

THE GUEST HOUSE INDUSTRY'S CONTRIBUTION TO BUILDING A DESTINATION BRAND

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DECLARATION

With this statement, I hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the degree MA (Communication Science): Corporate and Marketing Communication at the University of the Free State is my own independent work. I further declare that I have not submitted this thesis for any other qualification, nor at any other institution of higher education. All the sources that have been cited in this thesis are provided in a comprehensive reference list.

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January 2021

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ABSTRACT

Tourism happens when tourists visit a destination – the place they visit and at which they stay. Due to the intangibility of the holiday experience, destinations depend heavily on positive images and experiences. Guest houses, as part of the accommodation sector in tourism, could potentially play a big role in this aspect. However, the guest house industry runs the risk of being viewed as a readily accessible industry that does not require special training or formal qualifications. As the grading of these establishments is not compulsory in South Africa, this could cause quality issues and could have a negative impact on customer perceptions, and ultimately on the tourism industry. Destination marketers use branding to position the tourism destination in the market. Destination branding assists in identifying and differentiating a destination in a very competitive marketing environment. The main advantage of destination branding is that it creates a favourable position for the destination in the minds of consumers and distinguishes it from its competitors. This study aimed to provide new insight into the manner in which guest houses (as stakeholders in a specific destination) can be managed to contribute to the enhancement of the brand of a destination.

This qualitative study design applied a combination of different strategies during the different phases of the research. It included a conceptual analysis of destination branding, a literature review of the guest house industry as the context within which destination branding was practised, and interviews with guest house owners/managers and guest house visitors on two branded tourist routes. Information and data from the three phases were integrated to suggest guidelines on how guest houses can enhance a destination brand.

The findings of the study imply that the guest house industry plays a more significant role than just serving as an "essential support facility for tourist destinations". Guest houses, as conveyers of quality and communicators of brand value, are influencers of destination image, encouragers of word-of-mouth promotion and contributors to repeat visits to the destination. As many guest houses offer agro-tourism activities or other unique experiences, they become tourist attractions in their own right.

The guidelines provided were presented on two levels, namely guidelines to the destination management in general and guidelines to guest house owners/managers. Guidelines included that destination branding should be managed from a destination brand management perspective and a destination brand consumption perspective. Many guidelines pointed to brand leadership as key to developing a brand strategy, clarifying roles and responsibilities, securing the buy-in of all stakeholders (including residents), motivating them to become committed to the brand, developing internal and external brand communication, and coordinating the branding effort. Guidelines to guest house managers focused on tourist satisfaction, emotional connection, intention to revisit, and word-of-mouth marketing, through brand participation, hospitality, partnerships and collaboration, and by delivering services and products that are pleasurable, unique, people-orientated, and brand-orientated.

This study concluded that guest houses within a specific destination are more than essential facilities, as they have the potential to contribute in various ways to the enhancing of a destination brand.

Further studies could include revision of star grading requirements for guest houses in remote destinations to accommodate area-specific conditions, but still enhance the brand through quality. The study also revealed apathy amongst domestic travellers regarding green practices in the tourism industry, thus guidelines are needed to create awareness. Research and guidelines regarding how brand personality can be incorporated for distinctiveness can add value to the branding effort of destinations. Finally, research and solutions are needed for the financial survival of tourist destinations and product owners during crises in the macro environment, such as the recent Covid-19 lockdown situation.

Key terms: guest house industry, guest house management, homestay, branding, destination branding, destination brand personality, destination marketing, Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, Kalahari Red Dune Route

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

The tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors of Africa's economy. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019) labelled Tourism in South Africa as a "sunrise sector" as well as the "New Gold of South Africa's economy". This committee also anticipates to double tourism figures from 10.5 million in 2018 to 21 million by 2030.

The "New Gold" industry was badly hit by the Covid-19 global pandemic. This had a major impact on the expected aforementioned tourism growth targets. Yet, South African Tourism CEO contends that there is "no doubt" about South Africa's competitiveness as a tourism destination (Ntshona, 2020). In addition, the Tourism Minister announced a tourism recovery plan aligned with international frameworks.

Roux (2016) pointed out that the tourism industry employed 4.5 % of the total workforce in South Africa during 2014. Lombard (2016) translated this percentage to 1 out of every 25 individuals working in the tourism industry. According to Lombard (2016), data since 2008 tells that tourism offered more jobs than sectors such as agriculture, trade, and manufacturing. It is clear, therefore, that the tourism industry is a vital role player in the South African economy.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) describes tourism as "a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes" (Westcott & Anderson, 2020:1). Tourism, in other words, is about visiting a destination. According to Ivanovic, Khunou, Reynish, Pawson & Tseane (2009:4), a destination is "a place a tourist visits and stays at. A destination can be a country, city, town, rural area, or a resort." Destinations compete for the tourism business and have to create awareness using destination marketing. The main objectives of destination marketing, according to Keyser (2009:236), are market

positioning and the establishment of a positive destination image. Tourism demand for any destination is directly linked to the market position of that specific destination.

George (2015:521) concurs with this view, stating that the image of a destination is as vital as attractions. A destination image is a visual or mental impression that a person has of a place and one of the main factors influencing the choice of holiday destination (George, 2015:521). Place image is usually the responsibility of the state, region, or city government where private operators market specific services joined under an "umbrella brand" against the belief that a positive place image will make it cheaper and more accessible for producers to export and attract (Anholt, 2010:2–4). Due to the intangibility of the holiday experience, destinations depend heavily on positive images.

Image sources can be either organic or induced. Organic sources are mostly not controlled by the marketer and include word of mouth (WOM) (e.g., reference groups, friends and relatives, members of associations), media, Internet, and education. Induced sources include the marketing efforts by tourism organisations, destination marketing agencies, and tourism information centres (George, 2015:522). It is the responsibility of marketers to understand the factors influencing people's perceptions of a destination. Organisations responsible for destination marketing must position or brand a destination in the mind of the visitor. Destination branding is about developing a destination image in relation to the needs and wants of a target market (George, 2015:523). Branding is a necessity in the positioning of a tourist destination in the market.

Branding focuses on the creation of a particular position in the marketplace, i.e., communicating one single message focusing on quality, promise, story, or attribute (e.g., Paris is associated with romance, Barcelona with architecture, New York with shopping and energy), depending on consumer needs. The main advantage of branding, according to George (2015:523), is that it creates a favourable position for the destination and distinguishes it from its competitors. George (2015:525) notes that unique selling points in destination branding are gained by four main elements, namely authenticity, citizens that are passionately living the brand, emotional connectivity of visitors to the destination, and the sharing of experiences by visitors and locals (e.g., by using social media).

One of the ways through which the unique selling point elements can be communicated is the accommodation sector of tourism. The accommodation sector is one of the four main elements of the tourism industry. The other main elements are attractions, entertainment, and transport (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:4). More recently, sources refer to the elements as the *five A's* of the tourism industry: attractions, activities, accessibility, accommodation, and amenities (Concepcion, 2019; Samuel, 2021). Ritchie and Crous (2010) classify accommodation as a supporting factor, and not an attraction. Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:88) refer to the interdependency of the different main sectors of the tourism industry; a destination with tourist attractions and entertainment, but without accommodation, will neither be marketable nor successful. Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:89) also argue that the accommodation sector cannot be thriving when destination attractions are lacking.

1.1.1 Relationship between the accommodation sector and the tourism industry

PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the world's most well-known audit and assurance firms (PwC South Africa, s.a.), publishes five-year reports on a regular basis. PricewaterhouseCoopers (2015:5) predicted in their latest report that room spending would rise to R30 billion in 2019. According to the 2015–2020 report, the guest house/guest farm category was the best performer in the accommodation sector and also the fastest-growing category – one of the reasons possibly being that it is relatively easy for prospective guest house owners to enter the industry. South African Market Insights (2020) reflected on the most recent South African tourism statistics. According to South African Market Insights (2020) accommodation took second position amongst the main expenditure items in the tourism industry. These items were 'non-specific products' (22,5%), 'accommodation for visitors' (15,9%), 'connected products' (14,8%) and 'air passenger transport services' (12,9%).

1.1.2 Accessibility of the guest house industry for entrepreneurs

The guest house industry, as part of the accommodation sector, is viewed as a readily accessible industry requiring neither specialised training nor formal qualifications. Prospective guest house owners often see running their own guest house or bed and breakfast establishment (B&B) as a hobby or a way to make a little extra money. To

start a guest house is an obvious choice for owners of second homes, retirees wishing to supplement their income, households with open rooms as children are leaving home, people who would like to earn a living from home, and even individuals with a passion for interior decorating and food preparation. The aforementioned contributes to an exploding industry with guest houses appearing in even the remotest and smallest of towns. As the grading of these establishments is not compulsory in South Africa (Strydom, 2018), this could bring about quality issues and could have a negative impact on customer perceptions in a market with growing levels of experience and more sophisticated expectations. This could ultimately impact negatively on the tourism industry and a specific destination.

1.1.3 More sophisticated customer expectations

People are becoming more and more sophisticated travellers with rising expectations. Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:128) found that one of the critical success factors for developing and managing a guest house was the importance of offering tailor-made products, based on the needs of guests, followed by "quality of the service product", which included high levels of hygiene, quality food, décor and linen, as well as well-trained staff. Although these priorities might shift due to the impact of Covid-19, it must be emphasised that it is more complicated to measure and manage service quality than the quality of manufactured products (Luo & Qu, 2016).

Other authors point out that apart from the fact that business travellers' expectations differ from those of leisure travellers, mismatches often occur between customers' expectations and what managers believe their expectations are (Radder & Wang, 2006:554). For instance, they found that business travellers considered prompt service the most critical part of 'core service', while management thought that efficient handling of complaints was more critical. It was also found that meeting space for discussions appeared to be very important for business travellers, while managers thought dining-room facilities were more important. While guest house owners thought comfortable mattresses and pillows were the most important 'room amenity' factor, business travellers placed a premium on security and bathroom facilities. Furthermore, business travellers in this study viewed the professionalism of staff as very important – more than the friendliness of front desk staff. Commenting on the importance of

business travellers for the guest house industry, Radder and Wang (2006:555–560) say business travellers are fewer in numbers than leisure travellers, but their intensity of accommodation use is much higher, making them a very valuable stakeholder group. These authors identified essential factors for business travellers as follows:

- Professional skills and abilities (efficiency and friendliness of front desk staff, ability to deal with guests' requests, room service efficiency, communication skills, enthusiasm, friendliness and courtesy of staff, efficient check-in and check-out procedures, sympathetic handling of complaints and quick response to guests' problems);
- Amenities such as business facilities on the premises, dining-room/self-catering facilities, a meeting area for discussions; room amenities (safety, cleanliness, comfortable mattress and pillow, quality bathroom and shower facilities, soundproofing between bedrooms, staff appearance, and value for money);
- Service variety (reliable message service and wake-up calls, efficient handling of complaints, staff confidence, and punctual services);
- Convenience (user-friendly reservation system, services performed adequately the first time, accuracy and reliable information provided to guests, quick check-in and check-out procedures);
- Functional skills and abilities (trained staff, recruiting and selection of staff, the commitment of staff to pass guests' needs on to other employees);
- Atmosphere (home-away-from-home atmosphere, appealing décor), convenient location and secure parking.

Radder and Wang (2006:554) advise managers to concentrate on service dimensions that are important to guests and not those based on management opinions. Luo and Qu (2016) identified service delivery, environment, facilities, employee attitude, cleanliness, security, Internet service, food and beverage, location and price as essential service dimensions. Another significant finding in Luo and Qu's (2016) study was the different attitudes and behaviour reflected by guests from various cultural backgrounds. They found out that Westerners were easier to satisfy and more willing to engage in WOM than Chinese guests. Trianasari, Butcher and Sparks (2017) added to these findings by reflecting on the correlation between cultural familiarity with a destination and tolerance levels. Their study indicated that tolerance levels drop when

a guest is familiar with the culture of the destination. It is evident that the expectation levels of customers are much higher than before and tourism accommodation has to adapt to these expectations.

1.1.4 Salience of accommodation offerings

As pointed out earlier, tourist accommodation is one of the ways through which the unique selling point elements of a destination can be communicated. Although guest house offerings can be very homogenous, the different establishments contain elements and opportunities that can be applied to enhance the destination brand. If knowledgeable about the destination brand elements, accommodation owners/managers can act as change agents that enthusiastically provide area information. They can also amplify the destination brand elements through their service offerings, interior elements, architecture, and landscaping choices. The accommodation establishment is a communicator of quality and might set the tone for the visitor's experience and the image that the visitor is developing regarding the destination. Guest houses and their staff, therefore, are in a position to address George's (2015:525) four main elements from which unique selling points are gained, namely authenticity, citizens that are passionately living the brand, connecting visitors emotionally to the destination and stimulating sharing of experiences.

Against this background, it is clear that there are several opportunities within the tourism industry, and more specifically, the accommodation sector within tourism destinations, to contribute to the brand of the destination.

1.2 FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

Selecting a focus is the first step in designing the proposal (Maree, 2016:27). The focus of the research is set out in terms of the research problem (the axis around which the study revolves), the research questions, the aims, and the directions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:27).

1.2.1 Research problem

Tourism destinations find themselves in a very competitive market and destination branding is a key factor in positioning a destination in the market and differentiating it from its competitors (Munar, 2011:293). However, it seems that accommodation establishments do not make optimal use of branding elements to support and develop the brand of their destination.

Another issue is that the guest house industry is easily accessible and requires no formal education or tourism background from individuals entering the sector. Guest house owners often have a narrow view, focusing primarily on income and being oblivious to customer needs and the possibility that their establishments can impact the destination image.

Furthermore, quality issues arise from the fact that the grading of hospitality establishments in South Africa is not compulsory (Strydom, 2018). Slabbert and Saayman (2003:5) refer to the importance of quality for guest houses to attract more tourists. Precarious quality of accommodation in tourism may have a detrimental effect on the destination image, and ultimately, the destination brand.

The problems stated above translated into the research questions set out below.

1.2.2 Research questions

Babbie and Mouton (2001:76–77) identified four types of research questions. Based on these four categories, the following research questions were formulated for this study:

Meta-analytical research question:

What is the context in which destination branding is explored in this study? (Secondary research question)

Conceptual research question:

What does destination branding entail? (Secondary research question)

Normative research question:

What, according to guest house managers and guest house visitors, is the ideal manner to enhance a destination brand? (Secondary research question)

Theoretical research question:

Which guidelines can be recommended to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry? (Primary research question)

The research questions provide direction and serve as a point of departure in the formulation of the aim and objectives. The primary research question gives rise to the aim of the study, while the secondary research questions are linked to the objectives of the study.

1.2.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to provide guidelines to enhance a destination brand through the guest houses industry. To address this aim, the following objectives were identified:

- To analyse the concept of destination branding;
- To discuss the context within which destination branding is practised:
 - the nature, role and scope of the commercial accommodation sector in tourism marketing and specifically the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, and the Kalahari Red Dune Route as tourism destinations;
- To explore the ideal manner in which a destination brand can be enhanced:
 - by determining the knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding of owners/managers of guest houses (in the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, and the Kalahari Red Dune Route);
 - by determining which factors influence guest house clients' experiences of the destination.

The research focus is summarised in Figure 1.1.

Research problem			
<p>Accommodation establishments do not make optimal use of branding to support and develop the brand of their destination.</p> <p>Owners/managers are oblivious to customer needs and the possibility that their establishments can impact the destination brand.</p> <p>Quality issues arise from the fact that grading of hospitality establishments in South Africa is not compulsory, which may have a detrimental effect on the destination brand</p>			
<p>Conceptual research question</p> <p>What does destination branding entail?</p> <p>(Secondary research question)</p>	<p>Meta-analytical research question</p> <p>What is the context in which destination branding is explored in this study?</p> <p>(Secondary research question)</p>	<p>Normative research question</p> <p>What, according to guest house managers and guest house visitors, is the ideal manner to enhance a destination brand?</p> <p>(Secondary research question)</p>	<p>Theoretical research question</p> <p>Which guidelines can be recommended to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry?</p> <p>(Primary research question)</p>

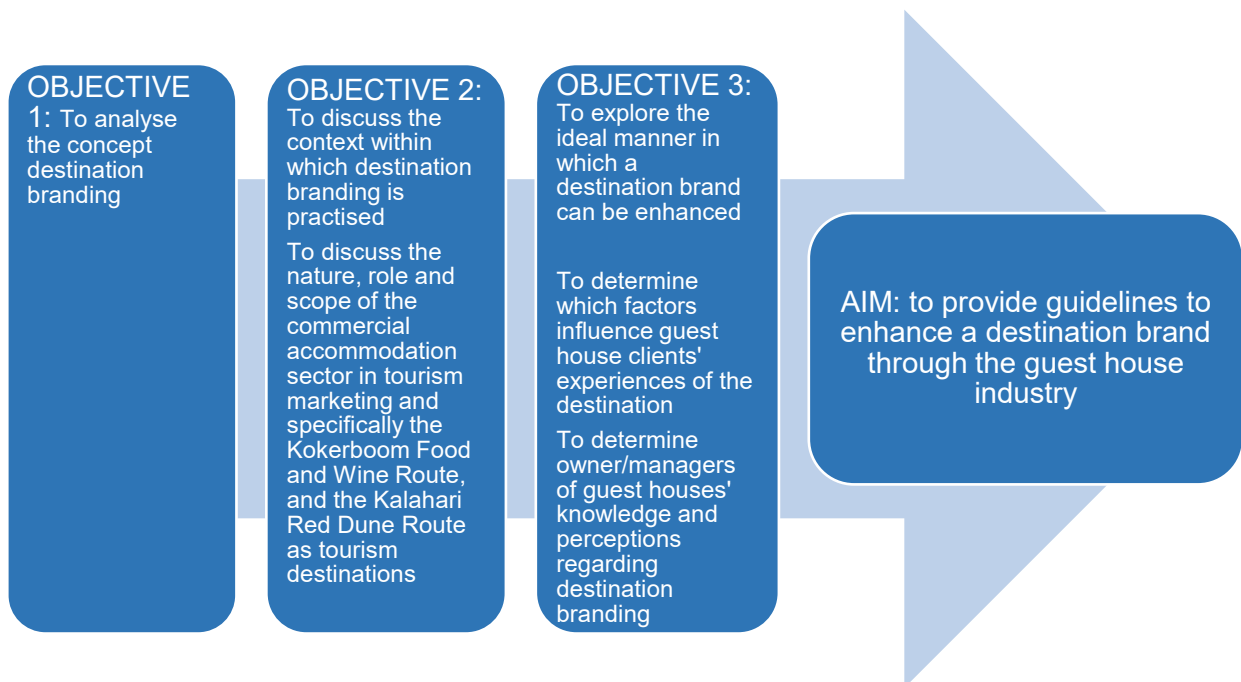


Figure 1.1 Research focus

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was conducted within the qualitative research paradigm (see 2.3). The study is divided into different phases. Phase 1 addresses the conceptual research question and the first objective, which was to analyse the concept destination

branding. The steps suggested by Rodgers (2000) in Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010) applied.

Phase 2 consists of a literature study of the guest house business as part of the tourism industry. The literature review explores the context in which destination branding of the two Open Africa Routes will take place. The routes investigated in this research are branded with the red dunes of the Kalahari as the symbol for the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the iconic Quiver Tree as a symbol for the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route. The creation of tourism routes was an attempt of Open Africa to generate income and jobs for local people and offer the traveller an authentic experience by clustering attractions, accommodation, restaurants, tour operators, guides, and artisans. Open Africa aimed at bringing people from all levels of community together to promote travel to their area through branding (Open Africa, [s.a].a) This phase addresses the meta-analytical research question.

In Phase 3, the normative research question is addressed. This phase involves interviews with owners of and visitors to guest houses on the two mentioned Open Africa tourist routes. The aim of this phase was to explore visitors' expectations, experiences, feelings, and opinions of guest houses, as well as owners/managers of guest houses' knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding. Table 1.2 provides a bird's eye view of the link between the chapters and the different research phases.

In Phase 4, information and data from the previous three phases was integrated to suggest guidelines on how guest houses can enhance a destination brand. The primary research question and aim of the study were addressed during this phase. A summary of the four phases is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Research phases according to chapters

PHASE	CHAPTER	TITLE OF CHAPTER
Phase 1: A conceptual analysis of destination branding	Chapter 3	A conceptual analysis of destination branding
Phase 2(a): Literature review of the tourism industry	Chapter 4	Contextualising the guest house business as part of the tourism industry of two Open Africa routes
Phase 2(b): Literature review of the guest house industry		
Phase 3: Empirical research process (interviews)	Chapter 5	Research results
Phase 4: Synthesis of data from Phase 1 to Phase 3 to suggest ways that guest houses can enhance destination branding	Chapter 6	Conclusions and recommendations

A detailed exposition of the research methodology used in this study is presented in Chapter 2. The research methodology chapter follows Chapter 1 because the first phase of the literature review was done by means of a conceptual analysis. The research methodology addressed in Chapter 3 thus needs to be discussed before the outcomes of the conceptual analysis is presented.

1.4 THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

A theoretical framework is used to describe the theory that explains why the research problem exists (USC Libraries, 2020). Adom, Hussein and Agyem (2018) explain that a theoretical framework comprises the theories that underpin the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be studied. A theoretical framework assists in finding an

appropriate research approach, analytical methods and procedures, and makes the research findings more meaningful and generalisable. Adom *et al.* (2018) note that the research findings must verify, extend, or modify the existing theory.

According to Maree (2016:73–74), the conceptual framework “anchors” the study because it concerns all theories, beliefs, and prior research findings that will guide the study. Adom *et al.* (2018) describe conceptual framework as “the researcher’s explanation of how the research problem would be explored”. It is linked with the concepts, empirical research and important theories, and highlights why the topic should be studied, the researcher’s assumptions, and the scholars the researcher agrees or disagrees with (Adom *et al.*, 2018).

This study includes two theoretical domains, namely the guest house industry and destination branding. Table 1.2 identifies the different subdomains and related theories of the two theoretical domains relevant to this study.

The grand theory in this study is systems theory, a theory that studies the relationship between the component parts of a system and other systems (Wilkinson, 2011). This study investigated the relationship between the guest house industry as a subsystem of tourism and its interconnectedness with destination branding.

Oliveira and Panyik (2014:54) define a destination brand as “the sum of all narratives and experiences” and agree that there are two subsystems underpinning destination branding, namely destination brand management and destination brand consumption. The tourism industry involves the place/destination producers or managers who use promotional, interpretive, and market research strategies to communicate place meanings. Visitors create place meanings using their knowledge, travel experience, motivations, and perceptions. Place/destination brand consumption refers to the visitors’ construction of the brand of a place or destination (Young, 1999, cited in Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:55). The consensus area exists where these subsystems overlap (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:55). Figure 1.2 is based on the explanation by Young (1999, cited in Oliveira and Panyik, 2014:55) and illustrates the social construction of a destination.

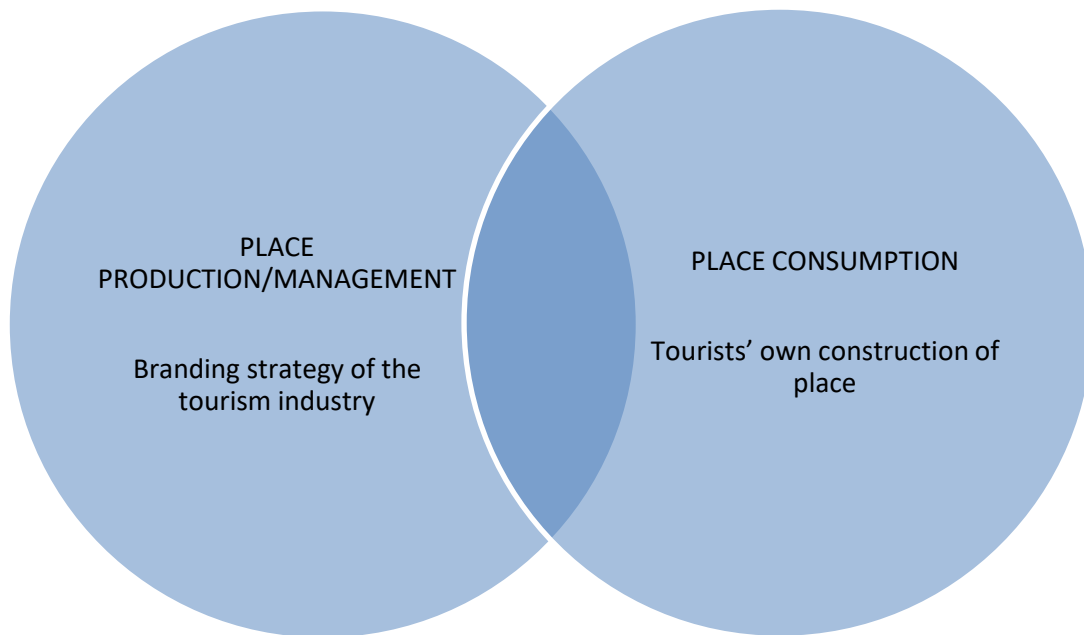


Figure 1.2: The social construction of a tourist destination

According to Petersen and Gencel (2013), the worldview chosen by a researcher indicates the research methods to be used. There are four philosophical worldviews, namely post-positivist (which replaced the term positivist), constructivist (also referred to as interpretivist), advocacy (or participatory), and pragmatist. Interpretivists focus on subjective reality and the way people view and interpret the world in their particular context. Truth in interpretivism is relative. Research inquiry in advocacy/participatory research is based on politics and leads to an action agenda to change the participants' lives. Pragmatists use mixed methods in their inquiries, as they are not committed to a particular philosophical view and seek truth in what works at the time (Petersen & Gencel, 2013). In post-positivism, objectivity is viewed as an unreachable ideal, and that reality is influenced by contextual factors such as culture and gender. The pillars of post-positivism are "truth" and "evidence" (Maree, 2016:59). This study followed an interpretivist/constructivist worldview.

Table 1.2 provides a meta-theoretical framework and conceptualisation of the study.

Table 1.2: Meta-theoretical framework and conceptualisation of the study

Context	Guest houses on tourist routes, and more specifically the Open Africa Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, as well as the Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route		
Philosophical assumptions	This study has been approached from an interpretivist epistemology		
Grand theory	The grand theory of this study is systems theory, as the guest house industry is a subsystem of the tourism system.		
Worldview	Constructivist/Interpretivist		
Theoretical domains	Destination branding		Guest house industry
Descriptive sub-domains	Place/destination brand production	Place/destination brand consumption	Responsible tourism Agritourism Service quality
Theories related to these domains	General model of destination competitiveness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2010) Positioning theory (Pike, 2005) Brand theory (Aaker, 1991, cited in Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005:329)	Sense of place model (Campelo Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2014) Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions Framework Brand equity theory (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, cited in Blain <i>et al.</i> , 2005:329)	Triple bottom line theory of responsible development Marketing
Concepts	Brand management (Pike, 2009) Brand networks (Hankinson, 2004, cited in Kasapi & Cela, 2017) Strategic development Stakeholder involvement Theory of place (Zenker, Braun & Peterson, 2017)	Destination competitiveness Sense of place Brand personality Tourism market Brand loyalty Brand equity (Pike, 2009)	Sustainability Strategic planning (Slabber & Saayman, 2003) Accommodation grading Service levels Internal branding (Kunsmann, 2019)

The theoretical domains, descriptive sub-domains, and theories and concepts related to these domains are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (the conceptual analysis) and Chapter 4 (the literature review).

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following terms that are used in this study are defined below. The first part of the discussion focuses on the terms that form the core of the study: branding, destination, tourism, and guest house industry. After that, other general hospitality terms that are relevant to this study are clarified.

1.5.1 Branding

Sammut-Bonnici (2015) defines a brand as “a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity, and to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization”. According to Sammut-Bonnici (2015), the branding strategy aims at creating brands that differentiate the product, service, person, place, or organisation from its competitors, reducing competition, increasing price elasticity, and improving profits.

1.5.2 Destination

The destination lies at the core of the whole tourism system, and it presents the mix of tourism products that influence the visitor's experience (Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2013:118). Regarding leisure tourism, the destination is the motivating factor behind the tourist's decision and expectations. George (2015:500–501) describes the destination as the place that contains the most significant elements of tourism as well as the place where the inbound tourism industry is located and points out that it is often a “perceived location”; in other words, the mental image that a prospective tourist has of the location.

1.5.3 Tourism

George (2015:22) describes tourism as an activity serviced by several industries, including hospitality and transport. Bennet, Jooste and Strydom (2012:4–5) quote the Tourism Society's definition: "Tourism is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and activities during their stay at these destinations." The United Nations World Tourism Organization, cited by George (2015:22), defines tourism as "a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes".

The abovementioned views distinguish the following characteristics of tourism relevant to the study:

- Tourism is an activity.
- Tourism includes different industries.
- Travel can be for leisure or business/professional purposes.
- Tourism contains social, cultural and economic aspects.
- Tourism entails short-term movement.;
- Tourism takes place outside the usual environment.
- Tourism happens at a domestic or international level.

These characteristics encapsulate the term "tourism" used in this study.

1.5.4 Guest house industry

The guest house industry is a sub-sector of accommodation suppliers, and is a "critical component of the tourism experience" (Bennet *et al.*, 2012:43).

The difference between various kinds of accommodation establishments is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. For the purpose of this study, the term "guest house industry" includes guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments, Airbnb, country houses, farm accommodation, and homestay accommodation.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Delimitations explain the study's boundaries and the elements responsible for limiting the scope, such as the setting in which the study takes place, population characteristics, and sample size. The delimitation section also indicates how these boundaries and elements might have influenced the outcome of the research (Editage Insights, 2019).

The following were delimitations of this study:

- The research was limited to only two of the 41 Open Africa tourism routes in South Africa.
- Both routes are situated in the "Green Kalahari" area with a possible implication that they will appeal to a particular market segment, and findings may reflect the views of a limited travelling market.
- The study focused on branding (and thus marketing factors) and did not consider any other aspects such as economic or political issues.

1.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical considerations, according to Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pieterse and Piano Clark (2016:44), should include the protection of participants' identities by obtaining permission to be interviewed and undertaking to destroy recordings. Groenewald (2004:46) suggests "informed consent" to ensure ethical research. Informed consent from participants in this study was gained through requesting respondents to participate voluntarily in the research. The purpose, procedures, possible risks, advantages, and confidentiality of the research were explained at the outset. Each participant signed a copy of the Participant Consent Form (Appendix A). Similarly, the participating manager/owner of each guest house that formed part of the sample signed a copy of the Request for Permission to Conduct Research Form (Appendix B) and received the Academic Project Support letter (Appendix C) from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

All electronic data have been secured on a password-protected computer. Hard copies of data, transcribed recordings of interviews, and researcher field notes have been locked away in a cabinet and will be stored for five years.

Ethical considerations, as identified by Leedy and Ormrod (2013:104–109), were also applied. Care was taken to protect participants from physical or psychological harm (e.g., unusual stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem). No participant was identified, and findings were reported in a complete and honest manner to professional colleagues.

Plagiarism or documentary theft was avoided, and credit has been given where appropriate. Unintentional plagiarism was eliminated by submitting all chapters to two online plagiarism detection tools, namely Turnitin and Grammarly.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the General Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (GHREC). The ethical clearance number obtained for this study is UFS-HSD2019/0139/1308 (Appendix G).

1.8 DEMARCATION OF CHAPTERS

The demarcation of the chapters in this study is set out in Table 1.3 below.

Table 1.3: Demarcation of chapters

CHAPTER	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Chapter 1	Introduction and overview	Chapter 1 provides the background to the study and explains the research problem as well as the aim and objectives of the study. Delimitations of the study are identified. The chapter defines key terms and explains research ethics.
Chapter 2	Research design and methodology	Chapter 2 discusses the reason for choosing a qualitative research approach and explains the research designs, sampling method, and data collection techniques. Data analysis and validity are outlined. The value of the research is explained.
Chapter 3	A conceptual analysis of destination branding	Chapter 3 explains destination branding using Rodgers's (2000) evolutionary conceptual analysis. Characteristics, antecedents, and consequences of destination branding are identified.
Chapter 4	Contextualising the guest house business as part of the tourism industry	Chapter 4 provides a literature review of the guest house industry, explaining accommodation choices, requirements for the establishment's successful operation, and sustainability. Lastly, the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune Route are introduced.
Chapter 5	Results and discussion	The results of the study are discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 6	Conclusions and recommendations	Chapter 6 provides a critical reflection of the study providing guidelines for the guest house industry on enhancing the brand of the destination. The contribution of the study is highlighted, study limitations are identified, and suggestions for future research are proposed.

CHAPTER 2:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to contribute to knowledge on destination branding. Since the literature review was conducted by means of a conceptual analysis, which represents the first research method employed in this study, an unconventional decision was taken to include the research chapter before the literature review chapters in order to provide a comprehensive overview of all research methods before they are presented in the chapters. Consequently, this chapter outlines the research procedure and methodology employed in this study. First, the reason for choosing a qualitative research paradigm is discussed. Next, the research design, sampling method and data collection techniques are described. Data analysis and validity are outlined, and finally, the value of the research is explained. The research design and methodology discussed in this chapter are motivated by the purpose of the study, which is to provide guidelines to enhance a destination brand through the guest houses industry.

The chapter commences with the identification of the research paradigm within which the research was conducted.

2.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Ontology, epistemology, and axiology form the building blocks of a research paradigm and shape a study. Therefore, it is essential to clarify these assumptions that informed the choice of a research paradigm that was followed throughout the research process.

2.2.1 Ontological assumption

Ontology stipulates how a researcher views reality and therefore has implications for a research study. Ontology seeks to address the nature of reality. Qualitative and quantitative researchers view reality differently. Therefore, a researcher has to identify the ontology of the study before the research design can be determined (Jackson,

2013:52). Qualitative research is used to answer questions about the multifaceted nature of a phenomenon, describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), while quantitative research views reality as singular (Creswell, 2015:19–22). In qualitative research, reality cannot exist outside people's interpretations and perceptions. Therefore, the status of things is socially constructed by people because it accommodates multiple perspectives and versions of the truth. Quantitative researchers observe reality as singular as it is seen and perceived in a definite, particular manner, tested by theory and hypotheses (Creswell, 2015). The decision to follow a qualitative approach in this study is motivated in 2.3.

2.2.2 Epistemological assumption

Epistemology is about knowledge and is a crucial foundation for research. It seeks to determine how knowledge is recognised and how it is used when found (Briggs & Coleman, 2007). In this study, the epistemological stance taken was guided by my interest as a lecturer in tourism and my specific interest in the guest house industry.

2.2.3 Axiological assumption

Axiology refers to the “aims” of the research and attempts to clarify whether the researcher is trying to explain or predict the world (Lee & Lings, 2008). Creswell (2013:20) suggests that qualitative research is value-laden (non-epistemic), while quantitative research is value-free (epistemic). The term ‘value-laden’ in reference to qualitative research implies that the researcher's values can affect the study and pave the way for biased results. On the other hand, quantitative research does not create relationships with participants; hence values should not influence how reality is interpreted (value free).

After considering the assumptions relevant to this study, I chose an interpretivist paradigm to assist me throughout the research process.

2.2.4 Interpretivist paradigm directing this study

The selection of a paradigm for a study is influenced by the nature of the problem that is investigated. This study investigated how the guest house industry can contribute to a destination's brand. As stated previously, the ontological and epistemological assumptions influence the choice of research paradigm, while the research paradigm influences the choice of research methodology. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005:40), it is vital that every research study be conducted within a paradigm. Babbie (2001:42) refers to a paradigm as the fundamental frame used to organise observations and reasoning. A researcher can choose from three dominant paradigms to underlie a study, namely positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. The choice of interpretivism as a paradigm was guided by the requirements, and supported by the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions thereof.

