Therefore, this study used a combination of content analysis and case study research. A digital place marketing practices criteria list and assessment scale was developed to systematically evaluate and assess the quality and persuasiveness of the above-mentioned content. The results of the assessment will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: *RESULTS AND DISCUSSION*

6.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the results based on a score out of 5, as discussed in sections 5.5 and 5.6, using a scorecard presented in Annexure 1. A satisfactory level of performance is considered to be an average score of 2.5 or higher. Scores for the different aspects of digital place marketing practices of the case study towns or municipalities are graphically presented and discussed, and detailed sub-conclusions drawn where applicable. Satisfactory scores (i.e., scores of 2.5 out of 5 or higher) are indicated by green bars. Poor attempts (i.e., a score lower than 2.5 but higher than zero) are indicated by red bars. Where no attempt has been made or the digital place marketing practice is not implemented at all (i.e., getting a score of zero), bars are black coloured. For a detailed discussion of the methodology employed, see Chapter 5.

6.2   Raw data

Annexure 3 provides the digital marketing implementation score for each digital marketing channel and aspect for each case study municipality, and Annexure 4 provides a breakdown of how sufficient (satisfactory [good], not satisfactory [poor], or not at all) the case study municipalities implement the different digital marketing channels and aspects. These data will be presented graphically and discussed in the rest of this chapter.

6.3   Overall digital place marketing score

The overall digital place marketing performance of each case study municipality is summarised by a single score, i.e., the overall digital place marketing score which is the average of sub-scores for several components of digital place marketing. The overall digital place marketing performance scores for all case study municipalities are presented in Figure 6.1, where it can be clearly seen that digital marketing implementation is poor

because only two of the 20 case study municipalities obtained a score of higher than 2.5 out of 5. The average overall digital place marketing performance score for all case study municipalities is 1.1 out of 5, with the average for strong municipalities being 1.6 out of 5 and the average for weak municipalities being 0.5 out of 5.
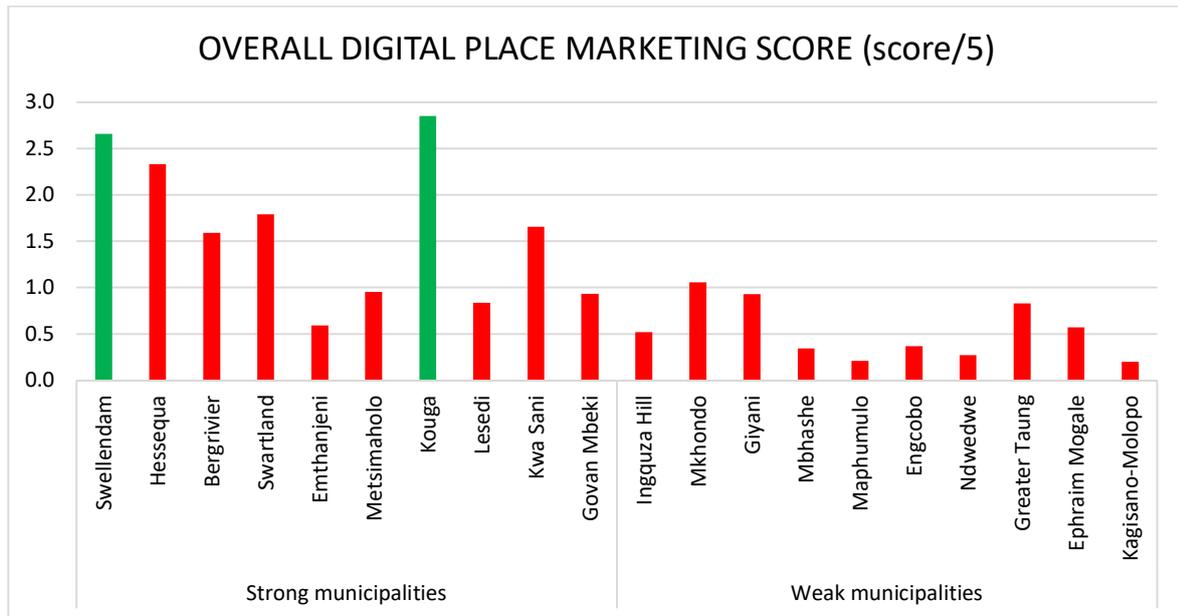
Figure 6.1: Overall digital place marketing score for all case study municipalities

Figure 6.2 indicates how many of the municipalities implement digital place marketing well (therefore falling in the good implementation class), how many implement it poorly (falling in the poor implementation class) and how many do not implement it at all (falling in the "no implementation" class). It illustrates that the generally better performing municipalities (that generally do better in terms of general public service delivery) also do better in digital place marketing implementation. Two out of the ten generally well-functioning municipalities (again, referring to well-functioning in terms of general public service delivery) also implement digital place marketing well. None of the poorly functioning municipalities implement digital place marketing well. However, all case study municipalities do implement at least some form of digital place marketing.

OVERALL DIGITAL PLACE MARKETING SCORE (number of municipalities in the different implementation classes)
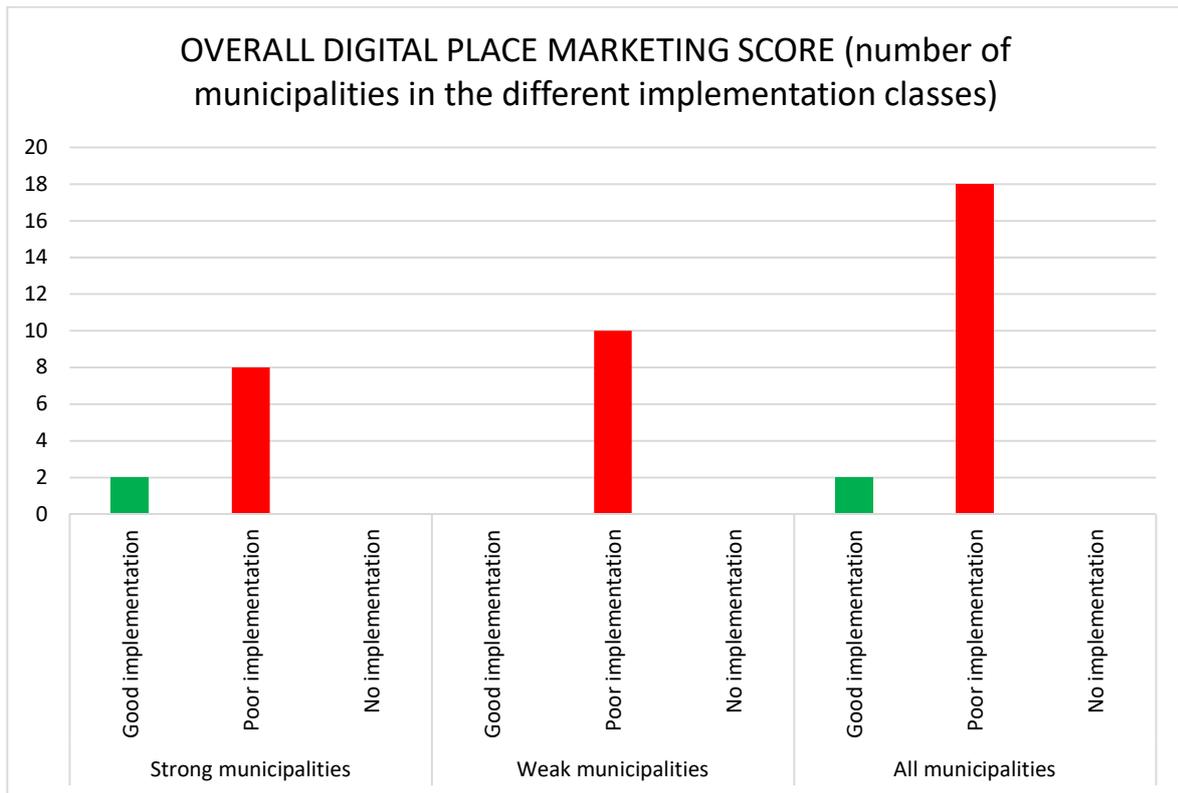
Figure 6.2: Overall digital place marketing score (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

6.4 Overall utilisation of the different digital place marketing channels and practices

Figure 6.3 illustrates that of all main digital marketing channels assessed only online advertising is not utilised by any case study municipality. Poorly utilised channels include wikis and mapping services. Better utilised channels include e-newsletters, blogs and tourism marketing websites, especially in the case of the generally well-performing municipalities (also see Figure 6.4).
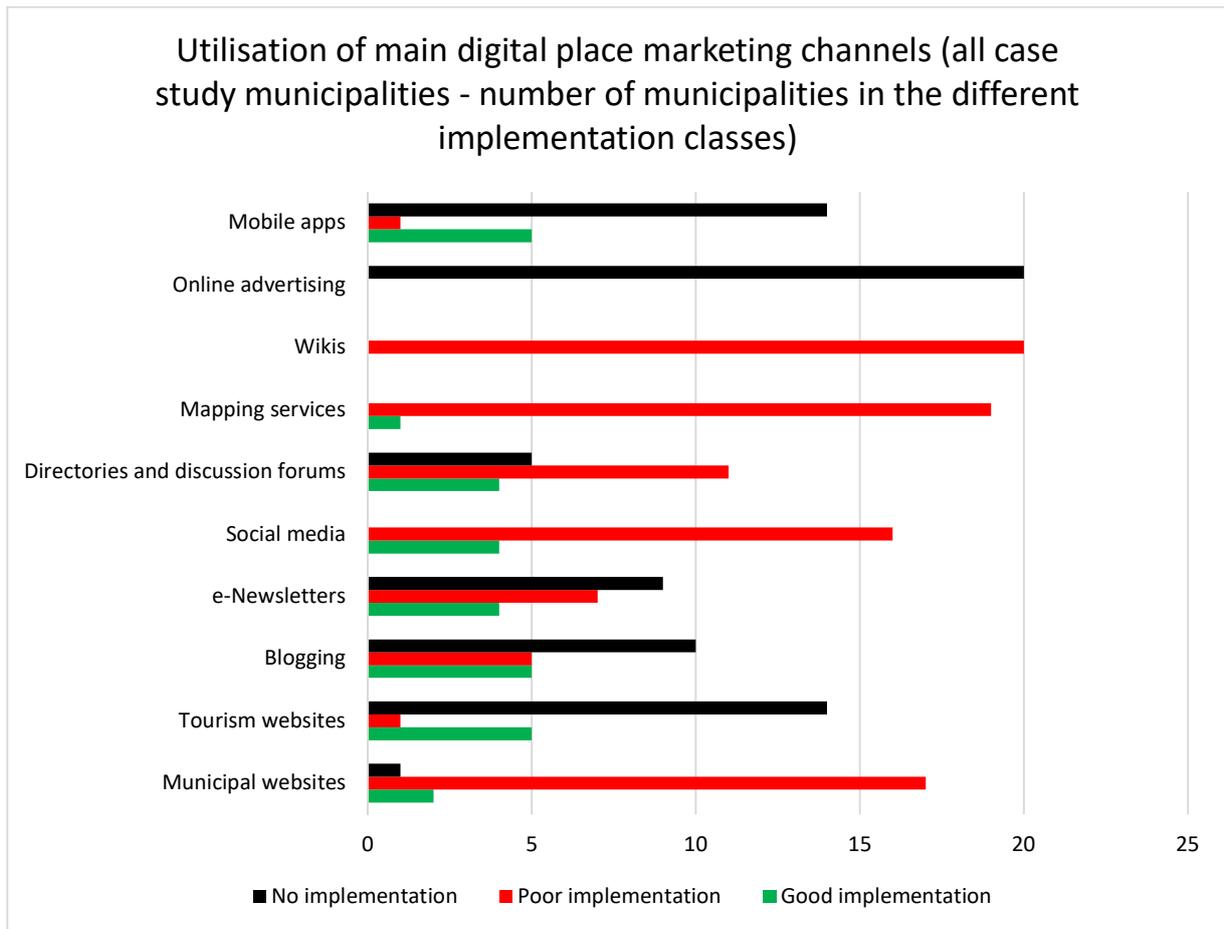
Figure 6.3: Utilisation of main digital place marketing channels (all case study municipalities)

The generally well-performing municipalities tend to make good use of directories and discussion forums (Figure 6.4); however, it is important to note that most of this content is created by visitors and the public, not by the municipality itself. The same applies to some extent to social media.
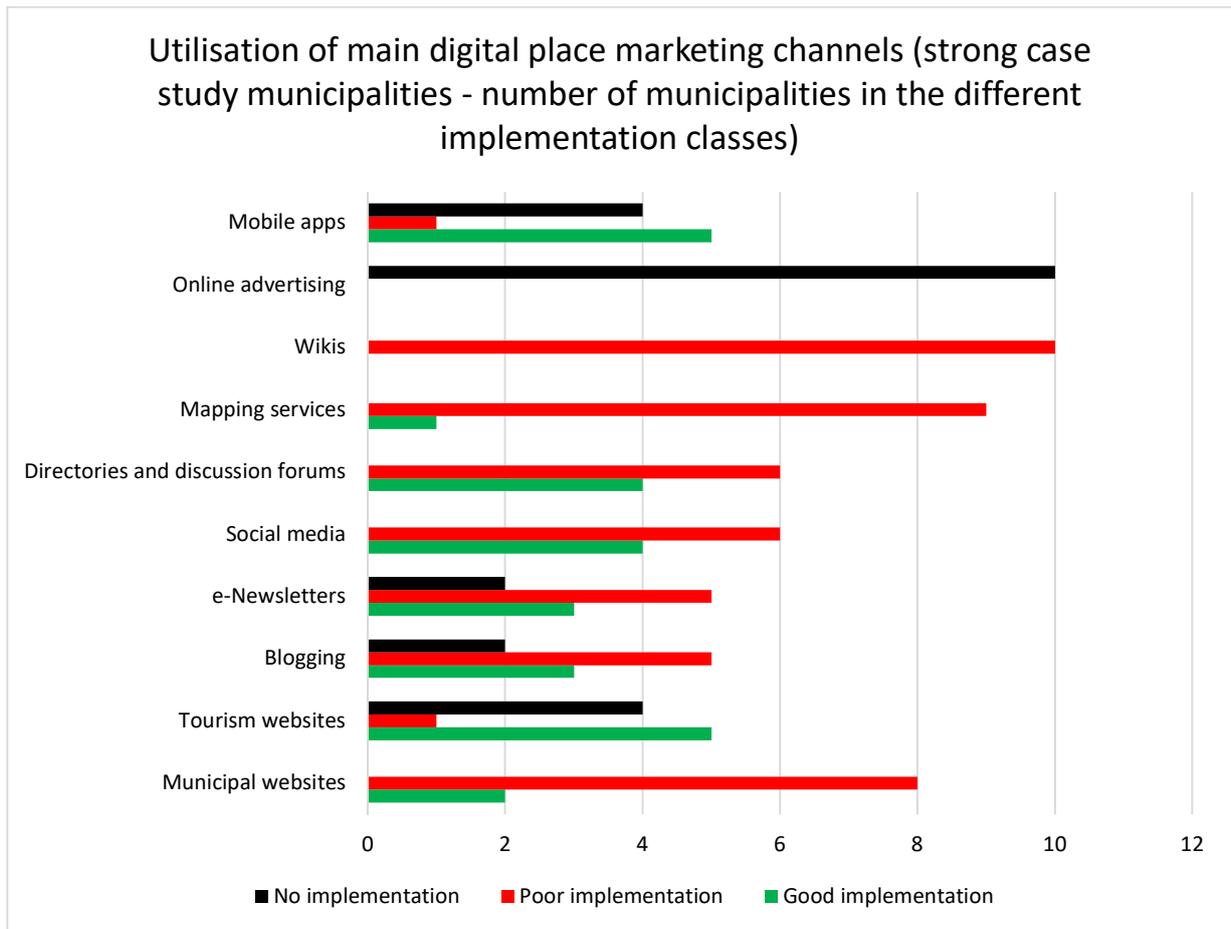
Figure 6.4: Utilisation of main digital place marketing channels (strong case study municipalities)

The poorly performing municipalities are at least covered to a very basic extent by Wikipedia which automatically provides some basic content for each municipality in the country (Figure 6.5). The same applies to mapping services, where mapping service providers such as Google Maps and Bing Maps automatically provide location markers and other information for towns and some sub-places within each municipal area. Community participation on social media plays an important role in making the place discoverable on social media.
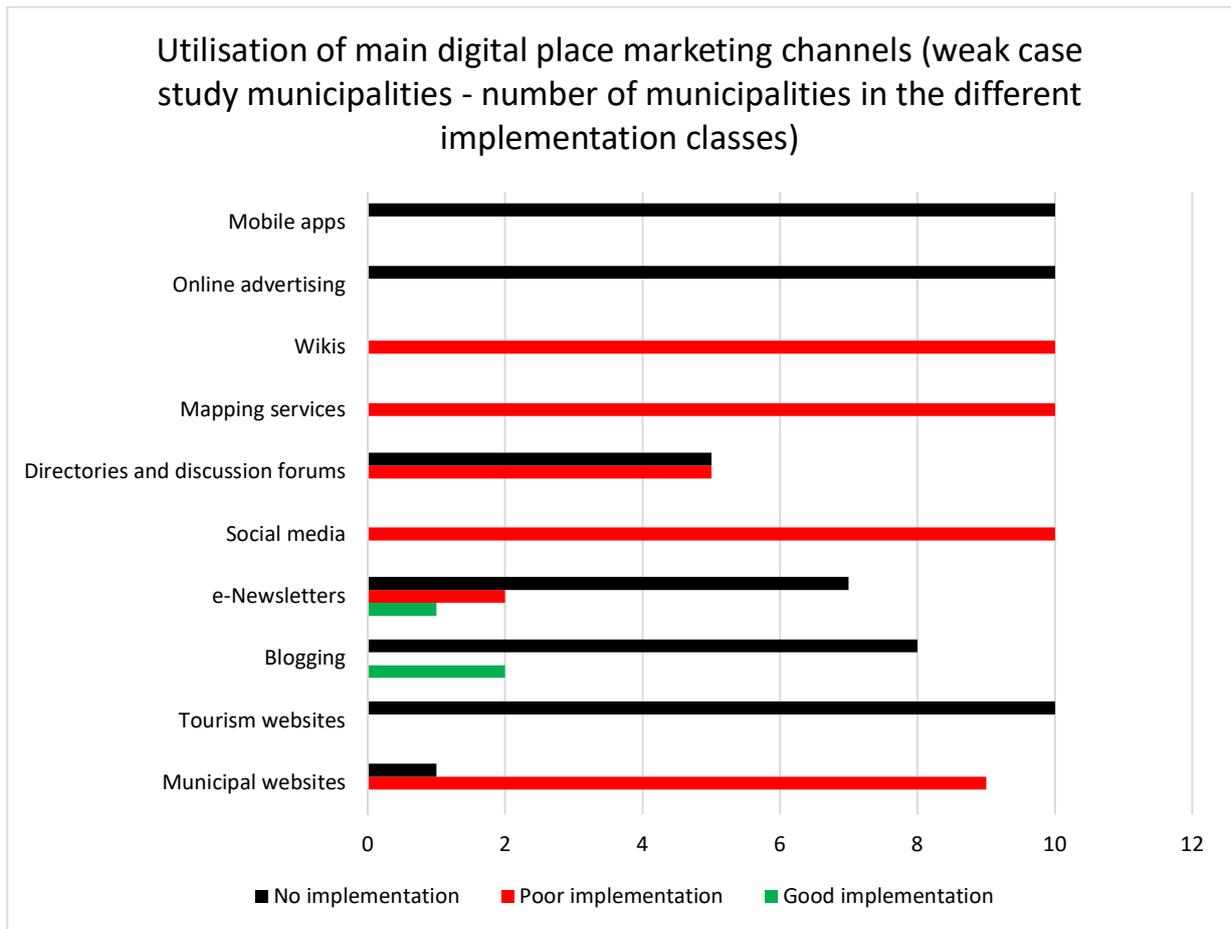
Figure 6.5: Utilisation of main digital place marketing channels (weak case study municipalities)

6.5   Digital maturity level

Figure 6.6 illustrates that the case study municipalities were at a low digital maturity level at the time of analysis. Of the 20 case study municipalities, only two are at level four, two at level three, the majority at level two, and only one at level one.
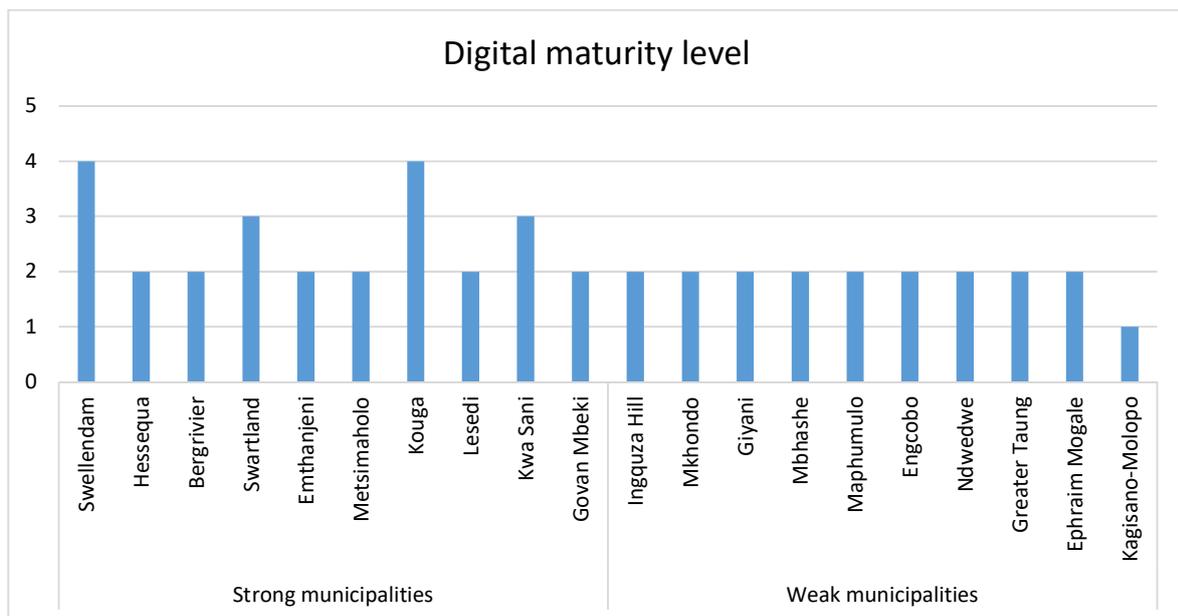
Figure 6.6: Digital maturity level by municipality

6.6 Municipal websites

As stated in section 2.5.1.1, a website should be the main information hub or one-stop shop where target audiences should be able to find information (or at least links to information) for all their place-related information needs, particularly on relevant place attraction factors. However, this is not the case for the overwhelming majority of the case study municipalities. Municipal websites are implemented to a satisfactory level (average) by only two of the 20 case study municipalities (two of the strong municipalities), poorly by 17 (eight of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities), and not at all by one of the weak municipalities (Figure 6.7).
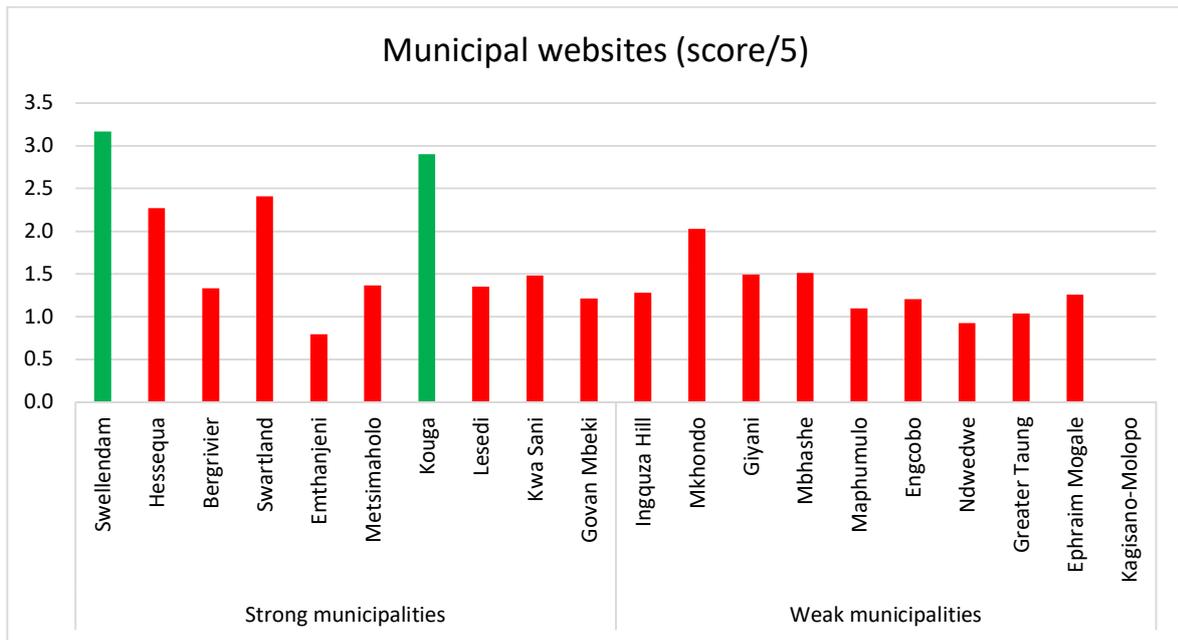
Figure 6.7: Municipal websites (score/5) - implementation by municipality

The generally better performing municipalities also tend to perform better in terms of websites – all ten strong municipalities have a website, of which two are good websites. None of the ten poorly performing municipalities have good websites, and one of them does not even have a website at all (Figure 6.8).
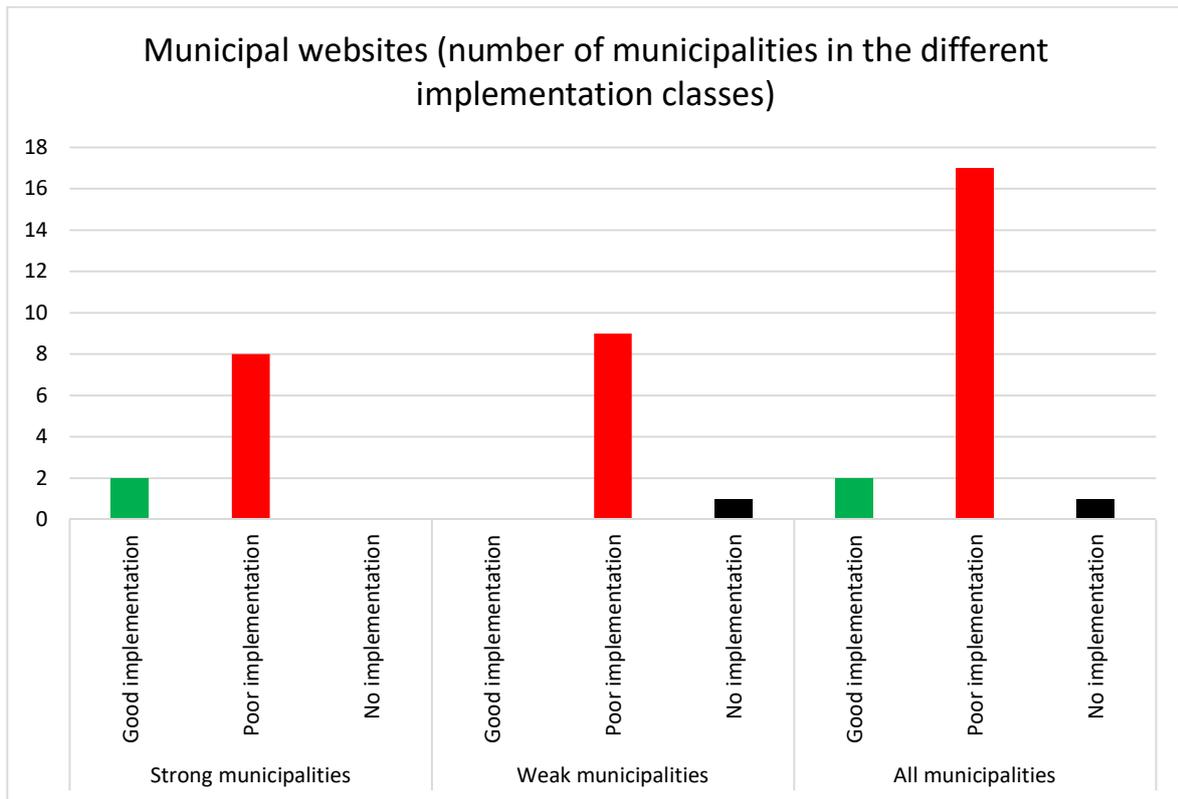
Figure 6.8: Municipal websites (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Figure 6.9 provides an overview of the different aspects of the municipal website assessment criteria, and whether these criteria are sufficiently implemented, poorly implemented or not implemented at all by the case study municipalities. The different aspects of website utilisation for place marketing purposes by the case study municipalities will be discussed in depth in the rest of this section.
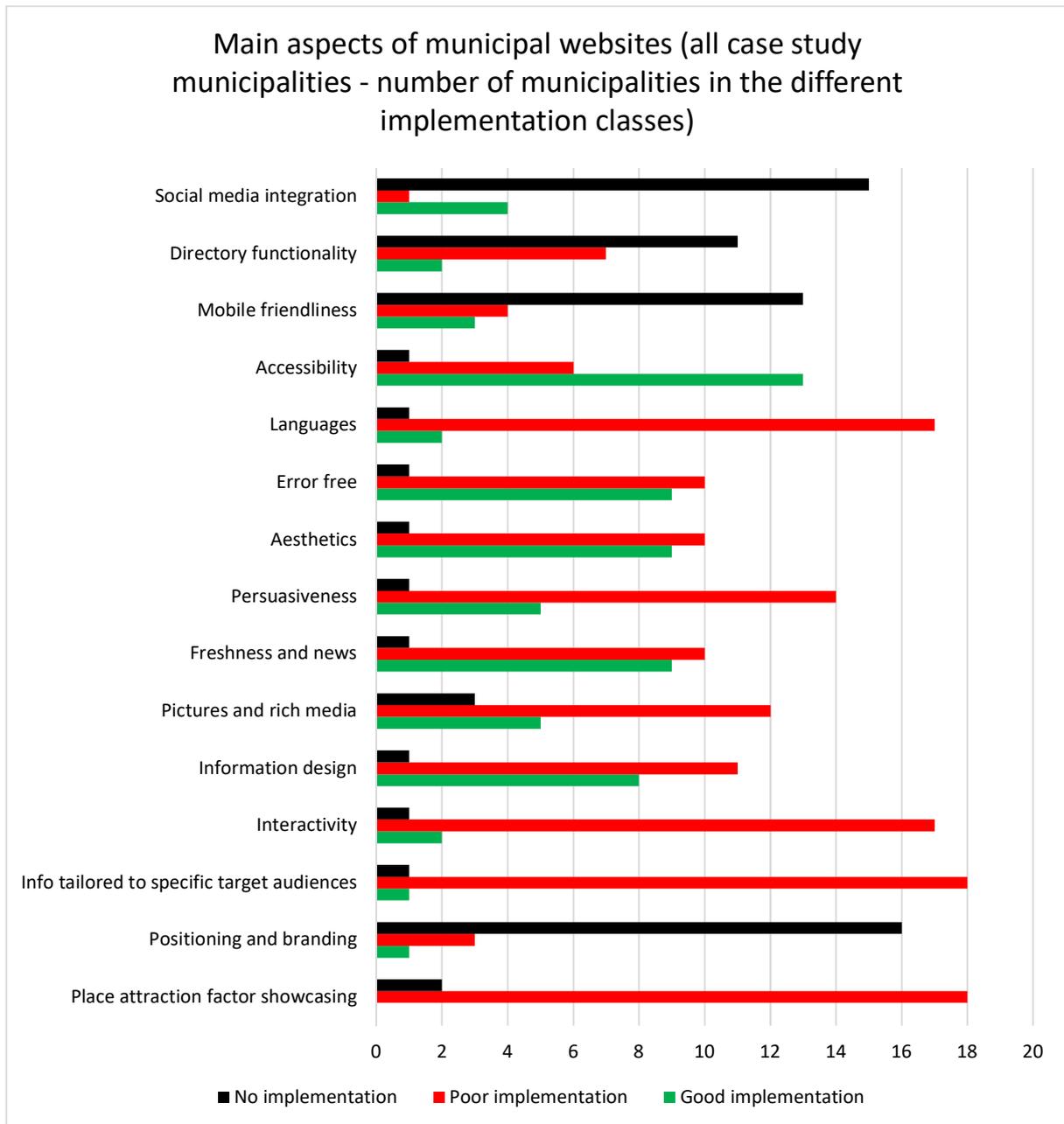
Figure 6.9: Main aspects of municipal websites (all case study municipalities)

6.6.1 *Place attraction factor showcasing*

None of the 20 case study municipalities showcase their place attraction factors to a satisfactory level. This is done poorly by 18 (all of the strong and eight of the weak municipalities), and not at all by two of the weak municipalities (Figures 6.10 and 6.11).
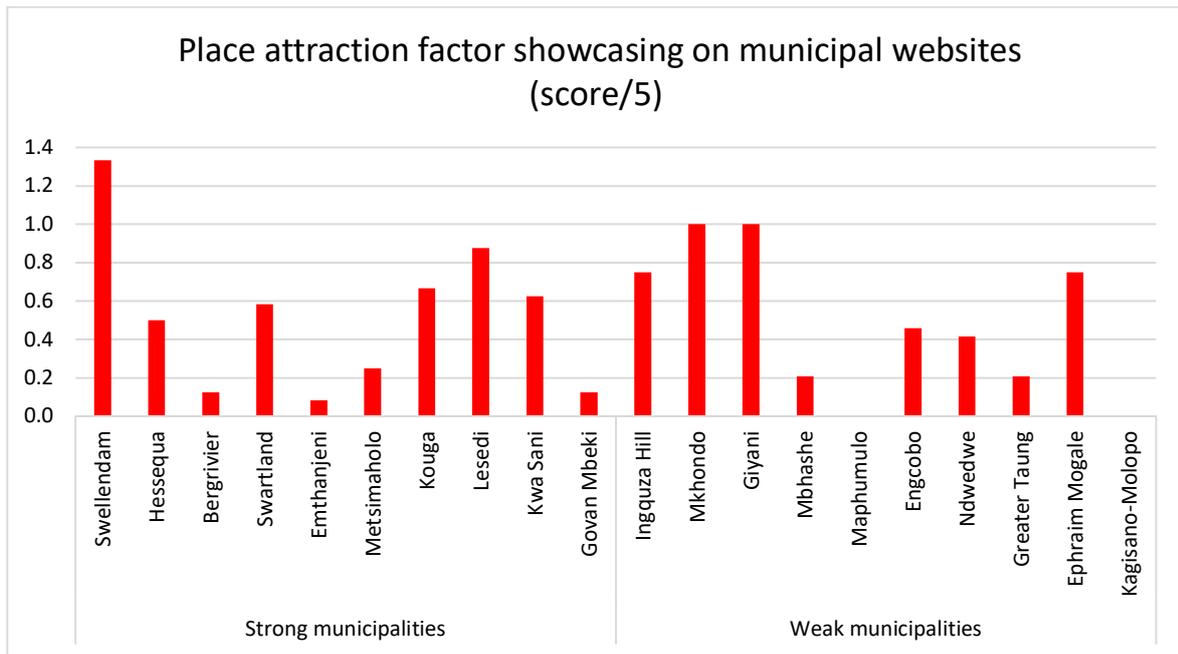
Figure 6.10: Place attraction factor showcasing on municipal websites (score/5) - implementation by municipality
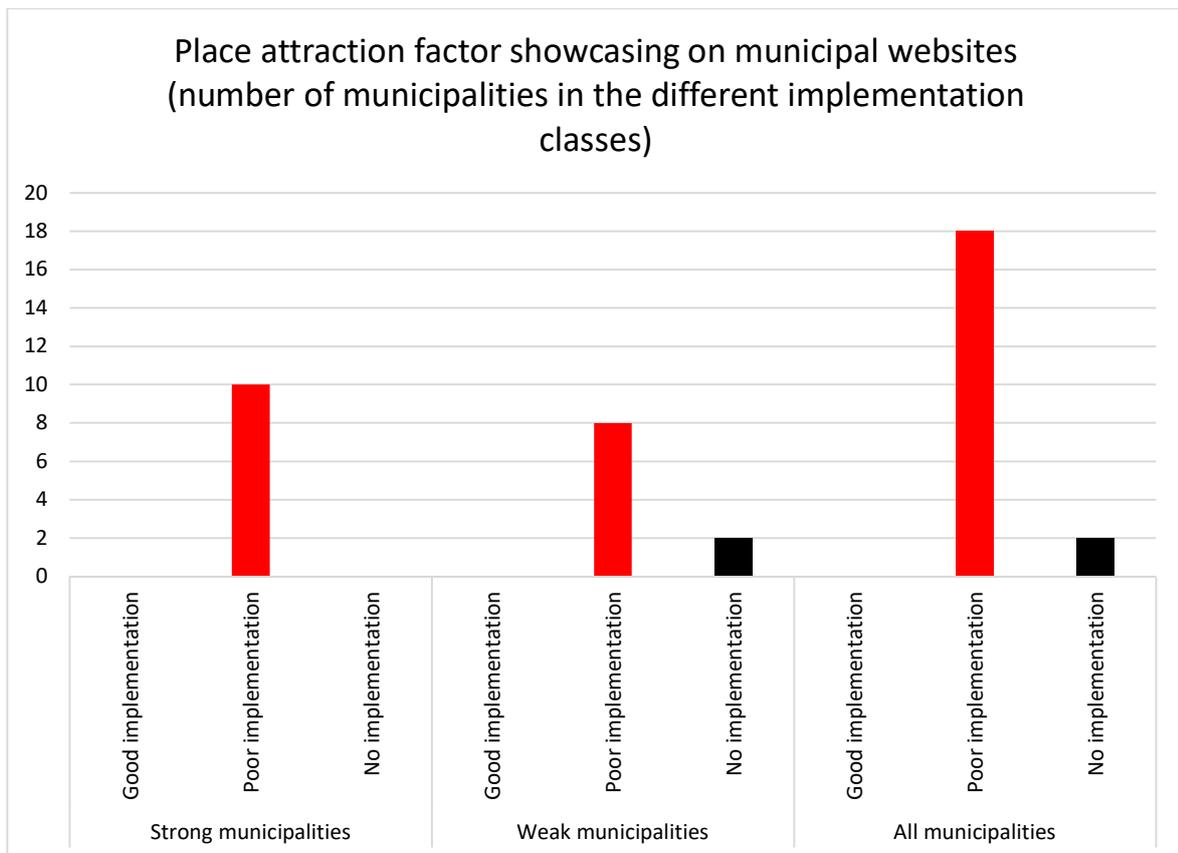
Figure 6.11: Place attraction factor showcasing on municipal websites (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Figure 6.12 illustrates the degree to which the different place attraction factors are showcased on the case study municipality websites. Important remarks are as follows:

Location: Most municipalities do provide a description of geographical location, but very few indicate it graphically on a map, which the user would understand much better. None of the municipalities place location in context of natural resources, trade routes and major markets in the region, which can be of major interest to potential investors and entrepreneurs.

Demographic description: In cases where it is provided as main content, discussions focus on social issues and access to basic services and not on income and skills which are of great importance to investors and entrepreneurs, e.g., in the case of Ndwedwe.

Economic description: In spite of its importance, the economy receives little attention in all case study municipalities. Some municipalities completely ignore the topic, while others provide a very basic economic breakdown based on intuition or on very basic census data. There is no attempt to systematically discuss the diversity of the economy, industry cluster formation, the local business climate, and competitiveness factors.

Governance: Although detailed information on roles, responsibilities, appointments and organisational structure are provided, there is little to no evidence of actual governance-related performance, which is an important issue for place marketing target audiences.
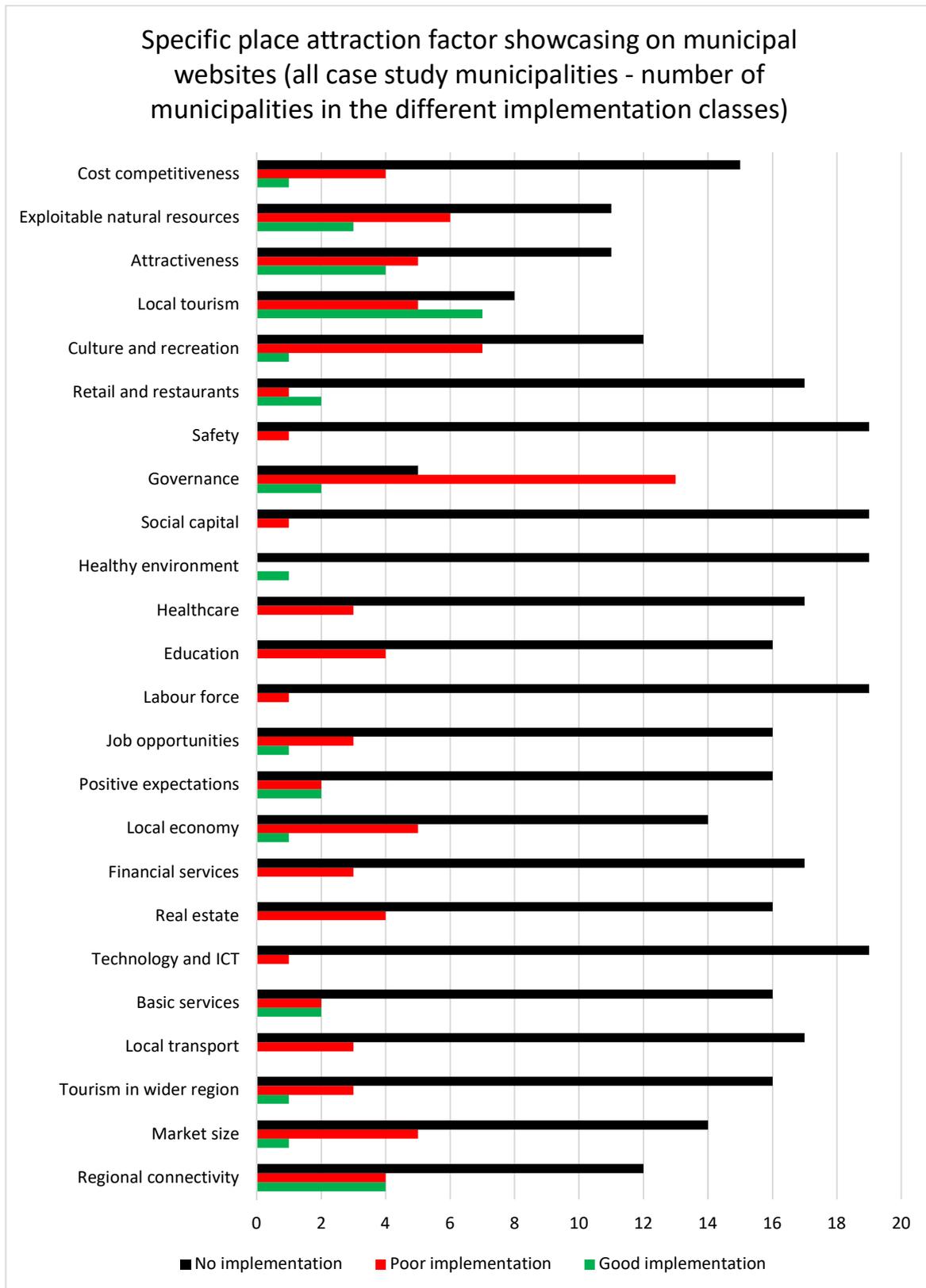
Figure 6.12: Specific place attraction factor showcasing on municipal websites (all case study municipalities)

6.6.2　Positioning and branding

Figure 6.9 illustrates that place positioning and branding are properly implemented by one of the 20 case study municipalities (one of the strong municipalities), poorly by three (one of the strong and two of the weak municipalities), and not at all by the remaining 16 cases (eight of the strong and eight of the weak municipalities). Even though the theory emphasises how important it is that target audiences must be made aware of how a place is different and better compared to other competing places (see section 2.5.1.2), it is not clearly communicated on the website through information provisioning or branding. The few that does highlight a differentiator or unique selling proposition tend to focus on a generic place attribute which does not represent a place attraction factor that matters most to key target audiences. Although searching for and finding websites are problematic for places without a unique, distinctive name, which is key to place positioning, it is even more problematic in the case of social media as discussed in section 6.10.

6.6.3　Information tailored to specific target audiences

The theory clearly states that website content that are interesting, appealing, relevant and useful to the specific target audience groups are the most important tool for modern place marketing (see section 2.5.1.3). However, as illustrated in Figures 6.13 and 6.14, information is tailored to specific place marketing target audiences to a satisfactory level by only one case study municipality (one of the strong municipalities), poorly by 18 cases (nine of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities). Most case study municipal website information are characterised by generic mission and vision statements, barely useful organograms and outdated rates and policies, with some useful information hidden as technical, user-unfriendly downloadable documents.
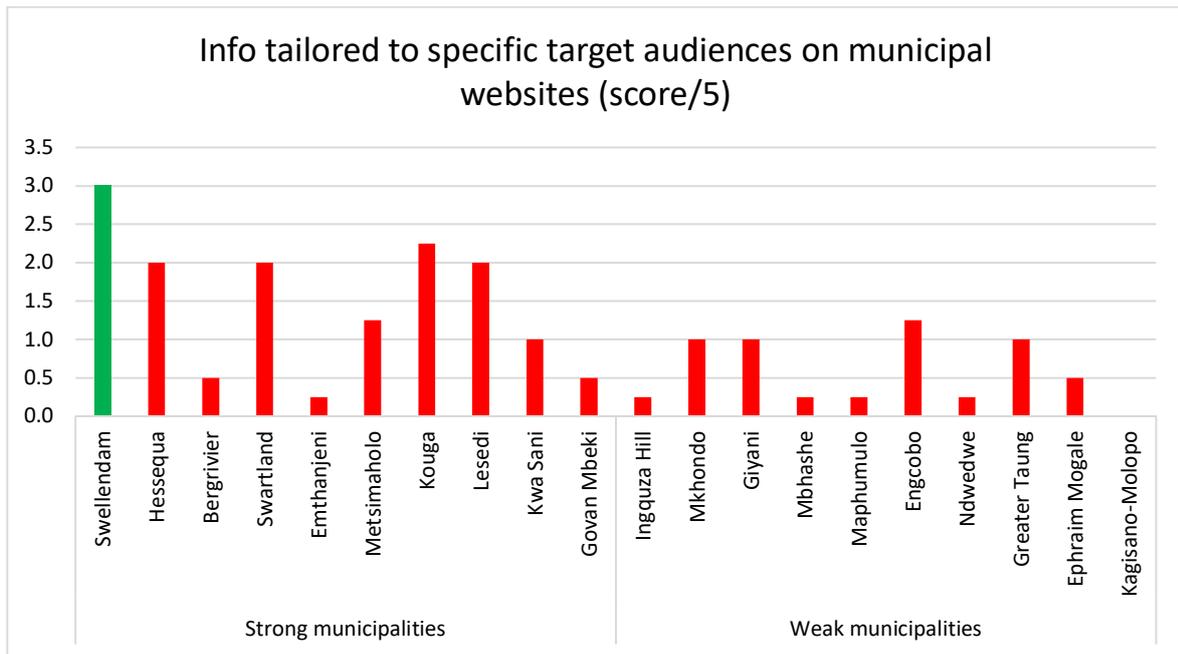
Figure 6.13: Info tailored to specific target audiences on municipal websites (score/5) - implementation by municipality
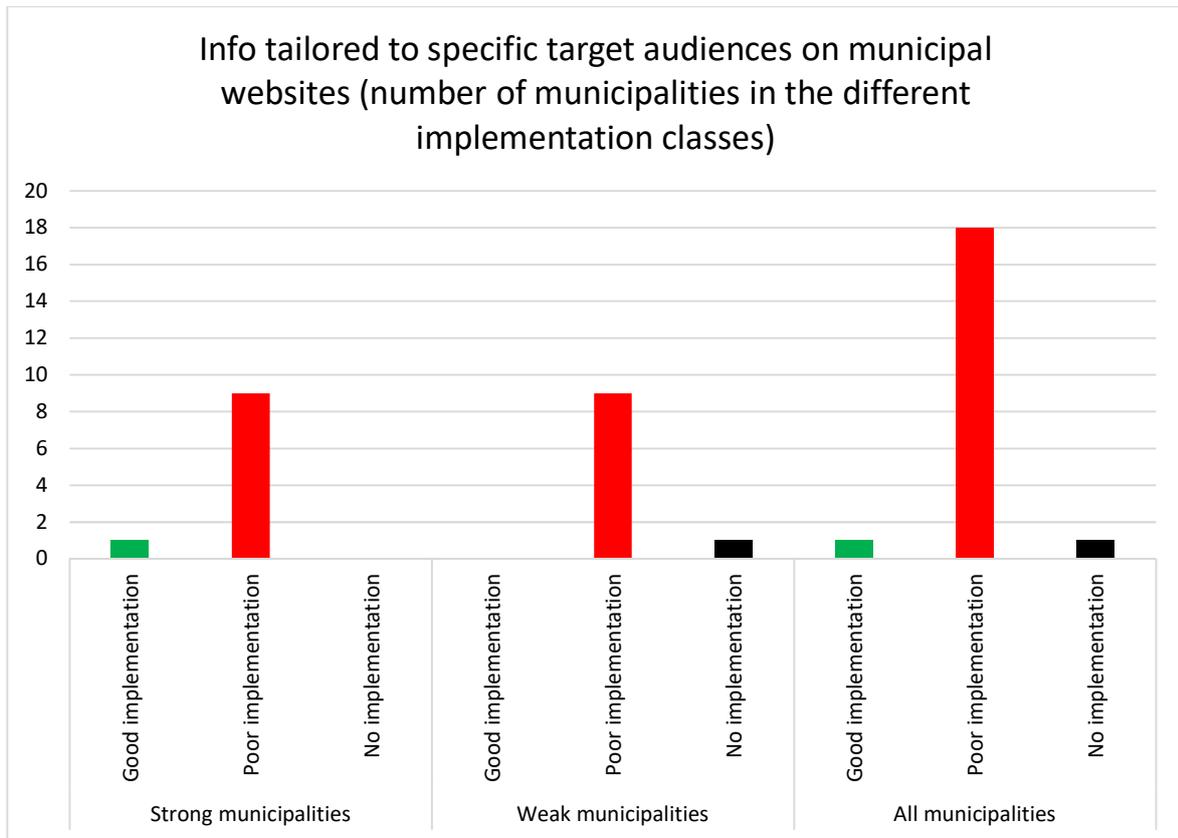
Figure 6.14: Info tailored to specific target audiences on municipal websites (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Figure 6.15 illustrates the degree to which the websites of the case study municipalities provide information as commonly required by target audience groups. The results for each target audience group will be discussed below.
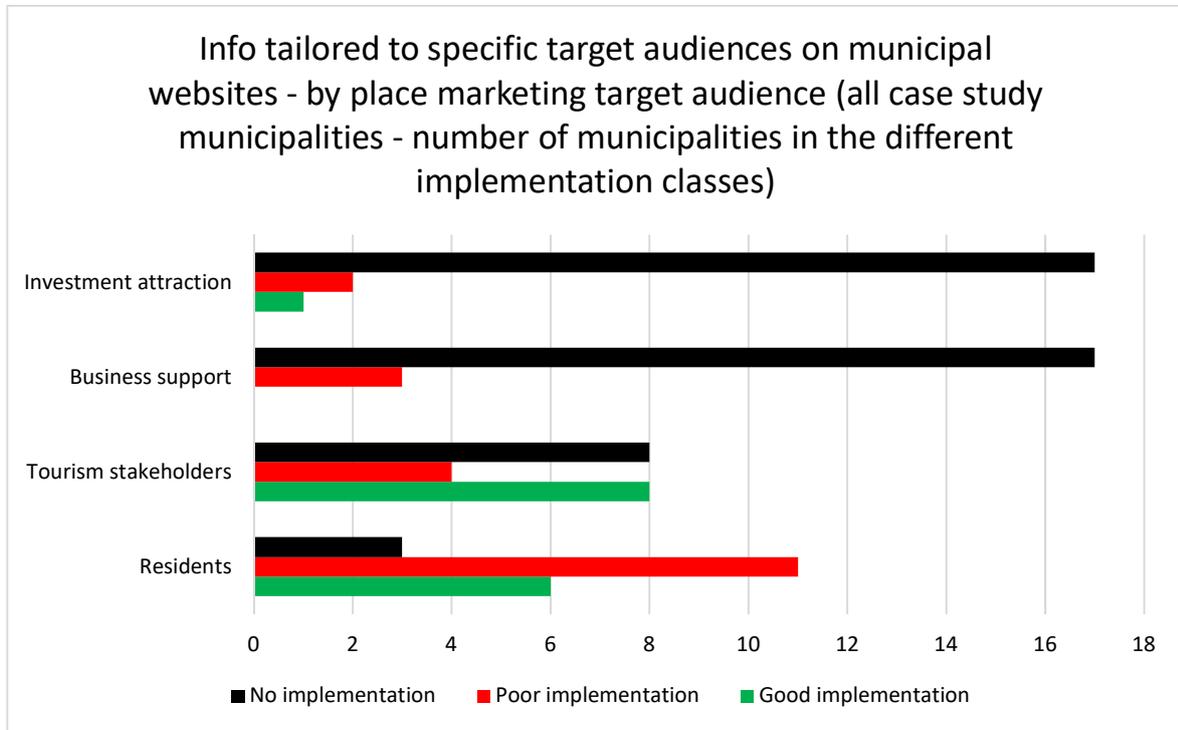
Figure 6.15: Information tailored to specific target audiences on municipal websites - by place marketing target audience (all case study municipalities)

6.6.3.1 Residents

As illustrated in Figure 6.15, information needs of residents are met to a satisfactory level by six of the case study municipalities (six of the strong municipalities), poorly by eleven cases (four of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities) and not at all by three cases (three of the weak municipalities). Key information typically required by current and prospective residents, such as service delivery issues, government services, amenities, educational institutions and health facilities are lacking or poorly described.

6.6.3.2 Tourists

Figure 6.15 illustrates that tourism stakeholders are provided sufficiently with information by eight of the case study municipalities (five of the strong and three of the weak

municipalities), poorly by four cases (two of the strong and two of the weak municipalities), and not at all by eight cases (three of the strong and five of the weak municipalities).

Several municipal websites, such as that of Ephraim Mogale, do have a short description about the main tourist attractions in the area, but they fail to provide contact details and links for more detail or to indicate their locations on a map, which are simple measures that could add great value. Provision of contact details of tourism establishments can be especially useful for municipalities that do not have a dedicated tourism website.

6.6.3.3 Business support services

Business support services are described to a satisfactory level by none of the case study municipalities, poorly by three cases (three of the strong municipalities), and not at all by 17 cases (seven of the strong and all the weak municipalities), as illustrated in Figure 6.15. Failure to provide information on locally available business support services is a matter of great concern because, as explained in the literature review, business attraction, retention and support are key pillars of place marketing and local economic development.

6.6.3.4 Investment attraction

It can reasonably be expected of any municipality to list the most important growth industries, possibly specific investment opportunities, and at least a link to provincial or national investment promotion incentives and support agencies or documentation if not available at local level. However, Figure 6.15 illustrates that investment attraction is sufficiently described by only one of the 20 case study municipalities (one of the strong municipalities), poorly by two cases (one of the strong and one of the weak municipalities) and not at all by the remaining 17 cases (eight of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities).

6.6.4   Interactivity

As illustrated by Figures 6.16 and 6.17, websites are sufficiently interactive in only two of all 20 case study municipalities (two of the strong municipalities) and poorly interactive in 17 of the cases (eight of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities).
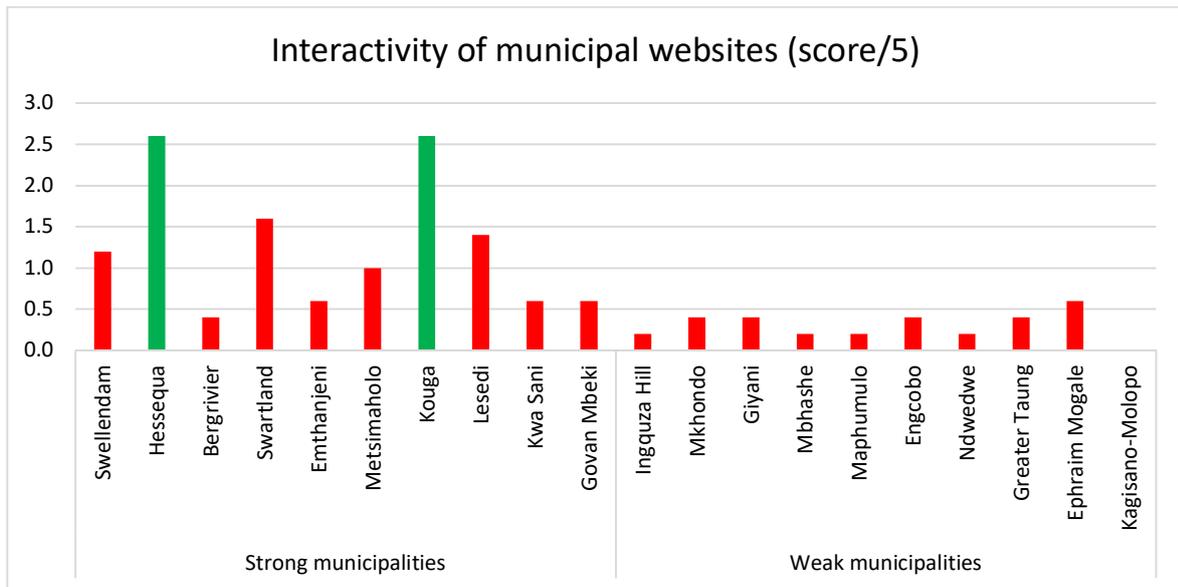
Figure 6.16: Interactivity of municipal websites (score/5) - implementation by municipality
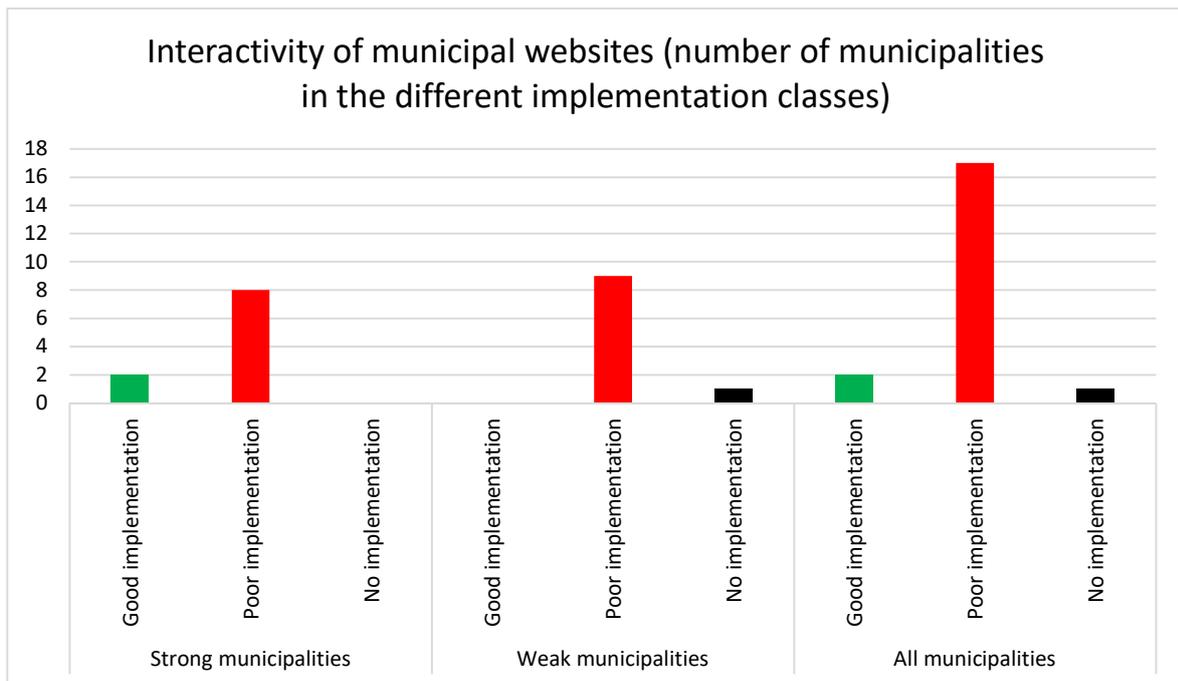
Figure 6.17: Interactivity of municipal websites (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Figure 6.18 provides details of interactivity and to which degree it is implemented. Important remarks include the following:

Inquiries and feedback: Websites provide sufficient opportunities for inquiries and feedback in seven of the municipalities (seven of the strong municipalities), poorly by twelve municipalities (three of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities) and not at all by one of the weak municipalities.