Although an interpretive study was considered the most appropriate paradigm for this research, it is necessary to note the possible disadvantages (Occupytheory, 2014):

- Research quality depends heavily on the skills of the researcher.
- Personal idiosyncrasies and biases of researchers can easily influence the study.
- It is more difficult to assess, demonstrate, and maintain rigidity.
- Interpretation and analysis are more time consuming due to the quantity of data.
- The presence of the researcher can affect or influence responses.
- Findings can be challenging to present in visual ways.

2.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach can be either qualitative or quantitative. To explain the difference between these two concepts, Atieno (2009:17) explains that qualitative data typically consists of words while quantitative data consists of numbers, and that all qualitative data can be quantified by assigning meaningful numerical values. Rahman (2017:102) links the research approach to the research paradigm and refers to interpretivism and positivism. The positivist researcher views the social world as consisting of concrete and unchangeable realities that can be quantified. Interpretive researchers in

qualitative studies view reality as changeable and socially constructed by humans. As explained in 2.2.4, this study followed an interpretive view.

The main research question in this study revolved around enhancing a destination brand through the guest houses in the vicinity. The study aimed to answer questions about the "what" and "how" of phenomena, rather than "how many" or "how much". As qualitative research is descriptive (McMillan & Weyers, 2011:123), it lends itself to interpretation and will possibly verify generalisations about destination branding and the guest house industry's place in destination branding. It also allows for multiple perspectives and can help define what is important and develop a better understanding of the matter being investigated – in this case the guest house industry's role in destination branding – as the study proceeds (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:139–140).

2.3.1 Advantages of applying a qualitative research approach in this study

The following advantages of qualitative research (Occupytheory, 2014) motivated its application in this study.

- Evaluation of issues and subjects covered can be done in greater depth and detail.
- Interviews have a flexible structure and are not restricted to a list of questions.
- The direction of the study can be revised as new information and findings emerge.
- Qualitative research provides for complexities and subtleties about the subjects.

Qualitative research makes it possible to discover the participants' inner experiences and understand how meanings are influenced by culture; since qualitative studies provide a detailed description of human feelings, experiences and opinions, the researcher is able to interpret the meaning of people's actions (Rahman, 2017:104). Furthermore, qualitative research can be used to simplify and manage data without destroying complexity and context (Atieno, 2009:16).

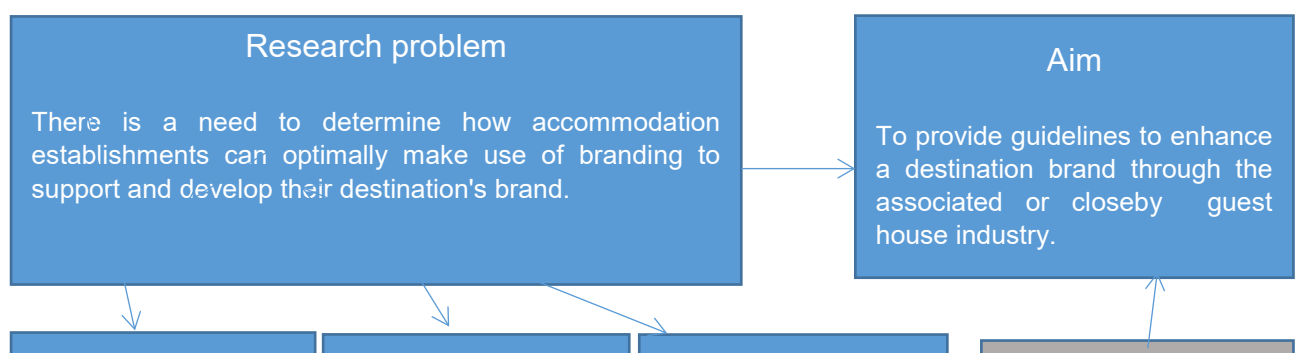
Rahman (2017:105) refers to a smaller sample size, which raises the issue of generalisability to the whole population. Special care should, therefore, be taken regarding validity (see 2.3.5).

Qualitative research typically contains multiple sources of data. In this study, data were derived from literature reviews of the tourism industry and the guest house industry, a conceptual analysis of destination branding, and an empirical study with semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is focused on inner feelings and individual experiences of participants, more specifically information key to understanding the role of the guest house industry in destination branding. Information about visitor perceptions and experiences pointed out what guest houses could focus on in order to enhance a destination brand.

The research paradigm and research approach determined the research strategies appropriate to the study.

2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell *et al.* (2016:72), a research design is a plan or strategy that brings the study from the underlying philosophic assumptions, explains the selection of participants, describes data-gathering methods, and discusses the data analysis to be done. Creswell *et al.* (2016:73–74) prefer the interactive model of research design of Maxwell (2009) which includes five components, namely research questions, aims, conceptual framework, methods, and validity. Figure 2.1 summarises the research design employed in this study.



2.4.1 Research questions

A grand research question, followed by four general research questions, has been discussed in 1.2.1. and 1.2.2. The grand research question, namely “Which guidelines can be recommended to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry?” binds all aspects of the study. Every component of the design was aimed at answering the grand research question.

2.4.2 Aim and objectives

As stated in 1.3, this study aimed to provide guidelines to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry. To address this aim, the main objectives were:

- To analyse the concept of destination branding;
- To discuss the context within which destination branding is practised:
 - the nature, role and scope of the commercial accommodation sector in tourism marketing and specifically the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, and the Kalahari Red Dune Route as tourism destinations;
- To explore the ideal manner in which a destination brand can be enhanced:
 - by determining the knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding of owners/managers of guest houses (in the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, and the Kalahari Red Dune Route);
 - by determining which factors influence guest house clients' experiences of the destination.

2.4.3 Conceptual framework

According to Creswell *et al.* (2016:73), a conceptual framework contains the theories, beliefs, and prior research findings that will guide the research. the meta-theoretical framework and conceptualisation of this study have been discussed in Chapter 1 (see Table 1.2).

2.4.4 Research methods

Just as there are various philosophical perspectives that can inform qualitative research, there are various qualitative research methods from which to choose. The chosen research method must be appropriate for the questions the researcher wants to answer since it influences how the researcher collects and analyses data, amongst other things. In a qualitative study, the researcher can choose to use action research, case study research, literature review, ethnography, phenomenology, historiography, grounded theory, content analysis and/or conceptual research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Mouton, 2001; Goulding, 2004; Payne & Payne, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). In this study, three research methods were used: a conceptual analysis, a literature review, and content analysis.

2.4.4.1 Data collection in this research

Methods in this study included a conceptual analysis as a non-interactive design to collect data about destination branding in Phase 1, a literature study to collect data regarding the guest house industry during Phase 2, and during Phase 3, semi-structured interviews as an interactive approach to collect information from visitors to guest houses, as well as guest house owners/managers along two Open Africa tourism routes in the Northern Cape. A combination of data collection strategies was used to enhance the validity and credibility of the study.

Phase 1 – Conceptual analysis

Phase 1 addressed Objective 1, a conceptual analysis of destination branding. Botes (2002:24) describes conceptual analysis as the process of "unfolding, exploring and understanding concepts" to give meaning, classify, and validate the relevant concepts. Data collection is based on exploring the existing literature because establishing the meaning of a concept is a primary concern in the conceptual analysis process. The following process was employed in this study:

- combining different definitions to provide a complete definition of the concept being studied;
- identifying and describing the characteristics (attributes) of the concept to identify the characteristics that are mostly associated with the concept;

- identifying antecedents or events that occur before the concept;
- identifying the consequences as the result of the concept;
- demonstrating the occurrence of the concept using empirical referents. Empirical referents are measurable ways in which to demonstrate the concept by employing occurrences in the real world (Walker & Avant, 2005, cited in Bernecker, 2010).

The concept that needed to be defined was "destination branding". Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010) published an article in which the evolutionary conceptual analysis approach of Rodgers (2000) had been studied and recommended. According to Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010:29), the value of Rodgers's method is that it is systematic, with three clear-cut stages during the analysis process. The authors' notion that Rodgers's method contributes to clarifying, describing and explaining concepts were central to understanding destination branding and motivated the choice of this specific type of conceptual analysis. The method used in this study included three stages (see Figure 2.2).

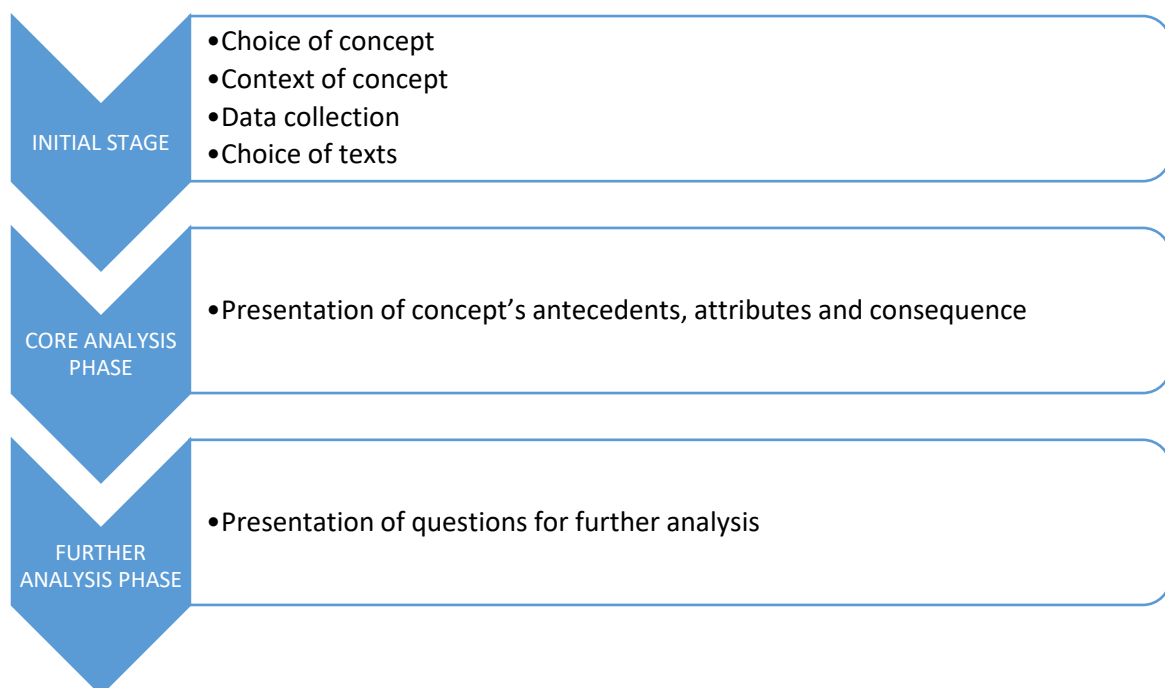


Figure 2.2: Summary of conceptual analysis stages

(Source: Adapted from Rodgers's 2000 method, cited in Tofthagen & Fagerstrom, 2010:22-27)

- Stage 1: Initial stage

Destination branding was chosen as a concept to be analysed. The study aimed to investigate the role of the guest house industry in enhancing the destination brand. The concept of "destination branding" was, therefore, significant to this study.

As a second step during the initial stage, the context of destination branding was discussed. The meaning and use of a concept can vary according to the context in which it was used. Concept context can consist of a cultural or social group using the concept (guest houses in this instance), the way the concept is used within the discipline, the time frame during which it was used, or the theoretical tradition in which it was used (Rodgers, 2000, as explained by Tofthagen and Fagerstrom, 2010:22).

Data collection took place against Tofthagen and Fagerstrom's cautionary recommendation (2010:23-24) not to allow pre-understanding of a concept to influence systematic conceptual analysis. Data sources for this phase are discussed in 2.4.4.1.

- Stage 2: Core analysis stage

The antecedents, attributes, and consequences of destination branding were explored during Stage 2. Consistent with Rodgers's (2000) method, every article was read and then reread while focusing on the context of destination branding, surrogate and related terms, antecedents, attributes, examples, and consequences. Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010:24) tabulated examples of questions to be addressed during the core analysis stage. Figure 2.3 indicates how the questions suggested by Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010:24) were applied in this study.

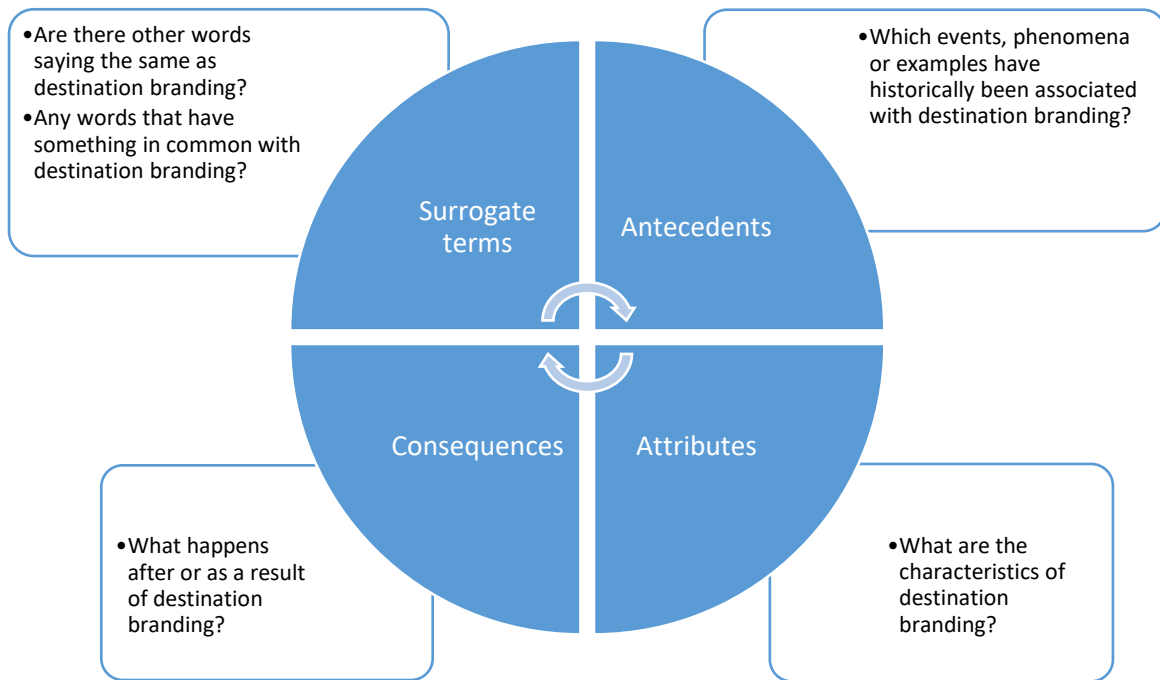


Figure 2.3: Questions asked during the core analysis phase

(Source: Adapted from Tofthagen & Fagerstrom, 2010:24)

Antecedents, according to Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010:25), are events and phenomena that have previously been related to the concept. These authors define attributes as "clusters of characteristics that make it possible to identify situations that can be categorised under the concept". Consequences are what happened after the concept was used in a practical situation.

- Stage 3: Further analysis stage

Conceptual analysis gives rise to questions and hypotheses for further research. During this study, the concept of brand personality as a tool in destination branding was prominent, and the impact of the guest house industry on brand personality was identified as a subject for further research (see 6.4).

Phase 2 – Literature review

During Phase 2, Research Objective 2 was addressed through a literature review. A literature review is a reflection on what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers and should be directed by a guiding concept like the research objective or the issue under discussion (Taylor & Procter, s.a.). According to Creswell *et al.* (2016:88), a literature review consists of “an overview of scholarship in a certain discipline through analysis of trends and debates” and it should justify the study by pointing out how the research will add to past research, and fill a gap in research. In other words, a stillness, inconsistency, contradiction, or challenge that appears in the literature study should be the justification of the study (Creswell *et al.*, 2016:29). Mouton (2001:87) supplies the following reasons for a literature review in research:

- To prevent a duplication of previous studies;
- To discover recent and authoritative theorising about the subject;
- To discover the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study;
- To identify instrumentation available that has proven validity and reliability;
- To determine the most accepted definitions of key concepts in the field.

The literature review on the tourism industry and the guest house industry was carried out to explore the context in which destination branding took place. The data sources included in Phase 2 are provided in 2.4.5.

Phase 3 – Semi-structured personal interviews

Qualitative research differentiates between three types of interviews: unstructured (open-ended) interviews, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews. During Phase 3, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, aiming at "what" respondents had experienced and "how" they had experienced it. Based on Worthington (s.a.), I attempted to uncover the participants' experiences, and the meaning the participants ascribe to those experiences or a process. An interview schedule was used to encourage dialogue that could help understand the interviewees' experiences with the phenomena (Stierand & Dörfler, 2012:950). The

topics included in the interview schedule were derived predominantly from the conceptual analysis (conducted in Phase 1) and to a lesser degree from the literature review. Research Objective 3 was addressed during this phase to investigate guest house visitors' lived experiences, perceptions and opinions of the aspects related to guest houses that influenced their perceptions of the destination brand. The interviews with the guest house owners/managers were aimed at determining which methods were currently employed to influence guest house visitors' perceptions, experiences, and opinions. Interview schedules were used in both instances.

The interview schedules were based on Groenewald's (2004:47) suggested four categories, namely experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions. The interview schedule used in the interviews with guest house visitors (see Appendix E) included the following questions:

- Experiences
 - Identify as many as possible positive guest house experiences from previous stays in guest houses.
 - Identify your negative guest house experiences from previous stays in guest houses.
 - Regarding your room at this guest house, how did your experience meet your expectations?
 - Regarding service at this guest house, how did your experience meet your expectations?
 - Through which source of marketing communication did you hear about this guest house?
 - Regarding the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route/Kalahari Red Dune Route as a tourism destination, which situations or offerings affected your perception of the route?
- Feelings
 - What aspects of a guest house experience make you feel welcome?
 - What aspects of a guest house experience make you feel unwelcome or not cared for?

- Which aspect of the atmosphere at any guest house is most important to you?
- Is there anything that impressed you during your stay at this guest house?
- Is there anything you feel should be improved or added to the service at this guest house?
- How do you feel about green practices or sustainability at this guest house?
- How did your stay in this guest house influence your feelings about this area?
- Beliefs
 - How strongly do you feel about green practices at guest houses?
- Convictions
 - Regarding the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route/Kalahari Red Dune Route as a tourism destination, which situations or offerings affected your perception of the route?
 - How can the guest houses on this route contribute towards the image/brand of the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route/Kalahari Red Dune Route?
 - Why did you choose this guest house?
 - What do you see as the general image/brand of this destination (Kalahari Red Dune Route/Kokerboom Food and Wine Route)?
 - Would you recommend this guest house to other people? Why?
 - Would you recommend this destination to other people? Why?

The interview schedule that focused on the guest house managers/owners (see Appendix D) included the following:

- Experiences
 - What are the benefits to you as the guest house owner/manager of being part of a branded destination?
- Feelings
 - What is the contribution that guest houses, in general, can make towards a positive guest house experience?
- Beliefs
 - What do you view as the general image of this particular area as a tourist destination?
 - What do you think is the brand promise of this tourist destination (Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food and Wine Route)?
 - A brand has to be based on the strengths of the destination. How would you describe the strengths of this route?
 - In your opinion, what are the improvement opportunities of the Kalahari Red Dune Route/Kokerboom Food and Wine Route?
 - Do you believe that cultural differences among guests can significantly influence how they perceive your brand?
 - On which aspects do you as the guest house owner/manager focus to offer your guests a positive guest house experience?
 - On which aspects do you as the guest house owner/manager focus to make your guests feel welcome and cared for?
 - How do you advertise your guest house?
 - How do your guest house marketing activities contribute towards the destination brand?
 - How do the service delivery activities at your guest house contribute towards the destination brand?
- Convictions
 - Should a guest house on a tourist route form part of the destination brand? Why?
 - Destination branding is focused on matching the marketers' promoted image with the perceived image of the visitors. Do you think this specific route is successful in matching the promoted

image and the image that visitors perceive? How is it done? Why not?

- Do you use the Kalahari Red Dune Route/Kokerboom Food and Wine Route logo on your marketing materials? How is it done? Why not?

2.4.4.2 Data analysis employed in the study

Since there are different theoretical frameworks, research designs and data-gathering methods, there will be different approaches to data analysis. Different authors (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:158; Creswell *et al.*, 2016:104) point out that data analysis and interpretation in qualitative research are closely interwoven and not two separate steps as with quantitative designs. In line with the research paradigm chosen for this study, inductive reasoning was used to sort and categorise underlying themes from the vast body of information.

Data analysis in Phase 1

During the conceptual analysis, the antecedents, attributes, and consequences of the concept “destination branding” were explored. The most popular data source, namely academic literature (Rodgers, 2000), was used. I identified repeated patterns by studying a large body of information regarding the topic (see 2.3.4.1.1).

Data analysis in Phase 2

During Phase 2, the literature review, the framework of 17 procedures identified by Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012:4) was used. These authors propose that the framework will help the researcher interpret literature in an optimally rigorous way, ensuring the interpretation is warranted, transparent, and comprehensive. They also say that the following techniques, which were used in this study, were the earliest ones they noted (2012:10):

- Constant comparison analysis to help with coding, identifying themes for headings and subheadings;
- Domain analysis to identify areas in sources through the relationships between symbols and referents;
- Taxonomic analysis to contribute to categorising the domains;

- Componential analysis to tabulate the differences among subcomponents of domains;
- Thematic analysis to search for relationships among domains.

Data analysis in Phase 3

In Phase 3, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. According to Kleiman (2004), data analysis involves coding, categorising, and making sense of the phenomenon's essential meanings. The steps of data analysis suggested by Groenewald (2004:49–50) and Braun and Clarke (2006) were applied in this study. Table 2.1 summarises the steps.

Table 2.1: Thematic analysis steps

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	PROCESS
1	Familiarising oneself with the data	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading, writing down initial ideas.
2	Initial Coding	Coding notable features of the data systematically across the data set, collating data relevant to a specific code. A code will be written next to the part which reflects a theme.
3	Theme searching	Collating codes in potential themes, gathering all data related to a potential theme. Four or five themes with categories under each theme will identified.
4	Reviewing themes	Generating a thematic map. Anonymous (ResearchGate) suggests a “devil’s advocate” strategy in seeking alternative understandings of the data and even by trying to undermine any thesis that are being used for analysis.
5	Defining and naming themes	Refine themes, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Report writing	Selection of vivid, extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating extracts with research question and literature, reporting of analysis.

Source: Braun and Clarke (2008:35).

First of all, bracketing was done. During bracketing, the interviewer does not take a position for or against a phenomenon. The interviewer should approach recordings and transcripts with an openness towards whatever meaning emerges and repeatedly listen to the audio recordings to develop a "holistic sense". Bracketing implies that the researcher's interpretation is suspended while focusing on entering into the world of the individual who is interviewed. Bracketing was practised by asking individuals to share their experience as guest house visitors on a specific tourism route in their own native language.

Delineating units of meaning was the next step. During this phase, "irrelevant" statements were eliminated. This entailed a rigorous process by which the researcher went through every word, phrase, sentence and paragraph, and noted significant non-verbal communication in the transcript to discover the participant's meanings. At this point, units of meaning do not yet necessarily address the research question. Hycner (1985:282) describes this step as a "crystallization and condensation of what the participant has said, still using the literal words of the participant" as much as possible.

The next step involved linking relevant units of meaning to the research question. During this step, the researcher linked the research question to the general meaning units to illuminate irrelevant statements. The focus was not on literal content only, but also on the number of times a unit of relevant meaning was mentioned and how it was mentioned.

After the units of meaning relevant to the research question were identified, they were clustered to form themes, and significant topics (also known as units of significance) were identified. As overlap occurred between the clusters, I had to go back and forth between recorded interviews and the units of meaning to develop relevant meaning clusters, as suggested by Groenewald (2004). Next, I summarised each interview and subsequently returned to each interview transcription and wrote up a summary of the interview, incorporating the themes derived during the previous steps. Finally, the general and unique themes were identified and summarised. Table 2.1 provides a synopsis of this process.

Table 2.2: Research phases in relation to chapters and study objectives

Phases	Chapter	Research Objective (RO)
Phase 1: A conceptual analysis of destination branding	Chapter 3: A conceptual analysis of destination branding	RO1: To analyse the concept of destination branding
Phase 2: A literature review on the tourism industry and guest house industry	Chapter 4: Contextualising the guest house business as part of the tourism industry of two Open Africa routes.	RO2: To discuss the context within which destination branding is practised * To discuss the nature, role, and scope of the guest house sector in tourism marketing and specifically the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, and the Kalahari Red Dune Route as tourism destinations.
Phase 3: Empirical research process (semi-structured interviews)	Chapter 5: Research results	RO3: To explore the ideal manner in which a destination brand can be enhanced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine which factors influence guest house clients' experiences • To determine the guest house owners'/managers' knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding.
Phase 4: Synthesis of data from Phase 1 to Phase 3	Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations	Phase 4 addresses RO1–RO3.

2.4.5 Sampling method

Sampling designs for the different phases were based on saturation. Saturation is essential for excellent qualitative research (Creswell *et al.*, 2016:83–84). Theoretical saturation refers to sample size and how many participants are to be included in the study to the point where all main variations of the phenomenon have been covered. Data saturation has been reached when all themes have been covered, and no new data generated. Creswell *et al.* (2016:84) acknowledge that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative studies and that the number of participants will depend on the research questions, type of design, experience of the researcher, and available time and funds.

Theoretical saturation, when information became repetitive, formed the foundation for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. Data saturation, when no new data came forward during interviews, occurred during Phase 3.

Sampling design for Phase 1

In Phase 1, theoretical sampling was based on theoretical saturation. The data for the conceptual analysis were derived from both primary and secondary publications. Primary publications consisted of specialised textbooks and articles from scholarly journals, both printed and electronic. Data sources included mainly printed media and professional literature. The following electronic databases were employed, because they provided sufficient access to full text academic publications: EBSCOhost, Emerald, JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, and SAGE Publications. Online academic books were attained from Adobe Digital Editions. Wiley Online Library was also employed. Literature was drawn from different disciplines, namely communication studies, tourism, hospitality, and events. Theoretical and research-based articles were studied. Keywords used to narrow the search were “destination marketing”, “branding” and “destination branding”. Articles were then screened for full access, and, subsequently, for relevancy (newest to oldest). Literature cited in articles was also reviewed. Table 2.2 indicates search results gained from the different databases through using the different keywords:

Table 2.3: Search results from the different databases

Database	Keyword: Destination marketing	Keyword: Branding	Keyword: Destination branding
EBSCHO HOST	1 644	7 322	
EMERALD	18 000	58 000	7 000
JSTOR	14 642	23 698	1 755
TAYLOR & FRANCIS	11 285	5 493	3 959
SAGE	433	219	154

Sampling design for Phase 2

Data gathering for the literature review took place through searches on library databases, journals, magazine articles, the Internet, national publications and legislation, theses, and dissertations. The following electronic databases were employed: EBSCOhost, Emerald, JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, and SAGE Publications. These databases provided easy access to full text academic publications, as well as good coverage of the research topics. Literature was drawn from the tourism management discipline. Keywords used were “tourism industry”, “guest house industry”, “guest house management”, “destination branding”, “destination brand personality”, “Kokerboom Food and Wine Route”, and “Kalahari Red Dune Route”. Theoretical and thematic saturation were applied (Coyne, 1997:625).

Sampling design for Phase 3

The population for the sampling process in this study consisted of two Open Africa Tourism Routes in the Northern Cape, namely the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune Route. These routes include, respectively, 18 and 11 listed guest houses (Northern Cape Info, [s.a.]a; Northern Cape Info, [s.a.]b). At the time of

the research, not all existing guest houses on the route were officially part of the routes. It has been indicated, however, that the Northern Cape Tourism (part of DEAT) would like to include more establishments (Maasdorp, 2016).

Two categories of sampling were incorporated in this study. Probability sampling was used to choose five guest houses on each route to be surveyed, and nonprobability purposive sampling was used to identify respondents from the visitors to the guest houses (Welman & Kruger, 1999:197). First, a sample from the guest houses was identified by applying the list randomiser RANDOM.ORG found on the Web (<https://www.random.org/lists/>). Three guest houses from the Kalahari Red Dune Route sample could not take part in the study due to personal matters, availability and bad mobile phone connection, and only one guest house on the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route did not take part as the owner was too busy. The next guest houses on the RANDOM.ORG lists were then contacted. Visitors to the guest houses formed the second group from which a sample was drawn. Eight visitors on the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, and seven guests on the Kalahari Red Dune Route were interviewed.

2.4.6 Research process

The guest houses that form part of the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune tourism routes were visited over a period of four weeks. The sampling technique for choosing the guest houses (not the residents) was systematic; the 10 establishments were selected through a random selection process from an alphabetical list of guest houses/guest farms on the two routes. The list of guest houses, 23 in total, was numbered, and the numbers were randomly selected by using the online program RANDOM.ORG found on the Web (<https://www.random.org/lists/>).

The selected guest houses were visited between 27 August and 23 September 2019. The owners/managers of these guest houses formed the one group of participants, and the visitors to these guest houses the other group of participants. Semi-structured personal interviews with the owners/managers and visitors of the identified guest houses were conducted. Visitors willing to participate were interviewed – sampling of the specific data source was, therefore, purposeful and non-random.

The sample size of respondents was initially based on availability sampling where I approached individuals who were available (Changing minds, s.a.) and after that

theoretical sampling was employed, as interviews were terminated at the stage of theoretical and thematic saturation (Coyne, 1997:625). From all individuals identified, only two guest house owners and two guest house guests did not want to take part. The length of interviews with guest house owners/managers was between 17.14 minutes and 45.26 minutes, and with guest respondents between 15.05 minutes and 34.02 minutes.

The process involving guest house guests entailed a verbal invitation in the reception area during check-in. Each visitor that agreed to participate received a copy of the research study information leaflet and consent form, whereafter an appointment was made for a suitable time and private space for the interview to take place. The interviews were held in conference rooms, private lounges or the dining areas of the guest's chalet. Most interviews took place between 17:00 and 19:00, in the time between settling in after a long drive and dinner. This tendency limited interviews to a maximum of two per day, with an average duration of 26.5 minutes per interview.

The researcher recorded the date on the field notes (memoing) which were and also taken into account as a data source. That included everything the researcher heard, saw, experienced, and thought while collecting data or reflecting on interviews (Groenewald, 2004:48–49; Stierand & Dörfler, 2012:954). Field notes were based on what happened, who was involved, and where the activities occurred. The four types of field notes included were observational notes (use of all senses to describe what happened), theoretical notes (to derive meaning while reflecting on experiences), methodological notes (reminders and instructions to oneself), and analytical memos (to review progress). The field notes also served as a data-storing method and were, as explained by Groenewald (2004:49), also a form of data analysis.

Audio-recording, with the permission of the interviewees, was also used as a data-storing method. Each respondent had been assigned a route code with a number and the recording number, for example, "Route 1/Owner/manager 1/Recording 1", or "Route 1/Guest 1/Recording 3". Based on Groenewald's (2004:48) suggestion, the researcher listened to the recording and made notes directly after each interview. The filing of hard copy documents was the third method of data storage.

Interviews were conducted based on the keys to successful interviewing proposed by Creswell *et al.* (2016:94). The aim was to conduct the research so that it would be:

- reducible (similar information was generated as the same interview schedule was used);
- systematic (participants or data were not selected to support pre-existing ideas);
- credible (reasonable questions were used, and they were asked in a way to enhance validity and truthfulness) and
- transparent (the way in which the data were collected and analysed is clearly communicated to readers).

Probing techniques suggested by Creswell *et al.* (2016:94) were used to obtain as much data as possible and to verify that what I thought I had heard was actually what the respondent meant. Detail-orientated probes were used to help the interviewer understand the "who," "where" and "what" of answers. Elaboration probes were used to ask participants to elaborate on a particular example or answer given, and clarification probes were used to paraphrase answers to confirm what the respondent has said.

The purpose, impacts, processes and benefits of the study were explained in a meeting of the Kalahari Red Dune Route product owners to establish rapport or a relationship. As the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route did not plan any meetings for that semester, the researcher informed and used the acting chairperson as a gatekeeper. Reciprocity would take place when the research result was shared with guest house owners on the two Open Africa Routes. Jennings (2005:257) cautions the qualitative researcher not to reduce multiple perspectives to a dominant view as all perspectives are valid and should be reported. This is known as multiple voicing.

The remainder of this chapter explains validity and ethical considerations for the study as well as the value of the research.

2.4.7 Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004:64) mentions four criteria for a trustworthy study, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Golafshani (2003) emphasises that every researcher needs to test and demonstrate that the study is credible. This implies that the study measures what is actually intended to measure (Shenton, 2004:64).

Credibility, according to Patton (1999:1190), depends on the following:

- * rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that are carefully analysed, with attention to issues of validity, reliability, and triangulation;
- * the researcher's credibility, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self; and
- * philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, purposeful sampling, and holistic thinking.

Credibility and ethical concerns were taken into consideration from the start of the research. As suggested by Jennings (2005:156), the researcher entered the field using a gatekeeper in order to establish credibility. As mentioned previously, the gatekeepers in this study consisted of the chairpersons of the two Open Africa Tourism Routes, as well as Mr J van Schalkwyk, the Director of Northern Cape Tourism. Ethical considerations have been discussed in see 1.7. Punch (2000:59) and Groenewald (2004:46) suggest "informed consent" to ensure ethical research. Informed consent from participants in this study was gained by informing respondents that they were participating in research and that it would be voluntary as well as by explaining the purpose, procedures, possible risks, advantages and confidentiality of the research. Punch (2000:59) also emphasises the importance of privacy, ownership of data and conclusions, and the use of results as other vital aspects. The study addressed these aspects through the research study information leaflet and consent

form that each respondent received. The contents were also discussed with each respondent before the interview took place.

Transferability refers to the degree to which findings of the study can be applied to other situations (Shenton, 2004:69). As context stands key in qualitative research, researchers such as Shenton (2004:71) argue that transferability should be pursued with caution. The researcher followed Shenton's 2004:71 advise on thick description of the phenomenon under investigation. All events, behaviours, settings, time, and place during the study were reported. The researcher also explained the boundaries of the study, the organisations taking part in the study, restrictions, data collection methods, number and length of data collection sessions, and the time period during which data was collected to enable readers to compare occurrences of the phenomenon described in the research report with other situations.

Dependability requires techniques to point out that similar results would be obtained should the research were repeated. This was addressed in the study by in-depth coverage of the research practices that have been followed, including sections devoted to the research design and its implementation, data gathering, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the process of inquiry, as suggested by Shenton (2004:71-72).

Confirmability concerns the researcher's ability to stay objective (Shenton, 2004:72). The researcher used constant bracketing to avoid bias. Triangulation (suggested by Shenton, 2004:72) was applied to promote confirmability in this study. Triangulation was used in this study by applying multiple research methods and data sources (Farmer, Robinson, Elliott & Eyles, 2006:377). Methodological triangulation was used by implementing more than one research method or data collection technique (conceptual analysis/literature review/semi-structured interviews). Data triangulation was also employed, which involved multiple data sources (guest house visitors and guest house owners/managers). Guion, Diehl and McDonald (s.a.) also suggest environmental triangulation, which involves using different locations and other factors related to the research environment, such as the time, day, or season. These factors are changed to determine whether the findings are the same across settings.

Environmental triangulation was established by using two different locations as study context, namely the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune Route, as well as different guest houses on these two routes. An audit trail was provided to allow any observer to trace the course of the study.

2.5 VALUE OF THIS RESEARCH

The value of the study is discussed in the subsections that follow.

2.5.1 Contribution to the particular field of knowledge

The research and research results will contribute to the prescribed study material for tourism students (Guest House Management) at the different VUT campuses. The textbook will be made available to tourism departments at all tertiary institutions.