Discussion forums: There are no opportunities for online discussions on any of the case study municipal websites.

Interactive tools: None of the municipal websites provide sufficient interactive tools on their websites, while it occurs in a weak form on three of the municipal websites (three of the strong municipalities) and not at all on 17 of the municipal websites (seven of the strong and all of the weak municipalities).

e-Government or e-commerce capabilities: e-Government or e-commerce capabilities are present to a satisfactory level on three of the strong case study municipal websites, poorly present on six of the websites (three of the strong and three of the weak municipalities) and not at all on 11 websites (four of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities).

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) capabilities: Only one of the websites is sufficiently equipped with CRM capabilities (one of the strong municipalities). CRM capabilities are poorly present on four of the websites (four of the strong municipalities) and not at all on the 15 remaining websites (five of the strong and all the weak municipalities).
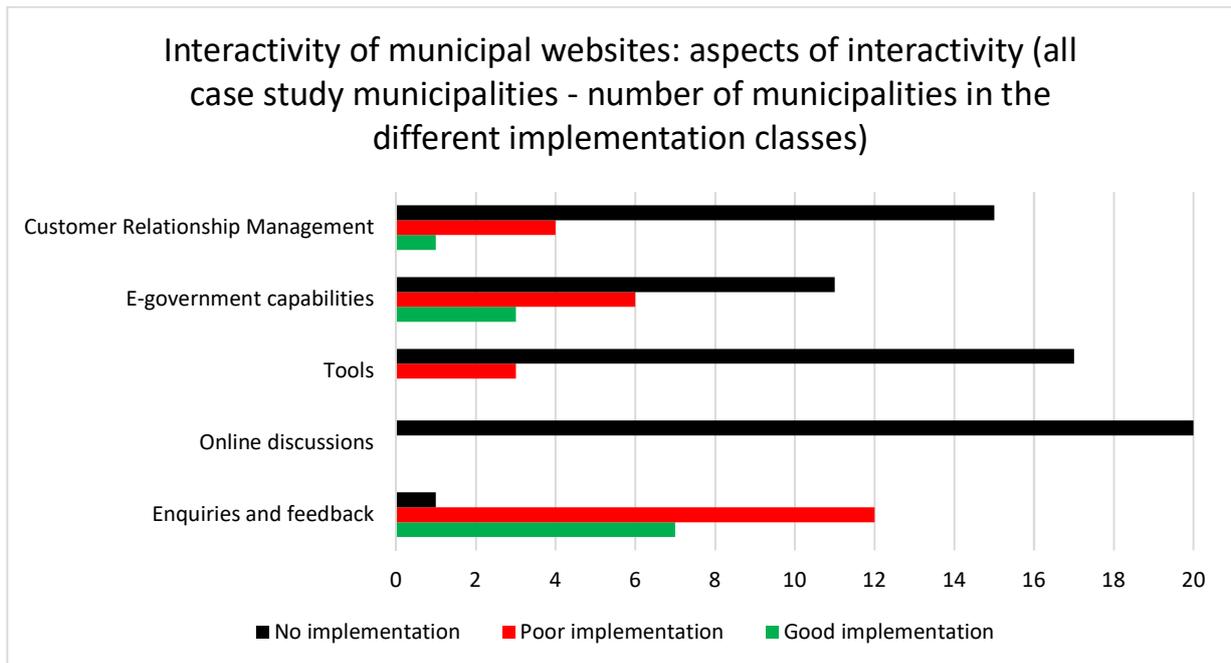
Figure 6.18: Interactivity of municipal websites: aspects of interactivity (all case study municipalities)

6.6.5 Information design

Figure 6.9 illustrates that the principles of best-practice information design are properly implemented by eight of the 20 case study municipalities (five of the strong and three of the weak municipalities), poorly by eleven cases (five of the strong and six of the weak municipalities).

The following were also observed:

Heading usage: As supported by the literature, headings failing to logically organize content, to indicate the importance of different concepts and to assist in navigation is indeed very common and were observed as problematic in all case study municipal websites.

Acronym usage: Some municipal websites, e.g., Ephraim Mogale, make copious use of acronyms but fail to explain what they mean. This makes the site difficult to use, especially in a place marketing context which aims to attract investors and tourists from outside who are likely to be unfamiliar with government-orientated or locally familiar acronyms.

Content depth: Better performing municipalities and better municipal websites tend to provide much more content in the form of readable text that explains and puts concepts into perspective, while poorer performing municipalities and websites just provide a navigation structure or skeleton, with downloadable documents rather than explanatory text.

Often, front-page banners or carousels are so large that the actual content is presented below the view, which results in poor user experience and opportunity to persuade. This is observed in most municipal websites, and is especially true for Ndwedwe.

6.6.6   Pictures and rich media

Very little use are made of pictures and especially rich media, as illustrated in Figure 6.9. Pictures and rich media are sufficiently made use of by five of the case study municipality websites (two of the strong and three of the weak municipalities), poorly by 12 municipal websites (six of the strong and six of the weak municipalities) and not at all by three municipal websites (two of the strong and one of the weak municipalities).

Most of the case study municipalities do make use of pictures on their websites; however, the pictures are often located in folders rather than displayed on the website itself, and the visuals are often of objects or events of little relevance to place marketing target audiences, as can be clearly seen in the case of Ephraim Mogale. None of the case study municipalities made use of podcasts, which represents a huge opportunity for improvement since it is very effective for place marketing purposes and easy and cheap to produce.

6.6.7   Content freshness and news

Content is kept fresh with regular news and other means in nine of the cases (six of the strong and three of the weak municipalities), poorly updated by ten cases (four of the strong and six of the weak municipalities), as illustrated in Figure 6.9. Overall, the use of news and notices as a method to improve content freshness and general vibrancy of municipal websites is underutilised by almost all case study municipalities. Presence of

outdated, now irrelevant content is problematic on most case study municipalities, which could be misleading and create a very negative impression of the place amongst target audiences. Providing relevant municipal officials with the functionality to update content directly on the website themselves could be an easy, effective and low-cost solution to improve content freshness and remove outdated content.

6.6.8   Persuasiveness

Figure 6.9 illustrates that the municipal websites of the case study municipalities contain sufficiently persuasive web copy in five of the cases (four of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), is poorly persuasive in 13 of the cases (five of the strong and eight of the weak municipalities). Persuasiveness is mainly attained through culture, subculture, social class and reference group compatibility, as well as source credibility simply because a municipality do carry a degree of authority because it is a government entity. Unfortunately, opportunities for persuasion through celebrity endorsement, which has huge potential for place marketing, is missed by all case study municipalities. Another major shortcoming observed on all case study municipal websites is the poor use of the Elaborative Likelihood Model of persuasion, which is particularly important for place marketing since some place marketing decisions demand a very high degree of decision making (e.g. where to relocate a family or business) while others require little cognitive processing (e.g. in the selection of tourism attractions and accommodation establishments).

6.6.9   Aesthetics

Figure 6.9 illustrates that the aesthetic appeal of the case study municipality websites is at a satisfactory level in nine of the cases (six of the of strong and three of the weak municipalities) and poor in ten of the cases (four of the strong and six of the weak municipalities). The main aesthetic issues observed on almost all case study municipal websites included an outdated as well as amateurish or unprofessional visual design, and poor integration of pictures that highlights place attraction factors.

6.6.10 Errors

Errors occur at an acceptable level in nine of the case study municipality websites (seven of the strong and two of the weak municipalities) and at an unacceptable level in ten of the cases (three of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities), as illustrated in Figure 6.9. Common errors observed include broken links and pages indefinitely "under construction", which is a clear indication that website maintenance is of low priority for municipalities even though websites are of crucial importance for place marketing.

6.6.11 Languages

As presented in Figure 6.9, only two of the 20 case study municipalities practice multilingualism on their websites (two of the strong municipalities). The importance of language and localisation as described in section 2.5.1.11 is largely ignored. Given that South Africa is a multi-lingual nation and that tourists and investors are sourced from various parts of the world associated with various languages, the fact that the majority of municipal websites are available in English only is problematic.

6.6.12 Accessibility

Figure 6.9 illustrates that accessibility is satisfactory in 13 of the 20 case study municipal websites (seven of the strong and six of the weak municipalities) and poor in six of the cases (three of the strong and three of the weak municipalities). The main issue is that many case study website text tend to use a too small font size, especially in the case of websites that does not adapt to smaller screen sizes as discussed in the next section.

6.6.13 Mobile friendliness

Mobile friendliness is implemented to a satisfactory level by three of the 20 case study municipalities (two of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), poorly by four cases (one of the strong and three of the weak municipalities), and is not implemented at all in thirteen of the cases (seven of the strong and six of the weak municipalities), as illustrated in Figure 6.9. This is a disappointing result given the speed at which mobile device usage

is growing, and given the fact that modern website development technologies make it increasingly easy to allow for screen size adoption The most important issues are failure to adapt text size and that users are forced to view content by horizontal scrolling (see section 2.5.1.13 for clarification).

6.6.14 Directory functionality

Figure 6.9 illustrates that directory functionality is well implemented on two of the 20 case study municipal websites (one of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), poorly by seven municipal websites (five of the strong and two of the weak municipalities) and not at all by eleven municipal websites (four of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities). As explained in the literature (see section 2.5.1.14) having directory functionality or acting as an information gateway is particularly important for municipal websites, yet listings and links to other crucial information sources, role-players, local businesses, attraction, service providers etc. are incomplete, broken or non-existing. Directory functionality should be a crucial area for municipal website improvement.

6.6.15 Social media integration

Social media integration is implemented to a satisfactory level by four of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), poorly by one municipal website (one of the strong municipalities) and not at all by fifteen municipal websites (six of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities), as illustrated in Figure 6.9. As explained in sections 2.5.1.15 and 2.5.4, the importance of social media cannot be ignored anymore, and given that social media can be easily and freely made use of, municipalities should make social media in general and social media integration with their websites in particular, an integral part of their place marketing strategy.

6.7 Tourism websites

Regarding the use of tourism websites by the case study municipalities, Figure 6.19 illustrates that only five of the 20 case study municipalities (five of the strong

municipalities) have a sufficient local tourism marketing website, one case study municipality (one of the strong municipalities) has a poor one, while the fourteen remaining municipalities (four of the strong and all of the weak municipalities) do not have any.

Tourism websites (number of municipalities in the different implementation classes)

Strong municipalities: Good implementation = 5, Poor implementation = 1, No implementation = 4
Weak municipalities: Good implementation = 0, Poor implementation = 0, No implementation = 10
All municipalities: Good implementation = 5, Poor implementation = 1, No implementation = 14
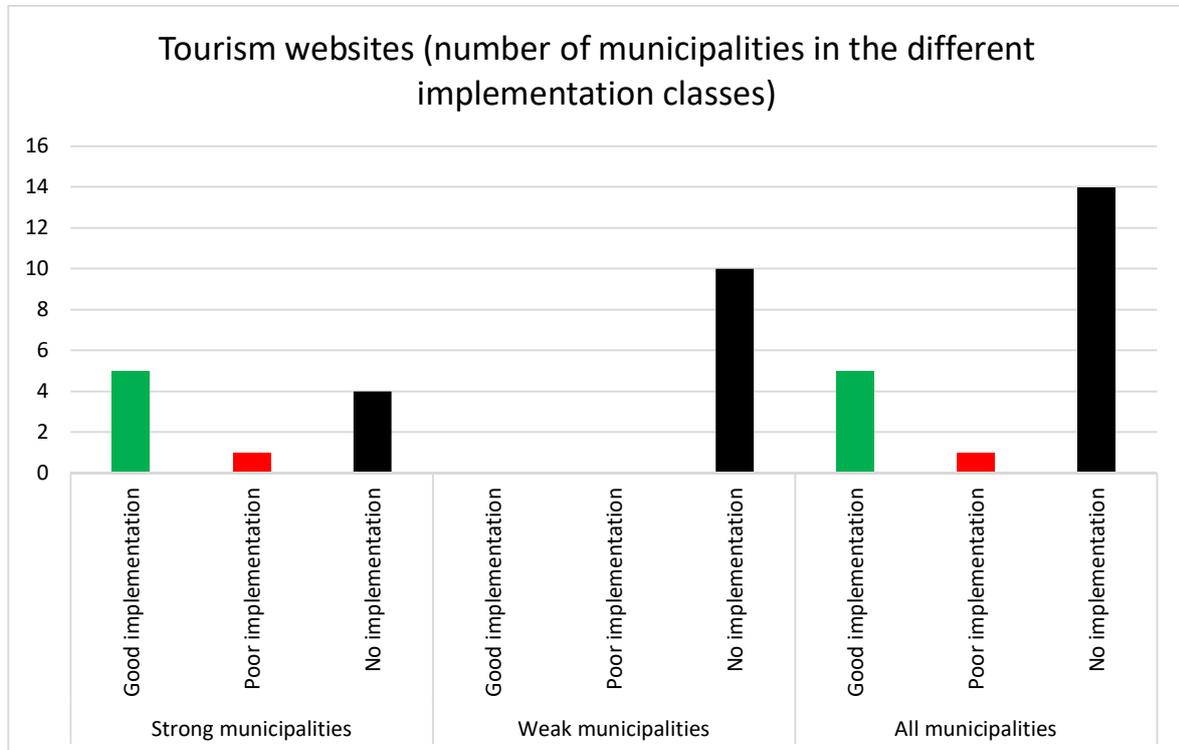
Figure 6.19: Tourism websites (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

The **rest of this section on tourism marketing websites will focus only on those municipal case study areas that have a tourism marketing website**.

Five out of the six municipalities with tourism websites have tourism websites that are satisfactory. Swartland's tourism website is the best of all the websites examined, with a score of four out of five (Figure 6.20). Although it is the best of all the cases, there is still significant room for improvement.
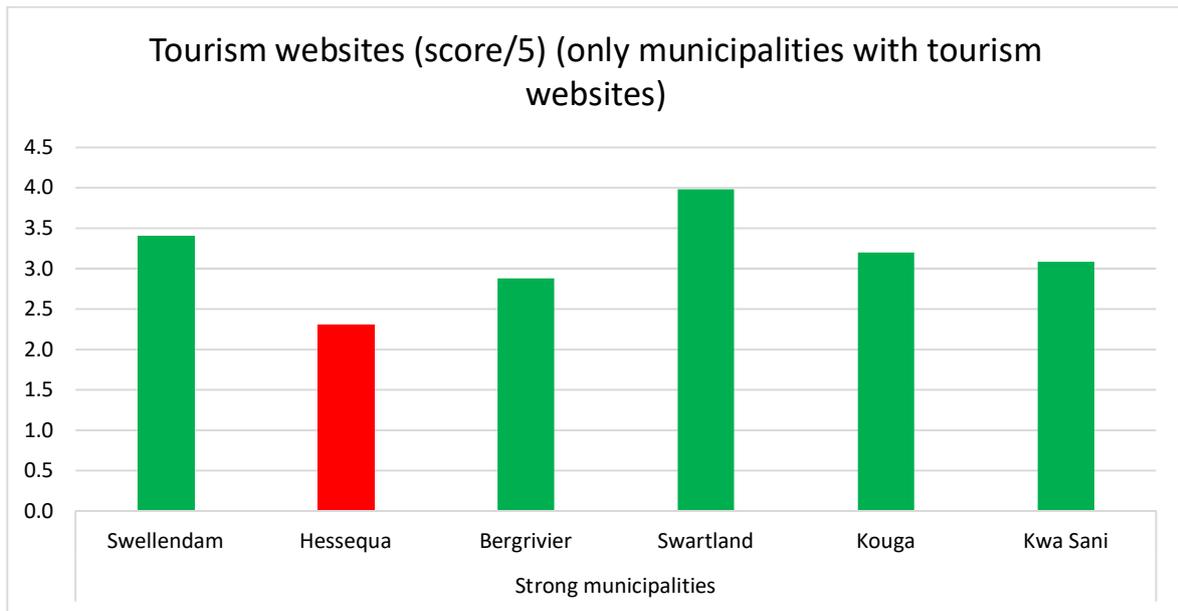
Figure 6.20: Tourism website implementation by municipality (score/5)

The most positive aspects of the local municipal tourism websites include being error free, having a high degree of accessibility, and being persuasive, as illustrated in Figure 6.21. Aspects that tend to be poorly addressed on the tourism websites include being available in a variety of languages, poor social media integration and mobile-device friendliness.
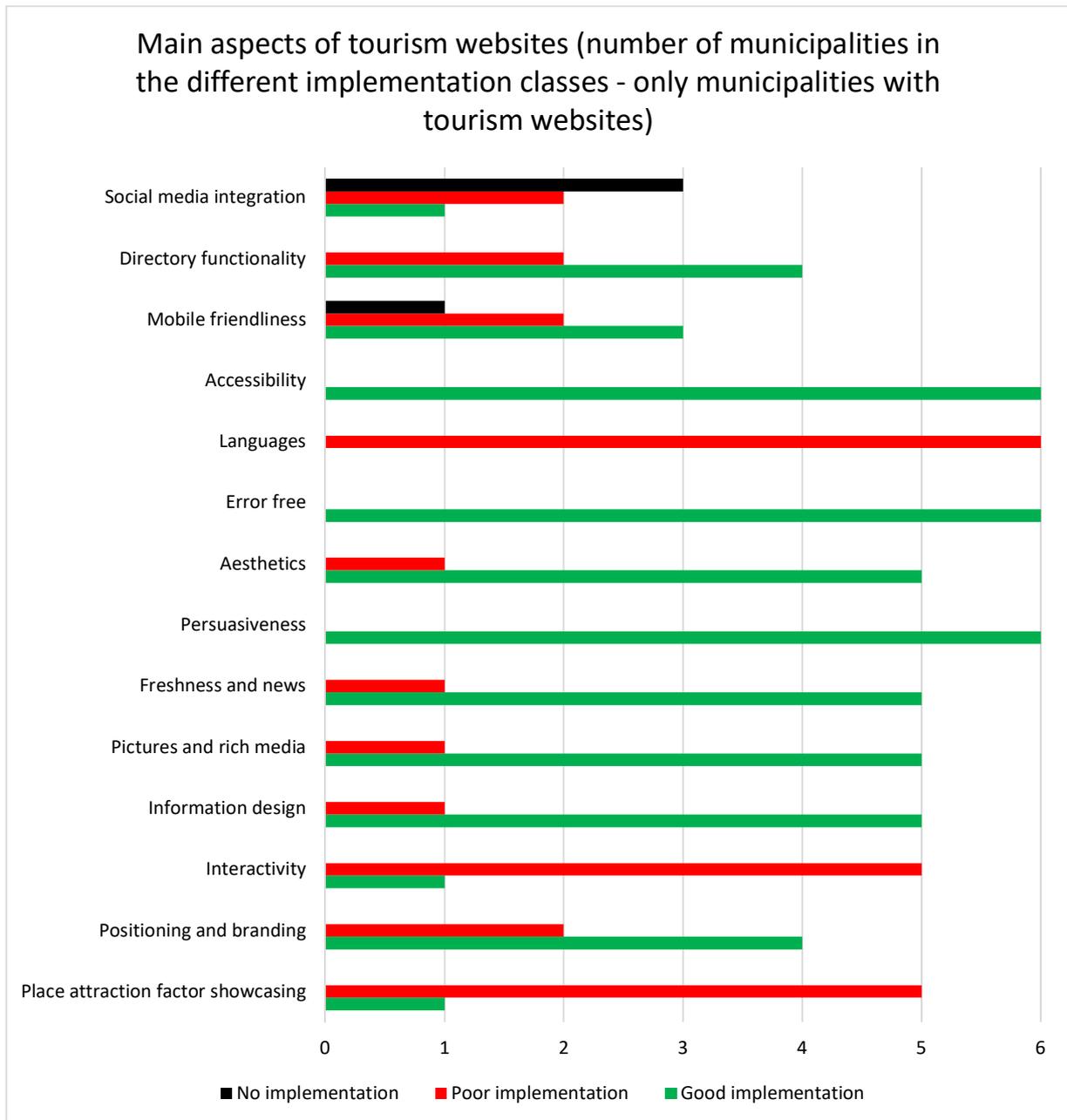
Figure 6.21: Main aspects of tourism websites (municipalities with tourism websites only)

6.7.1 *Place attraction factor showcasing*

Amongst those municipalities that have a tourism marketing website, showcasing of place attraction factors relevant to tourists and other tourism role-players is implemented to a satisfactory level by only one municipality and poorly by the remaining five (Figure 6.22).
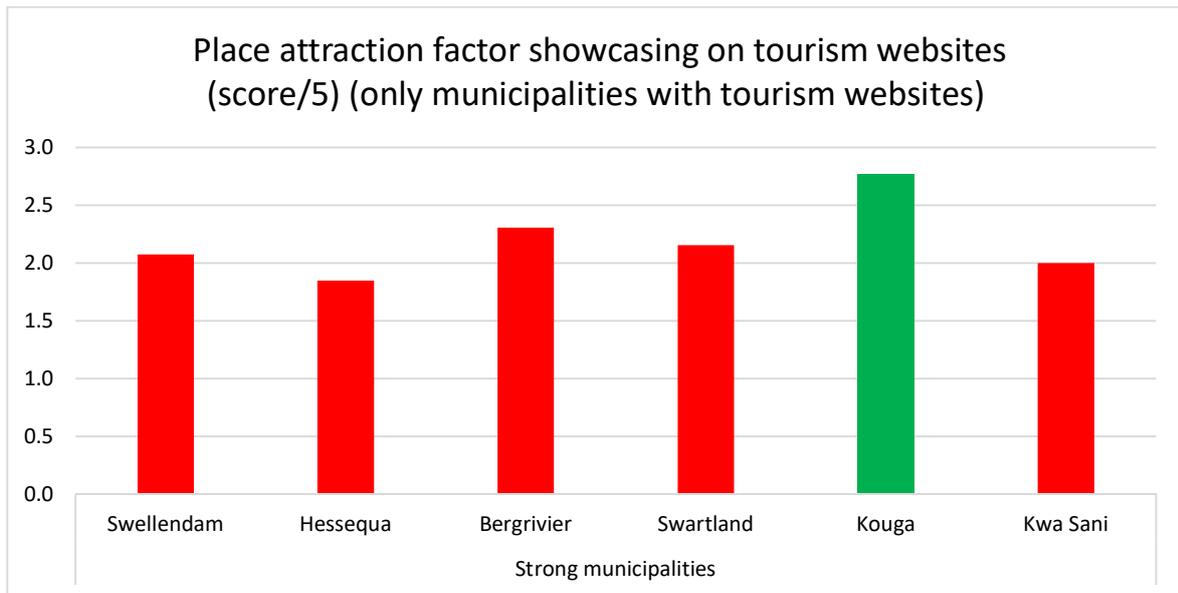
Figure 6.22: Place attraction factor showcasing on tourism websites - implementation by municipality

As illustrated in Figure 6.23, specific tourism-related place attraction factors that tend to be showcased well on the tourism marketing websites include the attractiveness of the local landscape and townscape, and tourism amenities such as cultural and recreational opportunities, tourism attractions and accommodation opportunities. Poorly showcased tourism attraction factors include cost competitiveness, being situated in a healthy or clean and disease-free area, proximity to tourism source areas, and especially safety (which is not addressed on any of the case study websites). This is a significant flaw because, as indicated in section 4.19, safety is a very important consideration for tourists, especially in the South African context.
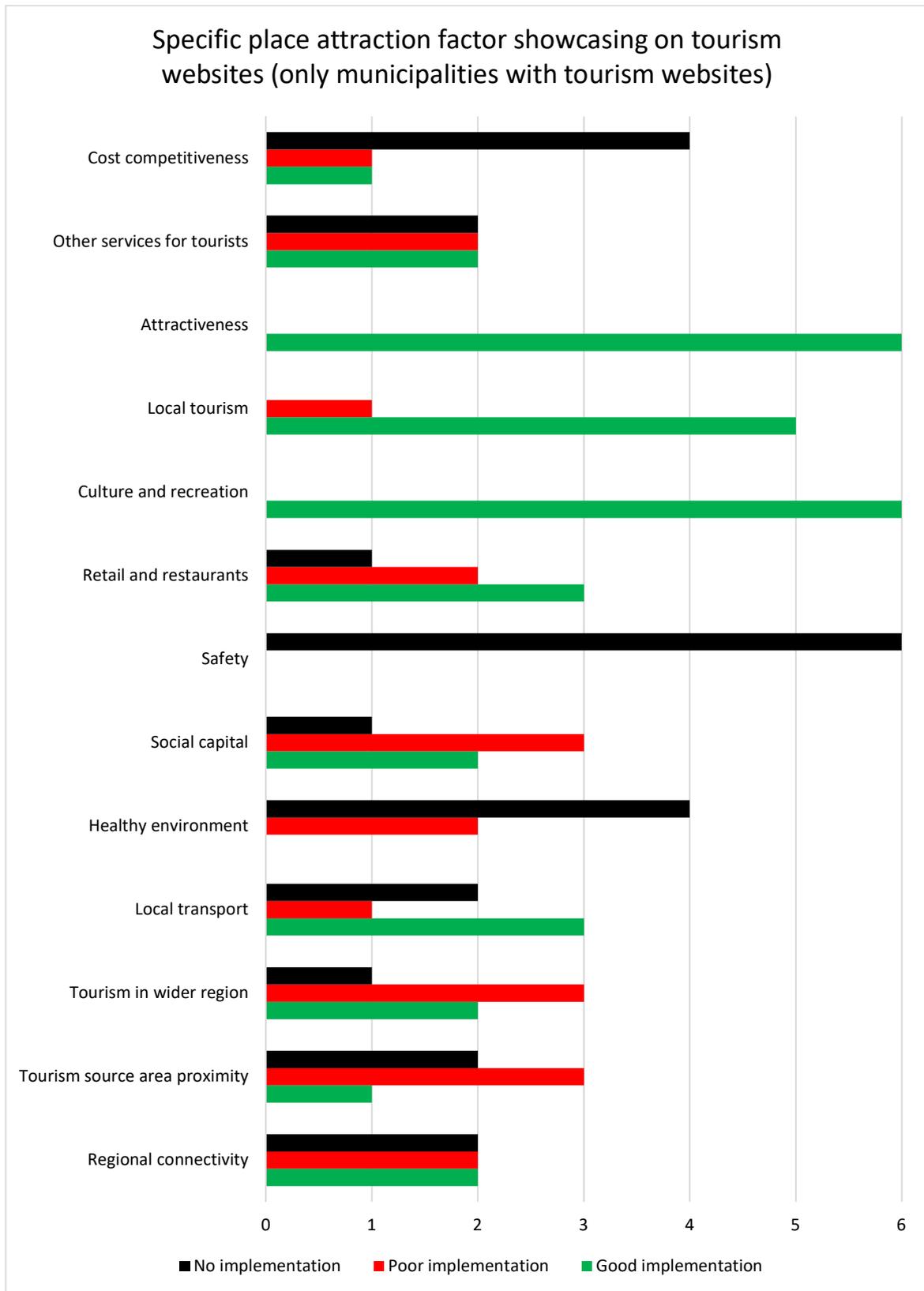
Figure 6.23: Specific place attraction factor showcasing on tourism websites (municipalities with tourism websites only)

6.7.2   Positioning and branding

Amongst those municipalities that have a tourism marketing website, positioning and branding are implemented to a satisfactory level by four and poorly by the remaining two case study municipalities (Figure 6.21).

6.7.3   Interactivity

Amongst those municipalities that have a tourism marketing website, interactivity is implemented to a satisfactory level by one and poorly by the remaining five municipalities.
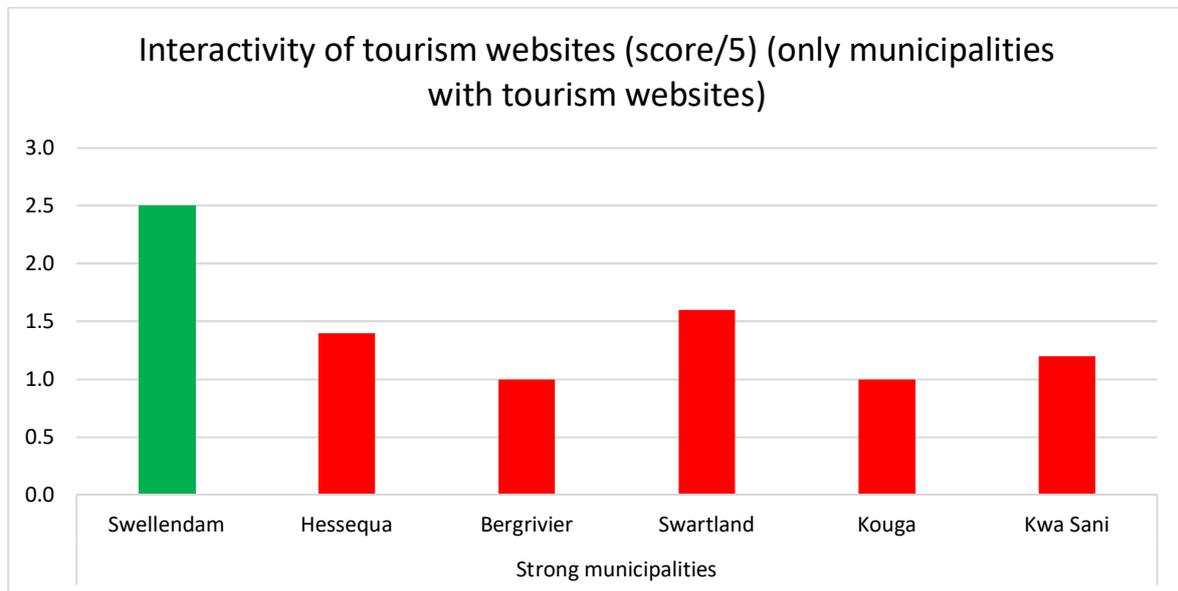
Figure 6.24: Interactivity of tourism websites - implementation by municipality

Amongst those municipalities that do have a tourism marketing website, results for the different aspects of interactivity indicate the following (Figure 6.25):

- Enquiries and feedback are implemented to a satisfactory level by four and poorly by the remaining two municipalities.
- Online discussions are implemented to a satisfactory level by two, poorly by one, and not at all by three municipalities.
- Tools are implemented to a satisfactory level by three, poorly by one, and not at all by two municipalities.

- E-commerce capabilities are not implemented at all by any of the municipalities.

- Customer Relationship Management is implemented poorly by one, and not at all by the other five municipalities. None of the case study tourism websites even attempted to introduce concepts of customization and custom findability as explained in section 2.5.1.4. Although such capabilities require quite advanced digital technologies, it is crucial for competitive destination marketing.
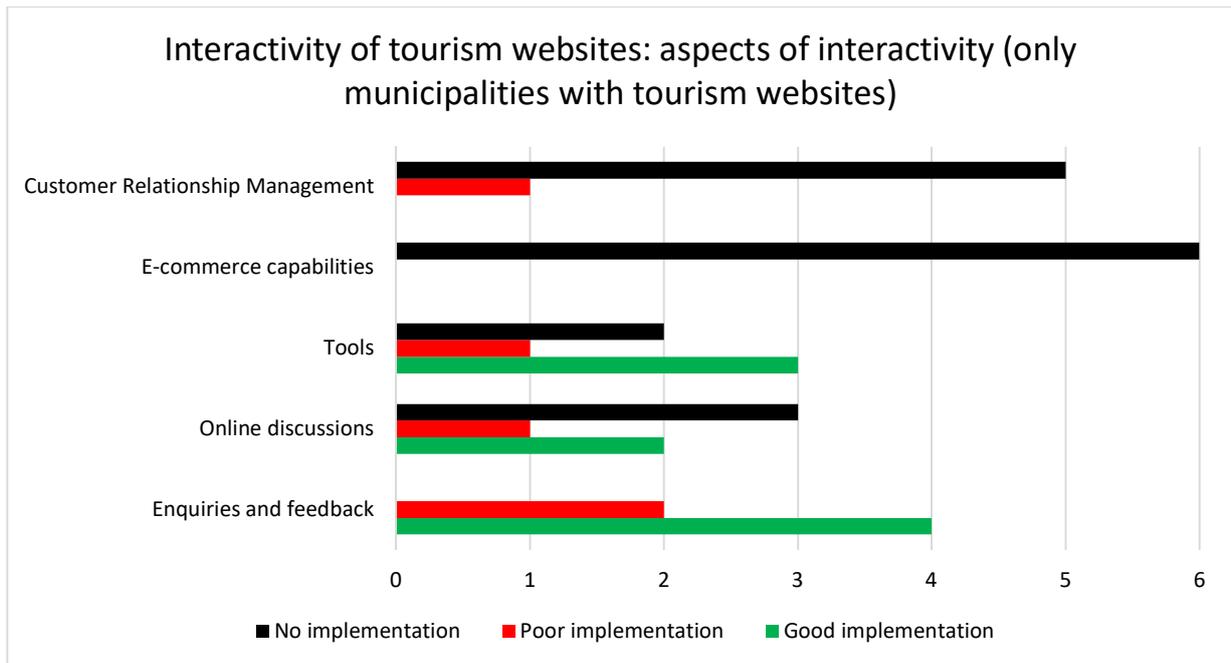
Figure 6.25: Interactivity of tourism websites: aspects of interactivity (municipalities with tourism websites only)

6.7.4   Information design

Best practice regarding information design is implemented to a satisfactory level by five of the case study municipalities with tourism marketing websites and poorly by the remaining one (Figure 6.21). Common strengths include proper classification of information by sub-place, attraction and accommodation types.

6.7.5   Pictures and rich media

Amongst those municipalities that do have a tourism marketing website, pictures and rich media are sufficiently utilised by five, and poorly utilised by one municipality (Figure 6.21).

6.7.6   Freshness and news

Content and news are sufficiently "fresh" or recent in five of the local tourism websites, and is not sufficiently updated in the remaining one (Figure 6.21).

6.7.7   Persuasiveness

All local tourism websites have sufficiently persuasive content (Figure 6.21).

6.7.8   Aesthetics

Amongst those municipalities that do have tourism marketing websites, best practice regarding aesthetics is followed to a satisfactory level by five, and poorly by just one municipality (Figure 6.21).

6.7.9   Error free

The websites of all municipalities that do have tourism marketing websites are sufficiently error free (Figure 6.21).

6.7.10   Languages

Despite the important best-practice principle for tourism websites to be available in the home languages of major tourist market segments or tourism source areas, all local tourism websites of the case study municipalities that do have tourism marketing websites are only available in English (Figure 6.21).

6.7.11   Accessibility

Principles of accessibility are implemented to a satisfactory level by all the local tourism websites (Figure 6.21).

6.7.12   Mobile friendliness

Amongst those municipalities that do have a tourism marketing website, best practices regarding mobile friendliness are implemented to a satisfactory level by three, poorly by two, and not at all by one municipality (Figure 6.21).

6.7.13   Directory functionality

Of those case study municipalities that do have tourism promotion websites, four have sufficient directory or portal functionality, as discussed in section 2.5.1. Directory functionally is poorly implemented by the other two websites (Figure 6.21).

6.7.14   Social media integration

Amongst those municipalities that do have a tourism marketing website, social media integration is implemented to a satisfactory level by one, poorly by two, and not at all by three municipalities (Figure 6.21).

6.8   Blogging

With regards to the use of blogging by the case study municipalities as a place marketing tool, Figures 6.26 and 6.27 illustrate that blogging is implemented to a satisfactory level by five of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong and two of the weak municipalities), poorly by another five municipalities (five of the strong municipalities) and not at all by ten municipalities (two of the strong and eight of the weak municipalities). Being such an important yet free and easy to use place marketing tool, blogging should be strongly promoted as a place marketing tool, especially by LED planners who could write about local investment and business opportunities and business support services, exporting local business managers about their products or services, and various parties involved in the local tourism industry about their tourism establishments and what the place and region as a whole can offer to tourists.
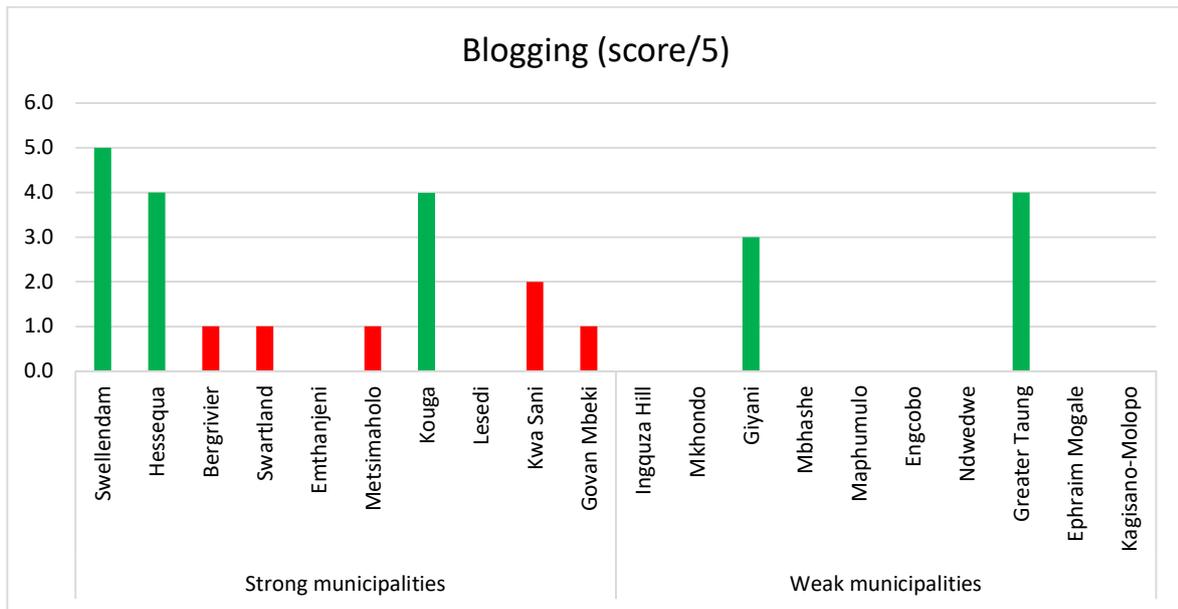
Figure 6.26: Blog implementation by municipality (score/5)
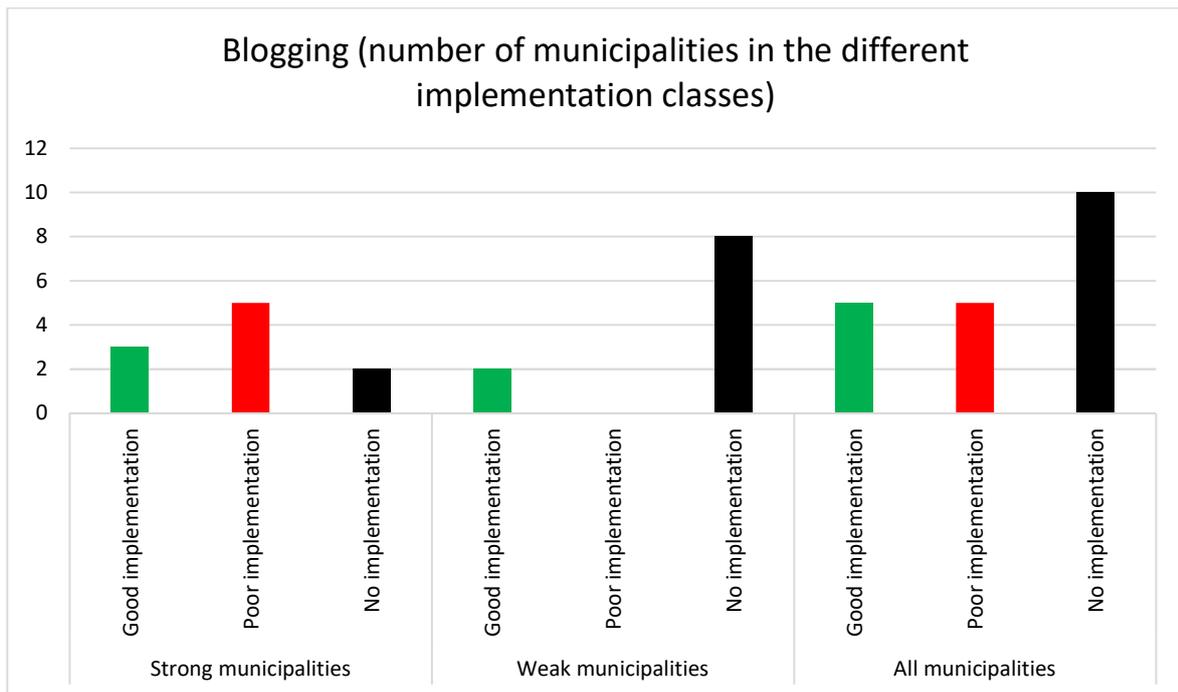
Figure 6.27: Blogging (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

6.9   e-Newsletters

e-Newsletters are sufficiently distributed by four of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), poorly by seven municipalities (five of

the strong and two of the weak municipalities), and not at all by nine municipalities (two of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities) (Figures 6.28 and 6.29).
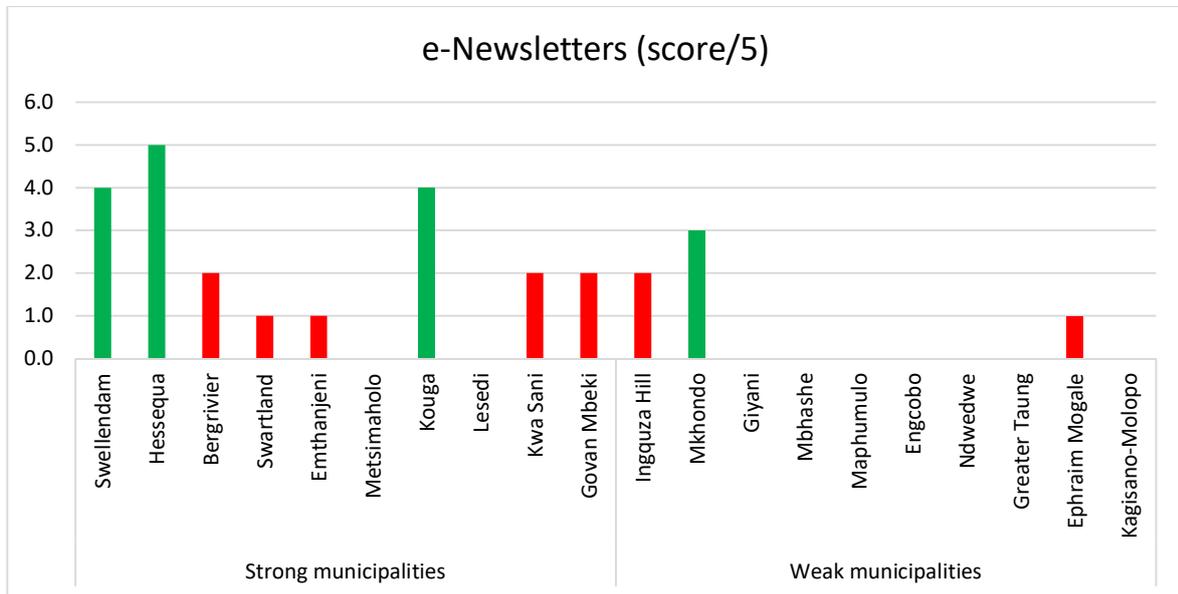
Figure 6.28: e-Newsletter implementation by municipality (score/5)
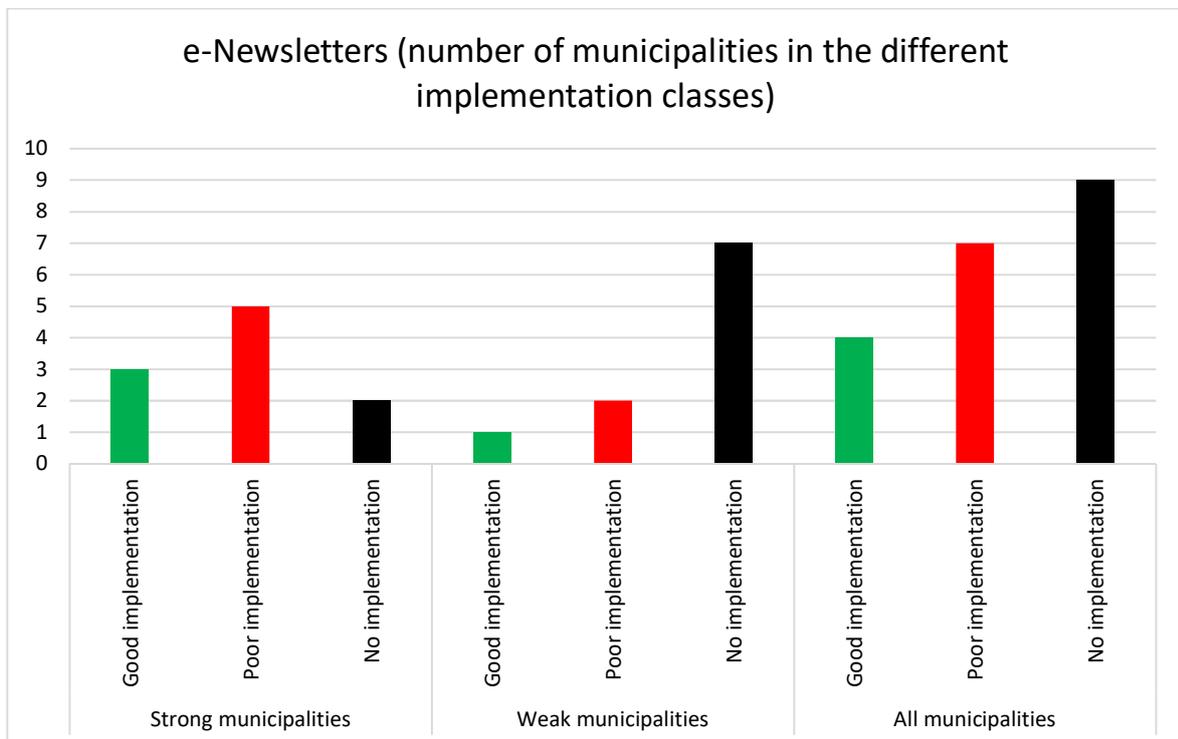
Figure 6.29: e-Newsletters (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

6.10 Social media

Concerning the use of social media by the case study municipalities to market themselves, in general, it is utilised to a satisfactory level by four of the 20 case study municipalities (four of the strong municipalities) and poorly by sixteen municipalities (six of the strong and all of the weak municipalities) (Figures 6.30 and 6.31).
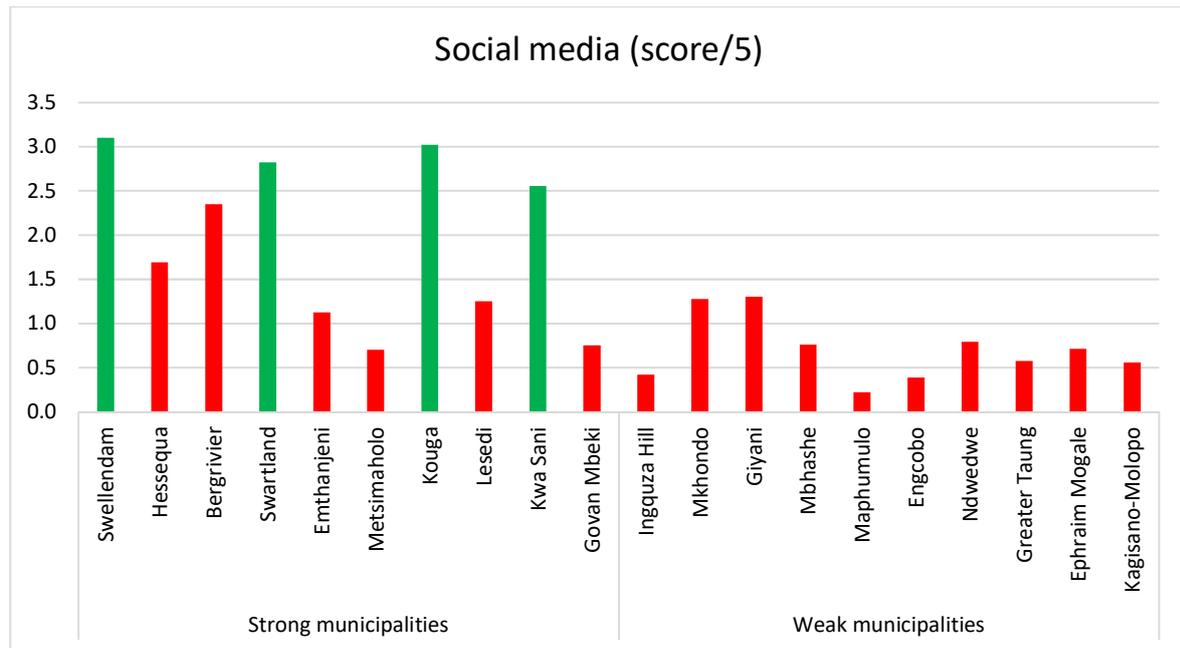
Figure 6.30: Social media implementation by municipality (score/5)
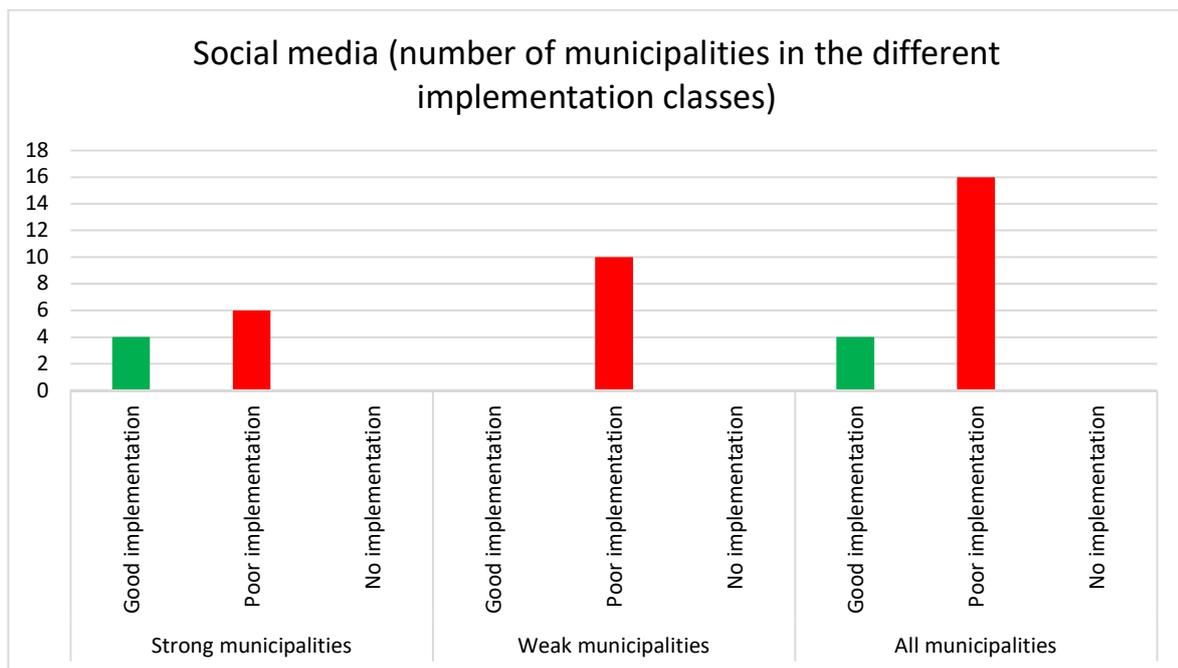
Figure 6.31: Social media (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Place branding and positioning best practice, as discussed in section 2.5.1, is not adhered to by the case study municipalities and the negative consequences of that are clearly illustrated by the results of this study. Having a unique name is not only important for branding purposes but is especially important on social media and other forms of user-generated content where the public does not have the skills or time to properly tag content per the correct location. On well-managed wikis such as Wikipedia and Wikitravel, users do go through the trouble to deal with two or more places with the same name (referred to as "disambiguation"); however, social media users do not. The result is that posts referring to the smaller or less dominant places are engulfed by posts relevant to the larger or more prominent places, making posts from the smaller place almost undiscoverable. This can be clearly seen on Pinterest with the towns of Heidelberg, Malmesbury, Flagstaff and Marble Hall. The same applies to places with the same name as major product brands, such as in the case of Underberg (a drink), Lesedi, Mbhashe and Mkhondo (local radio stations), or concepts as in the case of Darling. Lesedi is especially penalised in the digital world for not having a unique name: the municipal name is overpowered by the name of a major radio station and a tourism attraction in another area, and its two main towns' names are overpowered by a major city name in Germany and a prominent county in England, respectively.

An important use for social media in a place marketing context can be to connect residents originating from the place but now living and working in different, distant cities or countries with each other, with old social connections who remain in the home towns, and with news about what is going on in their home towns, preserving tradition and maintaining social capital from their home towns. Maintaining a connection with diaspora can play an important role in LED and raising the profile of the place; therefore, places should establish platforms to maintain contact with its diaspora (Bjelland et al., 2013: 52-56; 79-90; 171-178). Local newspapers and their social media presence can play an important role to raise the social media presence of a local community, as in the case of Taung Daily News on Twitter.

Figure 6.32 illustrates the degree to which the case study municipalities succeed in implementing the different social media platforms for place marketing purposes. The results of each platform will be discussed below.
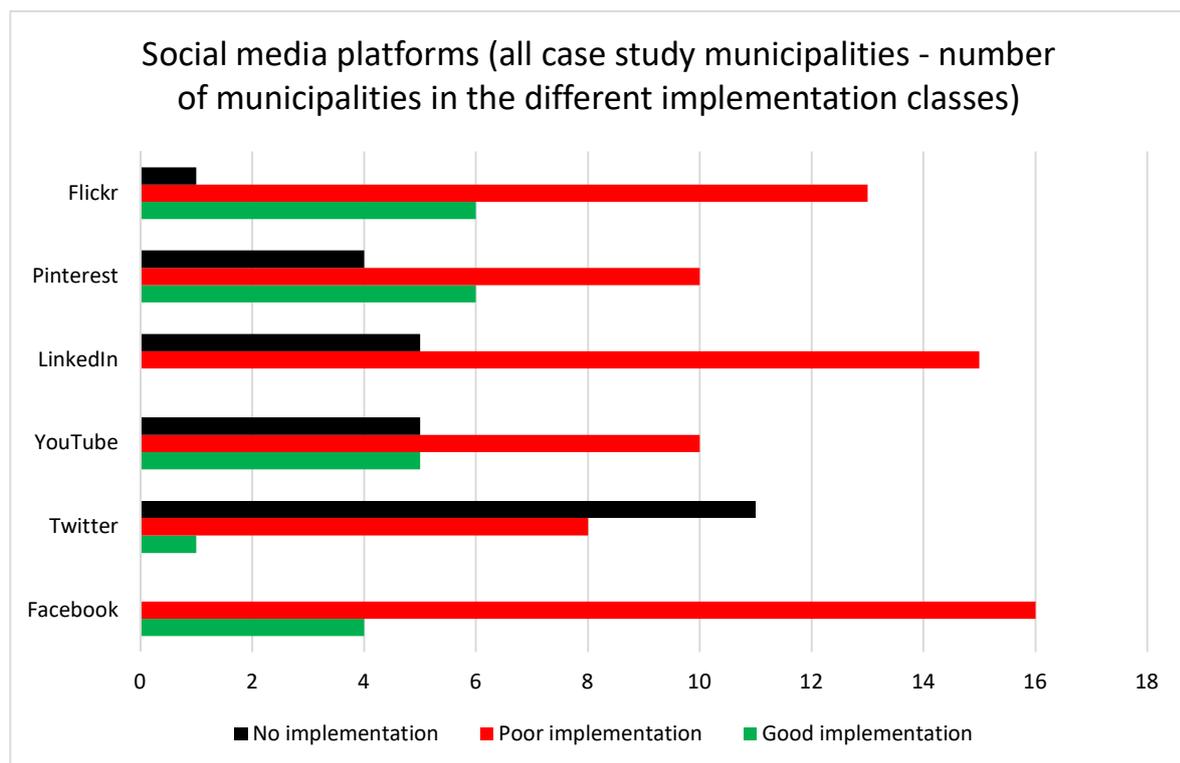
Figure 6.32: Social media platform implementation (all case study municipalities)

6.10.1 Facebook

Overall, Facebook is implemented to a satisfactory level by four of the 20 case study municipalities (four of the strong municipalities) and poorly by sixteen of the municipalities (six of the strong and all the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.32).

As illustrated in Figure 6.33, a municipal Facebook page of sufficient place marketing value is maintained by four of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), of poor value by one municipality (one of the strong municipalities), and not at all by fifteen municipalities (six of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities).

A tourism marketing Facebook page of sufficient marketing value is maintained by two of the 20 case study municipalities (two of the strong municipalities), while eighteen do not have any tourism page at all (eight of the strong and all the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.33).