2.5.2 Contribution to the particular profession in terms of branding

Branding is one of the primary functions of destination marketers. The study was aimed at pointing out to marketers the role guest houses play/have the potential to play with regard to destination branding.

2.5.3 Contribution to other interested parties

All destination stakeholders will benefit from the outcomes of the study. Destination stakeholders include the following:

- The industry providing tourist-related products and services, specifically the accommodation sector (benefitting by gaining a broadening view of its role and scope in destination positioning and destination marketing);
- The host community (benefitting through job opportunities and benefits brought about by improved standards, services, facilities, sustainable development, amongst other things);
- Tourists (the study sought to contribute to an improved tourism experience).

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design employed in the study was explained and justified. The aim and objectives of the study were disclosed, followed by a motivation for applying a qualitative research paradigm. The four phases of the study were discussed in detail. Phase 1 comprised a conceptual analysis of destination branding, while Phase 2 entailed a literature study of the guest house industry in the tourism sector. The empirical study – semi-structured interviews – was executed during Phase 3. An explanation was given of Phase 4, which involved the synthesis of data gained during the previous phases. The unit of analysis and sampling design for each phase as well as the explication of data were discussed. Finally, the trustworthiness and value of the research were highlighted.

CHAPTER 3:

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF DESTINATION BRANDING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the second objective of the study, namely to analyse the concept “destination branding”. Destination branding will be explained using Rodgers's (2000) evolutionary conceptual analysis by which characteristics, antecedents, and consequences of destination branding are identified.

Conceptual analysis is described by Botes (2002:24) as the process of “unfolding, exploring and understanding concepts” with the aim of giving meaning, classifying and validating the concepts. Data collection is based on the exploration of existing literature because the meaning of a concept is one of the first methods in the conceptual analysis process. As discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.4.4.1) the process, involves the following;

- the identification of antecedents or events that occurred before the concept has been established (the historical development of destination branding);
- the combination of definitions to provide a complete definition of destination branding;
- the identification and description of the characteristics (attributes) of the concept in order to identify the characteristics which are mostly associated with the concept;
- the identification of the consequences as the result of the concept;
- the demonstration of the occurrence of the concept using empirical referents. Empirical referents are measurable ways to demonstrate the concept by utilising occurrences in the real world (Walker & Avant, 2005, cited by Bernecker, 2010).

In this chapter an outline is given of the history of destination branding by identifying its roots in three domains and its development into different topics. A brief explanation of tourist destinations and the marketing thereof precedes the introduction of various

destination branding definitions and the development of a working definition for this study.

Subjects linked to branding (image, positioning, brand identity, brand equity, brand value, brand personality) will be briefly explored, and characteristics of destination branding will be discussed.

Finally, some outcomes of destination branding will be scrutinised.

The fourth general research question, namely “What does destination branding entail?” is relevant to this conceptual analysis.

3.2 HISTORY OF DESTINATION BRANDING

Although destination branding is a relatively new phenomenon, Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005:328) trace its roots back to the development of branded products such as Gillette and Quaker Oats. Foroudi, Gupta, Kitchen, Foroudi and Nguyen (2016:234) regard destination branding as an "offshoot of place branding" – a concept widely used interchangeably with destination branding (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:155). Hankinson (2015:20) points out that the conceptual development of place branding stemmed from urban policy and tourism perspectives, which worked independently with little reference to marketing (see Figure 3.1). Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008:154) explain that place promotion was used as a marketing technique to attract potential farmers and settlers initially to the "American West" but also to Canada, Australia, and the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The move from place promotion to place marketing became a trend in Britain and then in continental Europe and North America when seaside, mountain, and health resorts had to differentiate themselves from "normal places" and competition, and marketed themselves as "tourist resorts". According to Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008:158) corporate branding, and its compeer, place branding, were approaches to address the shortcomings of place marketing.

Urban policy, according to Hankinson (2015:20), initially focused on the place product and the urban image, but was criticised for “commodification” of places. As a result, scholars in the tourism domain studied destination image.

The topic of branding started to appear in marketing literature more than 50 years ago (Pike, 2009:124), but according to Miličević, Mihalič and Sever (2017:210), tourism literature started to recognise the importance of destination branding some 20 years ago through articles by Ozretić, Došen, Vranešević and Prebežac (1998) and Morgan and Pritchard (1999) as well as by journals such as the *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* and the *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*. After being a central topic at the 1998 American Marketing Science Conference (Dioko & Harrill, 2010:216) and the 1998 Travel and Tourism Research Association's Annual Conference, the topic was further explored in the book *Destination Branding* by Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2007), as well as in a special issue of the *Journal of Brand Management* (Blain *et al.*, 2005:328). Dioko and Harrill (2010:216) refer to research by Pike (2009) in which 74 published articles on the topic were identified, 33 of which were based on case studies, 28 dealt with brand management issues, 10 covered conceptual development and three explored web content issues. According to Dioko and Harrill (2010:216), Pike (2009) also outlined the topics on which the abovementioned research focused: destination brand identity, brand positioning, and destination brand equity measurement and tracking. Many studies were based on case studies which, according to Dioko and Harrill (2010:217), provided valuable background information and historical perspective for theory building.

Ritchie and Crouch (2010) included the concept of brand in their "General model of destination competitiveness", while Dwyer and Kim (2003) included brand in the "Integrated model of destination competitiveness", which counted – according to Miličević *et al.* (2017:210) – as the two most popular and frequently cited destination competitiveness models.

The study of Blain *et al.* (2005:329) on classical branding identified the writings of David Aaker and his colleagues as the most valuable work for insight into classical theory and branding practice. Blain *et al.* (2005) also postulate that Aaker's (1991) definition of branding is the most widely accepted. Aaker (1991), quoted in Blain *et al.* (2005), argued that the primary role of a brand was to "identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of the competitors". Blain *et al.* (2005:329) also recognise the theoretical framework of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) as a useful supporting framework for

Aaker's (1991) definition. Blain *et al.* (2005:329) note that the brand equity theory of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) postulates that brand value depends on brand awareness, perceived quality of the brand, brand associations, and brand loyalty.

Hankinson (2004), cited in Kasapi and Cela, 2017:134), proposed the concept of brand networks where brand is the result of a relationship between four components, namely consumer relationships, primary service relationships, brand infrastructure, and media relationships.

The first Destination Branding and Marketing Conference took place in Macau in 2005, with follow-up conferences in 2007 and 2009 (Dioko & Harrill, 2010:216). The most relevant themes at the time included issues of governance, interagency and interregional cooperation, stakeholder involvement, brand management, identity, symbolism and logo creation, brand communication, and the impact of new media and the web (Dioko & Harrill, 2010:217).

Hankinson (2010) refers to the convergence between urban policy, tourism, and mainstream branding and points out that the blending of these academic domains resulted in the emergence of place branding as a new domain. Figure 3.1 is based on Hankinson's (2015:20) timeline and summarises the development of destination branding.

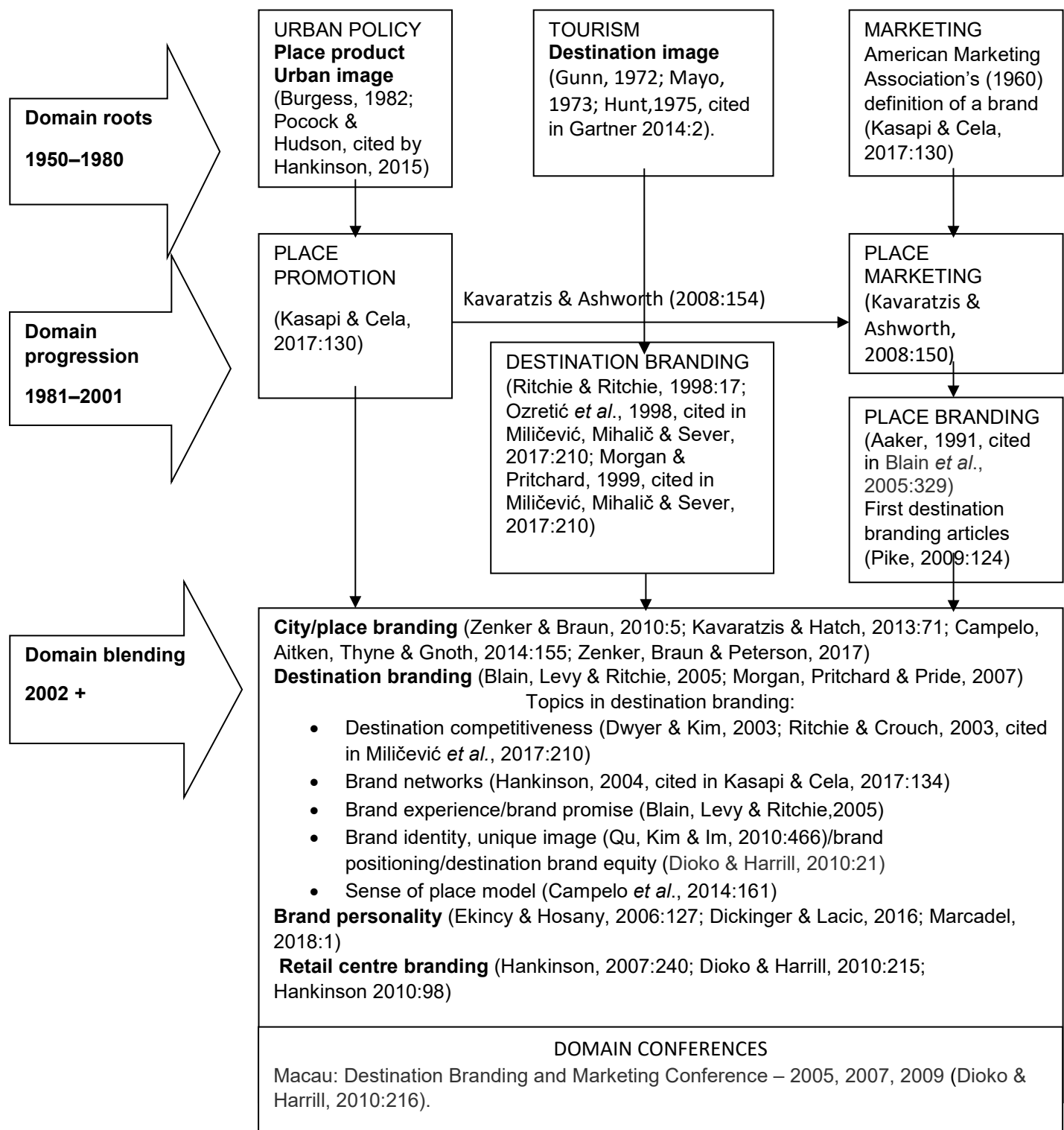


Figure 3.1: Destination branding timeline

(Source: Adapted from Hankinson, 2015:20)

3.3 WORKING DESCRIPTION OF DESTINATION BRANDING

An understanding of tourism destinations and destination marketing is vital before the concept “destination branding” can be defined.

Tourism destinations

The destination is where visitors use most tourism products. A mix of components is necessary for a destination to thrive. These components include attractions, facilities and services (which include accommodation), infrastructure, transportation, and hospitality. This is also known as the “amalgam of destination elements or destination mix” (Keyser, 2004:168–169). Keyser (2009:328) refers to the multiplier effect of tourism on the economy, which explains how extra income is generated in an economy due to an increase in tourist expenditures. Therefore, demand in the accommodation sector will depend to a high degree on tourism activity at the destination. That is probably why destinations are marked as units using branding.

Singh and Mehraj (2018) describe a destination as the communities surrounded by local government boundaries. According to these authors, the destination does not only entail an amalgam of different tourist products but is also based on consumers’ personally interpreted perceptions. These perceptions depend on factors such as the travel itinerary, the cultural background and the purpose of the visit. Keyser (2009:81) defines a tourism destination as “a defined spatial area made up of a mix of tourism resources, created facilities and support services and infrastructure that is managed, marketed and consumed under a single brand identity”. Zouganeli, Trihas, Antonaki and Kladou (2012:743) name the following ingredients of destination brand identity: architecture, atmosphere, climate, comfort, cost, ease of communication, food, friendliness of residents, landmarks, language, literature, natural resources, recreation, safety, service quality, shopping possibilities, sightseeing, sports, tourist infrastructure, and traditions.

The two Open Africa Tourism Routes relevant to this study are both defined geographical areas, containing a mix of tourism resources, products, and facilities, are both marketed under a single identity, and are managed by different authorities. Open Africa manages the Kalahari Red Dune Route with Tourism Development Northern

Cape (a subsector of DEAT) and a committee of product owners as support. The role players for the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route include Open Africa, Tourism Development Northern Cape, and a committee of product owners.

Before travelling, the prospective visitor develops an image of the destination, and a set of expectations derived from previous experience, WOM, media information and common beliefs (Pereira, Correia & Schutz, 2012:82). Keyser (2009:83) found that destination brand images are based on the characteristics and resources of the destination and include a visual identity in the form of a distinctive design, symbol, or colour. The unique quiver tree (Afrikaans: *kokerboom*) is used as a distinctive symbol for marketing the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, whereas the red dunes of the Kalahari serve as a symbol for the Kalahari Red Dune Route brand.

The ultimate objective of destination marketing, according to Chen and Phou (2013:270), is destination loyalty. Destination management organisations (DMOs) usually facilitate the creation of destination brand loyalty through striving for consistency between the identity of the destination, the induced image, and the experience of its visitors (Zouganeli *et al.*, 2012:740).

Destination marketing

The economic impact of tourism, on the one hand, and increasing competition, on the other, put massive pressure on effective destination marketing (Schaar, 2013:1). As mentioned previously, the critical part and desirable outcome of destination marketing is destination loyalty. Chen and Pau (2013:270) agree that merely satisfying customers is not enough to create loyalty; they argue that destinations should build a relationship with tourists.

In their article, Chacko and Marcell (cited in Saqib, 2019:133) mention destination positioning as a critical element of economic development in an area. They describe positioning as a form of marketing communication that assist to distinguish a destination from its competition so that tourists can choose the most attractive one.

Ritchie and Ritchie (1998:23) contend that a destination's marketing differs from the marketing of a traditional product. While a traditional product is usually a tangible, well-defined entity, the tourism product can be a very diverse and complex product delivered by different firms with different functions and capabilities. The marketing plan forms part of the strategic planning (see 4.4.5.1). Branding is one of a few marketing strategies (Schaar, 2013:1).

Branding, place branding, corporate branding and destination branding

To understand the abovementioned concepts, it is important first to explore the term “branding”. Branding is a technique to craft an identity in a highly competitive marketplace. Branding is described on the Web (11 Digits, s.a.) as follows:

The process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.

Different authors, such as Kotler and Armstrong (2016:232), use the definition of the American Marketing Association that states that a brand is a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition”. However, Van Meer (2010:7) points out that the American Marketing Association definition focuses only on the brand as a simple marketing tool, but does not view the concept from a customer's perspective. Kotler and Armstrong (2016:233) argue that branding helps buyers to identify potentially beneficial products. Brands communicate something about product quality and consistency (a buyer who repeatedly buys the same brand will get the same quality and benefits each time). According to Cant and Van Heerden (2016:226), a brand can change consumer perceptions in ways that are different from the actual qualities of the product; that is why branding helps consumers differentiate between similar products.

Branding, according to Van Meer (2010:7), is a crucial step when marketing a business, a place, or a product. Kotler and Armstrong (2016:233) view the building and managing of brands as probably the marketer's most important tasks.

Van Meer (2010:7) and Kladou, Kavaratzis, Rigopoulou and Salonika (2017:5) add that a brand entails more than just separating one product from the other; it covers all attributes (tangible, intangible, psychological and sociological) that come to the customer's mind when thinking about the brand. Customers perceive a brand as an essential part of the product – branding can, therefore, add value to the product. Van Meer (2010:7) misses two aspects in the definitions mentioned above: that social processes affect brand recognition, knowledge, and associations, and that value and meaning can be expressed by the brand. Cant *et al.* (2006:270) agree that brand loyalty is the outcome of brand equity. The value in a brand is called brand equity and refers to assets and liabilities associated with the brand that add to or subtract from the value of the product or service (Van Meer, 2010:7) (see 3.3.2.4.).

Modern-day tourism destinations offer high-quality destination attributes, including accommodation, attractions, services and facilities, as well as scenic views and friendly people. Destinations, therefore, need a tool to remain competitive in the contemporary tourism marketplace. Destination branding becomes the tool for destinations to remain competitive (Qu *et al.*, 2010:466; Zouganeli *et al.*, 2012:742). Dickinger and Lalicic (2016) suggest that the concept of destination branding has been introduced to overcome the fact that DMOs have little control over the tourist experience in a market with almost infinite tourism opportunities. These authors admit that destination branding is an attempt to influence the way consumers interpret and develop their own sense of what a brand means to them. The authors also comment on the vital role of destination branding in involving different stakeholders in one theme and in supporting the values that destinations have to offer. As the term “destination branding” is often used as an equivalent of “place branding”, it is vital to reflect on some authors’ views of the similarities and differences between the two terms.

Zenker and Braun (2010:5) define place brand as “a network of associations in the consumer’s mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design”. According to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013:70), the definition agrees that brand is formed in people’s minds because the place with its landscape and atmosphere stimulates associations in the minds of

the persons who encounter the place, but they point out that the multitude of stakeholders contributes to the complexity of the place as a brand. Kasapi and Cela (2017:134) state that the line between place branding and destination branding seems blurred. Place identity and place branding, according to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013:71) and Campelo *et al.*, (2014:155), are interwoven, and both a process of dialogue between stakeholders. Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) argue that it is not possible to separate the destination from the place because destinations are located in places. Zenker *et al.*, (2017) emphasise the close relationship between place branding and destination branding by pointing out that place branding often takes the form of destination branding to attract tourists, while the latter is increasingly widening its focus to include a broader range of target groups including residents. According to Campelo *et al.* (2014:155), the nature of a destination is determined by the networks, relationships, and shared experiences of the place. Therefore, destination branding should be guided by the theory of place and the sense of place (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:154). This matter will be discussed in 3.4.2.

Place branding can include nation, country, and destination branding (Foroudi *et al.*, 2016:243). These authors describe destination branding as an "offshoot of place branding" specifically focused on leisure tourism. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013:82) conclude that branding has a role to play in all parts of identity formation and entails a set of processes that facilitate the whole identity process. They view stakeholders as the most critical element of place branding. Campelo *et al.* (2014:154) argue that sense of place is mainly influenced by the meanings given to the place by the people who own the place and point out that when residents are left out of the branding process, it will lead to a simplistic understanding of the sense of the place and to brands communicating only "tacit connections".

Anholt (2010:3) points out the differences between place branding and destination branding: place branding includes more sectors, such as tourism, manufacturing, exports, and education, and conveys the place as being attractive to live in, visit, work, do business with and study in. Anholt (2010) acknowledges that there is a need for a destination brand to target specific tourism segments and that there should be a secure link between the destination and the overall place brand.

This study based its approach to destination branding and place branding on the conclusion of Zenker *et al.* (2017), namely that the two concepts should not be seen as separate entities.

Ritchie and Ritchie (1998:17) sought to address the traditional identification and differentiation functions of a brand, and to emphasise the importance of a promise of a memorable experience by proposing the following definition for destination brand:

A Destination Brand is a name, symbol, logo, wordmark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; Furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience.

Destination branding involves both material and non-material elements. Other than a product that represents an easily modifiable physical offering, the destination as a product contains tangible elements (such as historical sites and beaches) and intangible elements, such as culture, customs, and history (Qu, Kim & Im, 2010:466). Kemp and Bordelon (2011:122) refer to these elements as "components of destination branding".

A destination competes with similar destinations globally to attract tourists. Morgen, Pritchard and Pride (2004, cited in Helgason & Siguroarson, 2012:24), suggest six requirements for a destination brand to create an emotional connection with tourists. The brand should be credible, deliverable, differentiating, conveying powerful ideas, enthusing for partners and stakeholders, and resonating with visitors. Tasci and Gartner (2009, cited in Helgason & Siguroarson, 2012:25) also mention good value, quality, trust, assurance, anticipation to customers, and a positive and strong image.

Blain *et al.* (2005:337) elaborated on the definition of Ritchie and Ritchie (1998:17):

Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, wordmark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor

and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice.

Hankinson (2007:240) concludes that corporate brands share similarities with destination brands and that literature on corporate branding can be used to understand problems associated with destination brand management. Hankinson (2010:98) identifies several characteristics shared by corporate branding and destination branding:

- Both entail multiple stakeholders with potentially conflicting objectives.
- Both make use of a variety of contact points to communicate with stakeholders.
- Both execute an over-arching role across different business activities.
- Both are focal points for several consumer segments simultaneously.

3.3.1.1 Defining destination branding

Based on the discussion in the previous section, the following working definition of destination branding was applied in this study:

Destination branding is a tourism marketing positioning strategy with multiple stakeholders involved (on the place production side, as well as the place consumption side) that aims at stimulating buying behaviour and revisits through creating and reinforcing brand identity and a cognitive and emotional connection between target audience and destination, as well as promising (and delivering) a memorable travel experience by differentiating the destination image using the essence of the place, a name, symbol, logo, and other graphics uniquely associated with the destination in a credible manner, saving consumer search costs and perceived risk.

This definition attempts to capture the essence of the definitions by Ritchie and Ritchie (1998), and Blain *et al.* (2005), while also incorporating Morgan, Pritchard and Pride's (2004) requirements for creating an emotional connection with consumers, and recognising both brand identity and brand image (Qu *et al.*, 2010:466) as two different concepts. The definition acknowledges the complexity of multiple stakeholders on both the production and the consumption side. The definition furthermore suggests the inclusion of cognitive and affective image elements (Qu *et al.*, 2010:467), includes the

sense of place (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:154) and incorporates the outcomes of destination branding, namely to direct consumer behaviour and intention to revisit (Qu *et al.*, 2010:468). The definition confirms the convergence of two domains, namely tourism and marketing, and does not see destination branding and place branding as separate entities, in line with the viewpoint of Zenker *et al.* (2017).

3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF DESTINATION BRANDING

The characteristics of a destination brand, according to Singh and Mehraj (2018), include different natural places; retail centres; heritage, landscape and cultural attractions; entertainment; and special events. As mentioned previously, most offerings are a combination of tangibles and intangibles (Albayrak, Caber & Aksoy (2010:140). The branding process also involves tangible and intangible elements.

3.4.1 Tangible offerings

The tangible offerings of a destination brand are discussed below.

3.4.1.1 Physical tourism products

Tangible products include transportation, accommodation, gastronomy, and the cost of the service (Albayrak *et al.*, 2010:141). Sanyal (2014) categorises physical tourism products as places (such as Mumbai), organisations (such as World Wildlife Federation), persons (such as a snake charmer, dancer, or a guide), events (such as the Elephant Festival of Jaipur) or activities (paragliding, scuba diving or trekking). Sanyal (2014) furthermore classifies tourism products as natural products (forests, mountains, deserts, beaches), human-made products (festivals, monuments, fairs, art) and symbolic products: (sanctuaries, water sports).

3.4.1.2 Multiple autonomous service businesses

Because the tourism place product involves different buildings, facilities, and venues operated by public and private service businesses, it needs to be marketed through formal and informal partnerships (Hankinson, 2010:98). Both Blain *et al.* (2005:329) and Schaar (2013:2) point out that although tourists buy individual services, it is effectively the entire destination experience that is being bought. A traveller makes

use of accommodation, eats at different restaurants, visits attractions, participates in activities, interacts with residents, and observes the appearance, geography, and cleanliness of the environment. All these components add to the overall tourist experience. Because of all variables involved, the experience may differ from one tourist to the next (Schaar, 2013:2).

3.4.1.3 Physical brand elements

Kladou *et al.*, (2017:19) found that the three most prominent brand elements (name, logo, tagline) have limited potential in making a significant impact in the final evaluation of place brand. The study results emphasise traits and characteristics of the place itself as more influential decision-making factors. On the other hand, Blain *et al.* (2005:332) demonstrate the importance of logos in brand identity and brand equity by using the Coca-Cola signature, McDonald's arches, and the Nike "swoosh" as examples. These authors refer to a logo's ability to communicate an image, as well as speeding recognition of the company, but agree that branding entails a more comprehensive process than just the development of logos and taglines (Blain *et al.*, 2005:328).

Unique selling proposition, brand vision, brand values and brand personality (see 3.5.13) are intangible offerings that can be applied to position the brand in the market.

3.4.2 Intangible offerings

Yang, Liu and Li (2015) contend that a brand is a single perception of various intangible assets referred to as "brand equity". Yang *et al.* (2015) recognise that customer experience is controllable and improvable to some degree. Cardona, Sun, Li and White (2017) regard destination brand image, brand value, and brand quality as instruments to influence customer-based brand equity. Brand equity also refers to the value in a brand and it includes assets and liabilities associated with the brand that add to or subtract from the value of the product or service (Van Meer, 2010:7). Kotler and Armstrong (2016:238) describe brand equity as the "positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or service" and

measure brand equity as the extent to which consumers are willing to pay more for the brand. Cant, Strydom, Jooste and Du Plessis (2006:259) define brand equity in more practical terms: "Brand equity is incremental cash flows resulting from the product with the brand name versus that which would result without the brand name." Kladou *et al.*, (2017:7) prefer Keller's (1993) introduction of brand equity, which is directly related to the value of the brand as perceived by its consumers. Pike (2009:125) describes brand equity as the most common term used for the brand performance – measured as a financial value on the corporate balance sheet and agrees that high levels of brand equity can lead to better sales, price premiums, customer loyalty, lower costs, and buying behaviour (Pike, 2009:128).

The intangible offerings of a destination brand are discussed next.

3.4.2.1 Image

A study by Qu *et al.* (2010:466) shows that a unique image of a destination should be regarded as a critical brand association and describes a differentiated destination image as a basis for survival within a globally competitive marketplace. According to Qu *et al.* (2010:467) and Schaar (2013:2), tourism literature widely acknowledges that cognitive and affective evaluations influence destination image. While the cognitive evaluation includes beliefs and knowledge about the subject, affective evaluation refers to a person's feelings. Both cognitive and affective elements of the destination image should be considered in order to understand a destination branding model. Qu *et al.* (2010:467) propose a third image component, "unique image", to be considered a brand association. These authors believe that a destination's unique image is critical in installing the overall image in the consumer's mind. They found that cognitive image (knowledge and beliefs) was the most influential brand association to form an overall image, followed by a unique image. They agree that the overall image of the destination will direct tourist behaviour and argue that the intention to revisit a destination and spread positive WOM are two of the most critical behavioural impacts of the destination image (Qu *et al.*, 2010:468).

Ritchie and Ritchie (1998:24-27) admit that seeking a brand (reaching a joint agreement as to what is being branded) might be one of the significant challenges the DMO (Destination Management Organisation) will face. One of the reasons is that

residents might have a more idealistic perception of a destination than the tourism operators who are in closer contact with visitors. Van Meer (2010:2) also mentions the importance of inhabitants in destination branding, because they are the people inhabiting the place.

Pike (2009:127) holds that brand identity is the self-image desired by marketers, while brand image refers to the actual image held by consumers. Qu *et al.* (2010:466) acknowledge brand identity (the essence of a place, according to Saraniemi & Komppula, 2017:2) and brand image as essential ingredients for a successful brand. Brand identity provides direction, purpose and meaning; thus, it is the driver of brand associations, while consumers build a destination image in their minds based on brand identity projected through the marketing message.

Qu *et al.* (2010:474) agree with other researchers that brand identity should be based on destination image formed by consumers. They also suggest that the destination image should be monitored regularly to ascertain whether visitors have accepted the projected image.

A tourist destination contains many products and services, and DMOs have to look for a collective character in this multiple-component product. Ritchie and Ritchie (1998:25) point out that destinations in such a case use one of the dominant subcomponents for destination branding. Orlando, for instance, used the Disney Corporation dominance to brand the destination as "Orlando Magic".

Pike (2009:135) contends that a politically charged environment – in which DMO staff are accountable to government funding agencies, tourism businesses of the area, travel intermediaries, and inhabitants – can create pressure to change brand initiatives.

Schaar (2013:4) and Zenker *et al.* (2017) propose a differentiated and more complex brand communication tailored for different target groups. These authors promote the development of target group-specific sub-brands under an umbrella place brand because it can inspire all target groups to identify more effectively with the brand. Schaar (2013:4) explains that certain aspects of a destination will be promoted more

heavily to specific target groups than others, but that all messages should be "tied back" to the umbrella brand.

Kotler and Armstrong (2016:237) mention that the real value of a strong brand is the ability to gain and retain consumer preference and loyalty.

3.4.2.2 Brand quality and credibility

Because brand quality offers customers a main reason to purchase, it should be valued as a primary factor affecting consumer behaviour (Aaker, 1991, cited in Yang *et al.*, 2015). These authors conclude that destination brand quality creates destination brand loyalty.

Schaar (2013:4) stresses the importance of the credibility of the destination brand and points out that non-delivery of what has been promised by the brand will negatively affect return visits, as well as the reputation of the destination. According to Schaar (2013:5), there should be a trade-off between credible brand promises and inspirational brand promises. While the credible offer is based on what is familiar and believable, the inspirational offer appeals to the potential visitor's emotions and aspirations. A brand identity built on factual attributes only will be less emotionally appealing. On the other hand, a message that appeals to the receiver's wildest dreams could lead to disappointment.

Apostolakis, Jaffry, Sizeland and Cox (2015:205–208) suggest bidding for a resource status such as World Heritage Status to communicate quality.

3.4.2.3 Personality

Schaar (2013:5) views brand personality as a possible angle to use in destination branding, as the functional attributes of a destination are no longer sufficient to encourage buying behaviour.

Litvin, Yen and Uysal (2012) and Bilim and Bilim (2014:122) explain that brand image consists of physical attributes (such as colour), functional characteristics (doing something more effectively), and characterisation (such as youthful). The characterisation process relates to human characteristics and is based on brand

personality. Although both destination image and destination personality are cognitive constructs (Unurlu & Küçükkancabas, 2013:83), the personality or character of the destination is only one component of destination image (Bilam & Bilam, 2014:125). Both Pereira *et al.* (2012:82) and Kim and Lehto (2013:119) distinguish two types of benefits that brand image provides to consumers, namely functional (cognitive) benefits and symbolic (affective) benefits. They assert that brand personality is more closely related to the symbolic image (see 3.5.13).

3.4.3 Stakeholder-orientated

As pointed out, destinations are made up of a cluster of different components such as accommodation, hospitality, attractions, arts, entertainment, culture, heritage, and the natural environment (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggot, 2003:287). These components, together with various agencies and companies, the different levels of government, environmental groups, chambers of commerce, trade associations, civic groups, the wider private sector (Morgan *et al.*, 2003:287), the host community and visitors (Yusof & Ismail, 2014:74) are all stakeholders in the destination brand. The involvement of a variety of heterogenous stakeholders creates a management challenge.

3.4.3.1 Stakeholder management

Stakeholder management is a critical component of destination branding. Examining the needs of internal stakeholders, including local businesses, government and residents, is part of a branding strategy (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:122).

Furthermore, destination marketers do not enjoy the luxury of connecting supply to existing demand, or to tailor the product with the consumers in mind as with standard consumer products (Schaar, 2013:2). Destination marketers are stuck with what already exists and have to focus promotional efforts on groups most likely to be interested.

3.4.3.2 Destination marketers: less control over brand experience than marketers of product brands

Because consumers build their unique product from a wide variety of services on offer, destination marketers have less control over the brand experience (Hankinson,

2010:98). Consumers of a destination brand are also more diverse than the consumer base of a physical product (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:122). This also has an impact on brand loyalty.

3.4.3.3 Brand loyalty

Schaar (2013:4) states that brand value can be measured through brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is vital for the industry because much of a destination's business comes from repeat visits. Schaar (2013) suggests that not all tourists with a positive destination experience will necessarily be loyal, because some tourists travel to different destinations to experience more of the world. It is likely though that, because of a positive attitude, these tourists may still recommend the destination to others.

3.4.3.4 Adaptability of offer

Besides traditional products, the tourism product includes a series of services that are consumed over an extended period, which implies that the product may undergo evolutionary changes between purchasing and consuming. The brand should capture this changing nature of the product, such as seasonality. On the other hand, the brand should have a long-term life cycle, reflecting a characteristic that can be retained over time, such as the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Egypt, and the "I Love NY" campaign.

3.5 ANTECEDENTS OF DESTINATION BRANDING

Hankinson (2010: 99) identified five categories of critical antecedents of destination branding. Other authors elaborated on these five general antecedents and identified a few other factors that influence destination branding. These antecedents are explored in the following subsections.

3.5.1 Brand culture

An accurate assessment of organisational culture, followed by strategies to develop employees' commitment to the brand, is the starting point in brand building (Hankinson, 2010:99). The culture of an organisation (values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions) is influenced by the way employees feel about the organisation and it

creates an environment in which brand values must develop. The interaction of employees with customers is an essential factor in how external customers perceive the desired brand values. Brand-centred human resource activities are regarded as a crucial managerial activity. Hankinson (2010:99) proposes that recruitment and promotion should be based on finding employees with similar values to those of the brand. The brand training of new employees should include brand enthusiasm, brand consideration, brand endorsement and brand advancement, helping behaviour, sportsmanship and self-development, all of which are meant to enhance a positive brand culture.

A DMO should focus on getting residents committed to the destination's branding efforts because a secure connection will play a role in their self-concept (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:122). When residents are sure that branding efforts reflect a core competency of their area, they will have favourable attitudes about the branding efforts. Committed residents may become "evangelists" for the brand through WOM promotion to potential travellers (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:124).

3.5.2 Sense of place

Sense of place is fundamental in defining a place and to the articulation of a destination brand (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:155). Sense of place relates to the atmosphere, local habits, and communal practices, which add colour to the visitor's experience. Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) believe that recognition of the cultural characteristics of the place, a real understanding of the people living in the place, and an appreciation of how a shared sense of place is composed and experienced, are fundamental for a destination branding strategy. The authors recognise *genius loci* (the shared sense of the spirit of a place, which includes an attachment to and bonding with the place) as part of sense of place. Aitken and Campelo (2011:914) use the term "brand ownership". Sense of place does not refer to social constructs only, but also includes the physical setting. Both Campelo *et al.* (2014:156) and Saraniemi and Kamppula (2017:12) argue that tangible characteristics such as geographic location and landscape are strong contributors to the tourism experience, and therefore the sense of place.

Campelo *et al.* (2014) propose a sense of place model to support scholarship in destination and place branding (see Figure 3.2). The model depicted in Figure 3.2 is intended to reveal narratives, descriptions, images, and symbols useful in brand communication (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:162).