Figure 6.33 also illustrates that community-generated content of significant place marketing value is generated for eight of the case study municipalities (eight of the strong municipalities), while community-generated content is of little, if any, place marketing value for the remaining twelve municipalities (two of the strong and all the weak municipalities).
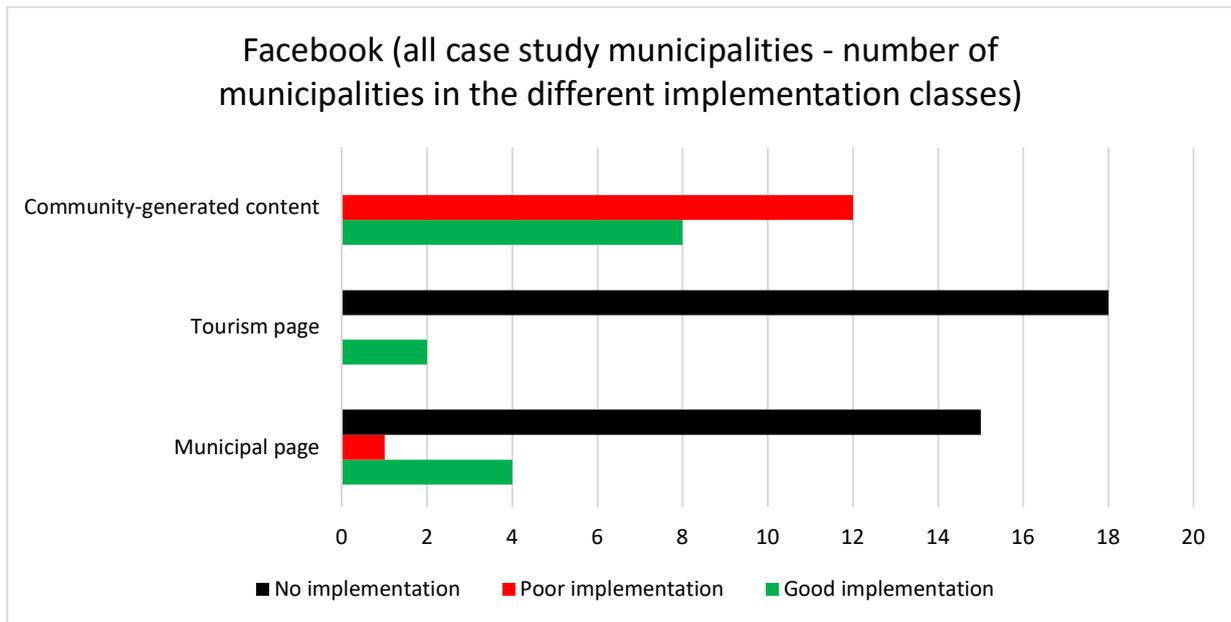
Figure 6.33: Facebook implementation (all case study municipalities)

In conclusion, given the importance of Facebook as a potential marketing tool, as discussed in section 2.5.4, municipalities and communities need to be empowered to use Facebook as a community support and place marketing tool, in various ways. Firstly, an official municipal page should be used to distribute content that supports the typical municipal mandate, e.g., to distribute municipal news and important public notices to the community, as in the case of Kouga, and as a platform to encourage public participation, as in the case of Govan Mbeki. It could even be used to promote local businesses and events, showcase local attractions and beauty, create a sense of community and local pride, as in the case of Swartland's page, and to boast about service delivery accomplishments, as in the case of Govan Mbeki. However, care must be taken to avoid creating an impression that the page is used for propaganda purposes. In addition, a tourism promotion page can be started with regular posts that showcase beautiful pictures of local attractions, landscapes, beautiful local architecture or streetscapes, and interesting stories about these attractions, history or user experiences, as in the case of Bergrivier (Bergrivier Tourism) and Kwa Sani (Underberg Calling).

Furthermore, it seems that there is a natural tendency for local communities to develop three types of community pages, which should be embraced or supported by local governments or community organisations. Most popular and common (occurring across

all sampled municipal areas and supports high levels of activity) is a page for social interaction and small talk. This creates a sense of community and may let the place appear vibrant. Care must be taken to prevent such a page to be hijacked by a racial hate agenda, as in the case of Metsimaholo. Also common (occurring across all sampled municipal areas) is a local advertising platform to advertise products and services of local entrepreneurs, and where jobs and bursaries can be advertised. Larger communities may consider splitting an educational and bursary page from a products and services advertising page. Care should be taken to block explicit sexual content, scams and illegal services such as abortion medication and services, as in the case of Ingquza Hill. Not common (only one municipal area has such a platform, namely Emthanjeni) but very important is a page where true local governance and service delivery issues can be raised; however, this purpose may also be served by an official municipality page in case the municipality does take the initiative to provide such a platform.

Lastly, municipalities need to be trained to classify the place correctly, i.e., a municipality as a government institution and a specific town as a "city". Many community groups (especially visible in the Hessequa area but occurring in all sample areas) also are set as closed groups, often for a good reason, but probably because they often do not have the knowledge to realise why and how to rather set themselves as open groups. Many can benefit more by being classified as an open group.

Local businesses generally do not make proper use of Facebook as a marketing medium. Few businesses have profiles and those that do, do not localise it; in other words, they do not clearly indicate what their locality or area of operation is. It is recommended that, as part of an entrepreneurship or local business support programme, local entrepreneurs be encouraged and trained or assisted to open, properly set up and use Facebook as a marketing tool.

6.10.2   Twitter

Twitter is utilised to a satisfactory level by only one of the 20 case study municipalities (one of the strong municipalities), poorly utilised by eight municipalities (five of the strong

and three of the weak municipalities) and not at all by eleven municipalities (four of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.32).

As illustrated in Figure 6.34, a municipal Twitter account of significant place marketing value is maintained by none of the case study municipalities, of poor place marketing value by two municipalities (two of the strong municipalities) and not at all by eighteen municipalities (eight of the strong and all the weak municipalities).

A sufficient tourism marketing Twitter account is maintained by three of the case study municipalities (three of the strong municipalities). One municipality has a poor tourism marketing Twitter account (one of the strong municipalities) and the remaining sixteen case study municipalities do not have a tourism marketing Twitter account at all (six of the strong and all the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.34).

Community or resident Twitter accounts that generate significant content of place marketing value are present in five of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong and two of the weak municipalities), with a poor presence for two municipalities (one of the strong and one of the weak municipalities) and no presence at all for thirteen of the case study municipalities (six of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.34).

Another observation is that the basic best practice of adding photos to enhance the copy of tweets (see section 2.5.4) is rarely implemented by the case study municipalities.
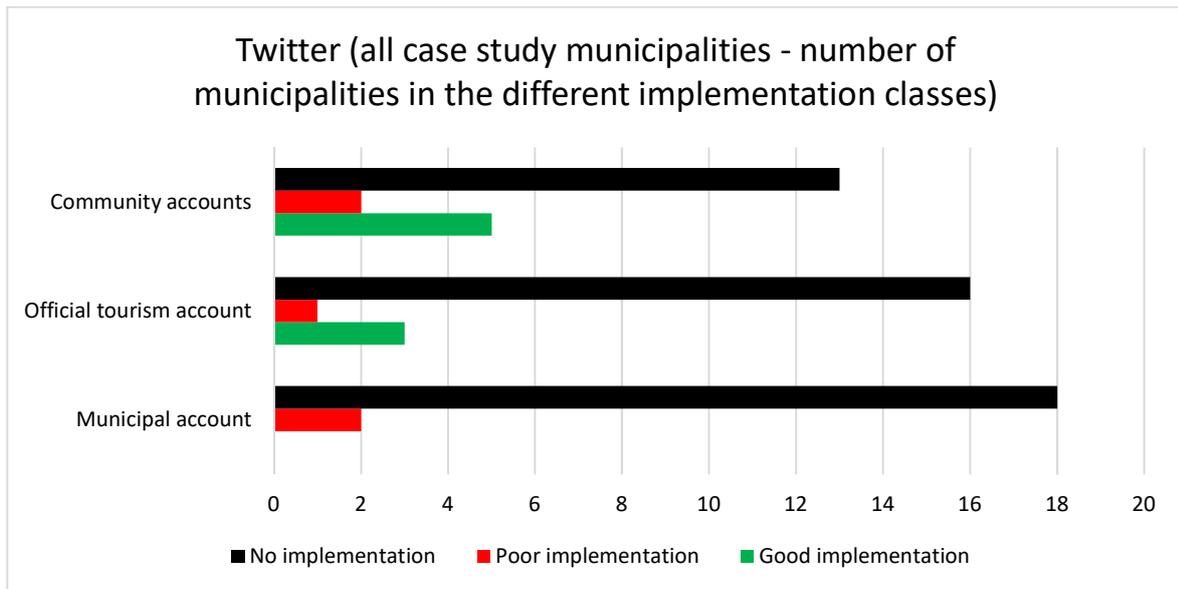
Figure 6.34: Twitter implementation (all case study municipalities)

6.10.3   YouTube

YouTube content of significant place marketing value occurs for five of the 20 case study municipalities (five of the strong municipalities), of poor place marketing value for ten municipalities (four of the strong and six of the weak municipalities). For the remaining five municipalities (one of the strong and four of the weak municipalities), no videos of place marketing value are found on YouTube at all (Figure 6.32). As discussed in section 2.5.4.2, YouTube is evolving into a very popular general search engine, therefore various parties involved in place marketing including local entrepreneurs and exporting businesses, tourism establishments, tourism promotion organisations, LED planners etc., should be encouraged and supported to make their own YouTube videos.

6.10.4   LinkedIn

Although LinkedIn has the potential to be an ideal place marketing tool due to its networking capabilities, as explained in section 2.5.4, it is poorly utilised by the case study municipalities. None of the 20 case study municipalities used it for place marketing purposes at a satisfactory level, and was poorly utilised by fifteen municipalities (nine of the strong and six of the weak municipalities), and not utilised at all by five municipalities (one of the strong and four of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.32).

As illustrated in Figure 6.35, a municipal organisational LinkedIn profile of good quality does not exist for any of the case study municipalities, of poor quality for six municipalities (six of the strong municipalities), and no profile at all for fourteen municipalities (four of the strong and all of the weak municipalities).

No LED/Planning department of any of the case study municipalities has an organisational profile on LinkedIn, which is a pity because an organisational profile might be a very valuable place marketing tool to connect with investors, local businesses and entrepreneurs. LED/Planning staff personal LinkedIn profiles are maintained to a satisfactory level by seven of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong and four of the weak municipalities), poorly by six municipalities (four of the strong and two of the weak municipalities), and not at all by seven municipalities (three of the strong and four of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.35).

A local Chamber of Business organisational LinkedIn profile is maintained by only one municipality (Kouga), and that at a poor level (very low activity, probably abandoned). Chamber of Business members' personal LinkedIn profiles are implemented to a satisfactory level by only one weak municipality, poorly by three municipalities (three of the strong municipalities) and not at all by sixteen municipalities (seven of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.35).

Tourism organisational LinkedIn profiles do not exist for any of the case study municipalities at all. Tourism organisational member or staff personal LinkedIn profiles are maintained at a satisfactory level by three of the 20 case study municipalities (three of the strong municipalities), poorly by seven municipalities (four of the strong and three of the weak municipalities), and not at all by ten municipalities (three of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.35).

In conclusion, given the great potential for using LinkedIn to network with investors, entrepreneurs, small and large businesses, tour operators, travel agents, highly skilled workers and other professional-level place marketing target audiences, it can be regarded as a huge lost opportunity for place marketing.
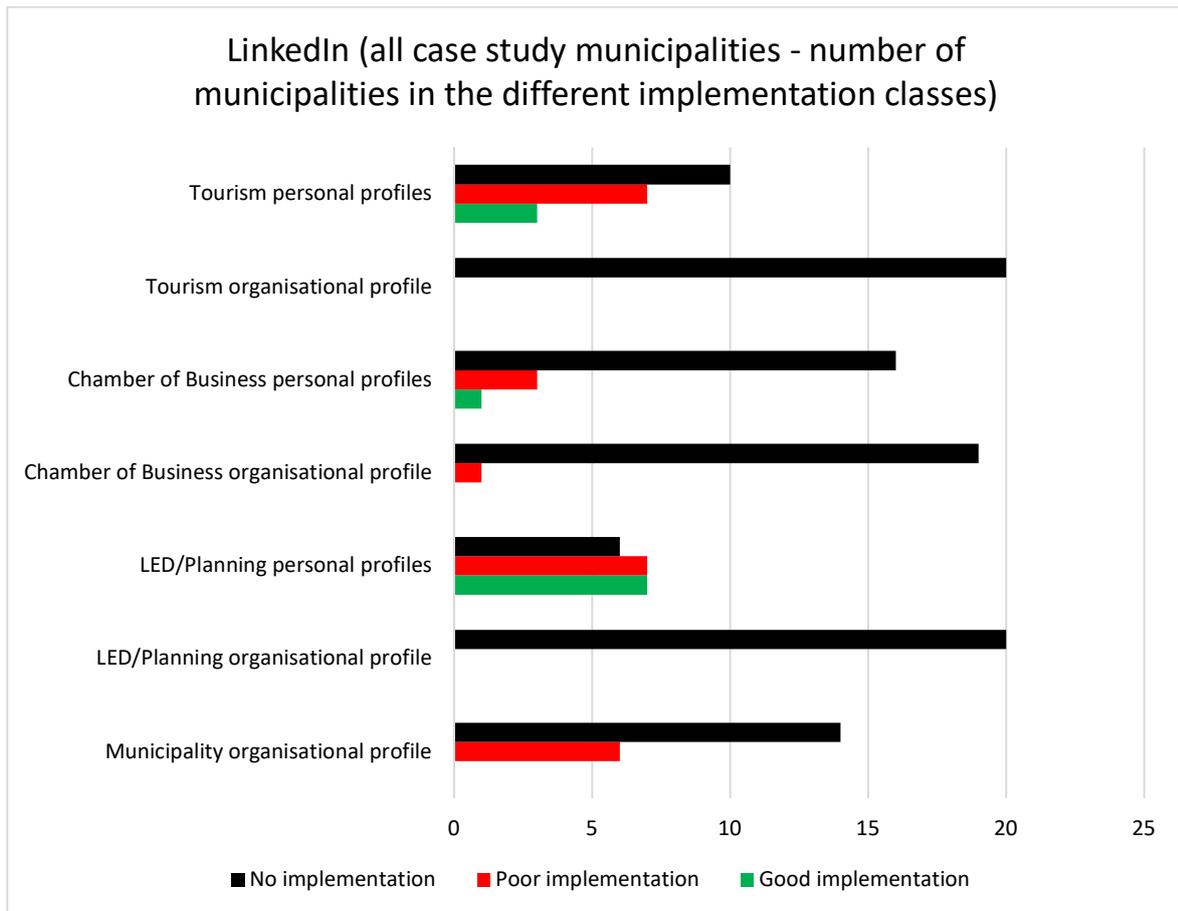
Figure 6.35: LinkedIn implementation (all case study municipalities)

6.10.5   *Pinterest*

Pinterest content of place marketing value exists at a satisfactory level for six of the 20 case study municipalities (six of the strong municipalities), poorly for ten cases (three of the strong and seven of the weak municipalities) and not at all for four cases (one of the strong and three of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.32). Due to its excellent place marketing potential, especially to attract tourists and skilled workers or residents, as discussed in section 2.5.4, it can be concluded that this medium is severely underutilised as a place marketing tool.

6.10.6   *Flickr*

Flickr content of significant place marketing value exists for six of the 20 case study municipalities (five of the strong and one of the weak municipalities), of poor value for

thirteen cases (four of the strong and nine of the weak municipalities), and not at all for one case (one of the strong municipalities) (Figure 6.32). Content on Flickr is mainly generated by local residents and travellers to the place for their personal use; however, municipalities and local tourism marketing organisations can do much more to deliberately utilise Flickr for place marketing purposes, especially because it is so easy to use.

6.11 Directories and discussion forums

Directories and discussion forums of satisfactory place marketing value exist for four of the 20 case study municipalities (four of the strong municipalities), of poor quality for eleven cases (six of the strong and five of the weak municipalities), and not at all for five cases (five of the weak municipalities) (Figure 6.36 and 3.67).
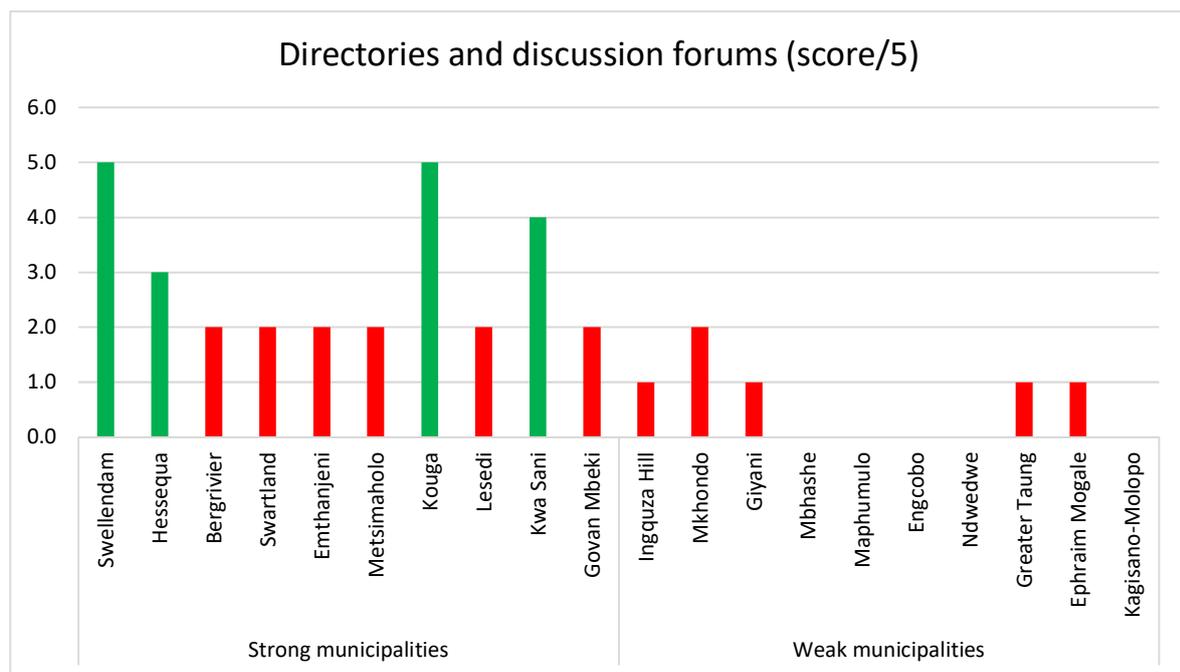
Figure 6.36: Directories and discussion forum implementation by municipality (score/5)
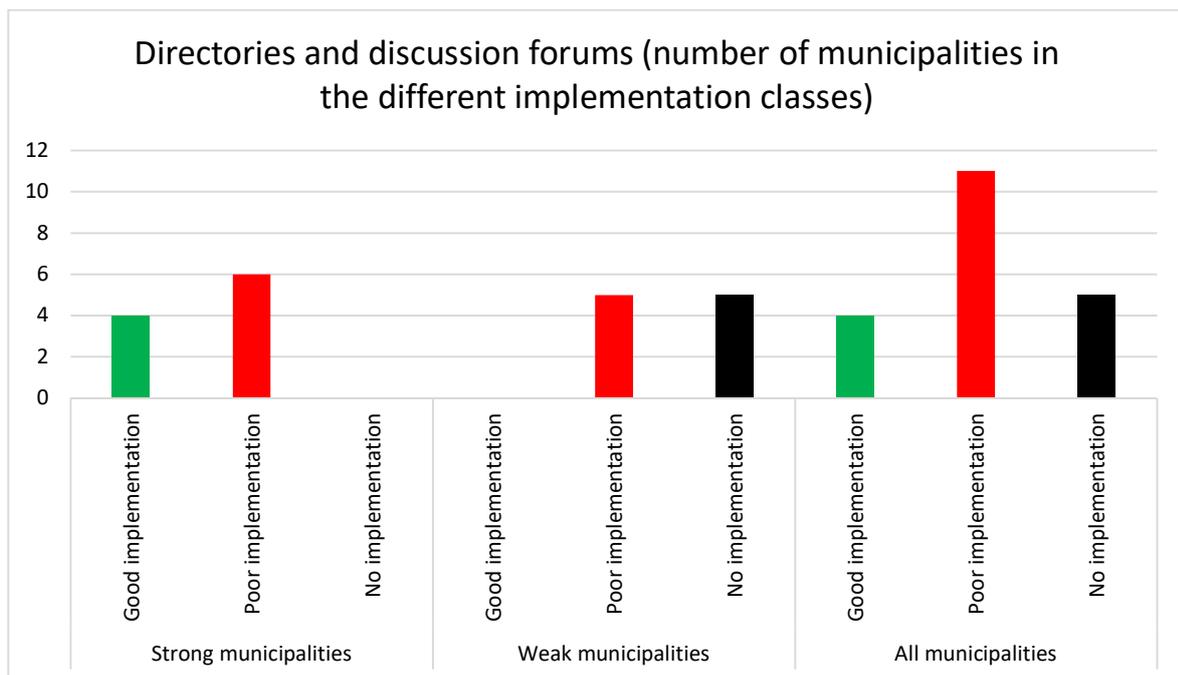
Figure 6.37: Directories and discussion forums (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Place promoters should encourage local tourism establishments to list themselves on TripAdvisor and similar platforms. Not only accommodation establishments but also restaurants, attractions and activity providers should be encouraged to be listed on these platforms, and place promoters themselves should take the initiative to list attractions. Overall, the place should list a diversity of establishments of tourist interest, not only accommodation. Sample towns that are well represented in a diversified manner are Swellendam and Jeffreys Bay. Contrariwise, the wide diversity of tourism establishments in Malmesbury and especially Piketberg are severely underrepresented on TripAdvisor.

It is important for places to manage place name changes effectively; e.g., in the case of Mkhondo, only one accommodation establishment is listed under the new name (Mkhondo). Users searching under the new name will find only one result, while users searching under the old name (Piet Retief) will find 22 results for accommodation, and several more entries for activities and general posts not listed under the new name. No establishments are listed under both the old and new name, and for many platforms it is unfortunately not possible to do so. Establishments should try to list themselves under

both the old and new names, and if not allowed, they should bring this predicament under the attention of platform owners.

6.12 Mapping services

As illustrated in Figures 6.38 and 6.39, mapping service listings of sufficient place marketing value occur for only one of the 20 case study municipalities (one of the strong municipalities) and of poor value for the remaining nineteen cases. This represents another "quick win" opportunity lost for towns and their communities because local points of interest can be registered for free on these mapping services and may increase exposure of such individual points of interest significantly, as explained in section 2.5.6.
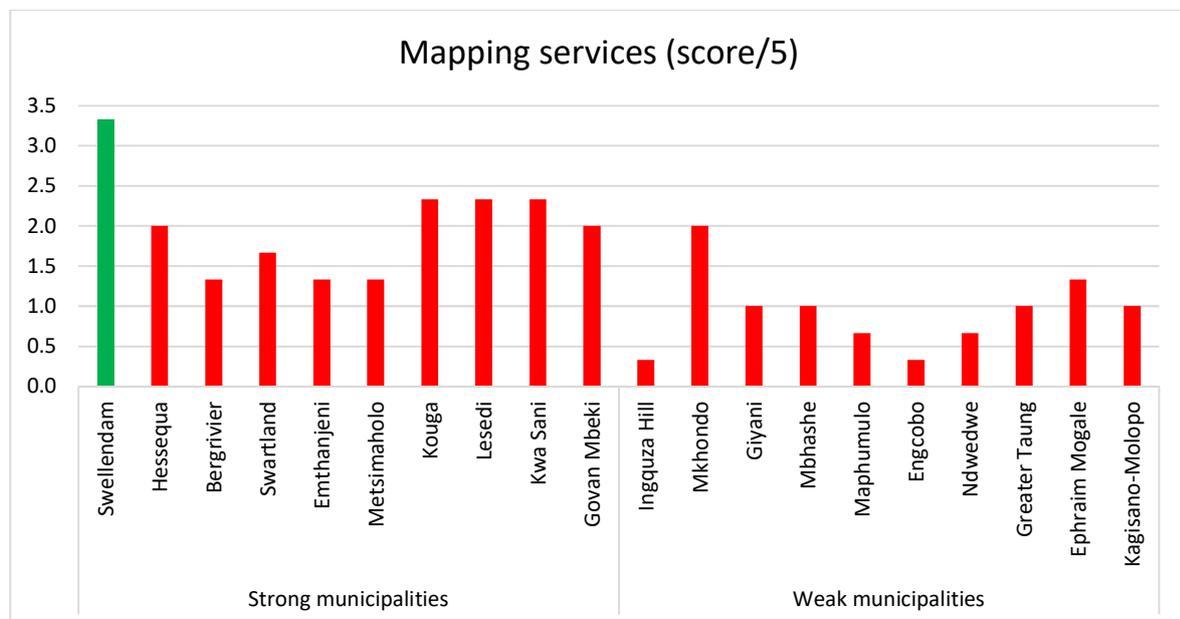
Figure 6.38: Mapping service implementation by municipality (score/5)
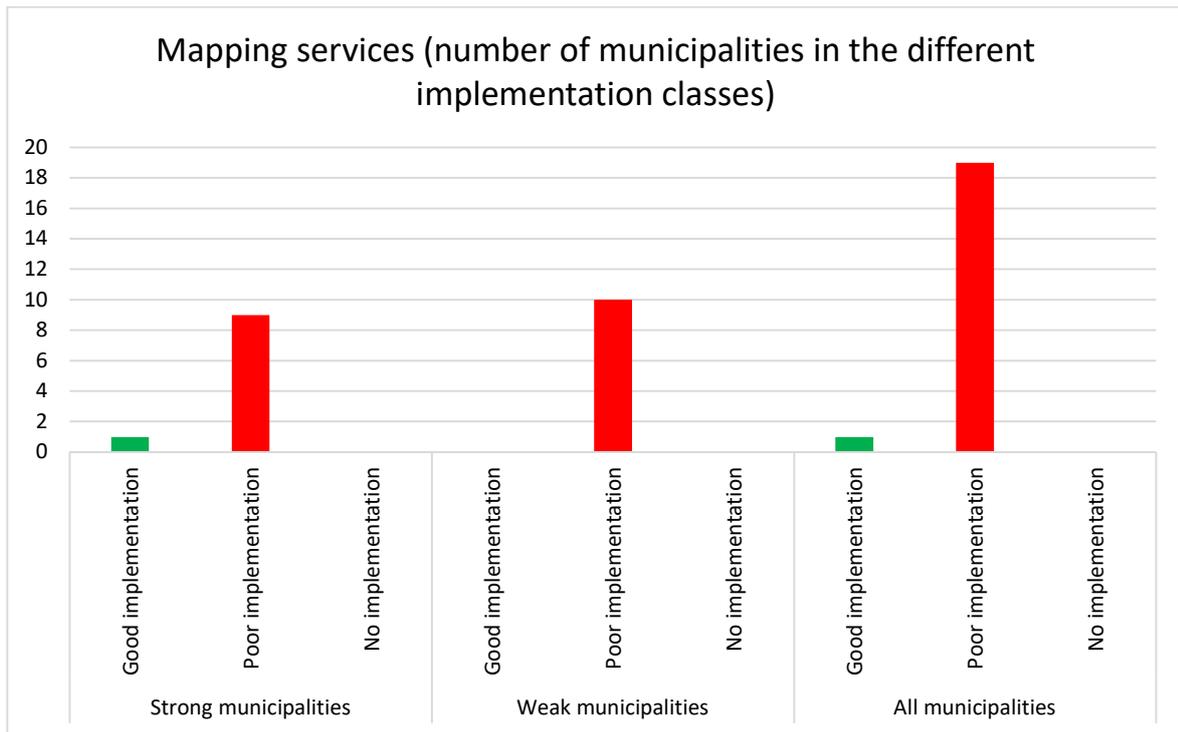
Figure 6.39: Mapping services (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

As illustrated in Figure 6.40, the degree to which the case study places are represented on important mapping platforms is unsatisfactory, especially in the case of Google Earth where seven municipalities do not have any photographs of their places, and three are not listed at all.
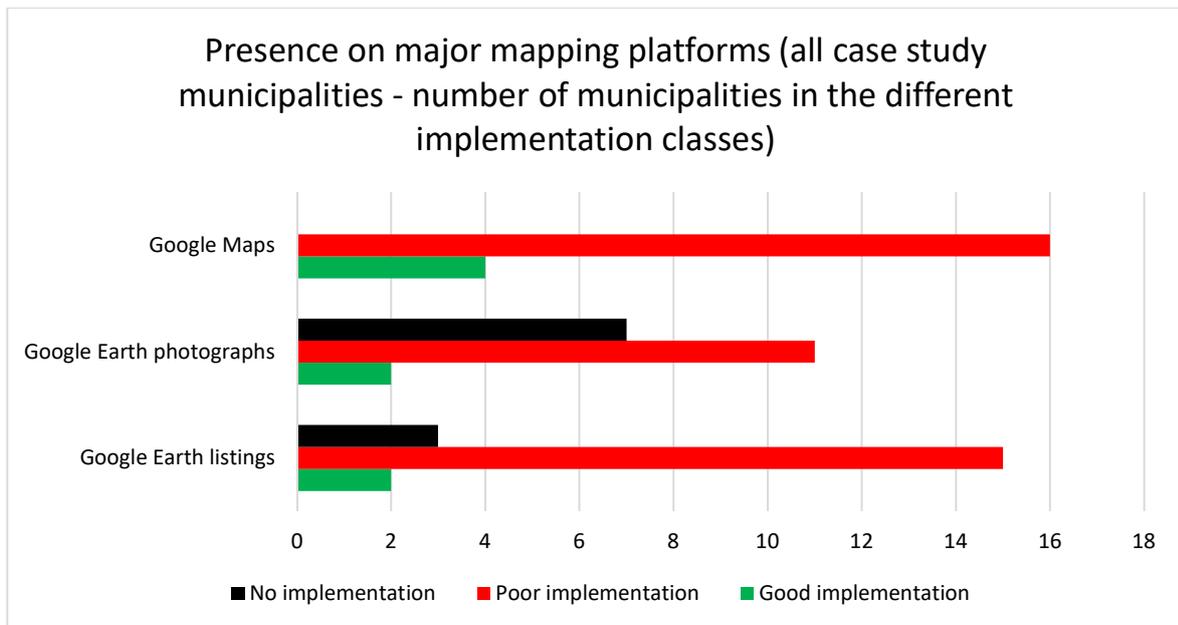
Figure 6.40: Presence on major mapping platforms (all case study municipalities)

6.13 Wikis

No municipality has a wiki of satisfactory place marketing value; however, all municipalities do have wikis of poor place marketing value, as illustrated in Figures 6.41 and 6.42.
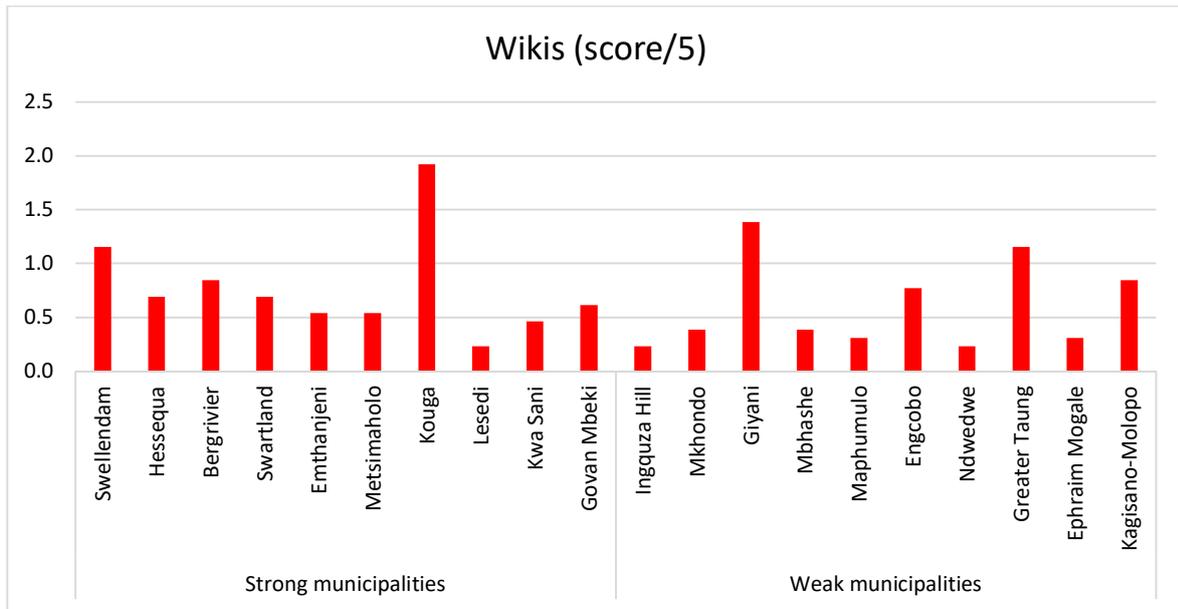
Figure 6.41: Wiki implementation by municipality (score/5)
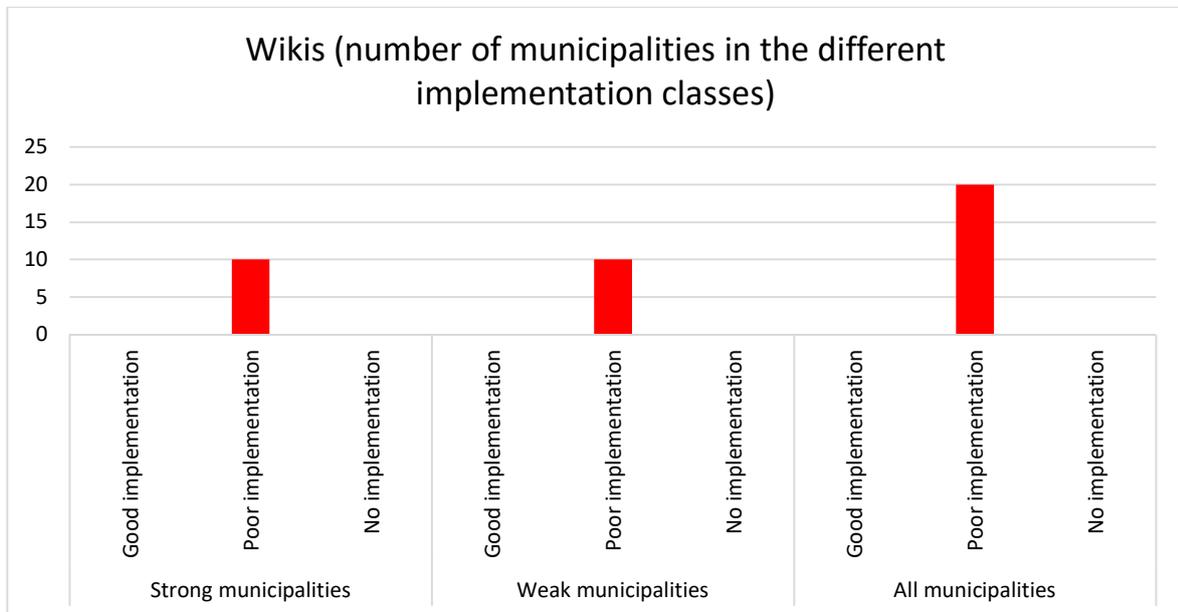
Figure 6.42: Wikis (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

Even though Wikipedia entries are some of the most prominent and highest-ranking search engine results for towns, they are not adequately used for place marketing purposes by any of the sample towns. Although some information is available to tourists for all municipal areas, there is no attempt to discuss or even just list the local attractions in a systematic manner. Apart from some basic demographic information for all towns and a very short economic description for only two towns, there is little, if any, useful information for potential investors, entrepreneurs and businesses. For example, a crucial section on the local economy is discussed at a satisfactory level for only one municipality, and not at all for twelve of the case study municipalities. Amenities and local institutions, which are critical information for skilled workers and potential residents, are not discussed at all for seventeen of the 20 case study municipalities. It is highly recommended that local people with the appropriate knowledge should be encouraged to contribute to Wikipedia entries for towns in their area, because it provides an opportunity for free but highly visible exposure to a global audience (Figure 6.43).

None of the sampled towns or municipal areas are listed on Localwiki.org – the only place in South Africa that makes use of this platform is Cape Town. No place in South Africa has a dedicated wiki at present (Figure 6.43).
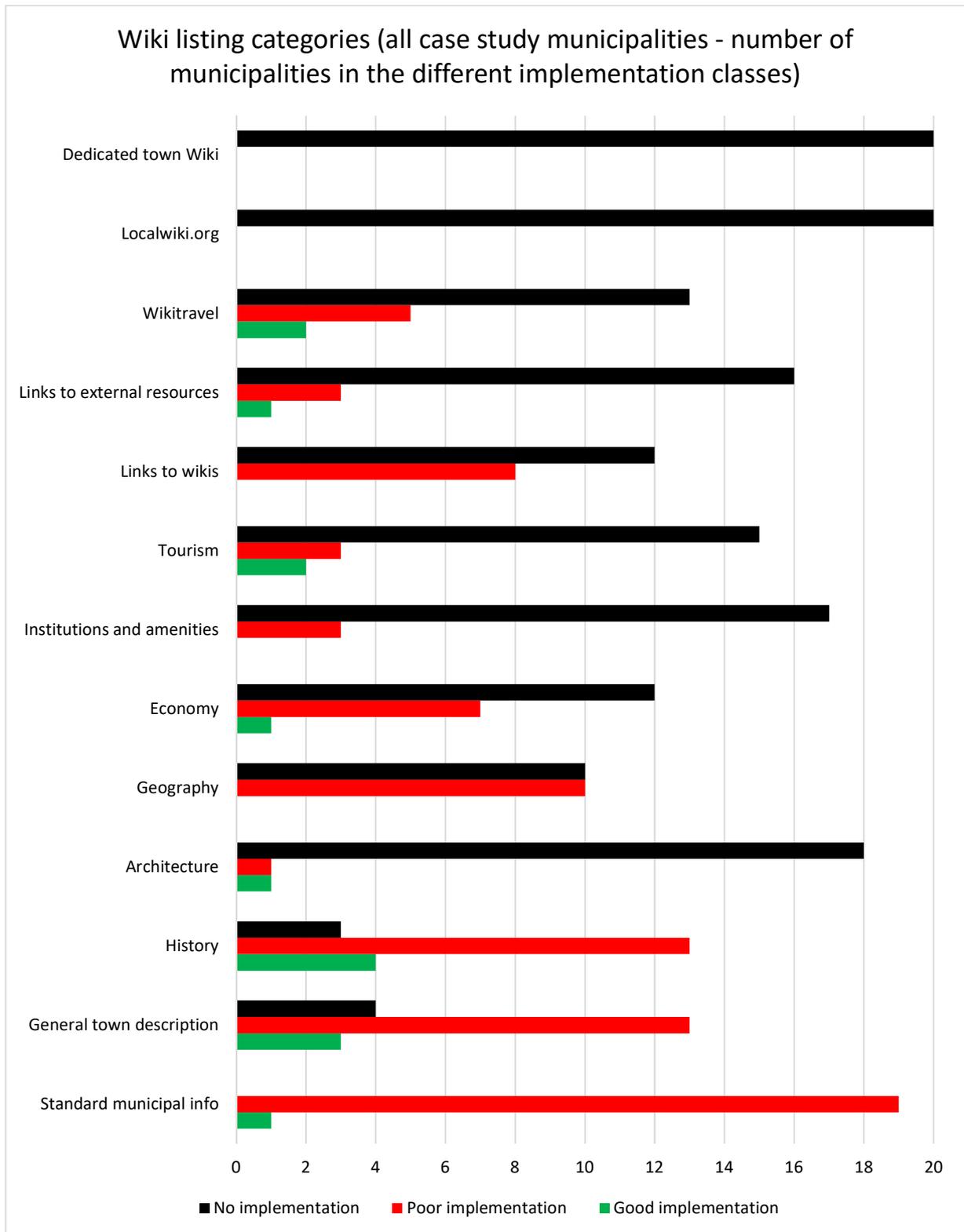
Figure 6.43: Wiki listing categories (all case study municipalities)

6.14 Online advertising

Online advertising is not utilised as a place marketing tool by any of the case study municipalities, or at least not during the assessment period (November 2016 to July 2017) (Figures 6.4 and 6.5). Because online advertising, including social media advertising, can be very effective and cost efficient for place marketing purposes, as explained in section 2.5.8, the fact that none of the case study municipalities use this marketing channel represents a huge lost opportunity and also a potential "quick win" strategy for future place marketing endeavours.

6.15 Mobile apps

As illustrated in Figures 6.44 and 6.45, mobile apps of significant place marketing value exist for five of the 20 case study municipalities (five of the strong municipalities), of poor place marketing value for one municipality (one of the strong municipalities) and not at all for the remaining fourteen municipalities (four of the strong and all of the weak municipalities). Due to the increased importance of mobile marketing, as described in section 2.5.9, it is essential that municipalities and local tourism destination marketing organisations make better use of mobile apps.
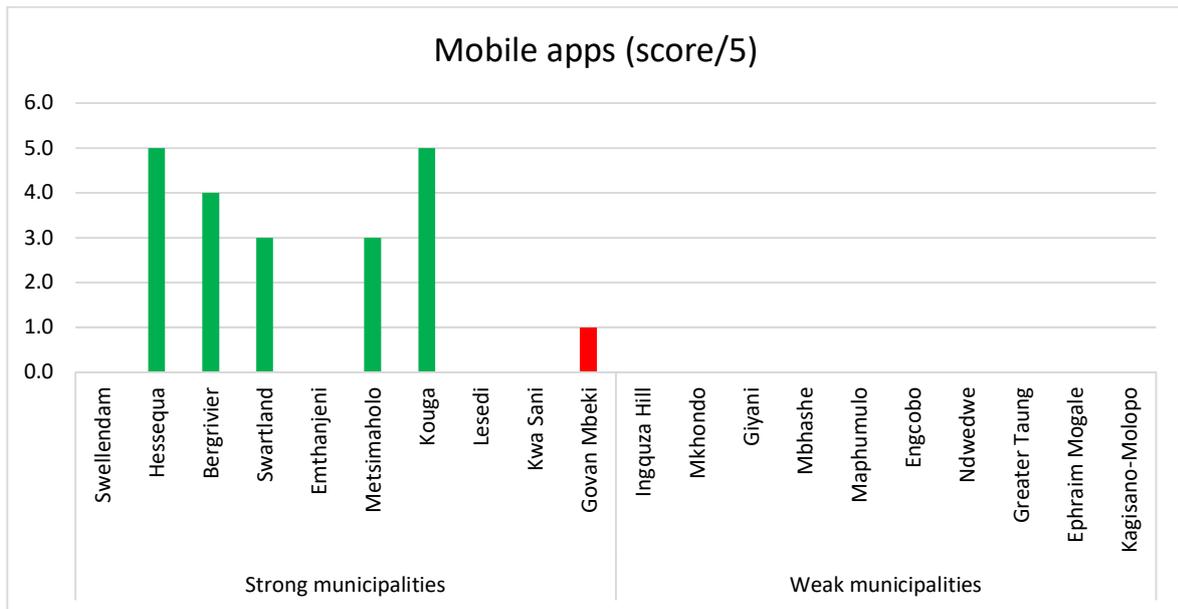
Figure 6.44: Mobile app implementation by municipality
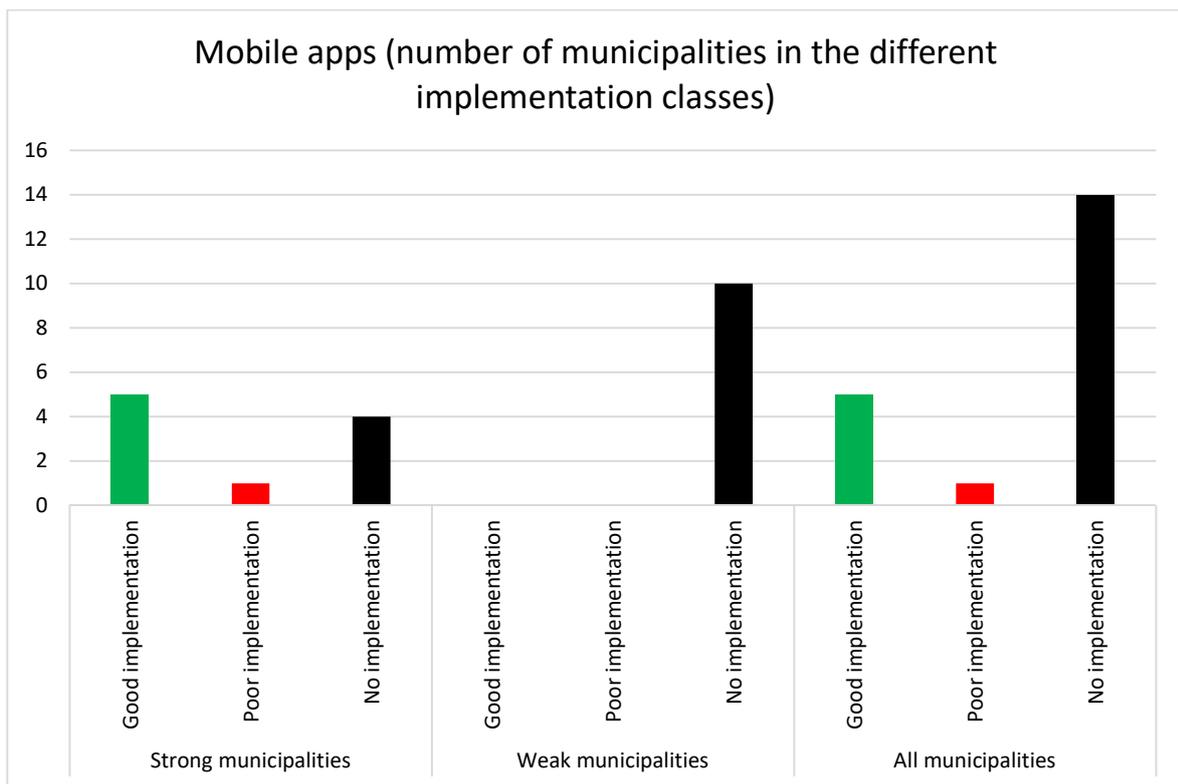
Figure 6.45: Mobile apps (number of municipalities in different implementation classes)

6.16 Conclusion

Chapter 6 presented the results of the assessment of the adequacy of the digital place marketing practices of the 20 case study municipalities. This included their implementation of municipal and tourism websites, blogging, e-newsletters, social media, directories and discussion forums, mapping services, wikis, online advertising, and mobile apps. Websites, as the most important digital place marketing channel, were assessed first, and one of the most important findings was that almost all municipal websites lack interactivity, and websites tend to be generic, without tailoring content to particular target audience groups. Another major finding is that place attraction factors are not properly showcased for almost all municipalities and across all digital marketing channels. Overall, it became clear that digital place marketing strategies and channels are poorly utilised by most municipalities, as described in the concluding chapter, next.

CHAPTER 7: *CONCLUSION*

7.1 Introduction

Due to globalisation and increased mobility of capital and people, larger and more attractive towns and cities lure investment, businesses, skilled workers and tourists away from smaller towns and rural areas, causing small-town and rural socio-economic decay throughout South Africa and most other parts of the world. A potentially effective approach to slow down or reverse this trend is for smaller places to position and reinvent themselves to be more competitive by identifying what the needs of their target audiences are and what they can offer to investors, business communities, skilled workers, and tourists in terms of place attraction factors (what makes the place attractive). They can then make target audiences aware of what the place has to offer and why it is a better place to invest in, do business or live in or to visit, compared to other competing places. This practice, referred to as place marketing, should increasingly focus on digital marketing channels to get the message through to target audiences because target audiences mostly use digital media as opposed to traditional media when researching possible destinations to visit, invest or do business in or to relocate to. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, this study systematically identified and described digital place marketing practices and channels that smaller towns and rural municipalities or communities in a South African context can utilise to attract and retain investment, businesses, skilled workers, and tourists. Then, the degree to which these best practices are actually adopted by 20 case study municipalities and their communities were assessed using web content analysis as the primary research method.

7.2 Main research findings

It was found that, at present, municipalities use digital place marketing practices generally poorly. Firstly, with a ranking only at level 2 in terms of the digital maturity scale, as described in sections 2.6 and 6.5, and an average overall digital place marketing performance score of only 1.1 out of 5, as described in section 6.3, it is clear that the

majority of municipalities are still at a low or immature level in terms of general digital place marketing implementation. Even the highest scoring municipalities have relatively low overall digital place marketing performance scores and are only at level 4, at most, on the digital maturity scale. This study compared the degree to which generally strong municipalities (scored 1.6 out of 5) versus generally weak municipalities (scored 0.5 out of 5) utilise digital place marketing practices. Although it could have been predicted that generally better performing municipalities would utilise digital place marketing practices better because they are more likely to possess the skills and resources to do so, this study found that even those digital marketing tools that require no specialised skills and are free to use, such as blogging and social media, are poorly utilised by weak municipalities. Blogging is utilised to a satisfactory level by three of the ten strong municipalities but none of the week municipalities. Blogging is not utilised at all by only two of the ten strong municipalities and eight of the ten weak municipalities. Similarly, social media is satisfactory utilised by four of the strong municipalities but none of the weak municipalities. Although all case study municipalities do utilise social media for place marketing purposes, utilisation by all weak municipalities is at a poor level. Resource poor municipalities should therefore focus much more effort to utilise free and easy to use, yet highly effective, place marketing opportunities presented by blogging and social media.

Secondly, although almost all municipalities have websites, which is the most important digital place marketing tool, most websites are of very poor quality. Only one municipality has an overall website score of above 3, while the majority scored between 1 and 1.5 out of 5, which indicates very poor utilisation of websites for place marketing purposes. One municipality does not have a website at all. The two most important priorities for improvement of the case study municipal websites as identified by this study should be to present place attraction factors according to the information needs of the different target audience groups and to improve interactivity, including e-government functionality.

Thirdly, key place attraction factors are very poorly showcased and often not showcased at all on municipal and local tourism websites and other digital marketing platforms. Several key place attraction factors, as identified in Chapter 4, are very poorly covered or not covered at all by all municipal websites, such as safety, social capital, health care, education, labour force, financial services, real estate and availability of new technologies.

None of these factors are covered to a satisfactory level by any municipality, even though they are crucial to all place marketing target audiences, especially in the case of safety, health care and education. All case study municipalities' place attraction factor showcasing tended to be presented in a haphazard way, i.e. incomplete and not organised by or tailored for the different target audience groups, which should be considered a high priority for improvement.

Lastly, most municipalities are not ready at all for the new mobile-first marketing environment. Mobile friendliness of websites and using other mobile-orientated digital marketing channels are becoming increasingly essential, yet very few municipalities perform well in these fields. An easy solution could be to use modern website development technologies which automatically adapt content presentation and font size to the screen size of the user. Furthermore, municipalities could make better use of a variety of other digital tools and channels as presented in sections 2.5.2 to 2.5.9, all of which are platforms already optimised for mobile devices.

7.3   Answering the research questions

As stated in Chapter 1, the first research objective of this study was to identify a reasonable range of possible digital place marketing strategies from the literature that smaller communities in South Africa can employ for their own place marketing objectives. This objective was formulated into the first research question, namely "What digital place marketing strategies can smaller communities in South Africa potentially use to attract and retain desired target audiences?". This question was thoroughly answered in Chapter 2, which presented a comprehensive literature review on appropriate digital place marketing strategies that small towns and rural communities can potentially and reasonably utilise to attract typical place marketing target audiences.

The second research objective was to identify which of these possible digital place marketing strategies are indeed employed, which formulated the research question, "To what extent do places use these digital place marketing strategies in practice?" This research question was successfully answered and backed by evidence presented in

Chapter 6, which clearly highlighted, as stated above, that smaller municipalities and communities in South Africa do not employ digital place marketing strategies successfully, as seen in the case studies. Therefore, the main research hypothesis of this study, namely that South African local municipalities and communities do not properly utilise digital place marketing techniques, was well supported by evidence from the case studies.

7.4   Recommendations

It is recommended that an affordable, simple and practical place marketing short course for municipalities and local tourism promotion organisations be developed. This short course should cover: the main place marketing target audiences and their needs, as set out in Chapter 3; place attraction factors that place marketing efforts should focus on, as described in Chapter 4; and digital place marketing channels and techniques, as described in Chapter 2. Typical learners in this course can be municipal LED officers and planners, communications officers, municipal managers, majors, tourism officials, local tourism marketing organisation staff, and representatives of local chambers of commerce.

It is also recommended that a content management system for municipal and local tourism promotion websites be developed. A website content management system is a tool that enables lay persons to develop professional, quality websites, made possible by a very simple user interface and ready-to-use website components that the user can simply populate with appropriate content, almost like an extensive social media profile. An example of a very popular website content management system is Wordpress.com, which enables for the easy and rapid development of general-purpose websites and blogs. It is recommended that a content management system be developed specifically for municipal websites and websites of local tourism marketing organisations. This system could provide a template or basic website structure with ready-to-use website components to easily build an efficient place marketing website that provides in the information and other needs of place marketing target audiences and other typical users of municipal websites. It can be provided with a "wizard" that guides the user through the process of gathering appropriate information and uploading it to build the website in easy steps, without overlooking any important sections.

7.5   Further research

For future research, it is recommended that the content and best practices identified in this study be made available to municipalities and communities, perhaps in the form of a training course as recommended above. Then, a follow-up evaluation can be undertaken, evaluating the efficiency of the recommended digital marketing best practices, whether any municipalities or communities implemented any of the identified best practices, and whether it was successful or not and why. Reasons to adopt or not to adopt, pitfalls experienced, impacts, costs and return on investment associated with the identified best practices could be investigated.

Additionally, future research can investigate the relationship between past, recent or current adoption of place marketing practices, and actual performance in terms of attracting target audiences, as well as on other broader social and economic performance criteria. This may identify direct causal relationships and correlations between place marketing practices and actual success in terms of LED.

The scope of this study was limited to the actual digital marketing footprint of municipalities. There is a need to investigate the reasons behind the quality and breadth of digital place marketing footprint or practices using research techniques involving discussions with persons associated with place marketing such as LED planners and staff involved with tourism and investment promotion and business support.

7.6   Contributions of this study and implications for practice

This study makes valuable contributions to the academic disciplines of urban and regional planning, LED and place marketing. Although there is ample literature on traditional place marketing, on the one hand, and especially on general digital marketing, on the other, little literature is available on the topic of digital place marketing. This study, and Chapter 2 in particular, combined the concepts of traditional place marketing and digital marketing to offer a new theoretical framework for digital place marketing.

This study systematically identified and described desirable place marketing "customers" or "place marketing target audiences" as they are referred to in this study. Although earlier attempts to develop a systematic listing and description of place marketing customers have been developed by authors such as Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993: 22-33), this study expanded this work significantly to produce a more comprehensive and updated list and description of place marketing target audiences, as presented in Chapter 3. This can be regarded as a particularly important contribution because knowing in detail who the audiences are that should be focussed upon and what their particular needs are is crucial for successful place marketing.

In addition, this study systematically identified and described the most important place characteristics that major place marketing target audiences use to make location choices, as presented in Chapter 4. This study coined the term "place attraction factors" that was thus far loosely referred to as "push and pull factors". Several credible sources have already identified and described place characteristics important for specific target audiences. For example, several competitive indexes exist, mainly from the perspective of investors and businesses, as place marketing target audiences. Mercer LLC (see Mercer LLC, 2007 and Mercer LLC, 2015) assesses places from the perspective of highly skilled workers as place marketing target audiences. This study attempted, however, to bring together a description of place attraction factors important to all major place marketing target audiences.

Lastly, a very important contribution of this study was to simplify knowledge and best practices regarding place marketing to be useful at the local level. Most literature related to place marketing and especially best practices for place marketing relates to the national government and large-city level, often in a developed-world context. This study translated this knowledge and best practices to be applicable at the local level and for small towns and rural areas in a developing-country context.

Apart from its academic contribution, this study also contributes to society and communities in urgent need of town regeneration and economic development by making available a framework for practical steps to facilitate place marketing according to best-practice principles. See the section on recommendations above on how this can be made

accessible to many municipal officials and LED and local tourism promotion practitioners through the development of a training course and content management system.

References

Adams, D. & Tiesdell, S. 2013. *Shaping places: urban planning, design and development*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Alexander, G. & Kane-Berman J. 2014. *The 80/20 Report: Local Government in 80 Indicators over 20 Years*. [online]. Report for the SA Institute of Race Relations. Available from: <http://irr.org.za/reports-and-publications/occasional-reports/files/the-80-20-report-on-local-government-26-may-2014-1.pdf> [Accessed 17 June 2015].

Anderson, L.G. & Seijo, J.C. 2010. *Bioeconomics of fisheries management*, 1st ed. Ames, Iowa, U.S.A: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ansari, A. 2016. *User Experience for the Web.* [online]. MOOC from Open 2 Study. Available from: <https://www.open2study.com/courses/user-experience-for-the-web> [Accessed 9 September 2016].

Ashworth, G.J. & Voogd, H. 1994. Marketing and place promotion. In: Gold, J.R. & Ward, S.V. (Eds.). *Place promotion: the use of publicity and marketing to sell towns and regions.* Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 39-52.

Badcock, B. 2002. *Making sense of cities: a geographical survey*. London, UK: Arnold.

Baker, K. & Mearns, K. 2012. Classification of South African towns revisited. In: Donaldson, R. & Marais, L. (Eds.). *Small town geographies in Africa: experiences from South Africa and elsewhere*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 3-19.

Batten, D.F. 1995. Network cities: creative urban agglomerations for the 21st century. *Urban Studies*, 32(2), pp. 313-327.

Bauer, I. 2014. Romance tourism or female sex tourism? *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease,* 12(1): pp. 20-28.

Baumann, D.D., Boland, J.J. & Hanemann, W.M. 1997. *Urban water demand management and planning*, 1st ed. New York City, USA: McGraw-Hill.

Belch, E.G. & Belch, M.A. 2015. *Advertising and promotion: an integrated marketing communications perspective,* 10th global ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Bengry-Howell, A., Wiles, R., Nind, M. & Crow, G. 2011. *A review of the academic impact of three methodological innovations: netnography, child-led research and creative research methods*. Southampton, UK: NCRM Hub, University of Southampton.

Bennett, A.G. 2010. *The big book of marketing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Bjelland, M.D., Montello, D.R., Fellman, J.D., Getis, A. & Getis, J. 2013. *Human geography: landscapes of human activities*, 12th international ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Blythe, J. 2012. *Essentials of marketing*, 5th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Bothma, N. & Gopaul, M. 2015. *E-marketing in the South African context*, 1st ed. Cape Town: Juta Limited.

Bruning, S.D., McGrewb, S. & Cooper, M. 2006. Town–gown relationships: exploring university–community engagement from the perspective of community members. *Public Relations Review,* 32(2): pp. 125-130.

Buhalis, D. 2000. Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management,* 21(1): pp. 97-116.

BusinessTech. 2016. *The Best and Worst Municipalities in South Africa in 2016*. [online]. BusinessTech. Available from: <http://businesstech.co.za/news/government/114770/the-best-and-worst-municipalities-in-south-africa-in-2016> [Accessed 16 March 2016].

Cantoni, L., Kalbaska, N., Marchiori, E. & De Ascaniis, M.S. 2016. *eTourism: Communication Perspectives* [online]. MOOC from University of Lugano, Switzerland, presented via iVersity. Available from: <https://iversity.org/en/courses/etourism-communication-perspectives-october-2016> [Accessed 19 October 2016].

Cao, K. & Yang, Z. 2016. A study of e-commerce adoption by tourism websites in China. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management,* 5(3): pp. 283-289.

Chaffey, D. & Ellis-Chadwick, F. 2016. *Digital marketing: strategy, implementation and practice*, 6th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Chakravarty, S. 2013. August 11. Research methods: content analysis. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6nqUTwDpLg.

Chikulo, B.C. 2013. Developmental local governance and service delivery in South Africa: progress, achievements and challenges. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 28(1): pp. 35-64.