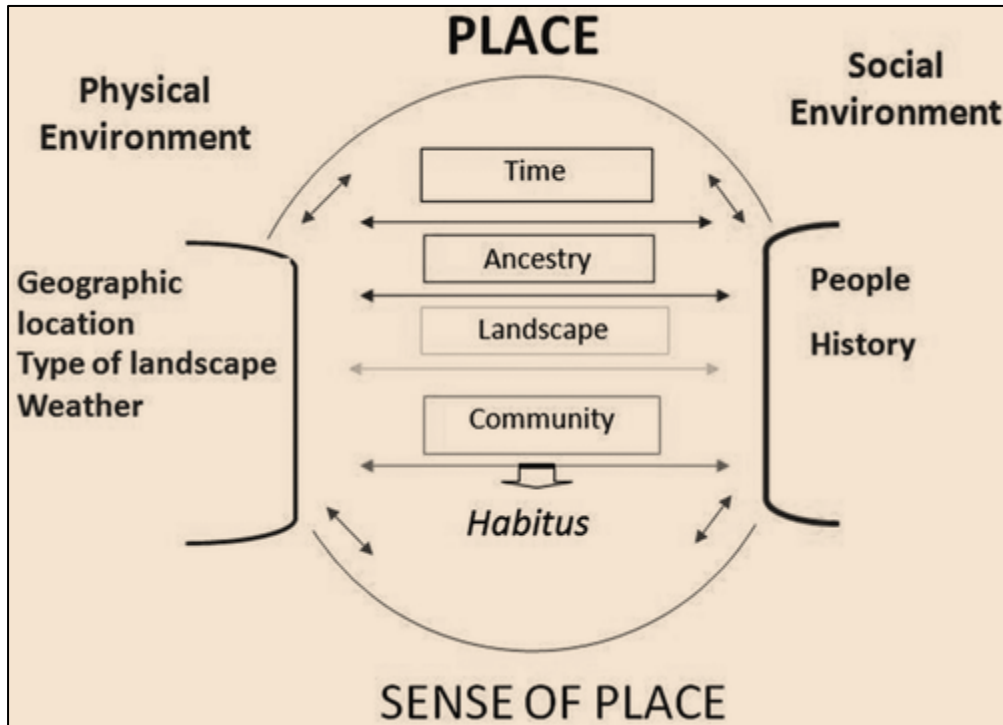


Figure 3.2: Sense of place model

(Source: Campelo *et al.*, 2014:161)

Campelo *et al.* (2014) recognise four constructs that define sense of place, namely time, ancestry, landscape, and community (illustrated in Figure 3.2). The significance and meaning of each construct shapes sense of place. The meanings of a construct are influenced by *how* they are socially created and shared by a group of people living in that specific place (the ways of doing things at that particular site). Meanings of a construct are also influenced by *why* they have cultural significance.

Time refers to the rhythm of the place – how time affects lifestyle at the place (traditional, modern, slow-paced, energetic) – and social reproduction, collective practices, and behaviour. Ancestry reveals cultural symbols and images, as well as how tradition and historical facts influence everyday practices. The landscape provides pictorial place reference and reflects the way the people deal with their external, tangible and visible environment. The named constructs overlap, influence each other,

and are reflected in the communities' sense of their own place and the place of others (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:162).

Campelo *et al.* (2014:161) describe the importance of sense of place in destination branding as twofold:

- Constructs that determine sense of place reveal the symbols, meanings, and attributes shaping identity and behaviour. Destination branding is about the communication of this identity.
- Sense of place is also related to *habitus*, which entails a person's sense of his or her place as well as the place of others. According to Campelo *et al.* (2014:162), the constructs reveal *habitus* in terms of how to do things at that place – practices that should shape decisions regarding networking, brand management, and governance when cooperating with the stakeholders who contribute to the brand experience.

Campelo *et al.* (2014:162) conclude that when residents are left aside in the branding process, it will result in low levels of acceptance and commitment by these inhabitants – which will ultimately affect the quality of the tourism experience. Zenker *et al.* (2017) argue that a higher identification with the place is vital for accruing brand ambassadors (which is important for word-of-mouth promotion).

3.5.3 Brand leadership

Brand leadership includes a clear sense of vision of what the organisation or entity wishes to become (Hankinson, 2007:243); it should foster brand commitment throughout the organisation and set up structures to send consistent brand messages to employees and consumers (Saraniemi & Komppula, 2017:2-3). Saraniemi and Komppula (2017:3) claim that leadership in destination branding is typically assigned to DMOs. According to Pike and Page (2014), it is common practice to fund a DMO – usually located in the public sector (Hankinson, 2007:246) – as the "main vehicle" to attract visitors to a distinctive place. Hankinson (2007:247) highlights that the critical role of the DMO is "to establish a clear vision for the destination brand and to develop a set of core brand values which link positive aspects of the place's heritage to a realistic vision of what can be achieved in the future". Hankinson (2007:246–247) does not view the role of the DMO as an easy task, as only a small number of staff is usually

employed, budgets are tightly controlled, and there exists no line authority over their organisational partners. Since advocates of destination branding have argued that it stimulates tourism, destination marketing organisations and national tourism organisations have committed themselves to substantial funding for multi-year branding strategies (Dioko & Harrill, 2010:213). The jurisdiction of a DMO may cover a country, state, province, city, town, or region. Its primary purposes include the marketing of that specific destination to potential visitors and providing the community and its members with economic benefits. Members of the DMO typically include hospitality enterprises, restaurants, tour operators, governmental bodies, and any other tourism-supporting firms (Blain *et al.*, 2005:328). The destination product's multi-dimensional nature holds a challenge for DMOs to deliver on the destination's brand promise and to retain consistency from visitor to visitor (Schaar, 2013:2). Hankinson (2010:109) also found that effective internal leadership can be restricted by the complex inter-organisational structures in which DMOs have to function.

Exemplary leadership was found to be the third most important factor in developing brand identity in the study of Saraniemi and Kamppula (2017:13), although the authors concluded that the role of DMOs in establishing brand identity might be overemphasised. Morgen, Pritchard and Pride (2012:81) agree on the vital role of DMOs in brand leadership, but explain that leadership should be a collective endeavour, including all stakeholders in "shared leadership", as the stakeholders are the "active investors" in what the destination has to offer. Hankinson (cited in Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016) believes that the destination branding process depends on the effectiveness of the DMO's leadership, but other authors (Hankinson, 2010:98; Ooi, 2010:108; Zouganeli *et al.*, 2012:740; Kladou *et al.*, 2017:3) point out that the people responsible for branding lack control over the destination when multiple stakeholders are involved.

Apostolalis *et al.* (2015:205–208) propose a brand ambassador as one of three policy recommendations to facilitate a unique brand and contribute to more effective leadership. These authors recommend the appointment of a brand ambassador who will appeal to investors, businesses, and locals and who will inspire locals with a vision, act as a warranty of quality for outsiders, improve coordination and consistency among stakeholders, and inspire a feeling of local pride in residents.

3.5.4 Brand communication

Brand communication implies contact with a range of stakeholders, including investors, suppliers, regulators, special interest groups and local communities. Brand communications require more communication channels and contact points than corporate advertising and public relations (Hankinson 2010:101). The overall aim of stakeholder contact is to build trust, and it entails shareholder meetings, annual reports, distributor training, events, and manuals.

Internal brand communication involves talks, handbooks, videos, or memorable to-the-point, short brand statements aimed at motivating employees (Hankinson (2010:101). Saraniemi and Kamppula (2017:13) found a shared understanding of values and aims, established through internal brand communication, to be an essential factor in developing brand identity. Internal brand communication is used to create and build a brand culture (see 3.4.1).

Dioko and Harrill (2010:218) explore whose image elements should form the basis of the destination's branding effort: perceived images of visitors, or those of the host. Hankinson (2010) refers to "brand reality" and points out that DMOs often experience difficulties in matching the brand experience with the brand promise.

Because identity is created by the sender, while an image is perceived by the receiver (Qu *et al.*, 2010:466), destination branding cannot be formed through one-way message transmission (Kladou *et al.*, 2017:4). Images deliberately projected by destination marketers mix with various other images beyond the control of the destination marketers. Consistency in brand messages and a strong brand narrative are therefore very important, and should be closely monitored by brand leadership.

Ooi (2010:107–125) refers to "poetics" and "politics" of destination branding. The process of presenting the unique brand story about the destination to potential visitors – aiming at positively influencing their perceptions – is called "poetics of destination branding" (Ooi, 2010:109). The destination branding campaign involves more than sending positive messages to the prospective visitors; it has to maintain the brand images and story, deliver the products, and create local support for the brand. Ooi

(2010:109) refers to the “internal local environment challenge” as politics of destination branding and defines the term as “the dynamic processes of drawing support and cooperation by the brand authorities from different tourism agencies and local residents, so that the brand will be accepted, communicated and manifested through official and unofficial publicity and products”.

Various authors (Dioko & Harrill, 2010:219; Ooi, 2010:110; Apostolakis *et al.*, 2015:199) agree that the multiple interests of various destination stakeholders may not match, and that the different parties might use the brand in their own ways while sending out alternative messages. Dioko and Harrill (2010:219) refer to this as "assimilation" and describe it as an "undercurrent" in destination branding. The politics of branding will, therefore, involve seeking consensus, persuading different stakeholders to use the brand, and presenting aspects in the branded manner (Ooi, 2010:122). Blain *et al.* (2005:337) also concluded on the importance of consistency and integration of images and messages throughout DMO operations. Dioko and Harrill (2010:219) refer to the results of a study by Blain *et al.* (2005) that revealed that only DMO executives, rather than members, were involved in the logo design process. Kemp and Bordelon (2011:122) suggest municipalities (usually the drivers of the DMO) should start with an inward focus to ensure that their visions are in line with the needs and expectations of the local community. When brands are then introduced to external constitutions, there might be better synergy in the marketing strategy.

3.5.5 Structure and coordination

Bregoli (2012:213) distinguished between shareholder coordination and cooperation. While cooperation concerns the sharing of resources to benefit from collective opportunities, coordination is about the management of the different stakeholders to achieve a shared goal.

Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) agree that destination branding and the quality of the destination experience rely on a combination of different services provided by different local stakeholders. This fragmented nature of the tourist destination (Bregoli, 2012:212) requires the coordination of stakeholders to ensure an integrated tourism experience as well as the successful development of the destination brand. Saraniemi

and Kamppula (2017:13) also reported the collaboration of key internal stakeholders as a crucial action in the development of brand identity, and therefore ultimately a destination brand. Hankinson (2010:98) points out that multiple stakeholders might have conflicting objectives, requiring the management of interactions (referring to brand leadership discussed in 3.4.3). Bregoli (2012:212) agrees that brand development is a matter of coordination rather than a managed activity, as destinations aim at stakeholder support and unity of purpose.

Assimilation, according to Dioko and Harrill (2010:219), encompasses certification and standards, and these authors point out how formal commitments of adherence (e.g., licensing) and shared values and standards can influence the destination brand and influence brand trust and credibility.

With more complex structures that challenge effective coordination (like when branding occur across regions), slower implementation usually occurs. Regions experience more political conflict than single cities and require a more complex brand architecture to accommodate the political objectives of leading towns and cities in the region (Hankinson, 2010:110).

3.5.6 Stakeholder partnerships and collaboration

Hankinson (2010:102) agrees that contemporary marketing involves strong relationships with suppliers, the community, shareholders and competitors and points out that organisations with insufficient resources might be able to respond more swiftly and effectively to a changing market environment if cooperative partnerships exist. Partnerships may involve the sharing of resources (such as finance, knowledge and competencies). However, a formal framework with organisational arrangements (see 3.5.5) and good communications (see 3.5.4) is a prerequisite. Hankinson (2010:109) points out that because DMOs are relatively small organisations with limited financial resources, they focus on securing stakeholder support to meet short-term financial objectives.

Findings of the study by Hankinson (2010:110) suggest that DMOs work with relatively small but broadly based groups of committed stakeholders and engage in long-term partnerships rather than typical one-year, subscription-based agreements. CEOs and

senior management must lead the process and must focus on establishing an understanding of and commitment to the destination brand. The study further emphasises the importance of departmental coordination in supporting brand development, as discussed earlier. Findings suggest strong relationships with organisations involved in the destination's physical environment (buildings and infrastructure).

Not only external constituents can be targeted by destination marketing teams, but also the local community (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:123). Aitken and Campelo (2011:918), Zouganeli *et al.* (2012:740), and Jeuring and Haartsen (2016:242) furthermore agree that place branding should not reflect the views of influential stakeholders only. They emphasise the engagement of "local" and "bottom-up" stakeholders (employees and consumers) to act as brand ambassadors. Perceptions and activities of internal stakeholders, as well as communication and collaboration with these stakeholders, are viewed as an essential part of destination branding. Jeuring and Haartsen (2016:243) regard city residents as the audience receiving messages of place marketing campaigns, the people living the brand, the citizens who provide legitimisation to the meaning attributed to public places, as well as those closely connected to the way the destination is experienced by its visitors. Ooi (2010:123) points out that not everybody in a destination will welcome tourists and that, unlike firms where managers can terminate employees' services, "not toeing the company's line", a DMO cannot get rid of citizens who do not live the official destination branding. Aitken and Campelo (2011:918) point out that when residents and local communities are left out of the branding process, it will result in little connection and understanding of the sense of the place, lower identification with the brand, and low levels of recognition, acceptance and commitment.

Destination residents and the hospitality of the host population can make a positive or negative contribution to the quality of the destination experience – something over which the tourism sector has little control. Certain resident behaviours and events may diminish the destination's appeal and affect the perception of a destination brand.

3.5.7 A dimension of pleasure

The brand must also capture not only the functional qualities, but also the pleasure dimension. Yang, Kim and Zimmerman (2019:557) argue that pleasure stimulates purchase behaviour. According to Alakoski and Tikkanen (2014:11) the pleasure dimension of tourism entails basic senses, and emotional, social, and functional dimensions of pleasure. That should be reflected in the name, symbols, and logos.

3.5.8 Emotional connection

Apostolakis *et al.* (2015:200) point out that reliance of a destination on its unique attributes (images which are distinctive, time-resistant and truthful) boosts emotional connection with its customers and achieves stronger customer loyalty. Schaar (2013:5) regards modern-day consumption as a form of self-expression and agrees that tourism destinations have become "fashion accessories" for travellers. Tourists purchase souvenirs and take photos to show them off to others because they believe that people will perceive them in a certain way for visiting that place (Schaar, 2013:5). According to Zenker *et al.*, (2017), people have a need to belong and to stay unique and recognisable as individuals. A unique place brand helps them to feel important and recognisable as individuals – because they base their identity on the personal accomplishment of visiting a unique place – while staying part of a subgroup or retaining their group identity.

3.5.9 Interactive online processes

Travellers look for information and inspiration online and prefer to stay connected while travelling (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:58). Potential tourists use the Internet to plan and book a vacation and share their experiences and feelings afterward online.

Dioko and Harrill (2010:220) view the rapid development of Web 2.0, social media, and interactive processes between brand owners and users as another undercurrent in destination branding. These authors refer to the issue as "anarchy" because ownership and control are taken out of the hands of tourism marketers and DMOs.

According to Munar (2010:291), Web 2.0 allows the public to contribute to developing, rating, collaborating and distributing Internet content through tools such as blogs, wikis, messaging applications and podcasts. Tourists use Web 2.0 tools for

information on tourist destinations as well as for sharing their travel experiences. Due to more powerful hardware, affordability, faster networks and higher e-literacy of the population, web branding content is a higher reflection of interaction and participation of end-users than of being controlled by organisations. Munar (2010:292) refers to the "digitalisation of word-of-mouth", and concludes that tourists do not include the formal elements of the brands (taglines, slogans, logos) in their storytelling when sharing their destination experiences, but are active in destination image building through their narrative, visual and audio contributions (Munar, 2010:302). In this way, consumers, as active creators of the destination brand (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:53), not only have the power to co-construct destination brands but to de-construct them as well (Dioko & Harrill, 2010:221). Technology may pose a threat to tourist destinations and their branding process (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:53).

Oliveira and Panyik (2014:59) refer to the ITB World Travel Trends report of 2013, in which 40% of travellers indicated that social network comments had influenced their travel planning, and 50% based their travel plans on the reviews and experiences of other travellers.

Oliveira and Panyik (2014:53) postulate that the most successful destinations in the future will be those who apply a co-created branding strategy. Future branding strategies should include a coherent strategy and consistent message to engage with potential visitors through the different online channels. Oliveira and Panyik (2014:54) identify travel blogs as an essential mechanism for information sharing among tourists, as well as for destinations to explore visitor experiences and to get information about the attitudes of their markets. Oliveira and Panyik (2014:55) argue that social media has developed into a highly effective way for DMOs to engage with the masses and suggest that the use of hashtags (the short links preceded by the # sign) in social media marketing will increase the influence of the message (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:61). These authors explain that by clicking on a word with a hashtag in any message, tweet, or photo, all tweets, photos, or messages marked with that keyword from all over the world will appear.

Oliveira and Panyik (2014:62) conclude that destination branding experts should work in an integrative way with social media and electronic tourism experts to maintain

communities of interest, gathering content, posting visual material, promoting local events, and encouraging electronic word of mouth.

3.5.10 Uniqueness

The tourism environment is highly competitive, and tourists can only be attracted through unique attractions (Schaar, 2013:2; Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:54;). The results of the study by Schaar (2013:4) show that the perceived uniqueness of a destination is essential in brand positioning.

Destinations utilising their unique cultural heritage and traditions as a critical tool in the branding process have been reported to be competitively better placed (see Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:122; Apostolakis *et al.*, 2015:199; Foroudi *et al.*, 2016:250). Schaar (2013:4) and Apostolakis *et al.* (2015:199) criticise most branding efforts as being homogenous and disconnected from the destination's history. The latter causes failure to capture local culture and history and leads to limited buy-in from local stakeholders – partly because stakeholders feel that the brand does not express or define them. Schaar (2013:4) points out that branding is positioned around the same key features, such as "good restaurants" and "excellent accommodations". The creation of the uniqueness of a destination is therefore not limited to culture or history, but could include any form of unique attribute that a destination can offer.

Apostolakis *et al.* (2015:205-208) propose the staging of sustainable international events to increase visibility, a vision for locals, and raising the economic profile of the area.

3.5.11 Brand image and competitive edge

Blain *et al.* (2005:330) and Qu *et al.* (2010:465) suggest that a definition of destination branding should include the concepts of destination image and competitiveness because an image has proved to play an essential role in visitors' choice. These authors also note that such a definition reflects the seller's point of view, but they propose that a brand should also be understood from the customer's perspective.

Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) argue that the need to understand the true identity of a place and the core attributes that define its character can be seen as one of the biggest challenges in creating a distinctive destination brand.

3.5.12 Brand promise

Blain *et al.* (2005:329) postulate that a brand promise is more critical in destination brand positioning than other service organisations. Promise does not serve as a guarantee but assists visitors in more accurate anticipation of the upcoming destination experience. Should the promise not be delivered, it might lead to visitor dissatisfaction.

3.5.13 Brand personality

A decade ago Van Meer (2010:3) referred to brand personality as a “new topic” in place branding. Ekinici and Hosany (2006:127), Murphy, Moscardo and Benckendorff (2007:6), Van Meer (2010:15), Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2015:1134), and Marcadel (2018:1) explain the added value of destination personality by saying that in cases where product attributes appear to be similar to competing brands, brand personality can create the differentiation or uniqueness (see 3.4.10). Usakli and Baloglu (2011) argue that many destinations promote similar functional attributes such as outstanding scenery, golden beaches or blue seas and agree that DMOs should develop marketing campaigns emphasising the distinctive personality of their destinations if they want to differentiate their destinations from those of competitors in a sustainable way (Kim & Letho, 2013:119; Polyorat & Tassanawat, 2017:280). Lee and Back (2010:132) refer to destination brand personality as one of the factors used to achieve “relationship marketing” – a method to build customers’ loyalty using factors other than product attributes or economics.

Aaker (1997:347) defines brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand". Marcadel (2018:1) adds to the definition by stating that brand personality "refers to human characteristics allocated to the brand by both its creators and consumers". Ekinici and Hosany (2006:127) adapted Aaker's definition for tourism destinations by stating that destination personality is the set of human characteristics associated with a destination. They view destination personality as a method for

understanding tourists' perceptions of places. Ekinci and Hosany (2006:128) supply the following examples: Europe has been described as *traditional* and *sophisticated*, Spain as *friendly* and *family-orientated*, London as *open-minded*, *unorthodox*, *vibrant*, and *creative*, while Paris is *romantic*. Van Meer (2010:3) emphasises the role of inhabitants in brand personality, saying that the personality of the brand represents the city, which is shaped by its residents. This should be taken into account when the brand personality of a place is created, as it will prevent visitors from having a false "image" of a place.

Unurlu and Küçükkancabas (2013:84) claim that personality and self-image are antecedents of brand identity. An attractive destination personality can effectively leverage the destination's perceived image, which will influence tourist choice. Usakli and Baloglu (2011) and Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2015:1146) also acknowledge that the emotional aspects of a destination – brand personality – can contribute significantly to the formation of overall destination image and desired outcomes such as bringing visitors back and attracting new visitors. When brand personality and self-congruity of consumers match effectively, a holiday status symbol, as well as the expression of a lifestyle, is created (Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016). A good match will result in positive destination attitudes and word-of-mouth marketing. The critical role of customer attachment to a brand and emotional attachment to a product has been proved by various studies as a successful way to differentiate a brand among competitors (see Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2015:1145; Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016).

The studies of both Lee and Back (2010:134) and Litvin *et al.* (2012) report trust and brand loyalty as consequences of brand personality. Hultman, Strandberg, Oghazi and Mostaghel (2017:1075) hold that tourist loyalty will manifest in intention to visit, revisit, and make recommendations.

Aaker, whose research objective was to develop a more reliable, valid, and generalisable scale and a framework to measure the dimensions of brand personality (1997:353), questioned the types of brand personality scales applied to measure brand personality (1997:348). Aaker (1997) derived five personality dimensions from 15 personality facets of famous brands, namely sincerity, excitement, competence,

sophistication, and ruggedness (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Aaker (1997) elaborated on the "Big Five of human personality" (which shows how consumers perceive brands according to the five personality dimensions) by adding a 42-item scale – also known as the Brand Personality Scale (BPS). She argued that the 5 BPS dimensions were generic and applicable across product categories, but stated that they might not be a perfect fit across cultures (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Kim 1, Malek 1, Kim 2 and Kim 3 (2017) also refer to the impact of culture on brand personality, as demonstrated in their study of South Korea.

Ekincy and Hosany (2006) extended Aaker's (1997) conceptualisation of brand personality to tourist destinations and indicated that tourists do indeed ascribe personality traits to destinations. They suggested that Aaker's 5-dimensional BPS needed to be adjusted to only three dimensions: sincerity, excitement, and conviviality. Dickinger and Lalicic (2016) refer to the results of several studies that have found different dimensions representing tourism destination brand personality and are of the opinion that the application of a scale depends on content as there is no agreement on the "brand personality destination scale". Dickinger and Lalicic (2016) admit that sincerity and sophistication are the two dimensions that are consistently presented through all service surveys. They suggest that negative emotions should also be analysed to improve customers' experiences with the brand. For accommodation specifically, Dickinger and Lalicic (2016) suggest integrating Aaker's theory into branding strategies, as accommodation views tend to have a high number of ruggedness-related feelings and competence.

Despite criticism, researchers such as Usakli and Baloglu (2011), Kim and Lehto (2013:119) and Polyorat and Tassanawat (2017:280) admit that Aaker's BPS is most often used to measure brand personality and they regard the BPS as "the most stable, reliable and comprehensive" measure of brand personality, even for destination brands.

Destination marketers and management act as facilitators of destination personality. According to Dickinger and Lalicic (2016), managers have the power to steer brand personality feelings and evoke emotions (Kim & Lehto, 2013:119) in customers. As competence seems to be an essential dimension in the accommodation sector,

managers should train their employees to demonstrate devotion, self-confidence and trustworthiness. If high levels of excitement are critical, managers should provide exciting and personalised experiences.

Internal communication plays a vital role in a successful brand personality. DMOs are advised to monitor whether brand messages are communicated as intended and that brand personality is conveyed consistently by both internal representatives and external communication. Kim and Lehto (2013:127) further advise DMOs to develop tourism products that complement the intended brand personality.

Both Dickinger and Lalicic (2016:319) and Marcadal (2018:3) view social media as an essential player in the development of brand personality due to its ability to build personal connections with individuals, cost-effectiveness, capacity to reach vast numbers of users, and ability to help destination management organisations to understand their visitors' image formation.

Studies by Kim and Lehto (2013:127) and Hultman *et al.* (2017:1075) sensitise marketers about brand personality congruence or the possible gap between projected and perceived destination brand personalities. These authors state that a large gap between the two images may lead to a destination and customer disconnection. Kim and Lehto (2013:127) stress the importance for DMOs to understand contextual factors contributing to discrepancies in projected and perceived destination personalities and to develop strategies to align these two elements.

Some authors question the value of brand personality. Hultman *et al.* (2017:1075) argue that a strong perceived destination personality is no guarantee of achieving a positive attitude towards the destination as there must be a fit between intended brand personality and perceived personality. Nevertheless, the preceding discussion offers enough evidence of the positive contribution of brand personality in destination branding to justify its inclusion as an antecedent in destination branding.

The final step in Rodgers's (2000) model (in Tofthagen and Fagerstrom, 2010) applied for conceptual analysis is to identify the consequences of the concept.

3.6 CONSEQUENCES OF DESTINATION BRANDING

Destination branding recently became a favourite method of marketing a tourism destination. However, this method is not free of challenges and adverse outcomes, as explained next.

3.6.1 Challenges in destination branding

Most challenges occur due to the fact that not all aspects of the destination brand are in the hands of the DMO.

3.6.1.1 Multifaceted products

Because of the complexity of the different factors of the destination mix, destinations cannot be treated as single products. Helgason and Siguroarson (2012:27) agree that it is time-consuming to change a destination image, and they contend that small budgets usually restrict DMOs.

3.6.1.2 Lack of control

Different authors (such as Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998:24–27; Pike, 2009:135; Van Meer, 2010:2) identify the lack of control as a significant challenge in destination branding. DMOs do not control the actual delivery of the brand promise because of the diverse group of stakeholders involved (Helgason & Siguroarson, 2012:27).

3.6.1.3 Apathy of residents

The brand cannot control residents' place attachment. Resident participation in supporting the brand requires a certain level of involvement with duties and responsibilities that exceed individual interests. Residents do not automatically align themselves with destination branding attempts (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016), which complicates the sustainability of the destination images.

3.6.1.4 Negative use of social media

The brand cannot control social media content. Social media has become a significant source of online travel information for prospective visitors. The two-way communication ability of social media has made consumer participation in the

development of a destination brand identity possible. DMOs do not have control over the images conveyed by the clients' messages and videos. Unsatisfied tourists can also negatively affect the destination brand through social media messages and images (Lim, Chung & Weaver, 2012:198).

Notwithstanding these challenges faced by the DMOs of destination branding, there are several positive outcomes of destination branding, as indicated below.

3.6.2 Positive outcomes of destination branding

Both the destination and the prospective visitors gain from destination branding.

3.6.2.1 Differentiates destination in the global market

Branding is an appeal to tourists to experience those characteristics that make it an attractive and distinctive destination (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:155). The most frequently recurring benefit mentioned in the branding literature is "greater competitive advantage" (Day, 2005:109). As destinations are becoming globalised and similar in offerings and infrastructure, the branding exercise helps both the tourism authorities and the destination to discover how they differ from other destinations (Blain *et al.*, 2005:331; Ooi, 2010:112; Apostolakis *et al.*, 2015:205). Blain *et al.* (2005:331) emphasise that such differentiation is "critical in the determination of destination choice".

3.6.2.2 Creates entry barriers for competitive offerings

Positive images and a unique brand can create entry barriers for other competing destinations (Apostolakis *et al.*, 2015:205). When customer loyalty has been achieved, tourists will be less inclined to purchase from rivals (Day, 2005:105). This is also true for destination branding.

3.6.2.3 Determines visitor choice and stimulates buying behaviour

The destination image is a significant influencer of visitor choice (Blain *et al.*, 2005:330). Kemp and Bordelon (2011:122) state that destination branding attracts visitors by promoting image, value, lifestyle, and prestige. Oliveira and Panyik

(2014:57) point out that branding can be focused even to change the type of visitors and their behaviour.

3.6.2.4 Shapes perceptions and experiences

Perceptions are influential influencers of travelling behaviour (Rajesh, 2013:73). According to Ooi (2010:111), perceptions are formed through personal experience and through sources, including news stories, travel programmes, films and WOM. Branding campaigns are aimed at becoming one of the sources shaping perceptions. Ooi (2010:112) argues that a brand package serves as a framework for tourists to imagine the destination before visiting, as people enter a place with their own pre-visit interpretations, which will enrich their destination experience. Ooi (2010:113) explains this notion by saying that the brand presents a story on which tourists build their experiences. Brand experience occurs when the visitor experiences the branded place and then gains pleasurable experiences (Singh & Mehraj, 2018). These authors refer to the secure link between satisfaction and one of the aims of destination branding, namely re-purchase intention. Singh and Mehraj (2018) regard visitor satisfaction as crucial for a destination's long-term success. Tourist satisfaction is influenced by the different aspects of a visitor's journey, such as transport, hospitality, and activities. Visitor satisfaction will influence the intention to revisit, customer complaining behaviour, brand loyalty, continuance, and recommendation (WOM).

3.6.2.5 Stimulates positive word of mouth

Both Kemp and Bordelon (2011:125) and Jeuring and Haartsen (2016:243) agree that customers have considerably more confidence in the views of friends and acquaintances than in the messages from corporate spokespeople. These authors view WOM (Word-Of-Mouth) (independent, face-to-face or even electronic communication between customers about the products and services) as a strong influence on the success of a tourism destination. Customers also use WOM referrals to cut back on the amount of information and diminish anxiety (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:125). Customer empowerment – developed through WOM, customer brand associations, and experience – can destroy brand value, influence brand equity, and change control and ownership of the brand from the organisation to being customer-centred (Aitken & Campelo, 2011:916). Satisfied clients, though, provide free

advertisement, promote increased travel, and reduce business costs when referring a destination to friends and relatives (Singh & Mehraj, 2018).

3.6.2.6 Influences place attachment, commitment and revisits

Qu *et al.* (2010:473) concluded that a positive and strong brand image, based on cognitive, affective, and unique image associations will stimulate revisits and attract new tourists to a destination. Pike (2009:136) refers to the successful delivery of brand promise that will lead to increased brand loyalty – specifically in the short break drive market. Place attachment, according to Zenker *et al.* (2017), refers to an emotional bond that people develop with a place. Place attachment for tourists will increase involvement with the place (revisits), while residents with a high identification of their place of living will have a strong place attachment. Zenker *et al.* (2017) also found that place identification is a strong driver of place advocacy (see 3.5.5).

3.6.2.7 Assists with selective packaging

Destination branding plays a significant role in changing tourism products (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:57). As not all sights, activities, and places at a destination are attractive or exciting, branding can accentuate certain aspects, while marginalising or ignoring others (Ooi, 2010:111). This makes it easier for the visitor to develop an itinerary.

3.6.2.8 Integrates stakeholders and communities

As indicated previously, the top-down approach in destination branding has become outdated. The fact that residents and tourists often harbour different or opposing perceptions of a place has also been discussed. Zenker *et al.* (2017) agree that residents are not only part of the place, but are in fact the people who directly benefit from positive developments and the receivers of any negative social and environmental impacts caused by tourism. Residents are also voters and citizens who legitimise place branding activities. When residents are positive, they will possibly act as place ambassadors.

3.6.2.9 Increases local pride

The way residents talk about the place where they live is a vital aspect of marketing, because consumers have more confidence in the views of friends and acquaintances than in corporate messages (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Day (2005:109) cites Ryan (2002), who states that increased local pride is an outcome of destination branding. Jeuring and Haartsen (2016) agree that residents are seen as essential destination stakeholders, and are increasingly included in the branding process. Newworld Associates (2018) argue that a successful brand will raise loyalty, advocacy, liveability, and community pride.

3.6.2.10 Encourages coordination and consistency

According to Ooi (2010:110), the destination brand pulls the destination offerings together, encourages cooperation between different parties, and stimulates the imagination of prospective visitors and tourism agencies with consistent images.

3.6.2.11 Indicates high quality

Blain *et al.* (2005:330) and Schaar (2013:3) argue that effective destination branding provides consumers with an assurance of quality regarding destination experiences. Singh and Mehraj (2018) point out that value is exhibited by quality and price. Singh and Mehraj (2018) claim that consumers' perception of value is a driver of future intentions. High perceived quality will motivate a visitor to choose a brand over competing products (Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:123). However, Schaar (2013:4) warns that quality is subjective. A person's evaluation of destination quality depends on previous experience as well as on the standard of living at home.

3.6.2.12 Reduces perceived financial risks

Blain *et al.* (2005:330) cite Berry (2000), who postulates that a brand reduces the visitor's perceived financial, social, and security risk when purchasing a service product, which is typically difficult to evaluate before purchasing.

3.6.2.13 Reduces search costs and perceived psychological risk

Blain *et al.* (2005:330) and Schaar (2013:5) conclude that because of significant expenditures associated with travelling, prospective consumers spend significant time

and energy during their choice of destination. Effective branding reduces options and saves time and costs. Effective branding also makes the interpretation of information easier (Day, 2005:108).

3.6.2.14 Saves packaging and communication expenses

A unique, internationally recognisable brand creates scope economies from collective marketing (Apostolakis *et al.*, 2015:205). Furthermore, increased relationships with customers lead to lower sales and service costs (Day, 2005:104).

3.6.2.15 Brands become destination assets

Day (2005:103-105) explains that the process of building a brand entails building an intangible asset for the destination. These assets include the relationship with key external stakeholders and networks. Assets also include increased shareholder value in the following ways:

- There is accelerated cash flow due to increased responsiveness of the market to marketing activity and new products.
- Costs are reduced as a result of co-branding and cooperative marketing.

The last step in the conceptual analysis process, according to Morgan and Yoder (2012:8–13), is to provide empirical referents.

3.7 REFERENTS

Chapter 5 reflects on the empirical referents of this study to demonstrate the occurrence of the concept itself, namely destination branding within the context of the Open Africa Food and Wine Route, and the Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route.

3.8 DESTINATION BRANDING SUMMARISED

Rodgers's (2000) model for analysing a concept was applied in this chapter to analyse destination branding. A tourism destination functions in a highly competitive market and has to find creative ways to position itself as a preferred holiday choice.

Destination branding has its roots in different domains but is widely used by destination marketers as a fast and cohesive tool to promote the destination to potential visitors.

The production side of destination branding includes all branding efforts of the destination managers. The consumers, on the other side, have their own individual construction of the destination (before and after visiting the place). The brand, therefore, lies in the overlap – the congruence – between destination brand production and destination brand consumption. The concept was summarised in Figure 3.3.

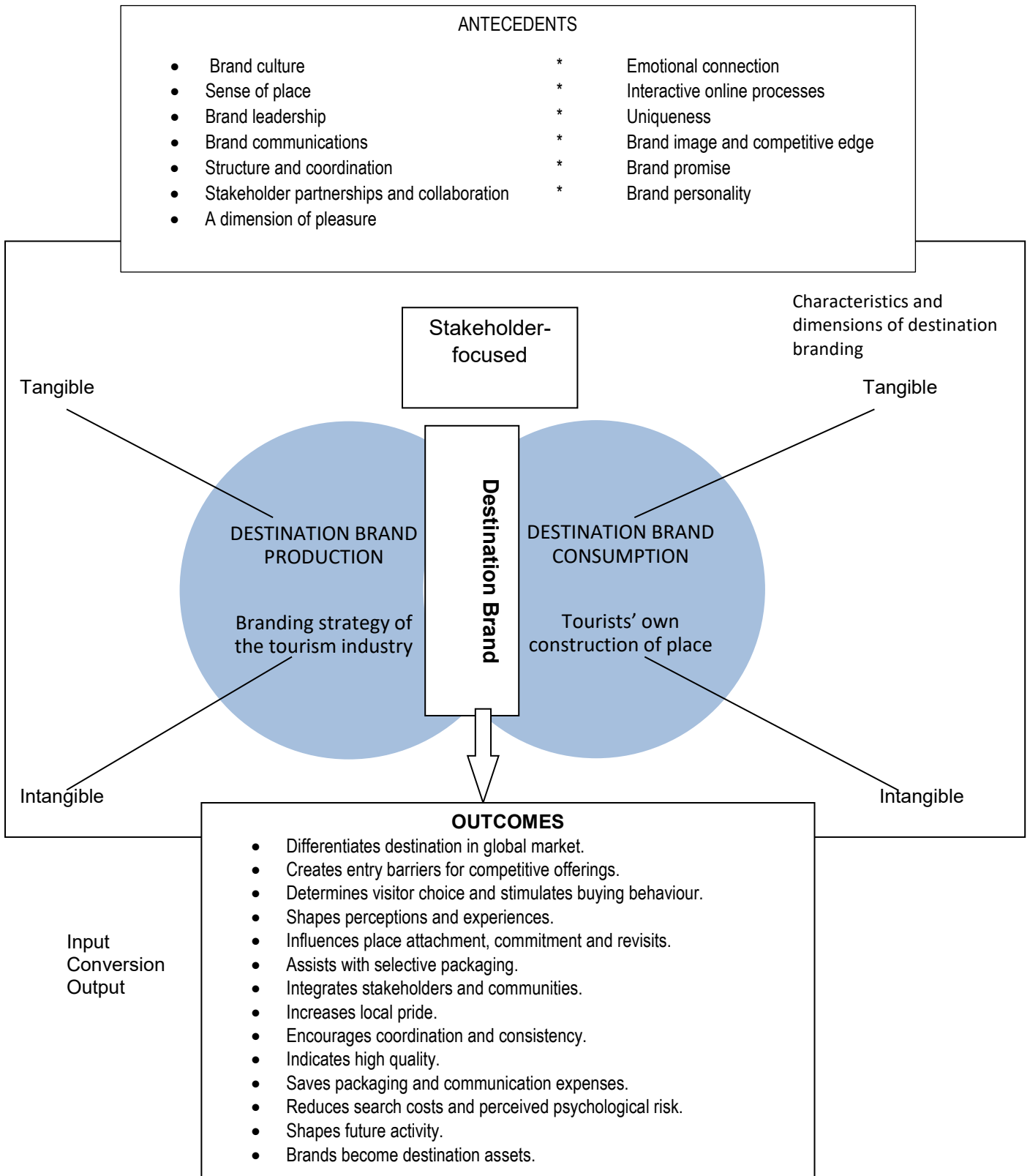


Figure 3.3: Conceptual summary of destination branding

In this chapter it is recognised through a timeline that destination brand management has a close relationship with concepts such as place promotion, place marketing and place branding, and that these concepts converge in topics such as nation branding and regional branding.

The discussion in this chapter also recognises the impact of the "postmodernist self" in potential tourists on holiday choices. It reflects on the importance of both cognitive and affective appeals, and a trade-off between credible brand promises and inspirational brand promises in a working definition of destination branding. Therefore, brand personality is discussed as one of the antecedents of destination branding, not as an alternative for destination branding.

This chapter explains destination branding as a concept, and, in line with the position that destination image is crucial for the success of the destination brand, it indicates points out how an image can be influenced.

Crucial points when reflecting on the characteristics of the concept include that branding is complex, and that image is affected by all tangible and intangible aspects of the service delivery, as well as all the other components of the destination and its stakeholders.

The approach includes, amongst other things, research on existing perceptions, close cooperation with tourism suppliers, and a search for consensus areas between destination brand production and destination brand consumption.

Empirical answers to how the guest house can contribute to the destination image and the factors influencing people's perceptions of destinations will be discussed when the proposed interviews with guest house owners and residents are dealt with.

The content generated through the conceptual analysis will form the framework for the presentation of the empirical results in Chapter 5. In the next chapter the guest house industry, as part of tourism marketing, will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4:

CONTEXTUALISING THE GUEST HOUSE BUSINESS AS PART OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The significance of tourism for the South African economy has been discussed in Chapter 1. It was highlighted that the different tourist destinations are in intense competition for business and have realised the importance of destination branding for a competitive advantage (Hankinson, 2007:241; Van Meer, 2010:7; Kotler & Armstrong, 2016:233). The Northern Cape has tapped into the "Open Africa" tourist route project by which attractions, accommodation, restaurants, tour operators, guides, and artisans are clustered into branded routes with the aim to promote travel to a specific area (Open Africa, [s.a.]a).

The tourism industry on a tourism route typically includes four elements, namely attractions, entertainment, accommodation, and transport (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:4). This study focused on the accommodation sector and investigates the role of the guest house industry in creating a destination brand. This chapter addresses Research Objective 2 of the study. It presents a discussion on the nature, role, and scope of the commercial accommodation sector in tourism marketing and specifically the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune Route as tourism destinations in the Northern Cape as this study focused on these two routes. The chapter provides the background for the following research questions:

- What is the context in which destination branding is explored in this study?
- Which guidelines can be recommended to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry?

The chapter commences with a historical perspective on tourism and accommodation to contextualise the modern hospitality industry.

4.2 HISTORY OF TOURISM

Tourism activities can be traced back to 4 000 BC in Sumerian times (Bennet & Strydom, 2012:1), but it was only after World War II that rapid development commenced in the modern world. Lubbe (2003:19) explains that World War II affected tourism through extensive domestic travel by armed forces who saw more of their own country and foreign countries. Communication and transportation – particularly railways – developed because of the war.

Lubbe (2003:15-16) mentions some conditions that affected travel in earlier times and refers to the similarities between tourism of that time and tourism in South Africa today. Any country needs peace, stability and prosperity for tourism to flourish.

Travel during the time of the Roman Empire had been stimulated by the availability of time, money, road infrastructure, safety, the emergence of guides and guidebooks, as well as inns along main routes and main centres. Lubbe (2003:15) regards events such as the great ancient Roman and Greece festivals as the "greatest incentive to travel". Even during that time, people let out rooms in their private homes, and visitors bought souvenirs. When the Roman Empire disintegrated, the Dark Ages followed, and a shrinking wealthy class, roads that deteriorated, and robbers that plagued the countryside had a negative effect on travel. The Dark Ages (from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century until the 10th century CE) was also known for its "terrible inns". However, pilgrims continued to travel to visit holy sites and used written travel guides containing information on directions, dangers, difficulties and accommodation.

The Middle Ages in Europe (from the 10th century until the Renaissance) were characterised by the medieval Catholic Church with its enormous power, influence and wealth, as well as the Crusades (mostly disastrous military travels to repossess Christian shrines of the Holy Land from the Moslems). The Vikings and the Normans also travelled throughout the Western world during the Middle Ages, and the Arabs travelled extensively for business, pilgrimages, and trade. Lubbe (2003:16) describes accommodation at this time as "usually filthy".

The medieval Catholic monasteries were forced by their rule to supply accommodation and food to travellers (Lubbe, 2003:16). Eventually, demand for overnight stay in the

religious houses became too great and the middle classes were subsequently sent to wine shops, inns and taverns, while the poor were still accommodated in monasteries and hospices run by the church.

The Renaissance sparked a period of increased freedom, creativity, a renewed appreciation of music, art and architecture, and the rebirth of ancient learning and literature. These aspects stimulated journeys of discovery and travel (Lubbe, 2003:17).

Education and training in tourism, though, have not experienced the same growth. Especially in southern Africa, tourism-related courses have only developed since the 1970s, and Bennet and Strydom (2012:1) predict there is still a long way to go in academic development.

4.2.1 Sub-Saharan travel in ancient times

Traces of pre-colonial travel in sub-Saharan Africa in ancient times can be found in language (idioms, proverbs and wise sayings that refer to visitors, travellers and sojourners). Reasons for travel included trading, religion, politics and family (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:15–16).

4.2.2 Sub-Saharan and South African travel since the 1700s

During the 1700s and 1800s, people travelled to South Africa for exploration, zoology, botany, geographical expeditions, anthropological studies, missionary journeys, and for the Dutch East India Company. They were accommodated on mission stations, in small towns and on farms (Lubbe, 2003:26).

According to Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:16), William John Burchell and David Livingstone came to Africa in the late 1800s as the first European explorers. Burchell wrote the book *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* about his travels in South Africa between 1810 and 1815. Livingstone came to Africa to discover the source of the Nile, and although he did not accomplish his dream, he explored southern and central Africa extensively and was the first European to see Mosi-oa-Tunya (Victoria Falls).

World War II, as mentioned earlier, had a great influence on tourism worldwide. South Africa was no exception. According to Lubbe (2003:20), the war was responsible for more efficient transport networks and faster, safer, heavier and longer trains.

During the 19th century, South Africa became known for "health tourism". Matjiesfontein was established as a health resort for persons with lung problems. The South African Railways started a publicity department in 1906 with a London office where South Africa was marketed as a health resort among the English aristocracy (Lubbe, 2003:26).

Farming communities went on holiday by ox-wagon – stimulating domestic tourism – and British civil servants working in South Africa took holidays in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. When some British civil servants were sent to administer the Griquas in Transkei, 99-year leases with the chiefs were arranged by the British government, and holiday cottages were built. Tourist attractions at that time included the Cango Caves (opened in 1891), the Port Elizabeth Snake Park (opened in 1906), and some museums. Wilderness, near Knysna, has been a favourite honeymoon destination since the 1900s. The Kruger National Park was established in 1926, and more game parks were formed in the 1930s (Lubbe, 2003:26–27).

The Tourism Department of the South African Railways merged with the Publicity and Travel Department of the South African Railways and Harbours in 1930 to become the sole tourism marketing body. They aimed to arrange itineraries and all-inclusive tours. SATOUR (the South African Tourist Corporation) was established in 1947 – also with the aim of promoting South Africa as a tourism destination. The South African government established the Department of Tourism in 1963, which by 1966 had full responsibility to promote tourism within the country (Lubbe, 2003:27).

4.2.3 Travel in South Africa in modern times

The tourism branch of the Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry merged with SATOUR and the Hotel Board to form South African Tourism on 1 October 1983. Apartheid laws gave rise to international boycotts and sanctions, slowing down the growth of tourism in South Africa. There were limited places available to the previously disadvantaged, and "non-Europeans" were turned away from hotel accommodation, restaurants and attractions (Lubbe, 2003:27).

With the democratisation of South Africa, an affluent black market emerged, accompanied by a rise in domestic and international travel in that market. The South African government developed programmes and initiatives to encourage citizens to travel and to become involved in the industry as product owners and employees. The White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa sparked various initiatives such as Local Economic Development, Spatial Development Initiatives, Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa, Local Agenda 21 and ST-EP, an acronym for Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:253–263).

It is obvious, therefore, that politics have largely influenced tourism in South Africa. The (1996?) White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa was an influential attempt of the new democratic government to transform the industry. This document identified the potential of tourism development in South Africa and provided a policy framework with guidelines for the development of the tourism industry.

The Government of South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism White Paper (1996:17) declared that "a new tourism" had been required to stimulate other sectors of the economy, create opportunities for the previously neglected groups, to be kind to the environment, and to "bring peace, prosperity, and enjoyment for all South Africans". The White Paper identified "Responsible tourism" as the most appropriate concept for the development of tourism in South Africa.

Travellers need a place to stay overnight, and an increase (or decline) in travel demand will affect accommodation en route or at the destination. Accommodation is the base from which tourists explore the destination and it plays a crucial role in tourism (Keyser, 2009:102). Ramukumba and Ferreira (2016:2) describe tourism accommodation as "an essential support facility in the destination regions".

4.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACCOMMODATION INDUSTRY

With rising tourism consciousness in the first half of the 20th century, the hotel industry attracted much attention. Increased car ownership in the 1920s created a need for hotels along the road and not necessarily near railway stations. South Africa boasted

1 203 licensed hotels in 1935 – most of them located in the Cape Province. One of the suggestions to address the hospitality demand was to build a chain of hotels in strategic areas such as Cape Town, the Garden Route, Port St Johns and near the Kruger National Park. Lubbe (2003:27) also refers to a suggestion of Norval (1936) that attention should be given to a "guest-house system" and to use rondavels at some resorts. The Old Residency in Haenertsburg is evidence that guest houses existed in the early 1900s. Lubbe (2003:28) reports on the low standard of hotels in the early 1900s and points out that the Hotel Board was eventually created in 1965 to improve standards and to make funds available for the establishment of new hotels and the improvement of existing establishments. Although lack of funds hindered the establishment of new hotels, the star-grading system played a substantial role in improving standards.

Guest houses started to grow in numbers in the late 1970s as the local equivalent of the European pension or boarding house (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:22–23). Travellers' needs were also changing, and people preferred the homeliness of the guest house concept. Furthermore, guest houses became an option for family holidays as hotels became too expensive. Slabbert and Saayman (2003:24) report that the growth rate of urban establishments has outgrown rural establishments since 1990. Open Africa, a social enterprise under the patronage of Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa (NGO Pulse, 2016), came up with a solution for entrepreneurs in rural areas to make money. By establishing rural tourism routes that offer visitors authentic experiences, income and jobs are created for local people (Givengain, s.a.).

4.3.1 Focusing on two Northern Cape tourism routes

Open Africa, according to Givengain (s.a.), aims at economic and social equality across rural Africa through job creation, as well as at encouraging conservation by teaching communities to value their environment as a wealth creator. According to NGO Pulse (2016), the Open Africa website markets 63 self-drive travel routes across

six countries. Two Open Africa tourism routes in the Northern Cape were included in the study.

4.3.1.1 Open Africa Kokerboom Food and Wine Route

The Kokerboom Food and Wine Route meanders through an arid and rugged part of the Northern Cape Province, offering visitors a cultural and culinary experience. Towns along the route include Upington, Keimoes, Kanoneiland, Marchand, Augrabies, Riemvasmaak and Kenhardt (www.SA-Venues.com, s.a.; Experience Northern Cape, 2017).

The route was named after the quiver tree (Afrikaans: *kokerboom*) – a unique tree synonymous with the area (Open Africa, [s.a.]b). The Orange River, according to Experience Northern Cape (2017) and Pathfinda (2017), was once called “God's gift to the Southern African thirst land”, because it brought life to this area – so much so that ten per cent of South Africa's vineyards are situated in this desert area. The green belt of cultivation amidst a desert rock landscape and rolling sand dunes has caused this area to be labelled "The Green Kalahari". According to Arid Experiences (s.a.) the route is also home to fast-growing farm-based industries involving raisins, peaches, apricots, plums, pecan nuts, citrus and dates. Attractions along the way include kilometres of vineyards, the Tierberg Viewpoint, the Augrabies Falls, game drives, hot springs, hot air ballooning, river rafting, 4x4 trips, hiking, bird watching, sampling local delicacies and wines, brandy-making, arts and crafts, farm stalls, a quiver tree nursery, opportunities to touch the unique quiver trees, Nama cultural engagement, mountain biking, and even taking donkey cart rides. The hospitality of the people of this area is also marketed as an attraction. The Green Kalahari Canoe Marathon and the TransAugrabies Mountain Bike Stage Race are two sports events that take place on the route (Experience Northern Cape (2017); Arid Experiences (s.a.)).

Accommodation establishments along the route, according to Open Africa ([s.a.]b), are the following: Kalahari Gateway Hotel and Conference Centre, De Oude Herberg Country Lodge, The Falls Guest House, Riemvasmaak Eco-Tourism Project (Hot Springs), Aan't Kanaal B&B, Kambro-Kind Guest House, Aloe View Guest House, Ikaia River Lodge, Kalahari River & Safari Co., De Werf Lodge,

Accommodation, Wedding, Conference Venue & Wellness Spa, Akkerboom Guest House, Belurana River Manor, Dundi Lodge, Elma's Accommodation, Lake Grappa Guest Farm and Ski School, Kalahari Water Holiday & Adventure Farm, Oranjerus Resort, TKabies Camping & Self-Catering, The Overlook Guest House, Ou Skool Guest House, and Vergelegen Guest House, Restaurant, Coffee Shoppe, and Cocktail Lounge.

4.3.1.2 Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route

The Kalahari is synonymous with undulating red dunes, lions, herds of gemsbok, springbok, large weaver nests, camel thorn trees, endless horizons, and starry skies. The Kalahari is known for its friendly people and warm hospitality and is marketed as a place to relax and to rejuvenate the soul. The Kalahari Red Dune Route, an Open Africa tourism route between Upington and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, aims to showcase typical Kalahari adventure and customs such as dune boarding, camel riding, 4x4 trailing, game drives, horse-riding, hunting, bird watching, regional customs, and folklore, as well as traditional cuisine, picnics on sand dunes and campfire stories (Mccarthy4x4, 2014; NorthernCape Info, [s.a.]a).

Main attractions on the route include the 3.7-million hectare Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, known for the black-maned lion, different large antelope species, and carnivores such as cheetah, hyena and leopard. The Kalahari Trails Meerkat Sanctuary is a 500 ha private reserve situated 35 km south of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, hosting different game species. Tradition-inspired souvenirs can be bought from Khomani San crafters. Sisen is the name of the project initiated shortly after the Khomani San moved back to their ancestral land in the Kalahari during 1999. All Sisen crafts are hand-made from desert materials such as wood, bone, horn, quills, seeds, animal skin and ostrich egg shells.

Three annual events take place on the route: The Deserts Walk/Woestyntrap is a three-day cycling event on the R360 between Askham and Upington. The nights are spent in tents on a salt pan, at an oasis, and on a game farm. Kalahari Desert Festival is hosted by the Khomani San and the Mier community and showcases traditional

dance, music and diversity. The Askham sports day (Afrikaans: *Boeresport*) is held at the Molopo Kalahari Lodge.

Accommodation along the route includes Witdraai Bush Camp, !Xaus Lodge, Rooipan Guest House & Self-Catering, Inkbospan Guest Farm, Vischgat Game Farm, Kalahari Guest House, Camping & Farmstall, Erin Game Ranch/Khomani San, Zoutpanputs, Duinebesie Self-Catering Accommodation, Klipkolk Lodge, Loch Broom Paradys Lodge & Game Reserve, Kgalagadi Lodge, Kalahari Trails Accommodation, Askham Chalets, Kalahari Info & Tented Camp, Kalahari Camelthorn Caravan Park/B&B, Loch Maree Guest Farm & Field Camp, Boesmansrus Grass Huts, Askham Adventure Guest House, Rooiduin Guest Farm, Kalahari Sands Guest House, Murray Guest Farm, Molopo Kalahari Lodge, and Askham Post Office Guest House (Open Africa, [s.a.]a).

From the lists of accommodation establishments on the two routes it is clear that the tourist accommodation business has been eagerly seized as a creator of income.

4.4 TOURIST ACCOMMODATION AS BUSINESS

Many guest houses are not successful because owners have not realised that their establishments are actually businesses which should be run according to standard business principles and requirements such as strategic planning, marketing planning, financial planning, operational planning, human resources planning and food service planning (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:36).

4.4.1 Business principles for tourist accommodation

Long hours and shift work are often to be blamed for job stress and even burnout (Sampson & Akyeampong, 2014:2; Hurley, 2015; Koc & Bozkurt, 2017). Most components of the tourism industry are labour intensive and require irregular working hours. Tourism takes place during regular working days, after hours, and during school holidays, public holidays and weekends. Guests are apt to check in at late hours or leave early in the morning, thus requiring an early breakfast or check-out services.

Therefore the personal situation of a prospective guest house owner (manager) must be conducive to the venture (Henning, 2008:7).

Another aspect that should be attended to when turning accommodation into a business is the legal requirements.

4.4.1.1 Legal requirements for operating a guest house

Legal requirements will change from time to time, and a prospective guest house owner should consult a town planning professional, as well as the local authority (Building Control/Town Planning Department), for legal and statutory requirements. A registered town planning professional should provide information on the exact process, particular to the relevant municipality, and should point out potential risks in the legal process (Fourie, 2015).

Each local authority will also have its unique land use management system with land use maps, indicating different zones on individual properties, with each zone offering a particular set of land use rights (Fourie, 2015). Urban areas are made up of a commercial zone surrounded by residential and industrial areas. The urban cluster tends to be surrounded by a vast agricultural zone. Land use matters are no longer only regulated by municipalities in towns. These days, a guest house development in the agricultural zone of the municipality may also be a matter of municipal concern. The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) of a municipality guides the future development of the urban cluster and gives direction to the expansion of each particular land use category.

Some SDFs will designate areas of preference for guest house development. These areas will probably be named tourism or hospitality corridors. The SDF will point out whether rezoning or any other relevant land-use change application is necessary. Usually, small B&B establishments with two or fewer bedrooms will not have to apply for rezoning.

All guest houses – even B&Bs with fewer than three rooms – should apply for registration at the local municipality, in which case development fees will be payable.

Properties older than 60 years require a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency for structural changes. Some developments, especially near water bodies, may require an environmental impact assessment. Sufficient parking provision plays a significant role in the application for a guest house, especially for establishments with conference facilities. Plans for renewable energy, such as solar installations, may improve the chance for more rooms during the application process (Fourie, 2015).

Apart from municipal consent, a guest house needs the following:

- A liquor licence for selling alcohol;
- Payment of business levies and taxes (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:25);
- A fire safety certificate;
- A certificate of compliance for food preparation from the Health Department;
- Permission to put up a sign from the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) in the case of national roads;
- A licence for operating a public transport service if the service is offered for payment;
- Television and satellite licences;
- A SAMRO licence to play music using radio, television or CD/DVD player;
- Compliance with the non-smoking laws;
- Compliance with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act as well as the Labour Relations Act (Henning, 2008:193–197).

Schroeder (2017c:35) highlights the importance of a disclaimer board. It should contain the words “Enter at own risk” and is intended to protect the owner against liability claims in the event of accidents, bodily injuries, damage to or theft of guests’ belongings when left unattended, damage to or theft of guests’ vehicles; or bodily harm as a result of food and drink consumed on the premises.

Guest houses on farms – often part of tourism routes – are usually part of agritourism projects with their own legal requirements. As with standard guest houses, the new agritourism business should be registered for income tax, value-added tax, Unemployment Insurance Fund, Compensation for Occupational Injuries and

Diseases, and PAYE (pay-as-you-earn. Provision should also be made for adequate liability coverage.

4.4.1.2 Voluntary membership and criteria

Apart from compulsory requirements, there are various voluntary membership choices.

4.4.1.2.1 Insurance

A personal domestic insurance policy will not cover the house owner when the property is no longer a purely private residence. Since a disaster or personal claim (guest house food and beverages causing illness, guests getting hurt on the premises, theft or damage to guests' belongings taking place on the property) can result in a business closing down, no guest house owner can afford not to have proper insurance, including liability insurance, contents insurance and loss of revenue insurance (Henning, 2008:192). Esterhuyzen (2015) adds fidelity cover (cover against fraudulent staff members) and cash cover if cash is handled on the premises.

Esterhuyzen (2015) notes that certain insurance companies will accept claims for medical expenses of guests and staff members lodged against the owner's personal domestic insurance company if the owner is still living in the house and there are fewer than three guest rooms. The same applies to damage to the personal belongings of guests and staff members. Optional coverage, such as coverage for trading stock (linen, towels, food, beverages and soap products) and trauma coverage for guests, can be added to the basic policy.

A "Guest House" policy is required for guest houses with 3-19 rooms and a "Tourism Policy" for 20 and more rooms.

4.4.1.2.2 Industry organisations

Membership of a local association (such as the local Guest House Association) provides credibility and will help with networking and referrals (De Bruin, 2017).

4.4.1.2.3 TGCSA grading

According to Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (2013), the TGCSA grades guest houses according to a one- to five-star system (see 4.7.5).

The strategic planning process mentioned above will result in a strategic plan.

4.4.1.3 Strategic planning

Strategic planning is about strategies and action plans to take the guest house to the point where the guest house owner wants his or her business to be. The strategic plan itself is preferably a written document containing the operational plan, human resources plan, financial plan, and marketing plan. Aims, policies, and action plans included in the strategic plan will give direction to where the guest house aspires to go (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:36).

Strategic planning, according to Slabbert and Saayman (2003: 50–51), is a process with the following steps:

- The setting of overall business objectives
- The setting of a vision; the inspiration that will guide decisions and actions. A clear vision statement, with mission and values, will enable staff to make better decisions because it informs them about what is central to the beliefs of the business. The vision should be communicated to all levels of staff so that everyone will commit to it;
- A mission statement;
- A business philosophy and ethics;
- A SWOT analysis to point out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the business. It is also useful to identify strategic issues such as which opportunities should be a top priority, or how internal weaknesses can be corrected. Strengths and weaknesses are based upon internal factors in the business (reputation, location, employees, facilities), while opportunities and threats relate to the external environment (weather conditions, competition, economic conditions, political factors – factors that are not controlled by the business). The PESTLE factors are sometimes applied to guide management in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:61–65; PESTLEANALYSIS, 2015). PESTLE is an acronym for political

factors, economic factors, socio-cultural factors, technological factors, legal factors, environmental factors. Examples in the guest house industry of factors outside the control of the owner/manager and which may have an impact on the success of the enterprise include declining economic conditions, international events that might bring about new business opportunities, changes in legislation, such as rezoning requirements, tax changes that might affect profitability, new technological developments and trends which the manager have to keep up with, and crime (Henning & Willemse, 1999:5);

- Identification of strategic issues and problems;
- Development of business strategies; the translation of the vision into goals and actions, which in turn becomes the criteria for performance measurement, control, and coordination (Finch, 2010:134).
- Managerial strategies;
- Operational strategies.

4.4.1.4 Marketing planning

GKTODAY (2017) describes marketing planning as a comprehensive blueprint containing the organisation's overall marketing efforts. The marketing strategy (used to increase sales) flows from marketing planning. GKTODAY (2017) furthermore explains marketing planning as a continuous process that includes marketing objectives, marketing programmes, policies, and procedures based on marketing activities such as marketing research, sales forecasting, product planning, product development, pricing, promotion, physical distribution, and after-sale services.

4.4.1.4.1 Competition in the area

Research regarding competition in the area will be one of many marketing activities that form part of the plan. An inventory of all guest houses and hotels in the area will determine the most vigorous competition, their markets, their rates, unique facilities offered by them, and the quality of service and accommodation offered. It will also point out the need for another guest house in the area and unique services and facilities to offer for a competitive advantage. Information sources are businesses in

the area, tourism organisations, local tourist information offices, and existing guest houses in the area (Henning & Willemse, 1999:12).

4.4.1.4.2 Determining target markets

It is not advisable – nor possible – to be everything to everybody; therefore, a niche market must be determined. The guest house owner must know the target market (potential guests) before an attempt is made to satisfy their needs. A profile of the target market will determine how the guest house should be set up, the level of service and luxury, rates, start-up capital needed, and the marketing strategy.

Tucker and Lynch (2005:13) argue that because the host-guest relationship is vital for the product experience at small establishments, a psychographic matching between hosts and guests may enhance the quality of the experience of both parties. Airbnb shares this view. Airbnb's most crucial trust mechanism, according to Guttentag (2015:1195), is the feature allowing hosts and guests to post public reviews about one another. The study of Tucker and Lynch (2005:29) suggests that tourism boards and grading councils use a formal process of lifestyle segmentation to match guests with suitable potential hosts.

4.4.1.4.3 Competitions

An award in a local or national accommodation competition, such as the AA Travel Guides Awards programme (Bizcommunity, 2011), SA Tourism Lilizela Award (Lilizela Tourism Awards, 2017), or the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence (Tripadvisor, 2017) might bring favourable publicity and can be used in the marketing campaign (Henning, 2008:183).

4.4.1.5 Financial planning

Financial planning involves the allocation and controlling of money during every phase in the process of service provision. Finding a source of funding and planning to generate an income form part of financial planning (Venter, 2014:32). Financial management includes a viability study, a business plan, the budget, and financial control.

4.4.1.6 Operational planning

Operational planning, according to Venter (2014:32), is a subsection of the strategic plan. It describes short-term ways to achieve company goals.

4.4.1.7 Human resources planning

Guest houses function in a highly competitive market, and the human resource (HR) element can provide a competitive edge due to the service nature of the guest house product (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:79).

According to a study by Kock and Strydom (2014:128), the hospitality industry requirements are for employees with a positive attitude, staff with the ability to deal effectively with customers, who can maintain professional standards, and who are service-orientated. Adaptability, flexibility, management/technical skills, and people skills are other essential qualities. Employees are required to satisfy the needs of customers but also to be productive in their jobs.

Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng (2010:402) specifically refer to the importance of coordinating HR and marketing to implement internal branding (see 4.4.1.7.1). HR represents the “people” component in the destination marketing mix and is, therefore, very relevant to this study. HR planning should indicate the skills needed to achieve strategic goals. HR aspects needing attention, according to Slabbert and Saayman (2003:80–85), include the following:

- Legal aspects such as unemployment insurance, staff contracts, and compensation for occupational injuries and diseases;
- Recruitment (application forms, following up on references, and interviews);
- Training and work experience;
- Performance appraisal (to measure and evaluate employees against a standard of performance based on strategic aims).

Mac Minn (2014) emphasises the importance of training and staff development. This author believes that employees can be uplifted, and that the effectiveness of the business can be improved through skills development. Skills required in the workplace

might include verbal/written communication skills, listening skills, computer literacy, cooking skills, driving skills, customer service, management skills, and administration skills. Mac Minn (2014) further states that employee performance should be monitored through performance appraisal, self-evaluation, supervisor evaluation, and evaluation by co-workers. When there are gaps in employee performance, a decision should be made regarding the skills needed to fill such gaps. Reasons for the performance gap should be specified. Possible reasons may include changed job specifications, lack of skills/knowledge, lack of motivation, or new/updated industry skills. Management then decides on the type of training, such as on-the-job training, short courses, or full-time study. Mac Minn (2014) recommends that guest houses incorporate staff motivation and incentive schemes, discipline staff when necessary, and take termination steps when needed.

Part of the staff development process should be to set goals for each employee to give them insight into the business and how they fit into it. Mac Minn (2014) argues that goals will increase performance and team spirit, create accountability (everybody knows what they are responsible for and how performance is going to be measured), and keep staff members focused. This should be part of the internal branding process (see 4.4.1.7.1).

The inherent nature of the accommodation business (tight schedules, long hours, repetitive duties) contributes to chronic stress in the workplace and Hurley (2015) suggests the following to reduce hospitality industry burnout:

- Ensure open communication with staff members.
- Provide adequate staffing.
- Create an environment for employees to have control over their work and be supportive of efforts made.
- Recognise or reward exceptional accomplishments and contributions.
- Encourage a positive work environment.

Hurley's (2015) suggestions for reducing burnout are also applicable to the internal branding process.

4.4.1.7.1 Internal branding

While branding is a form of identity a company displays to the outside world, internal branding involves the employees' connection to the company's external brand. It boils down to encouraging the whole staff to represent the company and its values as "brand ambassadors" (Kunsmann, 2019). Foster *et al.* (2010:402) note that branding literature has widely highlighted the influences of staff on the brand perceptions of existing and potential customers through their role in delivering both functional and emotional brand values, as each service encounter may potentially contribute to the corporate brand experience.

Kunsmann (2019) proposes that employees should feel connected to their work, company, and mission of the brand and suggests the following actions:

- Define the mission and brand values of the business, and ensure that employees understand them and believe in them. The mission and brand values should offer the employees more reason than a "paycheck" to work for the business.
- Include employees in the internal branding development by requesting feedback, opinions and insights about the internal brand and work culture.
- Invest in a personalised employee experience by knowing their goals, interests and values.
- Adopt software for employees to access company information and news.
- Appreciate and reward highly engaged employees. Kunsmann (2019) proposes non-cash incentives, as money is not a guaranteed motivator for developing long-term brand ambassadors. The author furthermore suggests that highlights should be shared with the rest of the employees as motivation to become involved.

4.4.1.8 Food service planning

The food experience at a guest house should exceed expectations and contribute to a memorable experience without sacrificing profitability (see 5.3.1.2.5.1). Kock (2012:111) mentions several management functions in guest house food service planning, namely recipe development, standardised recipe formulation, product

specifications (quality, size, amount), purchasing of products, preparation, staff skills, schedules, and working hours, as well as profit margins. Actions included in the functions mentioned are searching for the correct equipment to perform the service, and managing stock levels, hygiene and safety (Kokt, 2012:117–121).

A variety of options characterises tourist accommodation. In most cases, the level of comfort and luxury depends on the specific type of accommodation.

4.5 DIFFERENT TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

The hospitality industry consists of three parts: food services, accommodation, and gaming. The accommodation sector is divided into various lodging options: hotels, motels, boatels, inns, resorts, game lodges, conference centres, casinos, timeshare hotels/resorts/parks, condominiums, cottages, self-catering flats, country houses, guest farms, B&Bs, guest houses, back-packers, youth hostels, tents, camping grounds, caravan parks – even cruise ships (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:76; Keyser, 2009:101).

Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:78) identified the following criteria according to which tourists select their preferred accommodation:

- Location – Guests would like to stay close to where they are going to spend most of their time.
- Facilities – Although there is a correlation between price and range of facilities, facilities offered at an establishment will play a significant role in accommodation choice. Holiday resorts, known for a wide variety of facilities (such as restaurants, tennis courts, pools, horse riding and walking trails), are famous for family holidays. A guest on a business trip might prefer a hotel that offers secretarial services and private meeting facilities.
- Services – Room service, laundry services, Internet access and babysitting services might influence the choice of accommodation type.
- Price – Prices are based on factors such as the location of the establishment, and the range of facilities and services. Tourists expect value for money.

- Image – Image is the picture in the tourist's mind; the result of marketing, physical presentation, and the expectations created by the star grading status of the specific establishment. The essence of this study relates to this aspect.

The study was focused on the guest house, B&B, country house category because most of the accommodation offered on the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route fall within this category. Both routes include residential tourist accommodation (in towns and villages along the routes) as well as rural accommodation.

4.5.1 Guest house, bed and breakfast, country house

The TGCSA puts country houses, B&Bs and guest houses in one category and defines these establishments as indicated in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Definitions and summary of TGSA requirements for the guest house, bed and breakfast and country house category

TYPE	DEFINITION	REQUIREMENTS
COUNTRY HOUSE	An existing home, renovated home, or building specifically designed as a residential dwelling providing overnight accommodation, with public areas for the exclusive use of its guests. It is located in natural, peaceful surroundings such as a nature reserve, forest, or lake.	<p>Scenic or natural vistas, e.g., water view, rural outlook, mountain view, natural bush setting.</p> <p>Separate living areas for host/manager and guests if accommodated in the same building.</p> <p>The host/manager must be contactable 24 hours per day, seven days per week.</p> <p>The host must be within a 10-minute drive from the property to check guests in/out.</p> <p>Daily cleaning services included in tariffs.</p> <p>Shared facilities must be a minimum of a guest dining room and lounge and must be for the exclusive use of guests.</p> <p>Each room must have the exclusive use of an own bathroom – preferably en suite.</p> <p>Meals and beverages must be provided and may/may not be prepared on the property.</p> <p>Servicing of rooms (linen/towel changes, removal of rubbish and cleaning) must take place daily.</p>

GUEST HOUSE	An existing home, renovated home, or building specifically designed as a residential dwelling providing overnight accommodation, with more than three rooms and public areas for the exclusive use of guests.	<p>Separate living areas for host/manager and guests if accommodated in the same building. The host/manager must be contactable 24 hours per day, seven days per week.</p> <p>The host must be within a 10-minute drive from the property to check guests in/out. Daily cleaning services included in tariffs. Shared facilities must be a minimum of a guest dining room and lounge and must be for the exclusive use of guests. Each room must have the exclusive use of an own bathroom – preferably en suite. Meals and beverages must be provided and may/may not be prepared on the property. Servicing of rooms (linen/towel changes, removal of rubbish and cleaning) must take place daily.</p>
BED AND BREAKFAST (B&B)	<p>More informal accommodation with limited services provided in a private home with the owner/manager living in the house or on the property. Breakfast must be served. Each room must have the exclusive use of an own bathroom – preferably en suite. Guests and host/family share public areas.</p>	Host/staff member must live in the house or on the property.

It would be incomplete to discuss accommodation along the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and Kalahari Red Dune Route without mentioning agritourism and the concept of homestay accommodation because most guest houses on the two routes are situated on farms. Airbnb, as a rapidly growing booking agent worldwide, is also discussed.