Clifton, N. 2014. Towards a holistic understanding of county of origin effects? Branding of the region, branding from the region. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management,* 3(2): pp. 122-132.

Coates, J.F. 2016. Rural America: a future of decline and decay unless... . *Technological Forecasting & Social Change,* 113(Part A): pp. 39-40.

Connell, J. 2013. Contemporary medical tourism: conceptualisation, culture and commodification. *Tourism Management,* 34: pp. 1-13.

Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Crompton, W.C. & Hoffman, E. 2013. *Positive psychology: the science of happiness and flourishing*, 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Crush, J. & Chikanda, A. 2015. South-South medical tourism and the quest for health in Southern Africa. *Social Science & Medicine,* 124: pp. 313-320.

Das, M. & Chatterjee, B. 2015. Ecotourism: a panacea or a predicament? *Tourism Management Perspectives,* 14: pp. 3-16.

De Brauw, A., Mueller, V. & Lee, H.L. 2014. The role of rural-urban migration in the structural transformation of sub-Saharan Africa. *World Development,* 63, pp. 33-42.

De Hoyos, M. & Green, A. 2011. Recruitment and retention issues in rural labour markets. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(2): pp. 171-180.

De Jong, T. & Verkoren, O. 2012. Classification of South African towns revisited. In: Donaldson, R. & Marais, L. (Eds.). Small town geographies in Africa: experiences from South Africa and elsewhere. New York: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 3-19.

De Noni, I., Orsi, L. & Zanderighi, L. 2014. Attributes of Milan influencing city brand attractiveness. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management,* 3: pp. 218-226.

Debertin, D.L. 1993. *New strategies for effective rural development*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, Department of Agricultural Economics.

Diehl, M., Alexandrova-Kabadjova, B., Heuver, R. & Martínez-Jaramillo, S. 2016. *Analyzing the economics of financial market infrastructures*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Dinnie, K. 2008. *Nation branding: concepts, issues, practice*, 1st ed. Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Dogana, B. & Gokovali, U. 2012. Geographical indications: the aspects of rural development and marketing through the traditional products. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 62: pp. 761-765.

Dril, N., Galkin, A. & Bibik, N. 2016. Applying city marketing as a tool to support sustainable development in small cities: case study in Ukraine. *Transportation Research Procedia,* 16: pp. 46-53.

Dupasquier, C. & Osakwe, P.N. 2006. Foreign direct investment in Africa: performance, challenges and responsibilities. *Journal of Asian Economics,* 17(2): pp. 241-260.

Edwards, S., Birks, M., Chapman, Y. & Yates, K. 2016. Miscarriage in America: the geographical inequity of healthcare services. *Australasian Emergency Nursing Journal,* 19(2): pp. 106-111.

Elshof, H., Van Wissen, L. & Mulder, C.H. 2014. The self-reinforcing effects of population decline: an analysis of differences in moving behaviour between rural neighbourhoods with declining and stable populations. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 36: pp. 285-299.

Falk, J.H., Ballantyne, R., Packer, J. & Benckendorff, P. 2012. Travel and learning: a neglected tourism research area. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), pp. 908-927.

FAO. 2006. *The role of agriculture and rural development in revitalizing abandoned/depopulated areas*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Feeney, M.K. & Brown, A. 2016. Are small cities online? Content, ranking, and variation of U.S. municipal websites. *Government Information Quarterly,* 34(1): pp. 62-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2016.10.005.

Fernández-Cavia, J., Rovira, C., Díaz-Luque, P. & Cavaller, V. 2013. Web quality index (WQI) for official tourist destination websites: proposal for an assessment system. *Tourism Management Perspectives,* 9: pp. 5-13.

Fini, R., Grimaldi, R., Santoni, S. & Sobrero, M. 2011. Complements or substitutes? The role of universities and local context in supporting the creation of academic spin-offs. *Research Policy,* 40(8): pp. 1113-1127.

FCC. 2013. *Rural Municipalities Struggle to Maximise Their Limited Tax Base – Current Own Revenues Insufficient to Support Service Delivery Mandates in Rural Municipalities*. [online]. Fiscal and Finance Commission. Available from: <http://www.ffc.co.za/index.php/docman-menu-item/policy-briefs-2013/157-2013-policy-brief-1-rural-municipalities-struggle-to-maximise-their-limited-tax-base> [Accessed 18 June 2015].

Frijters, P. & Leigh, A. 2008. Materialism on the march: from conspicuous leisure to conspicuous consumption? *The Journal of Socio-Economics,* 37(5): pp. 1937-1945.

Gallent, N. 2015. Bridging social capital and the resource potential of second homes: The case of Stintino, Sardinia. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 38: pp. 99-108.

Gehl, J. 2010. *Cities for people*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Getz, D. 2008. Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism Management* 29(3): pp. 403-428.

Gibson, H.J. 1998. Sport tourism: a critical analysis of research. *Sport Management Review*, 1(1): pp. 45-76.

Giles, E.L., Bosworth, G. & Willett, J. 2013. The role of local perceptions in the marketing of rural areas. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management,* 2(1): pp. 4-13.

Gold, J.R. & Ward, S.V. 1994. *Place promotion: the use of publicity and marketing to sell towns and regions*. Belhaven Press.

Google Inc. 2015. *Building an Online Business.* [online]. MOOC from Alison. Available from: <https://alison.com/courses/Getting-Your-Business-Online> [Accessed 27 August 2015].

Griffiths, A. & Wall, S. 2012. *Applied economics*, 12th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Guo, J. 2009. Tax competition for commuters. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 39(2): pp. 148-154.

Gustafson, P. 2002. Tourism and seasonal retirement migration. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(4): pp. 899-918.

Hall, P. 2002. Christaller for a global age: redrawing the urban hierarchy. In: Mayr, A., Meurer, M. & Vogt, J. (Eds.). *Stadt und region: dynamic von lebenswelden*. Leipzig: Deutche Gechellschaf fur Geographie, pp. 110-128.

Handley, A. & Chapman, C.C. 2011. *Content rules: how to create killer blogs, podcasts, videos, ebooks, webinars (and more) that engage customers and ignite your business*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Handy, S.L. & Mokhtarian, P.L. 1996. The future of telecommuting. *Futures*, 28(3): pp. 227-240.

Haven-Tang, C. & Sedgley, D. 2014. Partnership working in enhancing the destination brand of rural areas: a case study of Made in Monmouthshire, Wales, UK. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management,* 3(1): pp. 59-67.

He, S.Y. & Hu, L. 2015. Telecommuting, income, and out-of-home activities. *Travel Behaviour and Society*, 2(3): pp. 131-147. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tbs.2014.12.003.

Hedden, S. & Cilliers, J. 2014. *Parched prospects: the emerging water crisis in South Africa*. African Futures paper 11. Institute for Security Studies (ISS). Available from: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/AF11_15Sep2014.pdf> [Accessed 12 March 2016].

Heinze, A., Fletcher, G., Rashid, T., Kurzyk, B., Gatautis, R., Vitkauskaite, E., Slavova, M. & Cruz, A. 2015. *Digital and Social Media Marketing*. [online]. MOOC from Salford Business School, University of Salford, presented via iVersity. Available from: <https://iversity.org/en/courses/digital-and-social-media-marketing> [Accessed 2 December 2015].

Henderson, J.R. & McDaniel, K. 2005. Natural amenities and rural employment growth: a sector analysis. *The Review of Regional Studies*, 35(1): pp. 80-96.

Herring, S.C. 2010. Web content analysis: expanding the paradigm. In: Hunsinger, J., Klastrup, L. & Allen, M. (Eds.). *International handbook of internet research*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Hilson, G. & McQuilken, J. 2014. Four decades of support for artisanal and small-scale mining in sub-Saharan Africa: a critical review. *The Extractive Industries and Society,* 1(1): pp. 104-118.

Hilson, G. & Osei, L. 2014. Tackling youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa: is there a role for artisanal and small-scale mining? *Futures,* 62(Part A): pp. 83-94.

Hughes, H.L. 1996. Redefining cultural tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(3): pp. 707-709.

Hunter, W. 2011. *Fisheries management and conservation*, 1st ed. Boca Raton, Florida, U.S.A.: CRC Press.

Huttunen, S. 2012. Wood energy production, sustainable farming livelihood and multifunctionality in Finland. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 28(4): pp. 549-558.

IMF. 2017. *What Is Direct Investment?* [online]. International Monetary Fund. Available from: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2015/09/basics.htm> [Accessed 10 September 2017].

Investopedia. n.a. *Foreign Direct Investment.* [online]. Available from: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fdi.asp> [Accessed 8 March 2013].

Kannan, P.K. & Li, H.A. 2016. Digital marketing: a framework, review and research agenda. *International Journal of Research in Marketing,* 34(11): pp. 22-45. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.11.006.

Kantor, B. 2017. Get South Africa growing. Jeppestown, South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

Keegan, P. 2016. *Online Advertising.* [online]. MOOC from Open 2 Study. Available from: <https://www.open2study.com/courses/online-advertising> [Accessed 16 August 2016].

Kesler, S.E. & Simson, A.C. 2016. *Mineral resources, economics and the environment*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Keyser, H. 2009. *Developing tourism: towards competitive destinations*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Kloos, B., Hill, J., Thomas, E., Wandersman, A., Elias, M.J. & Dalton, J.H. 2012. *Community psychology: linking individuals and communities,* 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Kotler, P. & Keller, K.L. 2012. *A framework for marketing management*, 5th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Kotler, P., Haider, D.H. & Rein, I. 1993. *Marketing places*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Kuckartz, U. 2014. *Qualitative text analysis: a guide to methods, practice & using software*. London, UK: Sage.

Laudon, K.C. & Traver, C.G. 2018. *E-commerce 2017*, 19th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Le, T. 2011. Remittances for economic development: the investment perspective. *Economic Modelling,* 28: pp. 2409-2415.

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2010. *Practical research, planning and design*, 9th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Leten, B., Landoni, P. & Van Looy, B. 2014. Science or graduates: how do firms benefit from the proximity of universities? *Research Policy,* 43(8): pp. 1398-1412.

Li, X. & Zhou, J. 2015. Environmental effects of remittance of rural–urban migrant. *Economic Modelling*, 47: pp. 174-179.

Litvin, S.W., Xu, G., Ferguson, A.C. & Smith, W.W. 2013. Too attractive for its own good? South of broad, second/vacation-homes and resident attitudes. *Tourism Management Perspectives,* 7: pp. 89-98.

Liu, S. 2015. Spillovers from universities: evidence from the land-grant program. *Journal of Urban Economics,* 87: pp. 25-41.

Lucas, J.S. & Southgate, P.C. 2012. *Aquaculture: farming aquatic animals and plants*, 2nd ed. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lydall, M. 2009. Backward linkage development in the South African PGM industry: a case study. *Resources Policy,* 34(3): pp. 112-120.

Madden, F. 2016. *Writing for the Web (WriteWeb).* [online]. MOOC from Open2Study. Available from: <https://www.open2study.com/courses/writing-for-the-web> [Accessed 19 September 2016].

Marie-Vivien, D., Bernard, L., Boutonnet, J.P. & Casabianca, F. 2017. Are French geographical indications losing their soul? Analyzing recent developments in the governance of the link to the origin in France. *World Development,* 98: pp. 25-34.

Mathews, S., Bianchi, C., Perks. K.J., Healy, M. & Wickramasekera, R. 2016. Internet marketing capabilities and international market growth. *International Business Review,* 25(4): pp. 820-830.

McGhie, C. 2013. *Why Retirees are 'Mouseholing' Between Home and Abroad*. [online]. The Telegraph. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/retirement/9894977/Why-retirees-are-mouseholing-between-home-and-abroad.html> [Accessed 14 April 2015].

McInerney, C.R. 1999. Working in the virtual office: Providing information and knowledge to remote workers. *Library & Information Science Research*, 21(1): pp. 69-89.

McLeod, J.M., Scheufele, D.A. & Moy, P. 1999. *Community, Communication, and Participation: The Role of Mass Media and Interpersonal Discussion in Local Political Participation* [online]. Political Communication. Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224818340_Community_Communication_and_Participation_The_Role_of_Mass_Media_and_Interpersonal_Discussion_in_Local_Political_Participation> [Accessed 2 February 2016].

McManus, P., Walmsley, J., Argent, N., Baum, S., Bourke, L., Martin, J., Pritchard, B. & Sorensen, T. 2012. Rural community and rural resilience: what is important to farmers in keeping their country towns alive? *Journal of Rural Studies,* 28(1): pp. 20-29.

McMillan, S.J. 2000. The microscope and the moving target: the challenge of applying content analysis to the World Wide Web. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77(1): 80-98.

Mercer LLC. 2007. *Defining Quality of Living.* [online]. Mercer LLC. Available from: <https://www.imercer.com/uploads/common/pdfs/definingqualityofliving.pdf> [Accessed 25 January 2015].

Mercer LLC. 2015. *Location Evaluation and Quality of Living Reports.* [online]. Mercer LLC. Available from: <https://www.imercer.com/uploads/common/pdfs/hardship-brochure.pdf> [Accessed 25 January 2015].

Merrilees, B., Miller, D. & Herington, C. 2011. City branding: a facilitating framework for stressed satellite cities. *Journal of Business Research,* 66(1): 37-44.

Mirta, J. 2012. *Entrepreneurship, innovation and regional development*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Moghimehfar, F. & Nasr-Esfahani, M.H. 2011. Decisive factors in medical tourism destination choice: a case study of Isfahan, Iran and fertility treatments. *Tourism Management,* 32(6): pp. 1431-1434.

Mohr, P. & Fourie, L. 2004. *Economics for South African students*, 3rd ed. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.

Morris, M. & Fessehaie, J. 2014. The industrialisation challenge for Africa: towards a commodities based industrialisation path. *Journal of African Trade,* 1(1): pp. 25-36.

Morrison, A.M. 2013. *Marketing and managing tourism destinations*, 1st ed. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Moseley, M.J. 2003. *Rural development: principles and practice*. London, UK: Sage.

Mouton, J. 2001. How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies: a South African guide and resource book. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.

Municipal Demarcation Board. 2012. *State municipal capacity assessment 2010/2011 national trends in municipal capacity: final national report on trends in municipal capacity for the 2010/11 municipal financial year*. Centurion, South Africa: Municipal Demarcation Board.

Nahai, N. 2017. *Webs of influence: the psychology of online persuasion*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Nel, J.V. 1994. *Promoting Verwoerdburg: a study in city marketing*. M.Sc. thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Ngomane, T. 2012. *Rural development in South Africa: the role of agriculture.* [PowerPoint presentation]. Available from: <http://www.agriseta.co.za/downloads/Rural_Development_in_South_Africa_-_the_role_of_agriculture.pdf> [Accessed 16 April 2015].

Niewenhuis, J. 2007. Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In: Maree, K. 2007. *First steps in research*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.

Nykiel, R.A. & Jascolt, E. 1998. *Marketing your city, U.S.A.: A guide to developing a strategic tourism marketing plan*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Hospitality Press.

On the Mark. 2005. *Product positioning in 5 easy steps*. On the Mark marketing booklet. Available from: <http://www.otmmarketing.com/Portals/42226/docs/product_positioning.pdf> [Accessed 27 March 2016].

OSCE. 2006. *Best-practice guide for a positive business and investment climate*. Vienna, Austria: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Pacione, M. 2005. *Urban geography: a global perspective*, 3rd revised ed. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Park, D-B., Doh, K-R. & Kim, K-H. 2014. Successful managerial behaviour for farm-based tourism: a functional approach. *Tourism Management,* 45: pp. 201-210.

Pearce, D.G. 2001. An integrative framework for urban tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(4): pp. 926-946.

Pender, J., Marré, A. & Reeder, R. 2012. Rural Wealth Creation: Concepts, Strategies and Measures. Economic Research Report 131, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Washington, D.C. Available from: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/44957/16573_err131_1_.pdf?v=41056> [Accessed 4 September 2016].

Pienaar, J.J., Campbell, M.M. & Visser, G.E. 2010. *The planning consequences of second-homes in South Africa*. South African Planning Institute (SAPI) conference 'Beyond crisis: opportunities & action'. Durban, 13-15 September 2010.

Pierrard, O. 2008. Commuters, residents and job competition. *Regional Science and Urban Economics,* 38(6): pp. 565-577.

Pike, A., Rodriguez-Pose, A. & Tomaney, J. 2017. *Local and regional development*, 2nd ed. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Pike, S. 2015. *Destination marketing essentials*, 2nd ed. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Pillay, M. & Rogerson, C.M. 2013. Agriculture-tourism linkages and pro-poor impacts: the accommodation sector of urban coastal KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Applied Geography,* 36: pp. 49-58.

Plummer, P., Tonts, M. & Argent, N. 2017. Sustainable rural economies, evolutionary dynamics and regional policy. *Applied Geography*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2017.01.005.

Poudyala, N.C., Hodges, D.G. & Cordell, H.K. 2008. The role of natural resource amenities in attracting retirees: implications for economic growth policy. *Ecological Economics,* 68(1-2): pp. 240-248.

Ries, A. & Trout, J. 2000. *Positioning: the battle for your mind*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Rogerson, C.M. 2009. Strategic Review of Local Economic Development in South Africa: Final Report Submitted to Minister Sicelo Shiceka (dplg) Commissioned by the dplg and AHI. Available from: <https://juta.co.za/support-material/resource/3269/> [Accessed 13 September 2017].

Ryan, C. & Kinder, R. 1996. Sex, tourism and sex tourism: fulfilling similar needs? *Tourism Management*, 17(7): pp. 507-518.

Ryan, D. 2014. *Understanding digital marketing: marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation*, 3rd ed. London: Kogan Page.

Rye, J.F. 2011. Conflicts and contestations: rural populations' perspectives on the second homes phenomenon. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 27(3): pp. 263-274.

Rykun, A.Y., Yuzhaninov, K.M. & Vychuzhanina, E.V. 2015. Universities and local communities: problems and perspectives of interaction. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 200: pp. 359-365.

Sachs, J.D. 2008. *Common wealth: economics for a crowded planet*. London, UK: Penguin Books.

Sager, S. 2014. Top 10 Best Cities for Families. *Parenting*. Available from: <http://www.parenting.com/family-time/home/top-10-best-cities-families-2014> [Accessed 9 October 2014].

SALGA. 2015. *Public Service Employment Growing Four Times Faster than Total Employment*. [online]. South African Local Government Association (SALGA). Available from: <http://led.co.za/story/2012/01/23/public-service-employment-growing-four-times-faster-than-total-employment> [Accessed 16 April 2015].

Scarborough, N. & Cornwall, J.R. 2015. *Entrepreneurship and small business management*, 11th ed. (global edition). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Schneider, G. 2015: *Electronic commerce*, 11th ed. Stamford, CT, USA: Cengage Learning.

Scorsone, E. 2002. *Strategies for Community Economic Development*. [online]. Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky. Available form: <http://www2.econ.iastate.edu/classes/crp274/swenson/URP290/Readings/strategies4ced.html> [Accessed 16 April 2015].

Shen, L. & Gunson, A.J. 2006. The role of artisanal and small-scale mining in China's economy. *Journal of Cleaner Production,* 14(3-4): pp. 427-435.

Sheng, X., Simpson, P.M. & Siguaw, J.A. 2014. U. S. winter migrants' park community attributes: an importance-performance analysis. *Tourism Management,* 43: pp. 55-67.

Siegfried, J.J., Sanderson, A.R. & McHenryc, P. 2007. The economic impact of colleges and universities. *Economics of Education Review,* 26(5): pp. 546-558.

Smith, B. 2006. *The farming handbook*. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Smith, H. 1994. *Marketing the city: the role of flagship developments in urban regeneration*. London: E & FN Spon.

Smith, N. 2016. *Social media marketing in a week*. London, UK: John Murray Learning.

St-Louis, E., Manaugh, K., Van Lierop, D. & El-Geneidy, A. 2014. The happy commuter: a comparison of commuter satisfaction across modes. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour,* 26(Part A): pp. 160-170.

Sunde, T. 2017. Foreign direct investment, exports and economic growth: ADRL and causality analysis for South Africa. *Research in International Business and Finance,* 41: pp. 434-444.

Supriyadi, E. 2012. Local economic development and triple helix: lessons learned from role of universities in higher education town of Jatinangor, West Java, Indonesia. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 52: pp. 299-306.

Teller, C. & Reutterer, T. 2008. The evolving concept of retail attractiveness: what makes retail agglomerations attractive when customers shop at them? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services,* 15: pp. 127-143.

Temporal, P. 2010. *Advanced brand management: managing brands in a changing world*, 2nd ed. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia).

The Economist Intelligence Unit. 2013. *Hot spots 2025: benchmarking the future competitiveness of cities*. London: The Economist.

The World Bank. 2016. *Doing business 2016: economy profile 2016: South Africa*. Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

Thompson, N. 2014a. *Beautification*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.useful-community-development.org/beautification.html> [Accessed 26 January 2016].

Thompson, N. 2014b. *Code Enforcement*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.useful-community-development.org/code-enforcement.html> [Accessed 26 January 2016].

Thompson, N. 2014c. *Definition of Community Development*. [online]. Available from: <http://www.useful-community-development.org/definition-of-community-development.html> [Accessed 27 January 2016].

Thompson, N.A., Herrmann, A.M. & Hekkert, M.P. 2014. How sustainable entrepreneurs engage in institutional change: insights from biomass torrefaction in the Netherlands. *Journal of Cleaner Production,* 106: pp. 1-11.

Toerien, D. & Marais, L. 2012. Classification of South African towns revisited. In: Donaldson, R. & Marais, L. (Eds.). *Small town geographies in Africa: experiences from South Africa and elsewhere*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 3-19.

Turton, A. 2012. *A South African perspective on climate change, food security and water*. Paper presented at the 4th BRICS Academic Forum, New Delhi, March 2012.

Ulaga, W., Sharma, A. & Krishnan, R. 2002. Plant location and place marketing: understanding the process from the business customer's perspective. *Industrial Marketing Management,* 31(5): pp. 393-401.

University of Surrey. 2017. *Introduction to Research.* [online]. Available from: <http://libweb.surrey.ac.uk/library/skills/Introduction%20to%20Research%20and%20Managing%20Information%20Leicester/page_61.htm> [Accessed 13 March 2017].

Vaaler, P.M. 2013. Diaspora concentration and the venture investment impact of remittances. *Journal of International Management,* 19(1): pp. 26-46.

Van Lent, C. 2016. *Advanced Styling with Responsive Design*. [online]. MOOC from University of Michigan, School of Information, hosted by Coursera. Available from: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/responsivedesign> [Accessed 4 December 2016].

Vepsäläinen, M. & Pitkänen, K. 2010. Second home countryside: representations of the rural in Finnish popular discourses. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 26(2): pp. 194-204.

Viallon, P. 2012. Retired snowbirds. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(4): pp. 2073-2091.

Wang, C., Zhang, C. & Ni, J. 2015. Social network, intra-network education spillover effect and rural–urban migrants' wages: evidence from China. *China Economic Review,* 35: pp. 156-168.

Wearing, S. & McGehee, N.G. 2013. Volunteer tourism: a review. *Tourism Management,* 38: pp. 120-130.

Weber, K. 2001. Outdoor adventure tourism: a review of research approaches. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2): pp. 360-377.

Welman, C., Kruger F. & Mitchell, B. 2005. *Research methodology*, 3rd ed. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press.

Wesgro. 2015. *Wesgro marketing strategy report for 2015 - 2020*. Cape Town: Cape Town & Western Cape Tourism, Trade & Investment. Available from: <http://www.wesgro.co.za/pdf_repository/2015%2011%2016%20Updated%20Wesgro%205Year%20Strat%20v5.pdf> [Accessed 21 July 2016].

Wessels, J. 2012. Small towns: development potential or poverty traps. In: *Strategies to overcome poverty and inequality*. University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

Wirth, P., Elis, V., Müller, B. & Yamamoto, K. 2016. Peripheralisation of small towns in Germany and Japan: dealing with economic decline and population loss. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 47(Part A): pp. 62-75.

Wong, K.M. & Musa, G. 2014. Retirement motivation among 'Malaysia My Second Home' participants. *Tourism Management,* 40: pp. 141-154.

Wood, M.B. 2014. *The marketing plan handbook*, 5th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

World Economic Forum. 2013. *The global competitive report 2013-2014: full data edition*. World Economic Forum. Geneva.

World Economic Forum. 2014. *The global competitive report 2014-2015: full data edition*. World Economic Forum. Geneva.

Yang, L. 2010. Ethnic tourism and cultural representation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(2): pp. 561-585.

Yende, S. 2016. Here are the best and worst municipalities. [online]. *City Press*, 28 February 2016*.* Available at: <http://city-press.news24.com/News/here-are-the-best-and-worst-municipalities-20160228> [Accessed 3 March 2016].