4.5.2 Farm accommodation and agritourism

Farm tourism, also known as agritourism or agrotourism, is a special interest form of rural tourism (Ingram, 2002:1; Coomber & Lim, s.a.:2) which embraces visits to rural areas for recreational experiences and participation in activities, attractions, and events not associated with urban areas (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014:95).

Agritourism activities in South Africa mostly centre on guest houses and self-catering accommodation, with different farm activities to offer (Schroeder, 2017a:37). Agritourism offers the opportunity to turn dilapidated buildings, such as old milking sheds and barns, into tourist accommodation (Uys, 2016:40). African Vineyard, for example, is a four-star guest house on a farm along the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route. All the luxury rooms, honeymoon suites, a spa, conference facilities, and the wedding venue were established in old barns and store rooms on the premises (De Bruin, 2017).

Because a successful farmer does not necessarily have the qualities of a capable agritourism host, it is necessary to do a critical evaluation of personality type before considering the development of farm tourism. Schroeder (2017b:42) suggests that the entrepreneur should be convinced that he or she would like to entertain guests, be able to create a warm and inviting atmosphere for visitors, be sure the new venture on the farm is manageable, and be willing to work on weekends and public holidays when people are most likely to visit the farm. A new business model that includes recruiting, training, managing staff and acquiring new skills, is therefore needed. Staff would need to have traditional hosting skills, but all farm employees will also have to be friendly and knowledgeable about the farm and its production practices. According to Schroeder (2017b:43), feasibility depends on factors such as whether the property is owned or rented, whether it offers unique features or scenery, whether there are potential hazards for visitors (dangerous implements or equipment, chemicals, or livestock) and whether there are attractions in the vicinity that could complement the offering on the farm.

Taylor (2016:30) believes that agritourism is "desperately needed in South Africa" because it is a way to familiarise South Africans with the beauty of their country, and it generates income and empowers rural communities. Local cuisine is a significant

part of the farm tourism experience, and the offering frequently includes basic accommodation or camping facilities.

Ingram (2002:4–11) claims that guests experience the countryside as both uplifting and peaceful and as a cure for the stresses of a busy lifestyle. Guests view farm holidays as a way to enhance family unity, a chance to expose their children to animal life and farm activities, and a way to build happy memories. They perceive country people as friendly and welcoming towards visitors.

Farms in the United States, Canada and Europe offer guests the opportunity to become involved in farm activities, such as collecting eggs and feeding livestock, in addition to offering accommodation and leisure activities. Schroeder (2017a:37) comments that this trend has not taken off in South Africa yet but it can be seen as an opportunity to offer the tourist more than simply accommodation on the farm.

4.5.3 Homestay accommodation

Homestays, an alternative form of accommodation featuring basic standards, offers tourists the opportunity to stay with a host family in a rural community. Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng (2015:41) refer to "growing social demand for experiences that symbolise a nostalgic vision of an idyllic rural past". Homestay accommodation differs from B&Bs in the sense that the guests typically participate in the daily activities of the host – allowing the guest to learn something about the daily lives of the local people (Agyeiwaah, 2013:408; Kontogeorgopoulos *et al.*, 2015:31–32; Oguchaa, Riungub, Kiamaa & Mukolwe, 2015:279). There are a few challenges. Kontogeorgopoulos *et al.* (2015:41–43) identify authenticity problems arising when hosts make tourist-friendly modifications, as well as an over-dependence on tourism while abandoning agriculture.

Lynch (2000:112) highlights the importance of social relationships in the small hospitality enterprise and refers to these relationships as networking. Lynch (2000:112) believes that cooperation, support, training interventions, and quality of small and micro enterprises can be influenced by informal leaders in a network. This

is probably achieved by the Open Africa Tourist Routes, as every "route" can be regarded as a network of social relationships.

4.5.4 Airbnb

Airbnb is the most extensive networked accommodation service and has surpassed the number of beds offered by major hotel chains (Oskam & Boswijk, 2016:22). Airbnb was founded in 2008 and served as a marketplace for people to advertise or book unique accommodation around the world from a mobile phone, tablet, or online. Airbnb allows the host to help a traveller decide whether the offerings are a good fit for the potential guest's specific needs by providing detailed information and providing guests the opportunity to rate the accuracy of information provided (Airbnb Company, s.a.).

Guttentag (2015:1208) believes that Airbnb can cope better than hotels with short tourism seasons and that a supply of Airbnb rooms can facilitate demand during major events, although the appeal might be limited by security and quality concerns and the fact that Airbnb requires more booking time and effort.

Oskam and Boswijk (2016:35) agree with Guttentag (2015: 1207–1208) that Airbnb may pose a threat to commercial accommodation as their markets overlap. Oskam and Boswijk (2016:35–36) refer to the negative impact, such as "unfair competition between traditional and unregulated accommodation providers, pressure on the housing market and touristification", and have questions regarding taxation, management of visitor streams, information management, safety issues, consumer protection and zoning.

The next section reflects on the characteristics of tourism accommodation.

4.6 INHERENT NATURE OF TOURISM ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodation (Kotuku Bed and Breakfast, 2015) is characterised by attributes such as

- pleasant views and location (see 4.7.1);
- privacy (see 4.7.2);

- comfort and luxury (see 4.7.3);
- the staff-factor (see 4.7.4 and 4.4.1.7).

The guest house product has both tangible and intangible features. The architecture of the establishment, the bedroom with all its accessories, the bathroom, the breakfast, the pool and the garden furniture are tangible, while service levels, friendliness of staff, helpfulness and ambiance are examples of intangible characteristics of the product. Although a comfortable bed, bathroom and breakfast form the core of the client's needs, it is the service delivery system – the attitude, helpfulness, friendliness, genuine concern of the staff – that largely determine the quality of the experience for the guest (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:98). Unlike purely tangible products, tourists do not have much more than memories to take home with them. The tangible elements of the experience, therefore, should be of high quality for the visitor to associate the accommodation experience (which is intangible) the tangible elements (Kaiser, 2012).

Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:215–217) and Kaiser (2012) add a number of other characteristics, which are briefly discussed below.

4.6.1 Perishability

An unsold room cannot be “warehoused for future sales”. If a room is not sold on a specific day, the establishment will not earn any money from it for that date. Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:2016) suggest that owners offer discounts using the Internet, newspapers, and other media to stimulate last-minute sales.

4.6.2 Inconsistency

Customer perception is profoundly influenced by aspects such as the weather, construction sites, and other customers. The product is changeable from one service provider to another because of the human factor. Different people will have different attitudes and different levels of knowledge and dedication.

4.6.3 Immobility

All facilities and services are offered to consumers in the destination area, and there is a significant dependence on the attractiveness of the area. Furthermore, the product is not easily moved for sampling.

4.6.4 People-orientated nature of the product

The perceived product quality depends on the interaction between staff and customers.

4.6.5 Inseparability

The accommodation product is produced and consumed at the same time and at the product owner's premises. The buyer of the accommodation product cannot touch or test it before buying it. As the product depends on people, it is crucial to employ the right people.

4.6.6 Inflexibility

An accommodation establishment cannot change its capacity quickly enough to react to spontaneous demand fluctuations.

4.6.7 Imitability

The accommodation product is straightforward to copy. Establishments look at what their competition does and add those amenities to their offerings.

Guest house owners should also know what potential guests expect of the accommodation offering.

4.7 TOURIST ACCOMMODATION EXPECTATIONS AND PREFERENCES

The accommodation industry should adapt to 21st-century travellers, who seek freedom of choice and the ability to control costs without compromising their

expectations (Basson, 2019). This author maintains that accommodation in central locations close to amenities stays top of the list.

4.7.1 Pleasant views and location

Most owners of guest houses, country houses, and B&Bs converted their private homes into tourist accommodation. Location should be recognised as a crucial factor before spending any money, as it might be more viable in the long term to buy a more suitably located property. Location was pointed out by Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:129) as one of the critical success factors in developing and managing a guest house. However, it should be borne in mind that location preferences depend on the type of traveller (Sand, 2014; Yang, Mao & Tang, 2017:14).

View may also affect the rates being charged. A water view is worth more than a garden view, while a view of an attractive garden takes preference over no view. The view can be a marketing tool (Sand, 2014).

A guest house on the main road will be visible and accessible and might attract business from the street (walk-in guests). Traffic noise, on the other hand, might have a negative influence on demand.

Yang *et al.* (2017:13–14) identified three categories of location-related factors: accessibility to points of interest, transport convenience, and the surrounding environment. Essential determinants include accessibility to attractions, airports, universities, and public transportation, as well as green space, water coverage, safety, and local businesses in the area.

4.7.2 Privacy

Although the ideal would be to plan and build a guest house from the start, the reality is that most guest house owners have to convert a current building into a guest house. This may bring about limitations related to space, extension possibilities, competition in the area, and integration of the owner's family life with the operation of a guest house.

Privacy, comfort and luxury can also be influenced by architectural layout. Henning and Willemse (1999) propose the following regarding layout:

- There should be demarcated areas for guests, staff and family members.
- Guests and family members should have separate recreation areas where children can watch television, swim, and play without disturbing guests.
- The office/reception area should be near the guest entrance, dining room, kitchen, and recreation area to enable the manager to keep an eye on activities and spacious enough to accommodate administrative documents, office equipment, and a display cabinet for brochures and maps.
- The guest entrance should be impressive to form a good first impression and large enough to accommodate group arrivals and their luggage.
- The kitchen must be close to the office and reception area, and near the dining area. Food preparation and scullery areas should not be visible to guests. As one kitchen will typically serve the needs of the guests and the family, the kitchen should be positioned to serve both areas. Henning (2007:66) suggests a kitchen of at least 25 square metres to cater for 12 guests.
- When there are no staff quarters on the premises, provision should be made for a dining area for employees during meals and tea time.
- Washing lines may not be visible to guests and can be concealed using plants, hedges or walls. The same applies to rubbish bins and compost heaps.
- A patio near the swimming pool or with a pleasant view of the garden is an excellent place to serve breakfasts during ideal weather conditions. The patio must not be too far from the kitchen.
- Bedrooms must be large enough to accommodate the furniture and allow comfortable movement. Henning and Willemse (1999:35) suggest that rooms should be at least 3.5 x 3.5 m in size.

4.7.3 Aesthetics and luxury

The 21st-century customer has high expectations of the product, service and experience (Ferenczug, 2018). Mordorintelligence (2020) reports a progressive growth in luxury hotel market trends due to a changing pattern in the standard of

living. Luxury accommodation, according to Mordorintelligence (2020), is influenced by factors such as location, size and on-site features.

4.7.3.1 Importance of appearance and first impressions

Coetzee (2015:121) found that the aesthetics dimension (décor and surroundings) is the most important out of four factors to achieve guest satisfaction, pleasant memories, feeling aroused, and added value. The other factors are entertainment, education and escapism. Escapism refers to the degree to which guests can lose themselves mentally or physically in an activity. The concept is associated with peace and quiet, wellness, and taking time away from everyday life (Coetzee, 2015:33).

4.7.3.1.1 Exterior

The TGCSA requirements for four and five-star establishments are "excellent" to "outstanding" appearance and maintenance of the exterior, excellent quality garden furniture, and the impression of luxury.

With regard to grounds and gardens, for any star grading, seasonal changes, environmental concerns and water usage should be taken into account. Universal accessibility should be ensured through slip-resistant and gravel-free surfaces, obstruction-free garden pathways, and ramps. The garden is one of the first things a guest will see on arrival. Landscaping is one of the things that provide a lasting first impression of the establishment.

Apart from the garden and building exterior, first impressions are also influenced by an attractive name-board, garden lighting at night – especially on arrival, undercover parking to off-load luggage on a rainy day, and friendly and professional reception (Henning & Willemse, 1999:32). Akwisombe (2014) suggests that the colour and neatness of the front door will set the tone for the house, as colour creates an emotional reaction. She also states that an untidy doorway and pathway up to the house will make a guest feel uncomfortable, and stresses the importance of an entrance that is well lit – preferably with an exceptional feature lighting piece.

4.7.3.1.2 Interior suggestions

- Style: Although uniqueness can be a selling point, extreme individual decorating styles may not appeal to everybody. A classic, traditional style, according to, will make most guests feel at home (Henning, 2007:55). This author warns against family clutter, such as photographs.
- Quality should be the norm when choosing carpets, curtains, linen, and furniture.
- Curtains can make a significant visual impact. Except for kitchen and bathroom windows, curtains should hang to the floor and reach as high as possible to create a luxurious atmosphere.
- Light fittings: Soft lighting (standard lamps and table lamps supplying light at a lower level) will create a sense of warmth and atmosphere. The kitchen, office and other service areas need intense light from the ceiling (Henning, 2007:56).
- The TGCSA requires the following regarding guest house lighting:
 - A light switch located at the entrance door;
 - One bedside light per guest, although one light between two beds is acceptable for one to three-star establishments;
 - Good quality lighting in bedrooms;
 - International multi-power plugs available on request, except for five-star guest houses where each bedroom should be equipped with an international multi-power point or plug;
 - Direct lighting at the desk or dressing tables at four- and five-star establishments;
 - Rooms adjusted to accommodate guests with special needs should have their light switches 80–120 cm from the floor.
- Floors: A wide variety of flooring options are available. Tiles are extremely durable, easy to clean, water- and fire-resistant, but cold and often slippery. Wood flooring is durable, easy to clean and eco-friendly. Bamboo and most laminated wood options are more water-resistant. Concrete floors are cost-effective, durable and easy to clean if adequately sealed. Such floors have a modern look, but are cold. Carpets are still the popular choice for guest rooms, because of the luxurious feeling, warmth and ability to absorb sound.
- Bedrooms: The bedroom is the core product of the guest house (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:228). There are usually a variety of bedrooms for which different rates are

asked at a guest house. Not all bedrooms are equipped with double beds as some people are willing to share a bedroom, but not a bed. Henning (2007:62) suggests a room size of at least 3.5 by 3.5 m to accommodate a bed, headboard, bedside tables, writing bureau/dressing table, chair, rack/shelf for suitcases, television, couch/comfortable chair, and wardrobe/hanging space for clothes. According to Henning and Willemse (1999:35), guests will always appreciate a spacious room.

TGCSA requirements for bedrooms include the following:

- Guest houses with 1–25 rooms should have at least one mobility accessible room, catering for persons with disabilities. Guest houses with more than 25 rooms should have at least two mobility accessible rooms.
- Bedrooms should be well planned to ensure spaciousness and ease of movement with no restrictions. Doors and drawers should be able to open and close without the need to move furniture.
- Regarding rooms with universal accessibility (guests with disabilities), unobstructed access between walls and furniture of at least 90 cm is required.
- Bedside tables or a shelf should be located beside all permanent sleeping positions.
- Bedrooms in five-star guest houses should offer enough chairs to seat the number of persons per room.
- All star gradings require a functional remote control colour television with multi-channels in each room. Public television in the lounge will be acceptable at one and two-star guest houses, as well as three-star establishments with fewer than five rooms. Four- and five-star guest rooms need "an outstanding choice of channels".
- Hanging space should be provided for full-length clothing, as well as for additional pillows and blankets at four- and five-star guest houses. At least one purpose-built luggage stand must be provided for each room. Less hanging space and a minimum of one drawer or shelf per guest at one- to three-star guest houses will be acceptable.
- All beds should be equipped with purpose-designed mattress protectors as well as pillow protectors. Spare bedding and extra pillows should be

available. A fitted sheet as well as a flat sheet must be provided at four- and five-star bedrooms.

- Dimensions for single, queen, and king-size beds differ between one- and three-star bedrooms and those of four- and five-star guest houses (extra length for all beds).
- Secure headboards are compulsory for three- to five-star rooms.
- All rooms must be equipped with a full-length mirror.
- Tea/coffee-making facilities, with adequate crockery, cutlery, electric kettle and complimentary sachets of tea, coffee and sugar (two per person) should be provided in all three- to five-star rooms.

Most guest houses keep three sets of linen per bed in stock. Henning (2007:63) recommends white linen because it will give the impression of cleanliness and will not fade after several washes. Guest houses also often offer a hairdryer, bar fridge, complimentary fruit/snack baskets, stationery/note pad, a welcoming letter, information regarding the area and its attractions, a breakfast menu and insect repellent in guest rooms.

- Bathrooms: En suite bathrooms for one- to five-star guest houses are the norm. At one- to three-star establishments, rooms without en suite facilities will be accepted by TGCSA providing each room will have exclusive use of a bathroom nearby. All bathrooms should have a toilet, hand basin, bath/shower, and hooks behind the door for hanging dressing gowns and clothes. Five-star bathrooms must have a bath and a separate shower. All taps must be in working order, and there must be sufficient hot and cold water. There must be enough towel rails for the number of guests in the room, as well as rack, shelf, and open vanity space. There should be a mirror above the hand basin. Shower curtains for five-star bathrooms are not acceptable and must be replaced by a fixed screen/wall. Toilet areas should have a lidded disposal bin, double-ply toilet paper, and a holder with spare toilet rolls. Good quality towels and bath mats should be provided; a hand and a bath towel per person in one- to three-star bathrooms and a face cloth, hand towel, and bath sheet per person in four- and five-star bathrooms. (Swimming towels should be available at reception). Accessories should include wrapped soap, good quality shampoo and tissues. For four- and five-star bathrooms, a shower cap, conditioner,

shower gel, and body lotion should be added to the list. Henning (2007:65) suggests white bathrooms as they are easy to clean and will add a fresh, hygienic appearance. Cracked or missing tiles should be replaced before the room becomes available. Granite tops are more hard-wearing than marble.

- The lounge: This space should have a relaxing and inviting atmosphere with comfortable seating for at least half of the guests. The arrangement of the furniture should allow guests to sit alone or in small groups. Flowers, books, glossy magazines, a fireplace, coffee making facilities and a communal bar will add to the atmosphere. A guest cloakroom nearby should be spotless throughout the day, and should contain enough toilet paper, fresh hand soap and clean towels (Henning, 2007:61).
- Dining room: The dining room should have enough space for guests to serve themselves at the buffet, as well as to accommodate separate tables for each guest. Henning (2007:61) suggests square tables with sides of 1.5 m that can be pushed together when a large group table is required.

4.7.4 Quality

Guests expect a high level of quality in both the features and the level of service they receive at the guest house (Totalstay, 2017). Finch (2010:133) notes that a customer charter will indicate to employees what they are expected to deliver and how. If the guest house values quality of services, facilities and equipment, it should be reflected in the vision/mission statement or at least communicated in the business strategy.

Every employee should be informed about the way management expects them to approach a guest (Trianasari *et al.*, 2017). If it is expected from every staff member to greet guests and ask them how they are, then it should be clearly communicated to all employees. Employees should be informed that chatting with colleagues, making private phone calls, chewing gum, biting their nails, or eating in public areas is unacceptable. Employees should be trained in controlling the tone, speed, and loudness of their voices and they should be made aware of active listening skills,

including facial expression, patience, and not interrupting (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:106).

Standards, policies and procedures are used to empower employees and endorse quality. Through standards, policies and procedures, employees will know precisely what is expected of them, have guidelines on how to clean a room and serve breakfast, and the guests will know what to expect. A lack of standards will not only affect employee enthusiasm and thinking, but will also lead to bad customer service. Standards should be realistic and should be regularly evaluated because customers' needs and expectations change over time (Mac Minn, 2014).

A standard is a written compulsory procedure that needs to be followed in an organisation (e.g., that a guest bedroom should be cleaned within 35 minutes, the phone must be answered within three rings, how a breakfast table should be laid or that all customer enquiries should be dealt with within 24 hours). A policy is a guiding principle that will direct decisions (e.g., cancellation policy, no pet policy.). A procedure is a consistent and repetitive list of steps to be followed to accomplish a particular result (Mac Minn, 2014).

Mac Minn (2014) advises that the following aspects should be included in the standards, procedures and policy document: personal presentation, greeting guests in their language, telephone etiquette, how to deal with guest complaints, booking, reservation and check-in procedures, guest departure procedures and late check-out policy, payment options, guest information regarding amenities, technology, area information, and guest house policies.

4.7.5 Star grading

Tourists expect value for money (ABTA, 2017), and although not compulsory, star grading is a tool to communicate value to potential customers. Both Du Plessis and Saayman (2011:133) and Coetzee (2015:121) found that tourists' perceptions of value and quality – as well as price expectations – were higher concerning 4- and 5-star properties than for the other categories. Du Plessis and Saayman (2011:133) stress the importance of grading if a manager wants to promote quality, provides value for

money, and obtains a competitive advantage. Coetzee (2015:121) concluded that star grading could not predict the outcomes of a stay concerning satisfaction, memories, arousal and value because it measures the tangible aspects of the accommodation offering. According to Henning (2007:194), all government departments may only make use of graded accommodation establishments, and guest houses will lose business if they are not graded.

Grading was introduced by the Hotel Board in 1965 – initially for hotel accommodation. SATOUR took over the function in 1992, and the grading scheme was still voluntary. Grading was later transferred to the DEAT, which registered the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa – TGCSA (Du Plessis & Saayman, 2011:131). The TGCSA aims to ensure quality by setting accreditation criteria for the different types of accommodation.

Perceptions about grading requirements may be different for international visitors. Ingram (1996) argued that different regulations, grading prerequisites and consumer expectations in different countries cause confusion and incorrect expectations, and pointed out that smaller establishments need to market themselves as well as the area efficiently. This need is being addressed in the case of the two Open Africa Routes relevant to this study, through branding.

4.7.6 Service

Since technology has replaced some services, guests place a higher premium on authentic service delivery and want staff to take care of them (Benbria, 2016). One of the critical success factors for developing and managing a guest house identified by Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:128) was the importance of offering tailor-made products, based on the needs of guests. This was followed by "quality of the service product", which included high levels of hygiene, quality food, décor and linen, and well-trained staff (see 4.7.4).

It is more complicated to measure and manage service quality than the quality of manufactured products (Luo & Qu, 2016). People are becoming more and more sophisticated travellers, with rising expectations. Guest house owners should know

what guests expect. Research has shown that apart from the fact that business travellers' expectations differ from those of leisure travellers, mismatches often occur between customers' expectations and what managers believe their expectations are (Lockyer, 2002:294; Radder & Wang, 2006:554; Wang, 2006). Business travellers, for instance, considered prompt service as the most essential part of "core service", while management thought that efficient handling of complaints was more critical. In the study mentioned, business travellers also viewed the professionalism of staff as very important – more than the friendliness of front desk staff.

Radder and Wang (2006:554) advise managers to concentrate on service dimensions that are important to guests and not those based on management opinions. Luo and Qu (2016) identified the following service dimensions: service delivery, environment, facilities, employee attitude, cleanliness, security, Internet service, food and beverage, location, and price. Another significant finding was the different attitudes and behaviour reflected by guests from various cultural backgrounds (Luo & Qu, 2016). They found that Westerners were easier to satisfy and more willing to engage in WOM than Chinese guests. Trianasari *et al.*, (2017) added to these findings by reflecting on the correlation between cultural familiarity with a destination and tolerance levels. Their study indicated that tolerance levels would drop when a guest is familiar with the culture of the destination.

Slabbert and Saayman (2003:100) also identified cleanliness, courtesy, responsiveness, reliability and friendliness as aspects that any guest will expect. They listed a few more guest expectations:

- Honesty, fair treatment, and accurate answers
- Respect
- Careful, reliable service
- Fast solutions to problems
- Quick service
- Personal attention and sincere interest
- Feedback regarding recovery efforts
- Assistance rendered willingly by employees
- The guest's satisfaction as primary concern

Radder and Wang (2006:555–560) comment on the importance of business travellers to guest houses, saying business travellers are fewer in numbers than leisure travellers, but their intensity of accommodation use is much higher. These authors identified the seven most important factors for business travellers:

- Professional skills and abilities (efficiency and friendliness of front desk staff, ability to deal with guests' requests, the efficiency of room service, communication skills, enthusiasm, friendliness and courtesy of staff, efficient check-in/out procedures, sympathetic handling of complaints and quick response to guests' problems);
- Amenities (business facilities on the premises, dining-room/self-catering facilities, in-room business centre, a meeting area for discussions);
- Room amenities (safety, cleanliness, comfortable mattress and pillow, quality bathroom and shower facilities, sound-proofing between bedrooms, staff appearance and value for money);
- Core service (service variety, reliable message service and wake-up calls, efficient handling of complaints, staff confidence and punctual services);
- Convenience (user-friendly reservation system, services performed effectively the first time, accuracy and reliable information provided to guests, quick check-in and check-out procedures);
- Functional skills and abilities (trained staff, recruiting and selection of staff, staff commitment to passing guests' needs on to other employees);
- Atmosphere (home-away-from-home atmosphere, appealing décor, convenient location, secure parking).

4.7.6.1 Discerning the client's needs

Mac Minn (2014) argues that a guest house owner can establish what the customer wants from the first point of contact when the client phones to make a booking: Does he/she want a room for one or two persons, would he/she like a patio or not, does he/she want breakfast to be included in the price, or are there any other special requests? This procedure will also provide the client with a clear understanding of what can be expected. If the customer asked for a river view room, and at that stage only garden view rooms were available, the client would know what to expect before he/she arrives.

Needs, as well as areas that need improvement, can also be established through customer feedback. The guest house should have a process in place which deals with feedback given at any time of the guest's stay. Slabbert and Saayman (2003:130) suggest that employees survey guests themselves. In this way, immediate feedback may allow quick recovery of service failures. Mac Minn (2014) agrees with following up on services while the customer is still experiencing the service as this conveys a message that the staff cares. Asking the guest at breakfast how the stay is so far opens the opportunity to address a problem as soon as possible and to ensure that the rest of the stay is pleasant.

Mac Minn (2014) also suggests that housekeeping staff be instructed to greet and ask a guest how he/she is when they pass any guest as well as to report comments that need attention.

Written feedback can be obtained using a guest satisfaction form, guest book, or email. The guest satisfaction form should include questions on the check-in process, the bedroom, bathroom, meals, and check-out procedure, and provide space for additional comments (Mac Minn, 2014).

4.7.7 Atmosphere

Atmosphere is generally regarded as a significant determinant for guest satisfaction (Heide, Laerdal & Grønhaug (s.a.:1). The ambiance is created by tangible elements such as architecture, landscaping, interior design/decoration, but also through intangible aspects such as colour, music, and service-orientated staff.

Heide and Grønhaug (2011:37) identified four factors to measure the atmosphere: relaxation, refinement, distinctiveness and hospitality. Distinctiveness was singled out as the most critical variable in explaining the overall atmosphere, while hospitality was the critical variable for explaining guest satisfaction. Therefore, owners/managers should capitalise on the unique aspects of their establishments, such as design elements, décor, or a particular location. However, they should be careful not to focus on design features at the expense of hospitality, as guests will be satisfied with a

moderate design provided that they are treated with hospitality. These authors point out that staff development is of utmost importance as the employees are central to creating an atmosphere and are also responsible for hospitality.

4.7.8 Technology in the guest house

Email, the Internet, computer data processing, computer reservation systems, copying facilities, mobile phones/tablets – even fax machines and security systems – are essential technology. Benbria (2016) identifies connectivity (wi-fi) as one of the most critical factors for a guest to book. There is a growing guest expectation for mobile check-in and check-out, according to Benbria (2016).

When the guest house offers conference facilities, technology should include at least a data projector, screen, sound system, and computer "hook-ups". According to Meetings.org. (s.a.), there are specific questions to address when considering a conference room at a guest house: How many computer "hook-ups" will be needed, what is the wi-fi capacity, do the premises have sufficient power supply, will a built-in sound system be required, how sound-proof is the building, does the ceiling allow enough height for projectors, will blinds or curtains in front of the windows be necessary, will there be any security for the equipment, who will be responsible for lost or damaged equipment, will the meeting room be accessible for setup before the meeting starts?

Slabbert and Saayman (2003:102) warn against technology that reduces personal service. There is a trend in some European countries that guests receive a card or a secret code before arriving at the guest house, which gives them access to the front door and even to their rooms. This process will save the guest house owner time and staff, but it is very impersonal and deprives the industry of a vital characteristic: hospitality.

4.7.9 The Green Movement

Benbria (2016) listed sustainability as one of six guest expectations of guest houses. According to authors such as Heath (2002:331), Keyser (2009:30–31) and Millar and

Baloglu (2011:302), the demand for responsible/sustainable tourism products is a new trend in the tourism industry. The modern-day tourist is concerned about the environment as well as the responsibility and ethics of the companies he buys from. Tourism companies, on the other hand, are asking about the responsibility of their suppliers and are introducing checklists that rate the sustainability of their practices. These authors believe that responsible tourism is a trend the tourism industry cannot afford to ignore, and destinations/establishments that practise responsible tourism will have a competitive advantage over other destinations/establishments.

The U.N. World Commission for Environment and Development (cited in Keyser, 2009:20) defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs". Responsible tourism, according to Keyser (2009:42), has the same goal, but in responsible tourism, individuals, organisations, and businesses take responsibility for their actions and the outcomes of such actions.

As pointed out earlier, sustainability and responsible tourism as green concepts have been described in the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa as "the most appropriate concept for the development of tourism in South Africa" (Government of South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996:17).

Sustainability, as well as responsible development, rests on three pillars – also referred to as the triple bottom line or three cornerstones of sustainability (Lubbe, 2003:75; Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:355; Keyser, 2009:25). Figure 4.1 is based on Keyser (2009:25) and explains the pillars of sustainable and responsible development.



South Africa hosted the first conference on Responsible Tourism in 2002 (“The Cape Town Conference”). The Cape Town Declaration states that Responsible Tourism:

- minimises negative economic, environmental and social impacts
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and improves the well-being of host communities
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives
- contributes toward conservation
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through meaningful connections with residents that lead to a greater understanding of these people by the tourists
- accommodates the physically challenged
- is culturally sensitive, motivates respect between tourists and hosts and builds local pride (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:353).

Negative impact on the environment, society, cultures, and the economy is often the downside of tourism development. Negative impacts include overbuilding and congestion, loss of biodiversity, revenue leakages, labour issues, degradation of natural resources, as well as different kinds of pollution, such as air, noise, water, and visual pollution.

The most significant current threat to economic growth in South Africa is the energy crisis, because of the inability of the South African electricity supply Commission Eskom to meet demands. The hospitality sector will not have a choice regarding the implementation of innovative energy-saving techniques (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:285).

Machete, Nhamo and Rampedi (2016:196) list indoor lighting, water heating, and indoor thermal comfort as the most energy-consuming services in guest houses and point out that energy consumption is the second-highest cost factor after labour. According to these authors, the challenge is to save energy without compromising guest comfort or quality of experience. Yi, Li and Jai (2016:9) found a discrepancy between what guests want and how establishments implement green practices. Guests desire comfortable room temperature, adequate water pressure, and proper dining service.

Millar and Baloglu (2011:307–308) included 571 travellers in a study examining the environmentally friendly attributes that guests seek in hotel rooms. Most respondents requested towel and linen reuse policies, refillable shampoo dispensers, energy-efficient light bulbs, a key card to control power use, and green hotel certification. They preferred recycling bins in the lobby and not in guest rooms. Green Hotel certification was also identified by Yi *et al.* (2016:9) as the "most well-recognised attribute among the green practices".

Hoogendoorn, Grant and Fitchett (2015) point out that infrastructural changes aimed at saving water and electricity are the most frequent attempts by guest houses in their efforts to "go green". Typical examples are solar panels/geysers, LED lights, and timers. Primary infrastructural changes regarding water consumption are low-flow showerheads and filters on pipes. Rainwater storage tanks and grey-water systems are a more modern solution to expensive replacement of bathroom plumbing. Energy is furthermore conserved using roof insulation, sufficient windows for natural light, and additional blankets during winter. Sixty per cent of the respondents in a study by Hoogendoorn *et al.* (2015) had planted indigenous plants to save water. The authors noted a shift towards marked bins for recycling and environmentally friendly cleaning products.

Machete *et al.* (2016:197–198) identified three primary energy-saving methods: behavioural change, engineering, and alternative low carbon energy sources. Behavioural change refers to convincing staff and guests to change their attitudes and behaviour regarding intensive energy consumption using awareness and training

programmes, energy-saving policies, guidelines for employees and guests, setting targets, and regular energy use audits.

Engineering includes planning, design, construction, and infrastructural maintenance focused on reducing carbon footprint and costs using retrofitting, alternative energy sources, and automation. Instrumentation is an engineering technique used to activate and deactivate energy consumption. Examples are day-night switches, which automatically turn the lights on and off according to the defined light intensity, or by using time switches. Security alarms or lights can be activated through movement sensors. The smart key card system, which enables energy consumption in guest rooms, is another instrumentation method.

Machete *et al.* (2016:200) also refer to passive energy-saving methods. These methods include construction techniques and design methods for buildings to be more green and eco-friendly and less energy-consuming. According to the authors, it is possible to reduce energy demand for buildings by 75% by using carbon-free building methods and building orientation.

Food waste, when composted, can be a valuable organic fertiliser for gardening. Grass clippings from the lawn will also add vital nutrients when composted and applied as a fertiliser.

Local cuisine served at the guest house reduces the carbon footprint and enables the local community and local industries to benefit from tourism.

Graci and Kuehnel (2010) refer to green building practices in the hospitality industry which include reusable wall panels manufactured from fertiliser waste and environmentally friendly cement, concrete with thermal insulation, materials from renewable sources such as wood, adobe (clay), mud and thatch. They also mention using biodegradable cleaning products and the planting of indigenous trees as prudent green practices.

Water-wise practices will include adjustment of sprinkler systems according to the season and for non-daylight hours to minimise evaporation, replacing specific sprinklers with drip irrigation systems for less water usage, grouping plants with similar

water requirements together on one irrigation line, and using organic fertilisers (Klaff, 2015).

4.7.9.1 Recognition for green practices in South Africa

South African Tourism (2016b) identifies three organisations that give credit to tourism and hospitality businesses through "green certification":

FEDHASA (Federated Hospitality Organisation of Southern Africa) is the driver behind the Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards. Imvelo, backed by the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme, recognises tourism and hospitality businesses that contribute to responsible tourism in a sustained and measurable manner.

The Green Leaf Environmental Standard assesses eco-friendly hotels, game lodges, and country tourism estates.

Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa promotes sustainable tourism development and offers Fair Trade certification for businesses that are benefiting local communities and economies through ethical practices.

The preceding paragraphs reflected on the impact of green practices, but effective tourism accommodation also contributes in other ways to the economy, society, and environment, as discussed below.

4.8 OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

Tourist accommodation has a beneficial impact on the community and the local economy for the following reasons:

- Residential communities benefit from safer neighbourhoods as owners or managers live on the premises permanently and provide a permanent presence during the day. While other businesses are left unoccupied at night, accommodation establishments operate full time.
- The image of the area, as well as the property value, increases through the upgrading of private homes to offer tourist accommodation.

- The aesthetics of the neighbourhood improve as guest houses have to keep up all surroundings and gardens.
- Visitors to guest houses also spend money on other local businesses such as restaurants and shops.
- Tourist accommodation provides employment opportunities for the local community, which enhances economic growth (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:9–10). Key findings by Nyikana and Sigxashe (2017:1) indicate that employment opportunities brought about by the accommodation sector contribute to the general upliftment of the lives of the local people. This is in line with the guidelines of the White Paper regarding the involvement of the local community.
- Economic benefits, according to Portolan (2012:42), include direct impact as well as indirect and induced benefits. The income earned by owners of accommodation facilities constitutes a direct impact. Indirect impact refers to raw material supply costs, half-products, products, and services. The increased purchasing power of the resident population is referred to as "induced impact".
- Tourist accommodation contributes to LED through their use of locally produced products. Ramukumba and Ferreira (2016:1) found that 64.2% of guest houses in their study used locally produced products to a large extent, while 32% used local products to a limited extent. Only 3.2% of guest houses in the study used no locally produced products. The accommodation sector's potential to build business linkages was also confirmed by Nyikana and Sigxashe (2017:3–4). According to Ramukumba and Ferreira (2016:4), the most potential for procurement by the accommodation sector is from smaller, local and disadvantaged entrepreneurs, for example for supplies of food, soft furnishings, guest amenities, security, laundry, and gardening services. Local procurement is in line with the Proudly South African campaign – an initiative supported by government, organised business, organised labour, and the organised community to stimulate the economy and create jobs through "buying local".
- Tourist accommodation has a direct influence on the overall success and development of tourist destinations (Sharpley, 2000:275). As the choice of accommodation reflects the tourist's needs and expectations, Sharpley (2000:276) posits that the supply of accommodation services directly influences the type of tourists the destination area will attract. Nyikana and Sigxashe (2017:1) concluded

that the accommodation sector is an essential cornerstone for any future tourism development agenda aiming to provide tourism opportunities for local citizens, especially in rural areas. The existence of the accommodation business triggers the emergence of other businesses. According to Nyikana and Sigxashe (2017:4), this leads to the multiplier effect whereby firms in the local economy are dependent upon other firms for supplies (also see Keyser, 2009:327; Rusu, 2011:70).

4.9 SUMMARY

Accommodation, together with attractions, entertainment, and transport, form the core elements of the tourism industry. The industry cannot function as a whole if one of the elements is lacking or not up to standard.

Tourist accommodation, particularly accommodation along the two Open Africa Routes, is in line with the guidelines of the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa. It creates employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, brings development to rural areas, provides access to the industry for previously neglected groups, builds cross-cultural relations, generates foreign exchange, offers potential for cross-sectoral linkages, and addresses responsible tourism.

This chapter distinguished between the different types of tourist accommodation, explained the inherent nature of tourism accommodation, and identified some expectations and preferences of tourists regarding accommodation. It was pointed out that tourist accommodation is a business that should be managed according to business principles. These principles include legal requirements and memberships, grading, and the importance of a strategic plan. It was shown that the guest experience can be managed by concentrating on all factors that have an impact on tourist accommodation. Strong emphasis was placed on the human factor and internal branding in accommodation as HR represents the people component of the destination marketing mix.

The chapter concluded by reflecting on the positive outcomes of effective tourist accommodation.

CHAPTER 5:

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects on the application of the research process (see Chapter 2) and presents the results. The data of semi-structured interviews are discussed after the prominent themes that were identified from respondents' answers are provided. The discussion of the themes and subthemes subsequently form the basis used to address the research questions in Chapter 6.

5.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

To address research Objective 3, it was necessary to conduct semi-structured interviews with guest house owners/managers, as well as with guest house guests (see 2.4.4.1). Research Objective 3 was aimed at exploring the ideal manner in which a destination brand could be enhanced by determining the factors influencing guest house guests' experiences, and by determining guest house owners/managers' knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding.

5.2.1 Sample of the study

The universe for the samples drawn consisted of 23 guest houses on the Open Africa Kokerboom Food and Wine Route (Route 1), and the Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route (Route 2). By implementing the online program, RANDOM.ORG, five guest houses on each route were randomly selected (see 2.4.5–2.4.6).

5.2.1.1 Demographic profile of sample

The sample for Phase 4 consisted of the owners/managers of the selected guest houses. Where a manager was not willing to participate, another guest house was drawn. Only one owner on each route could not participate. Interviews took place on the respondents' premises to make them more relaxed and to avoid using more of their time than necessary for interviews.

The sample for Phase 3 was drawn from tourists visiting the identified guest houses during the research period (27 August 2019–23 September 2019). The process required the availability of the interviewer in the reception area during check-in time. A purposeful and non-random sampling method was applied. The sample size for Phase 3 was initially based on availability sampling where the interviewer used those who were available and willing to participate, and after that, transferability was increased through theoretical sampling in which interviews were terminated at the stage of theoretical and thematic saturation. Each visitor who agreed to participate in the research received a copy of the research study information leaflet and consent form (see 2.4.7), and an appointment was made for a time and private space that suited the participant. These spaces varied from conference rooms, private lounges to the dining area at the chalet of a guest house guest. A maximum of two interviews per day became the norm, as visitors had covered long distances to their destination and preferred to settle in before interviews could take place. No participants wanted to be interviewed after dinner. Available time for interviews was between 17:00 and 19:00.

The guest houses which were randomly selected in Route 1 (Open Africa Kokerboom Food and Wine Route) were located in a surprisingly green part of this semi-desert area. All five properties capitalised on the aesthetics of the environment by incorporating vineyards, river views, river activities and lush gardens, or by keeping different kinds of game and waterbirds on the premises. Three of the five properties offered full-time restaurant facilities for the general public. The main drawcard for tourists on this route tends to be the Augrabies Waterfall National Park.

Fifty per cent of guest respondents on this route at the time of the survey were in the area for business reasons. The other 50% were holidaymakers.

The selected guest houses in Route 2 (Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route) included farm-stay accommodation offerings with limited capacity, one lodge with a public restaurant, and two buildings in a small village that had been converted to offer accommodation (see 4.5). Many participants correctly pointed out that The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park was the drawcard for visitors to the area. Three out of seven guest respondents were tourists. Four guest respondents were visiting the area for business reasons.

5.2.2 Data-gathering instrument

Trustworthiness in this instance was attained by using open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The questions focused on participants' experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions regarding the topics (Groenewald, 2004:47). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below indicate how interview questions addressed the study aims, as well as the connection between study design and theory.

Research questions for guests are contained in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Relationship between research questions for guests, research objectives and theoretical perspective

<i>Research question:</i>	
Which factors influence clients' guest house experiences?	
<i>Interview question</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
What was the reason for your stay at this guest house: business/leisure?	Guests were categorised as leisure tourists or business tourists due to the difference in expectations between the two groups (Radder & Wang, 2006:555-560).
Identify as many as possible positive guest house experiences from previous stays in guest houses.	Answers to these questions might add to the critical features of successful accommodation identified by Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:129), Yang, Mao and Tang (2017:14), Sand (2014), Slabbert and Saayman (2003:98), Coetzee (2015:121), Akwisome (2014), Henning (2007:55-65), and Henning and Willemse (1999:35-36) and might provide an opportunity to offer guest house owners practical solutions to challenges reported by participants.
Identify your negative guest house experiences from previous stays in guest houses.	
What aspects of a guest house experience make you feel welcome?	
What aspects of a guest house experience make you feel unwelcome or not cared for?	
Which aspect of the atmosphere at any guest house is most important to you?	This question touched upon the intangible features of the guest house experience, as published by authors such as Slabbert and Saayman (2003:98), Heide and Gronhaug (2011:37).
Regarding your room at this guest house, how did your experience meet your expectations?	The question addressed the tangible aspects of successful accommodation. This question was intended to test the similarities and differences between the preferences of business travellers and holidaymakers, as pointed out by Radder and Wang (2006:555-560).
Is there anything that impressed you during your stay at this guest house?	Questions tested (amongst other things) the importance of aspects such as green practices and sustainability (Machete, Nhamo & Rampedi, 2016:196-200; Yi, Li & Jai, 2016:9; Millar & Balogu, 2011:307-308; Hoogedoorn, Grant & Fitchett, 2015; Graci & Kuehnel, 2010).
How strong do you feel about green practices at guest houses?	
How do you feel about green practices or sustainability at this guest house?	
Regarding service at this guest house, how did your experience meet your expectations?	This question addressed the human factor in accommodation (Kokt & Strydom, 2014:123-126; Van der Westhuizen & Saayman, 2007:128; Henning, 2008:4). Questions reflected on the service dimensions identified by Luo and Qu (2016) and Slabbert and Saayman (2003:98-100), as well as on preferences expressed

Is there anything that you feel that should be improved or added to the service at this guest house?

by guests from different cultural backgrounds (Trianasari, Butcher & Sparks, 2017).

From which country or region are you?

Questions would also test the similarities and differences between the preferences and perceptions of different cultures (Aitken & Campelo, 2011:914; Campelo, 2014:155).

Research question:

What role does the guest house industry play in the tourism sector?

Interview question

Discussion

Through which source or marketing communication did you hear about this guest house?

Answers may provide information to destination marketers and accommodation providers regarding marketing efforts.

Why did you choose this guest house?

Answers may also point out if tourists came across accommodation options while investigating the destination. (In other words – did the potential visitor choose the guest house from the official Open Africa Route list, or did he/she search for accommodation in the area for different reasons than visiting the tourism route.

Regarding the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route/ Kalahari Red Dune Route as a tourism destination, which situations or offerings affected your perception of the route?

Answers to this question might address the impact of accommodation awards (Henning, 2008:138), as well as Star Grading (du Plessis & Saayman, 2011:133); Coetzee, 2015:121) on visitor choice.

Answers to this question reflect on Ramukumba and Ferreira's (2016:2) description of accommodation as an "essential support facility" for tourist destinations. Responses will also point out the influence that agritourism activities (often part of guest house offerings on tourist routes) might have on the image of the Route as a tourist destination.

How did your stay in this guest house influence your feelings about this area?

Answers would indicate whether the guest house supported the brand values of the destination (Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016), as well as what guest houses can do in future to enhance the brand.

What do you see as the general image/brand of this destination (Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food and Wine Route)?

Answers may also verify whether the intended image had been accepted by destination visitors (Qu, Kim & Im, 2010:474).

How can the guest houses on this route contribute towards the image/brand of the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route/ Kalahari Red Dune Route?

Would you recommend this guest house to other people? Why?

Answers will indicate the degree of visitor satisfaction and brand loyalty, which is critical to the industry, as note by Schaar (2013:2-4) and Singh and Mehraj (2018).

Would you recommend this destination to other people? Why?

Research questions for guest house owners/managers (Phase 4) are contained in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Relationship between research questions for owners/managers, research objectives and theoretical perspective

Research question	
What are the guest house manager's current knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding?	
Interview questions	Discussion
What do you view as the general image of this particular area as a tourist destination?	Brand theory was instructive here. Questions related to brand promise (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998:17; Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005:329), unique image (Qu, Kim & Im, 2010:467; Apostolakis, Jaffry, Sizeland & Cox, 2015:199-208), sense of place (Campelo, Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2014:154-161), brand associations (Zenker & Braun, 2010:5; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013:70), and components of destination branding (Qu <i>et al</i> , 2010:466; Kemp & Bordelon, 2011:122; Singh & Mehraj, 2018).
What do you think is the brand promise of this tourist destination (Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food and Wine Route)?	
A brand has to be based on the strengths of the destination. How would you describe the strengths of this route?	
Should a guest house on a tourist route form part of the destination brand? Why?	
What are the benefits to you as the guest house owner/manager of being part of a branded destination?	
In your opinion, what are the improvement opportunities of the Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food and Wine Route?	
Do you believe that cultural differences among customers can have a significant influence on how they perceive your brand?	
Destination branding is focused on matching the marketers' promoted image with the perceived image of the visitors. Do you think this specific route is successful in matching the promoted image and the image that visitors perceive? How is it done/Why not?	
Research question	
How can guest house managers incorporate the destination brand into the positive experiences of their guests?	
Interview questions	Discussion
On which aspects do you as the guest house owner/manager focus to offer your clients a positive guest house experience?	The theory on tangible and intangible features of successful accommodation was relevant. These included sustainability (Millar & Balago, 2011:307-308; Graci & Kuehnel, 2010), human resources (Mac Minn, 2014:43-45), aesthetics (Coetzee, 2015:121; Henning, 2007:55), service delivery (Radder & Wang, 2006:554; Luo & Qu, 2016, and atmosphere (Heide & Gronhaug, 2011:37).
On which aspects do you as the guest house owner/manager focus to make your guests feel welcome and cared for?	
How do you advertise your guest house?	Responses to these questions were analysed according to marketing principles, with a strong focus on destination branding theory.
How do your guest house marketing activities contribute towards the destination brand?	
Do you use the Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food and Wine Route logo on your marketing materials? How is it done/Why not?	
What is the contribution that guest houses, in general, can make towards a positive destination experience?	Answers to this question related to visitor satisfaction as a pre-condition for the long-term success of the tourism destination (Singh & Mehraj, 2018).
How do the service delivery activities at your guest house contribute to the destination brand?	Answers would indicate the possible roles of the accommodation sector in aspects such as selective packaging (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:57), being place ambassadors (Ryan, 2002, cited by Day, 2005:109), conveying quality (Blain <i>et al.</i> , 2005:330; Schaar, 2013:3), and building destination assets (Day, 2005:103-105).

Although both interview schedules were regarded as a guide, all questions were covered during each interview. Follow-up questions to probe responses were included where necessary.

The study made use of thick description by providing a detailed account of the context within which the study took place, as well as a thorough description of all procedures. This type of auditability intended to ensure that the reader would be able to follow the progression (Brink, 1993:38) as well as to bring about universality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:76). The latter refers to the degree to which the research project can be carried out by any competent person taking the researcher's place.

The audit trail consists of raw data (recorded interviews saved on the researcher's password-protected computer), transcribed interviews containing field notes (locked in an office cupboard), preliminary and final mind maps of themes and subthemes, as well as signed consent forms of all participants.

Interviews were recorded using a recording device of a legal practice, with "Smart Recorder" (an application downloaded on a smartphone) as a back-up instrument. The latter turned out to be a more practical method, as the application allowed for more recording capacity, as well as effortless downloading for transcribing purposes.

It became clear early in the study that guest house owners/managers on the two Open Africa tourism routes had different brand expectations. For this reason, the following units of analysis were included:

Interviews with owners on Route 1 (5)

Interviews with owners on Route 2 (5)

Interviews with guests on Route 1 (8)

Interviews with guests on Route 2 (7)

5.2.3 Data analysis applied

To analyse the interview data, the phases of thematic analysis indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006:35) were applied. The steps that were followed involved the following:

Step 1: Familiarising oneself with one's data

As the researcher, I collected the data in person. Familiarising included the transcription of interviews (both verbal and non-verbal utterances) and repeated reading.

Step 2: Generation of initial codes

Coding took place manually with different colour highlighters and the intention was to capture repeated patterns of meaning relevant to the phenomenon.

Step 3: Searching for themes

The different coded data extracts were collated into themes. I used a mind map to organise the codes and themes and to display relationships between themes. (See Appendix F).

Step 4: Reviewing themes

I reviewed the initial themes and sub themes by applying the research objectives as the coding framework. I then decided to give voice to four themes embedded throughout the interviews, but also addressed the research questions.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

I graphically demonstrated how each theme fitted into the study aim and research questions.

Table 5.3 demonstrates the integration of data. The table shows how the coding categories (derived from the semi-structured interviews) relate to the results of the three phases of the study, as well as to the research objectives. The primary outcome, as the first entry to the table reflects the relevancy of each phase and units of analysis with the purpose of the study.

Table 5.3: Connecting coding categories with data from the different research phases

STUDY AIM: To investigate ways in which guest houses in a specific destination can enhance a destination brand						
Research objectives	To analyse the concept "destination brand"	To discuss the nature, role, and scope of the guest house industry in the tourism sector, specifically the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune Route as tourism destinations	To determine which factors influence guest house clients' experiences	To determine the knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding of owners/managers of guest houses in the two Open Africa Routes	To establish how guest house owners/managers can incorporate the destination brand into the positive experiences of their guests	
Phase	Phase 1: Conceptual analysis of destination branding	Phase 2: Literature review	Phase 3: Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews			
Chapter	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5			
Data sources	Literature	Literature	Semi-structured interviews with guest house owners/managers and guests			
Units of analysis	<p>THEME 1: Brand participation</p> <p>Sub-themes: Knowledgeable brand members, apathy, lack of support, cooperation</p> <p>THEME 2: Living the brand</p> <p>Sub-themes: Sharing destination knowledge, cross-referencing, marketing material, Storytelling, Offering unique products</p> <p>THEME 3: Visitor brand awareness</p> <p>THEME 4: Visitor experiences</p> <p>Sub-themes: Unique features, negative experiences</p>					

Step 6 of the Braun and Clarke (2006) model entails the production of the report.

The following paragraphs deal with each theme separately: Participants' communication during the interviews add to the theoretical perspectives in Phase 1

and Phase 2. Most respondents were Afrikaans-speaking, and their comments have been translated to English and are presented in italics and brackets.

5.3 RESEARCH RESULTS

Step 1 to Step 3 of the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006:35) initially yielded 19 sub-themes. The themes were then reviewed against the research questions (Step 4 of Braun & Clarke, 2006:35) for relevancy. Figure 5.1 was then applied to screen and narrow the initial themes.

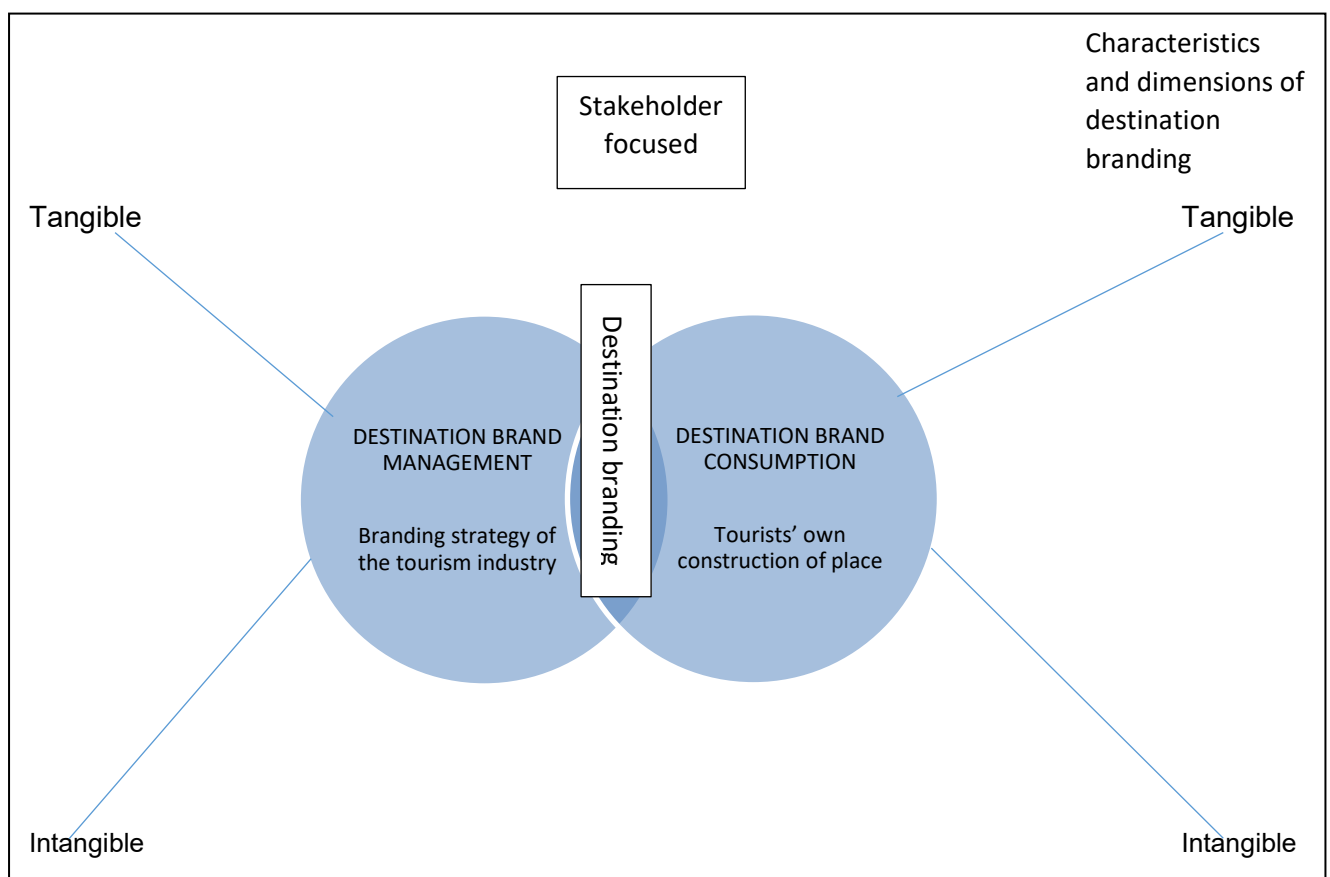


Figure 5.1: Characteristics and dimensions of destination branding

After the screening, the 11 sub-themes (knowledgeable brand members, apathy, lack of support, cooperation, sharing destination knowledge, cross-referencing, marketing material, storytelling, offering unique products, unique features, and negative experiences) were translated into four themes. These themes and sub-themes are illustrated in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2: Themes and sub-themes

The interview responses revealed respondents' perceptions and expectations of the respective brands, as well as their commitment to these brands. The sub-themes were then addressed in Theme 1: Brand participation and Theme 2: Living the brand. Responses were tested against the literature in Chapter 3, and specifically, the identified antecedents and outcomes of successful destination branding, as well as conformities between destination brand management (the branding strategy of the industry) and destination brand consumption (the tourists' construction of place) (see Figure 3.3). Destination brand consumption was addressed in Theme 3: Visitor brand awareness and Theme 4: Visitor experiences. Theme 4 reflects respondents' views and preferences of guest house services and operations, and it tested the theory discussed in Chapter 4.

The themes were divided between two sections. Section 1 concerns themes related to destination brand management, while Section 2 reflects themes related to destination brand consumption (see Figure 5.2).

These themes will be discussed in the rest of the chapter.

5.3.1 Section 1: Results from interviews with guest house owners

Two important aspects were explored in this section. The first related to the guest house owners/managers' perceptions of destination branding, and the second focused

on the way in which guest house owners/managers can or could incorporate the destination brand into their own guest house activities.

A. Guest house owners/managers' perceptions regarding destination branding

A brand is effective when there is sufficient consensus regarding the tangible and intangible features in the branding strategy (destination brand management) and the tourists' own construction of place (destination brand consumption) (see Figure 3.3).

As indicated in the literature review, Singh and Mehraj (2018) summarised the primary purpose of destination branding by saying that it is meant to stimulate visitor numbers and enhance the local economy. Antecedents for effective branding were identified in Chapter 3 as brand culture, sense of place, brand leadership, brand communications, structure and coordination, stakeholder partnership and collaboration, brand image and competitive edge, brand promise, a dimension of pleasure, uniqueness, emotional connection, interactive online processes, and brand personality (see 3.3).

The literature study points out that the overall image of a destination will direct tourist behaviour and plays a role in the tourist's intention to revisit and recommend (Qu *et al.* (2010:468). Blain *et al.* (2005:329) believe that the brand promise is critical to destination branding as it leads tourists to more accurate anticipation of the brand experience. Kavartis and Hatch (2013:70) argue that multiple stakeholders can make branding complex and confusing in the mind of the prospective tourist.

The following themes were identified with regard to this topic:

5.3.1.1 Theme 1: Brand participation

As noted in the literature study, Gössling and Lane (2014:1401) recommend that guest houses in rural areas become part of destination management initiatives because of the importance of guest-host relationships in rural areas. These authors view rural guest-host relationships as the backbone of rural tourism.

Responses in this theme indicated how guest houses experienced the branding effort and supported the brand values of the destination (Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016). Aspects with a high degree of consensus among respondents were summarised for a concise reflection of the brand members' knowledge of their respective brands. Deviations were cited and discussed in more detail as with the rest of the themes.

5.3.1.1.1 Knowledgeable brand members

Owner/manager respondents on both routes showed some knowledge of the characteristics and antecedents of their respective brands. There was also reasonable consensus regarding area images, route strengths, and brand promise of the respective routes. Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 summarise the owner/manager responses.

Respondents on Route 1 (Kokerboom Food and Wine Route) described the image of the area, the brand promise and the strengths of the route as shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Brand consensus amongst owners/managers on Route 1

Image of the area	Frequency of answer	Brand promise of the route	Frequency of answer	Strengths of the route	Frequency of answer
Peacefulness	1	Peacefulness	1		
Remoteness, vastness	2	Remoteness	1		
Natural elements	3	Natural beauty, Vegetation, Kokerboom	4		
Different landscapes					
Aridness					
Rock formations					
Contrast					
Dunes					
Vineyards					
Lush vegetation					
Stars					
Medicinal plants					
Birdlife					
Wildlife					
Insects					
Uniqueness	1	Different	1		
		Safety, less crime	2		
Sunshine	1	Climate		Climate	1
People, cultures, warm-heartedness	2	Hospitality	1		
Food/Wine/Wine cellars/Vineyards/Wine routes	2	Wines	1	Different wines	3
		Traditional Food		Traditional food	
				Wine cellars	
Augrabies Falls	2	Augrabies	1	Augrabies	2
Variety	1				
Orange River and river activities	2	River	1		
Farmers, Farms	2				
Transit route	1				
Kgalagadi	1	Interesting	1		
Guest houses	1	Riemvasmaak	1	Riemvasmaak	1
		Real experience	1	Attractions along the route	1

The most prominent features of the area, according to the five owner/manager respondents, were natural elements, such as different landscapes/aridness/rock formations/contrast/dunes/vineyards/lush vegetation /stars/medicinal plants/birdlife/wildlife/insects. Respondents also agreed on features such as remoteness and vastness, inhabitant characteristics, food and wine, the Augrabies Falls, the Orange River, and farming. The brand promise included natural beauty, safety, food and wine.

Table 5.5 indicates tangencies among the answers of Route 2 owners/managers regarding area images, route strengths, and the brand promise of the Kalahari Red Dune Route. The most prominent area images included calmness/peacefulness/rest/silence, natural environment with red dunes/plains/sunsets/game, hospitality, and the Kgalagadi. Most respondents indicated that the people were the most crucial route strength and pointed out that hospitality, friendliness, sincerity and unpretentiousness were prominent characteristics. Consensus on brand promise included silence/leisure/calmness, the desert experience with red dunes/sunsets/geckos/stars, as well as the characteristics of the people and cultures (hospitality/humanity/compassion).

Table 5.5: Brand consensus amongst owners/managers on Route 2

Image of the area	Frequency of answer	Brand promise of the route	Frequency of answer	Strengths of the route	Frequency of answer
Calmness, peacefulness, rest, silence	3	Silence Leisure Calmness	2		
Natural Environment	5	Desert experience	3	Red dunes	1
Red dunes		red dunes,			
Plains		sunsets			
Sunsets		geckos			
Fauna (game)		stars			
		Quality time in nature	1	Natural environment	1
Hospitality	2	People, cultures hospitality, humanity, compassion	2	People, hospitality, friendliness sincerity, unpretentiousness	3
Simplicity, non-commercialised	1	Simplicity, non-commercialised	1	Simplicity	1
		Quality time with family	1		
Kgalagadi	2				
Safety	1				
Traditional food	1			Traditional food	1
Bloodhound/ Haakskeenpan	1				
		Experience extreme temperatures	1		
		Clean air	1	Clean air	1
		Unique experience	1		
				Different activities	1

Pike (2009:127) and Qu *et al.* (2010:466) agree that there should be a relationship between brand identity (the image desired by destination marketers) and brand image (the actual image in the mind of the tourist). Although the images that visitors perceive will be discussed under “Place brand consumption” (see 5.3.2), some guest house

owners/managers pointed out that their visitors recognised area images similar to the projected images that are part of the branding strategy.

One Route 1 owner explained: "Visitors that are here always say that it is so peaceful and it's so tranquil and so beautiful, and they just love the stars and the river and so on". However, she believed that visitors were not aware of the brand name: "Nobody asks about the Kokerboom Route. Nobody has ever asked about the Kokerboom Route."

Another Route 1 respondent also believed that promoted images and perceived images corresponded, but doubted whether tourists knew the brand name: "Ek dink so. Omdat hier baie produsente op dit is. Kokerboom, Food, Wine ... genoeg restaurante wat se standaard so hoog is." (*I think so. Because we have got many producers on it [the route] Kokerboom, Food, Wine ... enough restaurants with high standards.*) The respondent also remarked: "Ek kry nooit iemand hier wat praat van die Kokerboomroete nie." (*I never get anybody here who mentions the Kokerboom Route*).

Route 2 owners/managers also believed that visitors experienced the images that were projected by the brand. One response summarised the general view: "Die mense kom hier, hulle kry wat die naam sê: dit is Kalahari. Hulle kry ook alles wat daarmee saam gaan soos ek voeër gesê het; die gasvryheid, die stilte, die skoon lug. Alles wat regtig daarmee te doen het so ek dink nie hulle kan teleurgesteld wees nie, die naam is nie misleidend nie." (*The people come here, they get what the name says: it is the Kalahari. They get everything associated with it, as I have said earlier; the hospitality, silence, clean air. Everything that has really something to do with that so I do not think they can be disappointed, the name is not misleading.*)

All owner/manager respondents agreed that a guest house on a tourist route should form part of the destination brand, but there was uncertainty regarding the effective functioning of the respective brands. The responses of guest house guests provided some answers (see 5.3.2).

5.3.1.1.2 Apathy

According to the literature, the logo is an important part of brand identity (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005:332). It not only assists in communicating image, but also helps to speed up recognition of the brand.

Although all owner/manager respondents on the two tourism routes were familiar with the destination logo (“Dit ken ek darem – hy het die kokerboom” – *At least I know that – it contains the quiver tree*), only three out of five respondents on Route 2 and one of the respondents on Route 1 used the logo in their marketing activities. This apathy is a concern, as valuable opportunities to help increase the visibility of the destination brand are lost.

“No, I don’t use it in marketing.”

“No, unfortunately not.”

“Nee, ek gebruik hom nie.” (*No, I do not use it.*)

“Op die oomblik gebruik ons nie eintlik hul naam nie.” (*At the moment we do not really use their name.*)

“Op die oomblik nie.” (*Not at present.*)

However, one respondent on Route 1 pointed out that she had applied the logo on a map that was used in her guest house for orientating visitors. Two respondents on Route 2 usually attached a card with the route logo on it to welcoming gifts. Another Route 2 respondent said: “Ek gebruik dit vir seker.” (*I most certainly use it.*) One of the Route 2 respondents added that she spoke with visitors regarding the Route as an attempt to market the route: “So jy probeer maar die Roete ... En as jy met gaste praat, praat jy oor die Roete, want meeste van hulle vra uit oor die Roete.” (*So, you try the Route ... And when you speak with guests, you speak of the Route, because most of them want to know about it.*)

Besides apathy regarding the logo, some owner/manager respondents were not really interested in Route initiatives:

“Ek was jare terug laas op ‘n vergadering.” (*It is years since I last attended a meeting.*)

“Ek was baie lank terug laas op hul website” (*I haven’t visited their website for a very long time.*)

“Om nou eerlik te wees...ek weet nie eers wie is almal op die roete nie” (*To be honest, I do not even know who are on the route.*)

More than one respondent (on both routes) were straightforward when asked whether they advertised their establishments as part of the route:

“Net ons onderneming en nie as deel van die roete nie” (*Our enterprise only and not as part of the route.*)

“Ons self doen dit nie” (*We ourselves don't do that.*)

“Net myself.” (*Myself only.*)

5.3.1.1.3 Lack of support

Ooi (2010:109) admits that the "politics of branding" might become a challenge during destination development. This author defines the term as "the dynamic processes of drawing support and cooperation by the brand authorities from different tourism agencies and residents so that the brand will be accepted, communicated and manifested through official and unofficial publicity and products" (see 3.4.4).

It was apparent from the current study that there is a significant need for the marketing of the two tourism routes and that this is a challenge. The literature review on destination branding clearly revealed that marketing by destination management institutions and stakeholders is a major component of the destination competitiveness model (Keyser, 2009:53). This partly reflects on stakeholder partnership, which is one of Hankinson's (2010:99) critical antecedents of destination branding. Hankinson (2010:98) suggests that multiple stakeholders might have conflicting objectives – which require the management of interactions. Such management or brand leadership, according to Hankinson (2010:100), needs a clear vision of the future, and should foster brand commitment and set up corporate structures.

Some Route 1 respondents were unsure about the corporate structure of their destination brand, and more specifically the role and functions of Open Africa, the Provincial Tourism Department and the product owner committee of the particular route.

These respondents perceived a lack of marketing support and information:

“Vir die afgelope vier jaar dink ek het die Open Africa te min gedoen om dinge hier te bemark ... Niemand kan vir my sê hulle weet van die Open Africa kaart nie. Ek dink daar moet weer vuur ingeblaas word.” (*For the past four years, I thought that Open Africa did too little to market things around here ... Nobody can tell me that they know about the Open Africa map. I think that somebody should breathe some new life into it.*)

“... toerismedepartemente ... hierdie ouens is nie ‘hands-on’ nie. Dinge het al verander, dan het hulle dit nog altyd daar ... Hulle doen baie, maar ek dink met die geld wat hulle spandeer, op hierdie stukke wat hul druk, kan ons baie beter

produktiwiteit kry en 'n positiewe beeld". ... *(tourism departments ... these guys are not hands-on. Things have changed, but then they are still there [on the map]. They are doing a lot, but I think with the money they spend on all the printwork, we can get much better productivity and a positive image).*

"... Noordkaap doen iets, maar jy weet wat ... wat baie ontnugterend was ... hierdie ouens hersien nie hul goed elke jaar nie." *(Northern Cape does something, but you know, something that was a rude awakening ... these guys do not revise their stuff annually.)*

"Ek behoort aan die roete, maar terugvoer...en bemerking ... en dit ... dink ek is nog glad nie daar nie ... die ... department kan meer insit op dit ...100% van die ouens wat na my toe kom, kom nie oor die roete daar nie" ... ek het nie iets wat ek kan sê 'Hier is die begin van die roete nie of hierso is die volgende gastehuse' nie". *(I am part of the Route, but feedback ... and marketing ... and so on ... I think it is not there at all at this stage ... the department should do more ... 100% of the guys visiting my guest house, do not come because of the Route ... I do not have anything that makes it possible to say, "This is the start of the Route' or 'Here are the next guest houses'.)*

"... om meer kommunikasie te hê tussen die mense wat dit reël en met die gastehuse" *(... to have more communication between the people who are organising it and the guest houses).*

"Hulle kommunikeer nie eintlik met ons nie." *(They do not really communicate with us.)*

"Ons sukkel maar ... ons toerismesentrum is maar bietjie ... die een in Kakamas is nooit oop gewoonlik nie." *(We are struggling ... our tourism centre is a bit ... the one in Kakamas is seldom open.)*

An owner on Route 2 pointed out: "Ongelukkig wil Noordkaap Toerisme ons nie befonds nie. So ons moet maar self woeker vir geld ... Aanvanklik het hulle (*Open Africa*) vir ons baie gedoen, maar hulle is nie nou meer so betrokke nie. Hulle voel ons Roete is nou gevestig. *(Unfortunately, Northern Cape Tourism does not want to fund us. So we have to raise funds on our own ... Initially, they [Open Africa] did a lot for us, but they are not so involved any longer. They feel our Route has now been established.)*

Another Route 2 respondent mentioned that Northern Cape Tourism does indeed provide some opportunities for Route members: "Hulle gee vir ons blootstelling soos

nou toe hulle die Bloodhound kar ge-‘launch’ het. Dan kon jy gegaan het ... jy kon ‘n voorlegging gedoen het wat ook in hulle sisteem ingesit is vir Bloodhound 2020 en dan kom jy outomaties op hulle boeke vir daardie tydperk.” (*They offer us exposure like recently during the Bloodhound car launch. Then you could go ... you could do a presentation which was uploaded on their system for Bloodhound 2020, and then you would be on their books automatically for that period.*)

Owner/manager respondents on Route 1 indicated that they referred visitors to other guest houses and points of interest in the area, but commented that they need a brochure or map containing information of the other Route members:

“Mense wil vertel, maar hulle het nie die kennis nie.” (*People would like to tell, but they do not have the knowledge.*)

“Al is dit net so ‘n ‘copy’ of iets wat sê dis almal wat op die roete is.” (*Even if it is only a copy or something which states this is everyone on the Route.*)

“The marketing really falls short.”.