Annexure 1: Digital place marketing features and assessment criteria

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
A. Municipal website	Website of municipality and its LED/planning department (website carries most weight in digital place marketing because it serves as the central information hub)	See section 2.5.1	?/5
A.1 Place attraction factor showcasing	Destination description and information incl. content usefulness or relevance, quality, FAQ, news/articles, electronic guides, brochures and other publications, in terms of key place attraction factors. Assess the overall perception created in terms of place attraction factors specifically in web copy as opposed to being "hidden" in downloadable documents.	See section 2.5.1.2 and Chapter 4	?/5
Regional connectivity	Regional connectivity description.	See section 4.2	?/5
Market size	Description of local and regional population and market size and proximity to markets and tourism source areas.	See section 4.3	?/5
Tourism in wider region	Description in terms of proximity to other tourism destination areas in the wider region.	See section 4.4	?/5
Local transport	Local transport infrastructure and services description.	See section 4.5	?/5
Basic services	Basic services availability and quality description (electricity, water, sanitation and waste management services).	See section 4.6	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
Technology and ICT	Technology and ICT infrastructure and services description.	See section 4.7	?/5
Real estate	Real estate description (land, housing and buildings).	See section 4.8	?/5
Financial services	Description of financial services locally available.	See section 4.9	?/5
Local economy	Describing the local economy as diverse, vibrant, and presence of industry clusters, if applicable.	See section 4.10	?/5
Positive expectations	Description of positive future expectations for the place.	See section 4.11	?/5
Job opportunities	Job opportunities (in the local economy, not just at the municipality) description.	See section 4.12	?/5
Labour force	Work ethic, wage expectations, skills and labour productivity description.	See section 4.13	?/5
Education	Education: description of local educational, vocational training and research facilities.	See section 4.14	?/5
Healthcare	Healthcare facilities and services description.	See section 4.15	?/5
Healthy environment	Describing the local environment as healthy and disease free.	See section 4.16	?/5
Social capital	Social capital description including sense of community, community vibrancy, outsider	See section 4.17	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	acceptance, family values and opportunities for spiritual development.		
Governance	Governance (local governance, politics, corruption, legal, regulatory, licensing, zoning and taxing system) - convincing web copy and supporting proof that the municipality is well managed. Generic information on management structures, organograms etc. will not carry much weight (maximum score of 2 out of 5) - focus will only be on evidence of actual performance and credibility of managers.	See section 4.18	?/5
Safety	Safety: Crime, public safety and security description.	See section 4.19	?/5
Retail & restaurants	Retail, food and beverage related amenities description.	See section 4.20	?/5
Culture & recreation	Arts, culture, entertainment, recreation and sport description.	See section 4.21	?/5
Local tourism	Tourist attractions, activities, services and accommodation description.	See section 4.22	?/5
Attractiveness	Attractiveness of urban design, nature and climate.	See section 4.23	?/5
Exploitable natural resources	Exploitable natural resources description.	See section 4.24	?/5
Cost competitiveness	Cost competitiveness description: pricing information, cost of doing business, living and visiting: information, calculators, comparisons,	See section 4.25	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	highlighting of value or positioning as related to cost.		
A.2 Positioning & branding	Positioning and differentiator description (why choose the place above other competing places) and place brand building.	See section 2.5.1.3	?/5
A.3 Info tailored to specific target audiences	Destination description tailored to the specific information needs of key place marketing target audiences:	See section 2.5.1.4 and Chapter 3	?/5
Residents	Residents (existing, new and interested residents): information on lifestyle amenities, attraction factors particularly important to residents, buy-local campaigns etc.	See sections 2.5.1.4 and 3.5	?/5
Tourism stakeholders	Tourists, tour operators and other tourism stakeholders.	See sections 2.5.1.4 and 3.4	?/5
Business support	Business retention and support, export promotion and entrepreneurship development services.	See sections 2.5.1.4, 3.2 and 3.3	?/5
Investment attraction	Investment and new business attraction, and investor relations: general information, and incentives for business and investment (in addition to business support discussed above).	See sections 2.5.1.4, 3.2 and 3.3	?/5
A.4 Interactivity	Interactivity and 3-way communication: degree to which the municipal website connects and facilitates interaction between the user and the organisation and with other users.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
Enquiries & feedback	Enquiries, complaints and feedback: Degree to which the municipal website encourage feedback, ease to find and submit complaints and enquiries, and initiation of regular surveys; in other words, how efficient the website is to facilitate stakeholder-to-place communication.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
Online discussions	Online communities and discussions on the website itself (stakeholder-to-stakeholder-to-place communication).	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
Tools	Tools: calculators, decision support, planning, note taking, booking, site selection and other tools.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
E-government capabilities	E-commerce and e-government capabilities (e.g. paying, buying, booking, renting online).	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
Customer Relationship Management	Customer Relationship Management capabilities and customisation to individual user level.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
A.5 Information design	Ease to find, process, understand and use relevant information, including findability and navigation (incl. tab structure, quick links, site map etc.).	See section 2.5.1.6	?/5
A.6 Pictures & rich media	Efficient use of photos, videos, sound, podcasts and stylish use of animated graphics.	See section 2.5.1.7	?/5
A.7 Freshness & news	Content freshness, news and notices: news, announcements, keeping stakeholders abreast of important issues and developments (place-to-stakeholder communication). The main body	See section 2.5.1.8	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	content of the municipal website should also be still relevant, up to date and regularly updated with new content (note that information quality is separately assessed, this criterion deals only with the freshness of the content).		
A.8 Persuasiveness	Persuasiveness of web copy: wording and other content on the municipal website should address core user needs, and an emotional appeal should be adopted as opposed to s strictly rational appeal), writing style should be appropriate for place marketing target audiences, and there should be a clear and persuasive call-to-action (more than just the provision of contact details).	See section 2.5.1.9	?/5
A.9 Aesthetics	Aesthetics of design: layout, graphic design and other visual elements should be attractive and appropriate for a place brand.	See section 2.5.1.10	?/5
A.10 Error free	The municipal website should be free of technical, factual, language, browser compatibility errors.	See section 2.5.1.11	?/5
A.11 Languages	Content should be available in the languages of important target audiences.	See section 2.5.1.12	?/5
A.12 Accessibility	The municipal website should be accessible to visually impaired people. Note that other accessibility factors such as language and mobile responsiveness are assessed separately by other criteria in this list.	See section 2.5.1.13	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
A.13 Mobile friendliness	Mobile friendliness or responsiveness of the municipal website: it should be easy to navigate and read on small screen, well-planned horizontal stacking of content with no horizontal screening, zoom allowed, and all content of the large screen version should also be available on a small screen.	See section 2.5.1.14	?/5
A.14 Directory functionality	Information gateway or directory functionality in the municipal website: the site should contain links to other relevant or related websites or information sources that adds value to the visitor, known as a portal. Alternatively, the site should provide comprehensive contact details to other relevant businesses, known as a directory.	See section 2.5.1.15	?/5
A.15 Social media integration	Degree to which the municipal website is integrated with social media, blog and other marketing initiatives, and ability of users to share website content with their social connections.	See section 2.5.1.16	?/5
B. Tourism website	Local tourism promotion organisation website. Note that only the official municipal tourism marketing organisation's website, and if it does not exist, assess the best private local tourism marketing organisation's website, it if such a website does exist. Also limit scope to only a town or municipal level tourism organisation, not district, regional, provincial, national or global level organisations.	See section 2.5.1	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
B.1 Place attraction factor showcasing	Destination description and information incl. content usefulness or relevance, quality, FAQ, news/articles, electronic guides, brochures and other publications, in terms of key place attraction factors. Consider the overall perception created in terms of place attraction factors relevant to tourists.	See section 2.5.1.2 and Chapter 4	?/5
Regional connectivity	Regional connectivity	See section 4.2	?/5
Tourism source area proximity	Proximity to tourism source areas	See section 4.4	?/5
Tourism in wider region	Proximity to other tourism destination areas in the wider region	See section 4.4	?/5
Local transport	Local transport infrastructure and services	See section 4.5	?/5
Healthy environment	Healthy and disease-free environment	See section 4.16	?/5
Social capital	Social capital including community vibrancy and friendliness towards tourists	See section 4.17	?/5
Safety	Safety: Crime, public safety, security, local political stability, corruption, healthy and disease free environment.	See section 4.19	?/5
Retail & restaurants	Retail, food and beverage related amenities	See section 4.20	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
Culture & recreation	Arts, culture, entertainment, recreation and sport	See section 4.21	?/5
Local tourism	Tourist attractions, activities, services and accommodation	See section 4.22	?/5
Attractiveness	Attractiveness of urban design, nature and climate	See section 4.23	?/5
Other services for tourists	Other services important to tourists, e.g. electricity, water, sanitation, technology and ICT infrastructure and services, financial services, healthcare facilities and services.	See Chapters 3 and 4	?/5
Cost competitiveness	Cost competitiveness as a tourist destination: consider the availability of pricing and overall cost of visiting information, cost calculators, price or cost comparison tools, and highlighting of value or positioning as related to cost.	See section 4.25	?/5
B.2 Positioning & branding	Positioning and differentiator description (why choose the destination above other competing destinations) and local destination brand building.	See section 2.5.1.3	?/5
B.3 Interactivity	Interactivity and 3-way communication: degree to which the local tourism promotion website connects and facilitates interaction between the user and the organisation and with other users.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
Enquiries & feedback	Enquiries, complaints and feedback: Degree to which the local tourism promotion website encourage feedback, ease to find and submit complaints and enquiries, and initiation of	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	regular surveys In other words, how efficient the website is to facilitate stakeholder-to-place communication.		
Online discussions	Online communities and discussions on the website itself (stakeholder-to-stakeholder-to-place communication).	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
Tools	Tools: calculators, decision support, planning, note taking, booking, site selection and other tools.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
E-commerce capabilities	E-commerce capabilities e.g. paying, buying, booking, renting online.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
Customer Relationship Management	Customer Relationship Management capabilities and customisation to individual user level.	See section 2.5.1.5	?/5
B.4 Information design	Ease to find, process, understand and use relevant information, including findability and navigation (incl. tab structure, quick links, site map etc.).	See section 2.5.1.6	?/5
B.5 Pictures & rich media	Efficient use of photos, videos, sound, podcasts and stylish use of animated graphics.	See section 2.5.1.7	?/5
B.6 Freshness & news	Content freshness, news and notices: news, announcements, keeping stakeholders abreast of important issues and developments (place-to-stakeholder communication). The main body content of the local tourism promotion website should also be still relevant, up to date and regularly updated with new content (note that	See section 2.5.1.8	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	information quality is separately assessed, this criterion deals only with the freshness of the content).		
B.7 Persuasiveness	Persuasiveness of web copy: wording and other content should address core user needs, and an emotional appeal should be adopted as opposed to s strictly rational appeal), writing style should be appropriate for tourists and other relevant stakeholders in the tourism industry e.g. tour operators, and there should be a clear and persuasive call-to-action (more than just the provision of contact details).	See section 2.5.1.9	?/5
B.8 Aesthetics	Aesthetics of design: layout, graphic design and other visual elements should be attractive and appropriate for a place brand.	See section 2.5.1.10	?/5
B.9 Error free	The local tourism promotion website should be free of technical, factual, language, browser compatibility errors.	See section 2.5.1.11	?/5
B.10 Languages	Content should be available in the languages of important tourist source areas.	See section 2.5.1.12	?/5
B.11 Accessibility	The local tourism promotion website should be accessibility to visually impaired people. Note that other accessibility factors such as language and mobile responsiveness are assessed separately by other criteria in this list.	See section 2.5.1.13	?/5
B.12 Mobile friendliness	Mobile friendliness or responsiveness of the local tourism promotion website: it should be	See section 2.5.1.14	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	easy to navigate and read on small screen, well-planned horizontal stacking of content with no horizontal screening, zoom allowed, and all content of the large screen version should also be available on a small screen.		
B.13 Directory functionality	Information gateway or directory functionality in the local tourism promotion website: the site should contain links to other relevant or related websites or information sources that adds value to the visitor, known as a portal. Alternatively, the site should provide comprehensive contact details to other relevant businesses, known as a directory.	See section 2.5.1.15	?/5
B.14 Social media integration	Degree to which the local tourism promotion website is integrated with social media, blog and other marketing initiatives, and ability of users to share website content with their social connections.	See section 2.5.1.16	?/5
C. Blogging	Blogging: Quality of the municipal, local business organisation, town or tourism destination marketing blog in terms of content value and freshness, and blog integration with other platforms and marketing activities.	See section 2.5.2	?/5
D. e-Newsletters	Electronic or email newsletters: assess the quality of content, how regular it is distributed, and whether there are clear mechanisms for users to opt-in and out. Scope is limited to newsletters of the municipality, local business	See section 2.5.3	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	organisation and local tourism marketing organisations.		
E. Social media	Quality of social media profiles in terms of: a) content value and freshness, b) interaction, community building and sharing, and c) integration with other platforms and marketing activities, for each of the following platforms (note that paid social media advertising is assessed separately under "digital advertising"):	See section 2.5.4	?/5
E.1 Facebook	Facebook	See section 2.5.4.1	?/5
Municipal page	Official municipal page	See section 2.5.4.1	?/5
Tourism page	Official tourism promotion page	See section 2.5.4.1	?/5
Community generated content	Community or user generated content	See section 2.5.4.1	?/5
E.2 Twitter	Twitter (consider only active accounts, not hashtags). Assess account in terms of 1) account name that should closely resemble organisation name; 2) account picture that should be the logo, spokesperson's face or otherwise be reflective of the place brand; 3) there should be a clear description of who the account holder is, what they do, and what they will tweet about; 4) there should be a clear call	See section 2.5.4.3	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	to action; 5) quality of content and usage of pictures; and 6) regularity of tweeting.		
Municipal account	Official municipal account	See section 2.5.4.3	?/5
Official tourism account	Official tourism promotion account	See section 2.5.4.3	?/5
Community accounts	Community or other relevant accounts	See section 2.5.4.3	?/5
E.3 YouTube	YouTube	See section 2.5.4.2	?/5
	Quality of first page video search results for the keywords: "accommodation" + main town name.	See section 2.5.4.2	?/5
	Quality of first page video search results for the keywords: "visit" + main town name.	See section 2.5.4.2	?/5
	Quality of first page video search results for the keywords: "school" + main town name.	See section 2.5.4.2	?/5
E.4 LinkedIn	LinkedIn	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
Municipality organisational profile	Organisational profile of the municipality as a whole entity. Assess the profile's description and follower number.	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
Municipality LED/Planning	Organisational profile of the municipal Investment Promotion, LED or planning	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
organisational profile	department. Assess the profile's description and follower number.		
Municipality LED/Planning personal profiles	Personal profiles of key people working at the municipal Investment Promotion, LED or planning department. Assess the quality of the headline, contact details, summary, skills and experience and follower/connection number.	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
Chamber of Business organisational profile	Organisational profile of the Chamber of Business. Assess the profile's description and follower number.	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
Chamber of Business personal profiles	Personal profiles of key people involved in the Chamber of Business. Assess the quality of the headline, contact details, summary, skills and experience and follower/connection number.	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
Tourism organisational profile	Organisational profile of the Tourism Destination Marketing Organisation. Assess the profile's description and follower number.	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
Tourism personal profiles	Personal profiles of key people working at the Tourism Destination Marketing Organisation. Assess the quality of the headline, contact details, summary, skills and experience and follower/connection number.	See section 2.5.4.4	?/5
E.5 Pinterest	General impression on the quality of exposure of the town or municipal area on Pinterest.	See section 2.5.4.5	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
E.6 Flickr	In Flickr, consider the degree to which a 20 second scroll down the search results for the main town's name reflects the place's attraction factors, especially place attraction factors important to tourists.	See section 2.5.4.6	?/5
F. Directories & discussion forums	Travel directory and review site listing, online communities and discussion forums: Use TripAdvisor as example and consider the general impression created when searching for the municipality's main town as the specific place of interest. Consider the number and quality of accommodation establishments, activities, restaurants and discussion forum posts listed.	See section 2.5.5	?/5
	Number of accommodation establishments listed	See section 2.5.5	
	Number of activities listed	See section 2.5.5	
	Number of restaurants listed	See section 2.5.5	
	Number of discussion forum posts	See section 2.5.5	
G. Mapping services	Mapping service listings: Google Maps and Google Earth	See section 2.5.6	?/5
Google Earth listings	Mapping of local businesses and tourism establishments in main town on Google Earth: general impression on the degree to which it is	See section 2.5.6	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	listed and presented with useful additional **information**.		
Google Earth photographs	**Photographs** showcasing local place attraction factors on Google Earth.	See section 2.5.6	?/5
Google Maps	Mapping of local businesses and tourism establishments in the municipality's main town on Google Maps. Consider the degree to which local points of interest and place attraction factors is **listed** and presented with useful additional **information**.	See section 2.5.6	?/5
H. Wiki's	Wiki listing (Wikipedia and Wikitravel): consider the quality of relevant information and links to other relevant information sources, for entries for both the municipality and most important town(s) within the municipal area.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Standard municipal info	Standard municipal information: sub-place listing, very basic demographics and politics on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
General town description	General town description beyond the basic data described above, and in addition to aspects assessed below (history, architecture, geography, natural resources, economics, local institutions, tourism attractions/facilities) on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
History	History, brand story, interesting historical facts on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
Architecture	Architecture and urban design: showcasing the place's built environment on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Geography	Geography, climate and showcasing of the place's natural beauty and natural resources on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Economy	Economics and local business environment: value for prospective investors/businesses on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Institutions & amenities	Local institutions and other amenities for prospective residents on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Tourism	Tourism information for prospective visitors and tourism investors on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Links to Wikies	Links to other Wikies related to the particular place (not generically applicable to all places) and relevant to place marketing targeting audiences on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Links to external resources	Links to external resources, websites relevant to place marketing targeting audiences, beyond the standard municipal website, on Wikipedia.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Wikitravel	Listing and quality of information to potential visitors and other tourism related target audiences e.g. travel agents, tour operators, tourism industry investors etc.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
Localwiki.org	Listing and quality of information to place marketing targeting audiences.	See section 2.5.7	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
Dedicated town Wiki	Dedicated town, city or place Wiki's: consider if the town or municipal area have its own Wiki platform and if so, how useful it is to place marketing target audiences.	See section 2.5.7	?/5
I. Online advertising	Online advertising: Consider paid search engine advertising, paid social media advertising, other digital advertising incl. affiliate marketing, reciprocal advertising, site or blog sponsorship etc. Consider only on advertising activities of organisations directly involved in place marketing or marketing of the entire place as a whole, not on marketing of a particular establishment within the place.	See section 2.5.8	?/5
J. Mobile apps	Mobile apps including native or hybrid apps on smart phones and tablets. Consider the presence of such apps on Google Play store, and value offered. Focus mainly on apps dedicated to the municipal area and towns within the municipal area, however, also mention if broader district or regional apps exists where the main town or municipal area are prominent.	See section 2.5.9	?/5
OVERALL DIGITAL PLACE MARKETING SCORE	Average of all the above scores.	See section 6.3	?/5
Digital maturity level	Overall level of digital maturity (level 0 to 5), considering the municipal website, and if	See section 2.6	?/5

Digital place marketing component or aspect	Brief description	Reference in dissertation to detailed description	Score out of 5
	present, also the local tourism marketing website.		

Annexure 2: Approval of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee

UFS-UV
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

15-May-2017

Dear Mr Thomas De Ridder

Ethics Clearance: An investigation into digital place marketing practices of selected South African local municipalities and communities.

Principal Investigator: Mr Thomas De Ridder

Department: Urban and Regional Planning (Bloemfontein Campus)

APPLICATION APPROVED

This letter confirms that a research proposal with tracking number: UFS-HSD2017/0413 and title: 'An investigation into digital place marketing practices of selected South African local municipalities and communities.' was given ethical clearance by the Ethics Committee.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: UFS-HSD2017/0413

Please ensure that the Ethics Committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the Ethics Committee on completion of the research.

The purpose of this report is to indicate whether or not the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the Ethics Committee should be aware of.

Note:

1. This clearance is valid from the date on this letter to the time of completion of data collection.
2. Progress reports should be submitted annually unless otherwise specified.

Yours Sincerely

Prof. RR (Robert) Bragg
Chairperson: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Natural and Agricultural Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Office of the Dean: Natural and Agricultural Sciences
T: +27 (0)51 401 2322 | F: +27 (0)51 401 3728 | E: heidemannj@ufs.ac.za
Biology Building, Ground Floor, Room 9 | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 (Internal Post Box G44) | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za

	Strong municipalities										Weak municipalities									
	Swellendam	Hessequa	Bergrivier	Swartland	Emthanjeni	Metsimaholo	Kouga	Lesedi	Kwa Sani	Govan Mbeki	Ingquza Hill	Mkhondo	Giyani	Mbhashe	Maphumulo	Engcobo	Ndwedwe	Greater Taung	Ephraim Mogale	Kagisano-Molopo
Municipal websites	3.2	2.3	1.3	2.4	0.8	1.4	2.9	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.3	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.0	1.3	0.0
Place attraction factor showcasing	1.3	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.0
Regional connectivity	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	3	0	3	0
Market size	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0
Tourism in wider region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Local transport	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Basic services	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technology and ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Real estate	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial services	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local economy	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0
Positive expectations	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Job opportunities	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Labour force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Healthcare	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Healthy environment	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Governance	4	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Safety	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Retail and restaurants	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culture and recreation	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Local tourism	1	5	1	2	0	0	5	3	4	0	0	4	3	0	0	4	0	1	2	0
Attractiveness	2	1	0	2	0	0	4	2	4	0	0	3	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Exploitable natural resources	2	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Cost competitiveness	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Positioning and branding	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Info tailored to specific target audiences	3.0	2.0	0.5	2.0	0.3	1.3	2.3	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3	1.3	0.3	1.0	0.5	0.0
Residents	3	3	1	4	1	3	4	4	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0
Tourism stakeholders	5	5	1	2	0	0	5	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	4	0	2	2	0
Business support	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Investment attraction	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interactivity	1.2	2.6	0.4	1.6	0.6	1.0	2.6	1.4	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.0
Enquiries and feedback	4	5	2	3	1	5	4	4	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	0
Online discussions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tools	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E-government capabilities	0	5	0	3	2	0	5	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Customer Relationship Management	1	3	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information design	4	2	2	3	1	4	4	2	2	4	1	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	0
Pictures and rich media	1	1	0	2	0	1	4	2	3	2	1	3	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	0
Freshness and news	5	5	1	3	2	2	5	3	2	3	2	3	2	4	3	2	2	1	2	0
Persuasiveness	4	2	1	4	1	1	4	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	0
Aesthetics	4	3	3	3	1	2	4	2	4	1	3	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	0
Error free	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	1	1	3	1	2	4	3	1	2	1	2	2	0
Languages	5	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Accessibility	5	4	5	4	2	3	2	3	4	2	3	3	4	3	1	3	3	2	2	0
Mobile friendliness	2	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4	0
Directory functionality	4	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Social media integration	3	2	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Tourism websites	3.4	2.3	2.9	4.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Place attraction factor showcasing	**2.1**	**1.8**	**2.3**	**2.2**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**2.8**	**0.0**	**2.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Regional connectivity	0	5	2	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tourism source area proximity	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tourism in wider region	0	1	1	3	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local transport	0	4	1	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Healthy environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social capital	2	0	4	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Safety	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retail and restaurants	5	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culture and recreation	5	4	5	5	0	0	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local tourism	5	2	5	5	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attractiveness	5	3	5	5	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other services for tourists	0	2	4	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost competitiveness	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Positioning and branding	2	2	3	5	0	0	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interactivity	2.5	1.4	1.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Enquiries and feedback	4	4	5	5	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Online discussions	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tools	4	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E-commerce capabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Relationship Management	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information design	4	2	5	5	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pictures and rich media	5	2	4	5	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Freshness and news	5	2	4	5	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persuasiveness	5	3	5	5	0	0	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aesthetics	5	3	2	5	0	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Error free	4	5	5	4	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Languages	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accessibility	4	4	4	3	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile friendliness	2	1	0	5	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Directory functionality	5	2	4	4	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social media integration	1	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blogging	5	4	1	1	0	1	4	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
e-Newsletters	4	5	2	1	1	0	4	0	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Social media	3.1	1.7	2.3	2.8	1.1	0.7	3.0	1.3	2.6	0.8	0.4	1.3	1.3	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.6
Facebook	1.0	1.0	2.7	2.7	1.3	0.3	3.0	1.3	2.7	2.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.3	0.3
Municipal page	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Tourism page	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community-generated content	3	3	3	3	4	1	4	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Twitter	2.3	0.0	1.7	3.3	0.0	0.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0
Municipal account	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Official tourism account	3	0	5	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community accounts	4	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
YouTube	4.0	2.7	2.3	3.7	1.0	0.0	2.7	1.3	3.7	0.7	0.0	1.3	1.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.0
LinkedIn	1.3	1.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.6	1.1	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	1.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.0
Municipality organisational profile	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LED/Planning organisational profile	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LED/Planning personal profiles	2	4	1	0	1	2	1	3	0	5	5	0	4	3	0	0	3	1	2	0
Chamber of Business organisational profile	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chamber of Business personal profiles	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tourism organisational profile	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tourism personal profiles	5	4	2	2	1	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pinterest	5	3	3	5	2	2	5	1	4	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
Flickr	5	2	4	2	2	1	5	3	5	0	1	4	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
Directories and discussion forums	5	3	2	2	2	2	5	2	4	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Mapping services	3.3	2.0	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.0	0.3	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.0
Google Earth listings	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Google Earth photographs	5	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
Google Maps	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Wikis	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.5	1.9	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.4	1.4	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.2	1.2	0.3	0.8
Standard municipal info	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
General town description	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	2
History	2	2	4	1	0	2	4	1	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	0	2	1	2
Architecture	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geography	0	2	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1

Economy	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Institutions and amenities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Tourism	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Links to wikis	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Links to external resources	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Wikitravel	4	0	0	2	0	1	5	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Localwiki.org	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dedicated town Wiki	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Online advertising	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile apps	0	5	4	3	0	3	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OVERALL DIGITAL PLACE MARKETING SCORE	2.7	2.3	1.6	1.8	0.6	1.0	2.9	0.8	1.7	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.6	0.2
Digital maturity level	4	2	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1

Annexure 4: Number of case study municipalities in the different implementation classes

Implementation →	Strong municipalities			Weak municipalities			All municipalities		
	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No
Municipal websites	2	8	0	0	9	1	2	17	1
Place attraction factor showcasing	0	10	0	0	8	2	0	18	2
Regional connectivity	2	0	8	2	4	4	4	4	12
Market size	0	0	10	1	5	4	1	5	14
Tourism in wider region	0	0	10	1	3	6	1	3	16
Local transport	0	1	9	0	2	8	0	3	17
Basic services	2	1	7	0	1	9	2	2	16
Technology and ICT	0	0	10	0	1	9	0	1	19
Real estate	0	2	8	0	2	8	0	4	16
Financial services	0	2	8	0	1	9	0	3	17
Local economy	0	3	7	1	2	7	1	5	14
Positive expectations	1	1	8	1	1	8	2	2	16
Job opportunities	0	1	9	1	2	7	1	3	16
Labour force	0	0	10	0	1	9	0	1	19
Education	0	2	8	0	2	8	0	4	16
Healthcare	0	2	8	0	1	9	0	3	17
Healthy environment	1	0	9	0	0	10	1	0	19
Social capital	0	0	10	0	1	9	0	1	19
Governance	2	7	1	0	6	4	2	13	5
Safety	0	1	9	0	0	10	0	1	19
Retail and restaurants	1	1	8	1	0	9	2	1	17
Culture and recreation	0	4	6	1	3	6	1	7	12
Local tourism	4	3	3	3	2	5	7	5	8
Attractiveness	2	4	4	2	1	7	4	5	11
Exploitable natural resources	0	5	5	3	1	6	3	6	11
Cost competitiveness	1	4	5	0	0	10	1	4	15

	Strong municipalities			Weak municipalities			All municipalities		
Implementation →	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No
Positioning and branding	1	1	8	0	2	8	1	3	16
Info tailored to specific target audiences	1	9	0	0	9	1	1	18	1
Residents	6	4	0	0	7	3	6	11	3
Tourism stakeholders	5	2	3	3	2	5	8	4	8
Business support	0	3	7	0	0	10	0	3	17
Investment attraction	1	1	8	0	1	9	1	2	17
Interactivity	2	8	0	0	9	1	2	17	1
Enquiries and feedback	7	3	0	0	9	1	7	12	1
Online discussions	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20
Tools	0	3	7	0	0	10	0	3	17
E-government capabilities	3	3	4	0	3	7	3	6	11
Customer Relationship Management	1	4	5	0	0	10	1	4	15
Information design	5	5	0	3	6	1	8	11	1
Pictures and rich media	2	6	2	3	6	1	5	12	3
Freshness and news	6	4	0	3	6	1	9	10	1
Persuasiveness	4	6	0	1	8	1	5	14	1
Aesthetics	6	4	0	3	6	1	9	10	1
Error free	7	3	0	2	7	1	9	10	1
Languages	2	8	0	0	9	1	2	17	1
Accessibility	7	3	0	6	3	1	13	6	1
Mobile friendliness	2	1	7	1	3	6	3	4	13
Directory functionality	1	5	4	1	2	7	2	7	11
Social media integration	3	1	6	1	0	9	4	1	15
Tourism websites	5	1	4	0	0	10	5	1	14
Place attraction factor showcasing	**1**	**9**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**1**	**19**	**0**
Regional connectivity	2	6	2	0	10	0	2	16	2
Tourism source area proximity	1	7	2	0	10	0	1	17	2
Tourism in wider region	2	7	1	0	10	0	2	17	1
Local transport	3	5	2	0	10	0	3	15	2

	Strong municipalities			Weak municipalities			All municipalities		
Implementation →	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No
Healthy environment	0	6	4	0	10	0	0	16	4
Social capital	2	7	1	0	10	0	2	17	1
Safety	0	4	6	0	10	0	0	14	6
Retail and restaurants	3	6	1	0	10	0	3	16	1
Culture and recreation	6	4	0	0	10	0	6	14	0
Local tourism	5	5	0	0	10	0	5	15	0
Attractiveness	6	4	0	0	10	0	6	14	0
Other services for tourists	2	6	2	0	10	0	2	16	2
Cost competitiveness	1	5	4	0	10	0	1	15	4
Positioning and branding	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**4**	**16**	**0**
Interactivity	**1**	**9**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**1**	**19**	**0**
Enquiries and feedback	4	6	0	0	10	0	4	16	0
Online discussions	2	5	3	0	10	0	2	15	3
Tools	3	5	2	0	10	0	3	15	2
E-commerce capabilities	0	5	5	0	10	0	0	15	5
Customer Relationship Management	0	5	5	0	10	0	0	15	5
Information design	5	5	0	0	10	0	5	15	0
Pictures and rich media	5	5	0	0	10	0	5	15	0
Freshness and news	5	5	0	0	10	0	5	15	0
Persuasiveness	6	4	0	0	10	0	6	14	0
Aesthetics	5	5	0	0	10	0	5	15	0
Error free	6	4	0	0	10	0	6	14	0
Languages	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20	0
Accessibility	6	4	0	0	10	0	6	14	0
Mobile friendliness	3	6	1	0	10	0	3	16	1
Directory functionality	4	6	0	0	10	0	4	16	0
Social media integration	1	6	3	0	10	0	1	16	3
Blogging	**3**	**5**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**8**	**5**	**5**	**10**
e-Newsletters	**3**	**5**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**7**	**4**	**7**	**9**

	Strong municipalities			Weak municipalities			All municipalities		
Implementation →	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No
Social media	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**4**	**16**	**0**
Facebook	4	6	0	0	10	0	4	16	0
Municipal page	3	1	6	1	0	9	4	1	15
Tourism page	2	0	8	0	0	10	2	0	18
Community-generated content	8	2	0	0	10	0	8	12	0
Twitter	1	5	4	0	3	7	1	8	11
Municipal account	0	2	8	0	0	10	0	2	18
Official tourism account	3	1	6	0	0	10	3	1	16
Community accounts	3	1	6	2	1	7	5	2	13
YouTube	5	4	1	0	6	4	5	10	5
LinkedIn	0	9	1	0	6	4	0	15	5
Municipality organisational profile	0	6	4	0	0	10	0	6	14
LED/Planning organisational profile	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20
LED/Planning personal profiles	3	5	2	4	2	4	7	7	6
Chamber of Business organisational profile	0	1	9	0	0	10	0	1	19
Chamber of Business personal profiles	0	3	7	1	0	9	1	3	16
Tourism organisational profile	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20
Tourism personal profiles	3	4	3	0	3	7	3	7	10
Pinterest	6	3	1	0	7	3	6	10	4
Flickr	5	4	1	1	9	0	6	13	1
Directories and discussion forums	4	6	0	0	5	5	4	11	5
Mapping services	1	9	0	0	10	0	1	19	0
Google Earth listings	2	8	0	0	7	3	2	15	3
Google Earth photographs	2	7	1	0	4	6	2	11	7
Google Maps	3	7	0	1	9	0	4	16	0
Wikis	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20	0
Standard municipal info	1	9	0	0	10	0	1	19	0
General town description	1	6	3	2	7	1	3	13	4
History	2	6	2	2	7	1	4	13	3

Implementation →	Strong municipalities			Weak municipalities			All municipalities		
	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No	Good	Poor	No
Architecture	1	1	8	0	0	10	1	1	18
Geography	0	6	4	0	4	6	0	10	10
Economy	1	3	6	0	4	6	1	7	12
Institutions and amenities	0	1	9	0	2	8	0	3	17
Tourism	1	1	8	1	2	7	2	3	15
Links to wikis	0	6	4	0	2	8	0	8	12
Links to external resources	1	1	8	0	2	8	1	3	16
Wikitravel	2	3	5	0	2	8	2	5	13
Localwiki.org	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20
Dedicated town Wiki	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20
Online advertising	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	20
Mobile apps	5	1	4	0	0	10	5	1	14
OVERALL DIGITAL PLACE MARKETING SCORE	2	8	0	0	10	0	2	18	0

Annexure 5: Editor's letter

Rephrase it!
Academic Text Editing

17 Fallopius Street, Bloemfontein
+(27) 076 081 0730
info@rephraseit.co.za

12 January 2018

Student:	**Thomas de Ridder**
Student number:	**2007143734**

I declare that I edited the Master's dissertation titled, *An investigation into digital place marketing practices of selected South African local municipalities and communities*

During the editing process I looked for and corrected spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence and paragraph errors. I checked for clarity and consistency in style, and made suggestions where changes could be made. I also double-checked the references in-text and in the list of references to make sure that they correspond with the referencing style used by the student. Finally, I formatted the document to present neatly.

Yours sincerely

Johannes Pieter Odendaal