“As enkeling kos dit te veel geld om hierdie goed te bemark.” (*It is too expensive for an individual to market these things.*)

“Ek sal sê meer advertensies.” (*I would say more advertisements.*)

Route 2 members have taken the marketing of their Route into their own hands:

“Jy betaal ledegeld en ons adverteer as ‘n roete. So ons bring daai roeteboekie uit. Advertensie, in die eerste plek, werk vir ons goedkoper uit. As wat elkeen moet individueel gaan adverteer. Jy kan dit net nie bekostig nie.” (*You pay a membership fee and we advertise as a route. So we publish that route booklet. Advertisement, in the first place, is cheaper for us. Instead of everyone advertising individually. You simply cannot afford it.*)

“Ons betaal ledegeld per persoon per jaar. En daaruit is ons veronderstel om te besluit watter advertensie ons beskou as die belangrikste.” (*We pay membership fees per person per year. And from that we are supposed to decide which advertisement we view as the most important.*)

“Die brosjure is deur die Rooduin Roete se bestuur gedoen en dit is ons eie, ons betaal vir hom en ons versprei hom ook.” (*The Red Dune Route management made the brochure and it is ours, we pay for it and we distribute it as well.*)

Two owner/manager respondents (one on Route 1 and the other respondent on Route 2) identified a need for training of staff in cleaning and interaction with guests. One of them expressed a need for standards in the tourism sector. This issue has also been addressed in the literature review citing Dioko and Harrill (2010:219), Mac Minn (2014:58) and Trianasari, Butcher and Sparks (2017). These authors point out how formal commitments of adherence (such as licensing, standards and processes) can influence the destination brand and affect brand trust and credibility. Finch (2010:133) finds a solution in a customer charter, which indicates to staff members what they are expected to deliver and how. Slabbert and Saayman (2003:98) view it as ironic that a comfortable bed, bathroom, and breakfast form the core of the client's needs, but that the attitude, friendliness, helpfulness, and genuine concern of the staff largely determine the quality of the experience.

The opinion of a guest respondent (a tour guide) confirms what is said in the literature: "Opleiding speel 'n geweldige rol. Alles hang af wie is in beheer van daardie personeel. As jy omgee vir mense, gaan jy sorg dat jou personeel dit doen." (*Training plays an enormous role. Everything depends on who is in charge of those staff members. If you care about people, you will ensure that your staff does it.*)

5.3.1.1.4 Cooperation

Hankinson (2010:102) agrees that contemporary marketing involves strong relationships with suppliers, the community, shareholders and competitors and points out that organisations with insufficient resources might be able to respond more swiftly and more usefully to a changing market environment when forming cooperative partnerships. Partnerships may involve the sharing of resources (such as finance, knowledge, and competencies). A formal framework with organisational arrangements (see 3.5.5) and good communication (see 3.5.4) is a prerequisite for destination branding. Owner-respondent 3 on Route 1 explained how the different stakeholders teamed up when the Route was established and how she, as a guest house owner, contributed: "[Dit was] die eerste keer in die geskiedenis – nege jaar terug – dat SANRAL en bv. Provinsiale Vervoer bymekaargekom het, want ons moet borde opsit ... Ook departemente binne in die toerisme ... En ek dink wat baie belangrik was wat hieruit gespruit het, was die hulp wat jy mense gegee het." (*It was the first time in history – nine years ago – that SANRAL and Provincial Transport, for instance, met,*

because we had to put up signage. ... Departments within Tourism as well ... I think something very important that emerged from this was the assistance you could offer people.)

Saraniemi and Kamppula (2017:13) also reported the collaboration of key internal stakeholders as a crucial action in the development of brand identity. Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) agree that destination branding and the quality of the destination experience rely on a combination of different services provided by various local stakeholders. Owner-respondent 3 (Route1) supported this notion by saying: "Ons het mekaar nodig. Ons moet hande vat." (*We need each other. We must take hands.*) Owner 5 on Route 1 elaborated on cooperation: "Want hoe meer ons die ... die Roete bemark, kan ons mense trek na Upington en omgewing. Ek meen, dit bring geld in." (*Because the more we market the Route, the more people we can draw to Upington and the area. I mean, it brings in money.*)

Research has shown that social relationships in the small hospitality enterprise are essential (Lynch, 2000:112). In line with this finding, guest house owners on Route 2 enjoyed the social benefits of being part of a branded group: "[O]ns as vrouens werk lekker saam. Ons kry lekker idees onder mekaar." (*We as women work together nicely. We get nice ideas from one another.*) A second respondent said: "... dan hoor jy van probleme, jy hoor van om moeilike 'customers' te hanteer ...en jy deel die lekker met mekaar." (*... then you hear of problems, you hear of how to handle difficult customers ... and you share the positive things with one another.*) A third respondent commented: "En ja, dit hou jou op jou tone ook. Want jy sien by ander." (*And yes, it keeps you on your toes. Because you [learn from] other people.*) Lynch's (2000:112) findings confirm that informal leaders from small and micro enterprises in a network can influence cooperation, support, training interventions and quality.

Owners on Route 2 explained the cooperation between Route 2-members as follows: "Almal werk saam" (*Everybody cooperates*).

"Ek dink almal op die roete is gemotiveerd ... ek dink nie ons het regtig afguns onder mekaar nie. Omdat ons ver van mekaar af is." (*I think everyone on the Route is motivated ... I do not think there is any envy. Because we are far from one another.*)

"Daars nie vir my 'n ding om te dink, ag nee wat ek gaan niemand bemark van hier af verder nie. Want daai ou bied net weer ietsie anders wat 'n groter ervaring is." (*There is no such thing as thinking, oh no, I am not going to market anybody further on. Because that guy offers something different again that is a greater experience.*)

"Ons leer so baie by mekaar." (*We learn so much from one another.*)

"Ons het begrip vir mekaar se goed. En as jy my iets vra, sal ek nie sê nee, ek weet nie. Jy weet, ons deel. Ons deel regtig met mekaar. (*We understand one another's situation. And, if you ask me about something, I won't say no, I don't know. You know, we share. We really share with one another.*)

The same respondent explained the Route members' involvement in the hosting of local events and added: "Dis lekker, want jy kom weer uit en jy kuier met jou pelle en jou Roete se mense, want ons is amper 'n familietjie – die Roete se vrouens. En so kuier jy en jy werk saam." (*It is nice, because you go out again and you socialise with your friends and the people of the Route because we are almost a little family – the women of the Route. Furthermore, in this way you socialise and you work together.*)

Owner 2 (Route 2) mentioned that – like in every society – there were some who had taken advantage of the ones who were doing the work, but those incidents had been handled by the Route management.

Owner/managers also referred to the positive cooperation between Route 2 members and the benefit of technical assistance (see 4.7.8.) Owner 1 mentioned that the members share relevant information on a WhatsApp group and that the smaller guest houses get help with the star grading process and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) registration. "As R op die groep sit ek kort 24 kamers dan klim ons almal op die groep en sê ek het drie, ek het twee, ek het een, en dan deel sy dit in volgens dit." (*When R posts on the group 24 rooms are needed, then everyone comes onto the group and they say: I have three, I have two, and I have one, and then she divides it accordingly.*) Owner 3 remarked: "So ons sien mekaar nie eintlik as kompetisie nie." (*So we do not really see each other as competition.*)

"... die kleineres gehelp om te registreer om 4-ster, 2-ster, 3-ster wat ookal en met die BEE registrasies en goed dit wat nou ook belangrik is. (... *helped the smaller ones to register to become 4-star, 2-star, 3-star or whatever and with BEE registration and the stuff that is now important.*) A respondent added: "... hulle het vir ons gesê dat ons op

hierdie MAPS – Google Maps – moet gaan en hulle het ons gehelp om te ‘connect’ op dit.” (... *they told us to get onto MAPS – Google Maps – and they helped us to connect to it.*)

Another Route 2 respondent explained that the smaller establishments, which did not have their own websites, got coverage on the website of the Route: “As jy nou bel en jy soek vinnig 'n telefoonnommer en goed dan het ek dit, want jy kry mos nou nie ... die kleiner outjies is mos nou nie op die Internet beskikbaar nie.” (*If you phone now and you quickly want a telephone number and stuff, then I have got it because you do not get ... the smaller ones are not available on the Internet.*)

Two Route 2 respondents suggested personal financial benefits of being involved by group projects: “... of soos die toerismeweek waar ons almal betrek raak waar daar kos reëlings en goed is.” (... *or with the tourism week where they involve us all with food arrangements and stuff.*) The second respondent stated: “En die ‘events’ wat plaasvind is die roete se mense wat help om daai ‘events’ te laat gebeur.” (*And the events that take place are the people of the Route that help to make those events happen.*)

Owner 2 (Route 2) voiced some concern regarding the sustainability of the current route stakeholder leadership: “So – en ek moet eerlik sê - ons Roete se bestaan, is ‘genuine’ Z wat alles op ‘track’ hou. Sy is absoluut ...met ons finansies, met ons bemarking, met ons brosjures. Met ons samewerking, is sy absoluut die een wat hom op ‘track’ hou en ek dink almal van ons is half benoud. Omdat sy so 'n ongelooflike perfeksionis is op haar gebied, is ons half bang vir die dag dat sy sê sy het nou genoeg gedoen. So ja, ons probeer almal nou maar help en insette gee. (So – *and I have to be honest – the existence of our Route is genuine Z that keeps everything on track. She is absolutely ... with our finances, with our marketing, with our brochures. With our cooperation, she is absolutely the one that keeps [it] on track, and I think all of us are a bit anxious. Because she is an unbelievable perfectionist in her area, we rather fear the day that she says she has now done enough. So yes, all of us try to help and to give input.*)

As stated in the literature review, Apostolakis *et al.* (2015:205) state that a unique internationally recognisable brand creates scope economies from collective marketing. Day (2005:103-105) agrees by referring to increased shareholder value

through accelerated cash flow and reduced costs due to cooperative marketing (see 3.6.2.14). It became clear throughout the interviews with the different guest house owners/managers that collective marketing was the most prominent benefit the single product owner got from the brand:

“... omdat dit ’n roete is, maak dit vir ons vrouens makliker om bemarking te doen. In die eerste plek, vir seker.” (*... because it is a route, it is easier for we women to do marketing. In the first place, for sure.*)

“Advertensie, in die eerste plek, werk vir ons goedkoper uit. As wat elkeen moet individueel gaan adverteer. Jy kan dit net nie bekostig nie.” (*Advertisement, in the first place, works out cheaper for us. Instead of everyone advertising individually. You can just not afford it.*)

“As jy nie op die Roete is nie, dan moet jy soveel meer ander bemarking doen.” (*If you are not on the Route, then you will have to do so much more other marketing.*)

“Jy is meer sigbaar. Dis makliker. Ek kan nie as ’n enkelpersoon INDABA toe gaan nie” (*You are more visible. It is easier. As a single person I cannot go to INDABA.*)

“So ons gastehuse se inligting lê alles daar. Die toeris wat verbykom, vat ’n ding as hy wil of hy skakel ... Hier is gastehuse wat nie by ons Roete ingeskakel is nie en ek dink hulle voel dit tog.” (*So all the information about our guest houses is there. The tourist that passes by takes [one] if he wants to or he phonest... Here are some guest houses that are not connected to our Route, and I think they do feel it.*)

Not all owners/managers believed that their brand was successful. The following comments summarise the overall sentiment of the owners/managers on Route 1:

“Ek dink om eerlik met jou te sê die Kokerboom Roete – vandat ek hier gekom het die dag – is nie werklik so goed soos dit moet wees nie ... So ek voel elkeen gaan maar op sy eie aan.” (*I think to be honest with you, the Kokerboom Route – since the day I arrived here – is not as good as it should be ... So I feel each one carries on by themselves.*)

“... as ons almal betrokke raak. Ek dink van die gastehuse en soos ekself ... ons is ook maar skuldig aan 100% betrokke wees en in die ding in gaan.” (*If all of us [can] become involved. I think some of the guest houses and like myself ... we are guilty of 100% involvement and to get into it.*)

B. Incorporating the destination brand into guest experiences

Ooi (2010:122) argues that the politics of branding will involve seeking consensus, persuading the stakeholders to use the brand and to present their offerings in the branded manner. Kladou *et al.* (2017:19) claim that traits and characteristics of a place itself are more powerful factors in decision-making than prominent brand elements such as name, logo and tagline. The implication is that brand members should apply or "live" the brand.

The literature study confirmed the importance of involving different stakeholders in one theme and that these stakeholders should support the destination values on offer (Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016). Chapter 3 identified brand culture, brand promise and sense of place as three of the antecedents of destination branding (see 3.5.1, 3.5.12 and 3.5.2). A brand culture includes area enthusiasm and a sense of place (atmosphere, local habits and communal practices). Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) view the sense of place as fundamental to the articulation of a destination brand. The authors regard *genius loci* (the shared sense of the spirit of – and the attachment to – a place) as part of the sense of place and see geographic location and landscape as essential elements of the tourism experience. Zenker *et al.* (2017) point out that a high identification with the place is vital for accruing brand ambassadors (important for word-of-mouth promotion).

In this study, owners/managers over the spectrum presented a high identification with the destination and its characteristics. The following themes developed from the data:

5.3.1.2 Theme 2: Living the brand

Theme 2 responses reflected on what owners/managers of guest houses do to enhance the brand. Interviews with owners and managers on both Routes expressed their enthusiasm regarding their respective environments and their attempts to apply brand promises and destination values at their guest houses.

5.3.1.2.1 Sharing knowledge of the destination

One Route 1 respondent believed that the guest houses were responsible for informing tourists about the existence of the Route and its offerings: "As hy by ons kom dan kom hy maar op dit af. As hy by een van ons gastehuse kom ... baie keer

as iemand vir ons 'n navraag het oor blyplek en wat hy kan doen dan het ons 'n aktiwiteitslys van die Rooiduin Roete wat ons saam met sy bespreking vir hom stuur.” *(When he arrives here, then he becomes aware of it [the Route]. When he arrives at our guest houses ... often when somebody has an enquiry regarding accommodation and what he can do, then we have a list of activities of the Red Dune Route that we send together with his reservation.)*

Respondent 3 on Route 1 was passionate about providing information regarding the area: “En die inligting wat ons hier by X gee, bring vir ons definitief baie voete ... Ja, ons probeer regtig om hierdie toeris baie meer te gee as net ons gastehuis. En hulle luister graag, hulle luister graag. Want hulle soek die inligting.” *(And the information that we provide here at X, most definitely bring us some feet ... Yes, we really try to offer this tourist much more than our guest house. And they listen eagerly, they listen eagerly. Because they are looking for the information.)* Another Route 1 respondent said: “Inligting is baie belangrik vir ons gaste – veral ons oorsese gaste wat nie weet wat hulle kan doen nie” *(Information is very important to our guests – especially our foreign guests who do not know what they can do.)* A third Route 1 respondent believed that guest house managers can help guests to become less anxious when sharing experiences of the area with them: “As jy 'n bietjie ondervinding het van die streek, kan jy die ouens so ‘nice’ help. En jy kan sien die ou ontspan.”

Route 2 respondents also valued information sharing: “Baie van ons toeriste sal vir ons vra wat kan ons doen om die dag om te kry.” *(Many of our tourists ask us what they can do to spend the day.)*

“En baie van die ouens vra, maar waar kom dit voor?” *(And many ask, but where does one find this?)*

“Baie hou daarvan om lekker te gesels – so dat jy maar 'n bietjie inligting omtrent die omgewing met hulle deel.” *(Many prefer a nice conversation – then you can share a bit of information regarding the environment with them.)*

“Ek kan jou bietjie vertel hoe lyk dit in die Park, die verskillende ruskampe, hoekom is die water so seperig” *(I can tell you something about the Park, the different rest camps, why the water is so soapy.)*

“Dan neem ons mense uit vir ‘sundowners’ – om dit vir hulle lekker te maak en te wys. En ek ken redelik die plante van die veld ... so ek kan vir hulle hierdie goed vertel.”

(Then we take people out for sundowners – to make it nice for them and to show them things. And I have a fair knowledge of the veld – so I can tell them about these things.)

5.3.1.2.2 Cross-referencing

From the interviews it became clear that the destination gains in different ways from the efforts of guest houses, but that there are also advantages for guest houses to be part of the destination brand.

Guest house owners who felt that the marketing activities of their route did not function at full capacity, pointed out that word-of-mouth marketing and referral among route members might be the outcome if the brand functions well. One Route 1 respondent said: "If once word of mouth gets out, and you have built a reputation as being on the routes and being a guest house that is on the route that gets recommended, it is a huge benefit because then there is no better advertisement than word of mouth." A second Route 1 respondent stated: "... en minstens – hopelik – verwys iemand anders weer ... "*(... and at least – hopefully – somebody else refers again...)* A third Route 1 respondent noted: ... "om op die einde van die dag voete te kry." (*... to get feet at the end of the day.*)

Product owners gain through referral. All respondents on both routes said that they refer their guests to other places of interest in the area, and if they are fully booked, they refer tourists to other guest houses on the Route. A Route1 respondent said: "Ons het mekaar nodig. Ons moet hande vat. Somtyds is ek vol, dan het ek ander gastehuse nodig om my gaste heen te stuur." (*We need each other. We should cooperate. Sometimes I am fully booked, then I need other guest houses to refer my guests to.*)

"Baie van ons kliënte ... ons stuur hul Riemvasmaak toe of Augrabies toe." (*We send many of our clients to Riemvasmaak or Augrabies.*)

"Ja', and then we also tell them when they ask where can they go, we tell them to go to Bezalel for wine tasting or you can go to Augrabies. We try and refer them to other guest houses."

"... by Keimoes Padstal miskien 'n lekker konfytjie wat die tannie maak of die beskuit wat sy bak, jy weet, en die druiwe en dadels van die omgewing hier naby." (*... at*

Keimoes Farmstall perhaps nice jam made by the woman or the rusks she bakes, you know, and the grapes and dates from the neighbouring area.)

One Route 1 owner held the opinion that only a few members market the area and refer visitors to places on the Route: “Maar ouens wil nie hierdie goed altyd vertel nie. Jy weet die mense is baie ‘Ek wil net vir myself’ en dan na nege jaar is dit nog nie regtig ontsluit nie. Daar is ’n paar wat dit regtig doen, maar dis maar ’n probleem.” (*But the guys don’t always want to tell this stuff. You know, the people are very much like ‘I only want it for myself’ and then after nine years, it has not been unlocked. There are a few who really do it, but it is a bit of a problem.*)

Route 2 members also pointed out that they refer visitors to other places: “Soveel kilometer van hier af is dit ‘dune surfing’, soveel kilometer hiervan af doen hulle 4x4-roetes.” (*So many kilometres from here they offer dune surfing, so many kilometres from here they offer 4x4 routes.*) This respondent also pointed out that she refers potential clients to other guest houses, for instance when her guest house is fully booked, or when it is more practical for a visitor on his way to Namibia to stay closer to the border. “En dan sê ek wie dit is en ek gee die nommer.” (*And then I tell them the name and I provide the telephone number.*)

5.3.1.2.3 Marketing material

A Route 2 respondent elaborated: “Kyk ons het pamflette van die goed op die Rooiduin Roete ... Dit het al die telefoonnommers in van alles wat ’n gastehuis op die roete is. Elke liewe gastehuis, elke tydverdryf wat daar is, is daar ’n naam en ’n nommer op wat vir jou duidelik beskryf: By X kan jy duine ry, jy kan 4x4-roetes doen, jy kan perdry. So hulle doen moeite.” (*Look, we have pamphlets of the stuff on the Red Dune Route ... It contains telephone numbers of all guest houses on the Route. [For] every single guest house, each activity ... there is a name and number [on the list] which describes you clearly: At X you can do dune riding, you can do 4x4 routes, you can do horse riding. So they put in much effort.*) Another Route 2 respondent referred to the efforts of the Route management: “Die brosjure is deur die Rooiduin Roete se bestuur gedoen en dit is ons eie, ons betaal vir hom en ons versprei hom ook.” (*The brochure has been made by the Red Dune Route management, and it is ours, we pay for it, and we distribute it.*)

Interactive online processes was another antecedent of destination branding identified in Chapter 3 (see 3.5.9). A Route 2 respondent pointed out that the Route administrates its own Facebook account, as well as its own web page. This kind of initiative is supported by Oliveira and Panyik (2014:55, 62), Dickinger and Lalicic (2016:319) and Mercadel (2018:3) who argue that social media and electronic tourism should be utilised as a convenient channel to engage with a crowd, maintain communities of interest, gather content, do visual storytelling, promote events, and encourage electronic WOM. The same respondent mentioned that the Route members are connected to Google Maps, and since the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is the main drawcard for visitors to the area, a person would be able to see all the options on the Route when he/she searches Kgalagadi on the Internet. "Hulle het vir ons gesê dat ons op hierdie MAPS – Google Maps – moet gaan en hulle het ons gehelp om te 'connect' op dit. So as 'n ou sê hy wil Kgalagadi toe gaan en hy gaan op Google Maps, dan kan hy die gastehuse sien wat wel op Google Maps is op die Roete, waarvan – ek wil amper sê 70% van ons is reeds ..." (*They told us to get on this MAPS – Google Maps – and they helped us to connect to that. So, if someone says he wants to go to the Kgalagadi and he goes onto Google Maps, then he would see the guest houses who are on the Route – I would say nearly 70% of us are [there] already ...*) This is in line with the views of Oliveira and Panyik (2014:62) that state that destination branding experts should maintain communities of interest, gather content, post visual material, promote local events, and encourage electronic word of mouth.

One Route 2 owner explained that after the Route was established, Open Africa granted a certain amount of money that could be utilised for the operation of the Route. The Kalahari Red Dune Route members decided to develop a tourist information centre and ablution facilities in Askham: "... naby die Diamond T Coffee Shop is die geboutjie gebou en dan is daar 'n mans- en 'n damesafdeling. As jy inkom ... die idee is jy betaal 'n bedraggie – R2 of 'n R5 by die hek. Daai geldjies gaan dan nou alles na ons Red Dune Route toe. Dan stap jy basies in 'n inligtingsarea in waar ons hele Roete uiteengesit is, 'n 'slide show' is, 'n mooi kaart van die omgewing ..." (*Near the Diamond T Coffee Shop a building has been erected and then there is a ladies and gents division. When you enter ... the idea is that you pay a small amount – R2 or R5 at the gate. This small amount goes to our Red Dune Route. Then you basically step into an*

information area where the whole Route is set out, a slide show, [and] a beautiful map of the area ...)

5.3.1.2.4 Storytelling

Besides sharing information from brochures, owners/managers also liked to tell stories about the area and its attractions.

“... deur met hom te gesels van die begin af. Om hom tuis te laat voel.” (... by talking to him from the start. To make him feel at home.) The same Route 1 respondent added: *“En stories vertel.” (And to tell stories.)*

“... en toe het ek hulle nou so bietjie van die Ou Skooltjie vertel ... en ek kon lekker met hulle Duits praat – toe is hulle nou éérs baie beindruk.” (... and then I told them a bit about the Ou Skool ... and I could speak German to them – so then they were even more impressed.) (Route 1)

“Jy betrek die ou. Dis nie, ’n ou boek in en hy is in die kamer nie. En dit maak ’n baie groot verskil.” (You involve the person. It is not [a matter of] a guy checks in and he stays in his room [all the time]. And that makes a huge difference.) (Route 1)

A Route 1 respondent keeps brochures and the tourism annexure of a local newspaper to offer visitors information about the area: *“So ek het van die goed hier en hierdie is ’n baie belangrike bron wat ons het om mense hiernatoe te trek, want hulle weet hulle kry inligting. En by ‘word of mouth’ loop hierdie storie ... Ek haal daardie toerismebylaag uit en vra waarheen ry u – waarheen is u op pad? As hy sê Augrabies, dan sê ek weet jy wat meneer, as jy nou Augrabies toe ry, ry jy by Friersdale verby – ry daar in en kyk die eilande. Jy ry verby die kanale wat deur oom Japie Lutz gegrawe is, Keimoes, Kakamas. Sien jy al die klein dorpietjies hier? Hulle het elkeen ’n geskiedenis ... gaan daar in, lees hier en dan gaan soek jy dit. Anders weet ouens nie. Mense wat hier bly, raak gewoon ... hulle ken dit nie. Dan vergeet hulle om dit vir die toeris te sê.” (So I keep some of the stuff here, and this is a vital source to draw people here because they know that they get information. And by word of mouth, the story runs. ... I take out this tourism annexure and ask, where are you driving to – where are you going to? If he says Augrabies, then I say you know what, sir, if you drive to Augrabies, you will pass Friersdale – drive in there and see the islands. You will pass the canals dug by ‘oom’ Japie Lutz, Keimoes, Kakamas. Do you see all the little towns here?*

Each of them has a history ... go in there, read here, and then you go and look for these things. Otherwise, the tourists will not know. People living here are used to them ... they do not know them. Then they forget to tell the tourists.)

“Hier is soveel geskiedenis, maar die ouens moet dit ken.” (*There is so much history, but the people should be familiar with it.*)

“... as jy op ‘n duin sit met hulle, sal jy sê, kom ons raak net stil. En dan sê jy, wat hoor jy?” (*... when you sit on a dune with them, you say, let’s just become quiet. And then you say, what do you hear?*) (Route 2)

“Hulle wil daai interaksie hê.” (*They [the tourists] want that interaction.*) (Route 1)

Guest houses may have an impact on visitors' understanding of the environment. Respondent 2 on Route 2 mentioned: “Ek sê altyd vir my gaste, moenie jou wêreld hiernatoe probeer bring nie, want dit is twee verskillende wêrelde. Jy moet maar die Kalahari vat soos hy is.” (*I always tell my guests, don’t try to bring your world here, because they are two different worlds. You have to accept the Kalahari for what it is.*) Respondent 4 on Route 2 added: “Jy slaap by my ... ek kan jou bietjie vertel hoe lyk dit in die Park, die verskillende ruskampe, hoekom is die water so seperig – want dis boorgatwater. Dis alles inligting wat jy nie noodwendig in die Park self kry nie. ... hoekom is dit so droog, hoeveel reënval kry hierdie mense? Dit gee ons, as produkeienaars, vir ons toeriste.” (*You sleep here ... I can tell you a bit of what it looks like in the Park, the different rest camps, why the water is so soapy – because it is from a borehole. All this is information that you will not necessarily get in the Park. ... why is it so arid, how much rain do these people get? This is what we, as product owners, offer our tourists.*) (See 4.5.2.)

5.3.1.2.5 Offering tangible and intangible products unique to the destination

Respondents believed that guest houses could enhance the destination experience by offering something different and unique and, through the offering of quality services, bring visitors back to the area. This concurs with authors such as Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) who report that destination branding and the quality of the destination experience depends on a combination of different services provided by different local stakeholders. An owner on Route 1 said: “Each guest house can offer something unique and different ... so you really just try and give them a service that they will

come back to again.” An owner on Route 2 agreed: “Dit is wat ek altyd sê van ons hier, elkeen bied iets anders aan.” (*This is what I always say about us here, everybody offers something different.*)

According to Kemp and Bordelon (2011:122), destinations that use their heritage and traditions in the branding process are competitively better positioned. Heritage and traditions represent both tangible and intangible tourism products – one of the characteristics of destination branding (see 3.3).

Owner-respondents on both routes mentioned attempts to conserve the history of the respective areas. On both routes, respondents indicated that they focused on traditional food – a tangible heritage product – in their restaurants. A respondent on Route 1 wanted more opportunities for Nama cultural dance performances (an intangible heritage product) and expressed her sadness about a historical church building, which had been neglected by the local authorities. With regard to the history of the area, she said: “So ons is ook nou besig om 'n stuk grond aan te koop om die geskiedenis en die plante hier te bewaar.” (*So we [the guest house owners] are also buying a piece of land to conserve the history and the plants here.*)

Route 2 respondents prioritised the preservation of history and historical buildings. The first manager-respondent on Route 2 explained the display of antique and vintage objects throughout the property: “Die hele plek is mos geskiedenis van die Suid-Afrikaner, want as jy hier binne rondstap, hier is implemente, hier is kombuisgoed wat ons oumagrootjies mee gewerk het.” (*The whole place is South African history, because when you walk around inside, there are implements, there are kitchen things that our great grandmothers used.*)

One Route 2 owner explained: “Dit was van die eerste huise wat hier gebou was en dit was die tannie wat die skool begin het se huis gewees en die gasteplek was ou tuishuisies. Doerie jare se tuishuisies wat ons net – jy weet – gerestoureer het ... ek hou dit maar min of meer so.” (*These were the first houses to be built here, and this house belonged to the lady who started the school, and the guest houses were old 'tuishuisies' (weekend cottages used by farmers when they came to church). 'Tuishuisies' from years gone by that we have – you know – renovated ... I keep it more or less as it was.*)

A third Route 2 owner responded: "En onthou, my gastehuisie was 'n restourasieprodukt, verstaan jy. Dit was die ou X. [Ek] het ek nou weer die geskiedenis probeer op-'swot'. Ek was tot by die museum op Upington om te hoor of hulle nie enigsins iets het nie." (*And remember, my little guest house was a renovation project, you understand. It was the old X. ... I have just tried to study the history again. I even went to the museum in Upington to find out whether they have anything.*)

Over the spectrum, owners/managers in the two branded destinations tried to apply the brand promise and destination values in their offerings. Enthusiasm for the area was also discernible in the answers of respondents on both Routes.

Route 1 owners/managers focused on the exterior in the following ways: "X se groot aantrekkingskrag is die diere wat ons hier het; die springbokkies, die eende, die ganse, die ... die skilpaaie, die bokkies wat uit ons hand uit eet. Dis baie belangrik vir kinders ook." (*X's main attraction is the animals we have here; the springbuck, the ducks, the geese, the ... the tortoises, the little buck that we feed by hand. That is also very important for children.*) The respondent also believed that a vast lawn and many trees, children's playground, and a viewpoint add to the experience: "Hier is meer as 40 soorte bome en ek gaan hul nou beginne name gee en op hulle vas te sit en dan het ons die uitkykpunt daar ... en ek sê vir hulle hier is 'n bottel wyn vir R20, R29 ... gaan sit daar bo, drink dit en kyk hoe die son ondergaan ... ons het selfs nou 'n speelraam hier aangebring. Dat kinders kan speel, want ma's wil rustig wees en kuier met hul vriendinne." (*Here are more than 40 kinds of trees, and I am going to name them and attach it to them, and then we have a lookout point out there ... and I tell them here is a bottle wine for R20, R29 ... go and sit up there, enjoy it and watch the sunset ... we have even put up a jungle gym. So that the children can play, because the mothers want to relax with their friends.*)

Another Route 1 guest house keeps different kinds of geese and waterfowl on a pond: "... as hul deur die dag wil kom, hulle voor by die dam kan sit en rustig koffie drink of iets eet by die dam en in die tuin." (*... when they want to come during the day, they can relax in front at the pond with coffee or something.*)

Guest houses with public restaurant facilities offer opportunities for contact and cultural exchange between local people and tourists. A manager-respondent on Route 2 explained the contact between guests and local people: "Op ons stoepe, want ons

plaaslike mense kom eet hier en jy weet mos nou maar hoe is ons Kalahari-mense, hulle lag en gesels met almal.” (*On our porches, because our local people come here for meals and you know what we Kalahari people are like, we laugh and talk with everyone.*) In this way, a guest house contributes to the integration of stakeholders and communities as one of the outcomes of destination branding (see 3.5.7). She also mentioned that tourists ask her what they can do: “Dan verwys ek hulle na die Mouton-mense vir ‘sandboard’ of ek wys hulle na V en C toe vir die Boesman ‘experience’ so en dan gewoonlik as hy terugkom sal jy agterkom die mense se verbasing en oor almal wil help. As 'n ou hier sê hy het 'n pap band, dan help almal.” (*Then I refer them to the Mouton people for sandboarding or to V and C for the Bushmen experience and that, and then usually when he comes back, you will realise the people's astonishment and that everybody wants to help. When someone here says he has a flat tyre, then everybody helps.*)

Some respondents specifically referred to the connection between destination image and quality of the experience. A Route 2 owner said: “Vir seker moet jy probeer om ten alle koste ‘n goeie beeld – nie net van jou plek nie – maar van die hele streek uit te dra.” (*For sure, you must try to convey a positive image at all costs – not of your place only – but of the whole area.*) Owner 3 on Route 1 adopted the area outside her premises to improve the quality of the environment. “En ons onderhou ook daardie palmbome ... Ja, ons probeer regtig rondom die plek ook mooi maak.” (*And we look after those palm trees as well ... Yes, we really try to beautify the adjoining area too.*)

On both routes, owner-respondents referred to the impact that low standards and the lack of training might have on tourists' experience of the destination. One Route 2 owner explained the reason for creating Route 2: “En dit is waarom ons die Route geskep het. Was om samehorigheid te kry en almal op ‘n standaard te kry dat ons ‘n goeie beeld van ons hele omgewing kan uitdra.” (*And that was why we created the Route. Was to foster collaboration and to get everyone up to a standard [so] that we can convey a proper image of our whole area.*) Kemp and Bordelon (2011:123) endorse this sentiment and desired outcome of destination branding with their theory that high perceived quality will act as a motivator for tourists to choose a brand over competing products.

5.3.1.2.5.1 Products that endorse the brand

Route 1 guest house owners/managers described brand attachment in their offerings, as well as their role in advertising and selling of local produce as follows:

"We really do promote our wines, I even give them complimentary glasses of wine to taste ... and our food ... we try to promote the traditional dishes, and they are very popular at the moment as well in the restaurant. 'Ja', and then we also tell them when they ask where can they go, then we say go to Bezalel for wine tasting, or you can go to Augrabies ... We focus mainly on a peaceful venue, tranquillity."

"Wynkelders se wyn ... en ek sit altyd 'n presentjie in sakke op die tafel. So dit is outomaties van die omgewing. En die kos soos die bobotie. Hier word net Oranje Rivier aangehou om dit te 'promote' outomaties." (*Wine from the Cellars and I usually put small gifts in bags on the table. So this is automatically from the region. And the food such as bobotie. Here we supply Orange River [wines] only, and that promotes automatically.*) The same respondent also mentioned warm-heartedness and hospitality: "Ek dink dit kom uit in 'n spontane warm persoonlikheid." (*I think it comes from a spontaneous and warm personality.*)

"Food'. Baie tradisionele kosse waarvan Riemvasmaak – die mense probeer dit daar doen. Ons by gastehuse probeer dit doen; ons braaiboud op 'n Sondag, ons bobotie, ons koeksisters, pap en wors met 'n sous, vetkoek, roosterkoek." (*Food. Many traditional dishes of which Riemvasmaak – the people try to offer it there. We at guest houses try to offer it; our leg of lamb on Sundays, our bobotie, our koeksisters, 'pap', and sausage with gravy, 'vetkoek', 'roosterkoek'.*) Respondent 3 also touched upon hospitality: "... is maar vriendelikheid ... dis wat jy die ou bied." (*It is friendliness ... that is what you offer the person.*) With regard to the first element in the brand name (Kokerboom), the owner mentioned: "Ons het heelwat aangeplant ..." (*We planted quite a lot ...*)

"Ons is al genoem vir die beste restaurant in Y. So ons fokus baie daarop om ordentlike kos te gee ... ons 'house wines' is plaaslike wyne." (*We have been mentioned the best restaurant in Y. So we are focused on providing good food ...our house wines are local*). The same guest house embraced the area's hot summer temperatures and starry skies by offering open-air showers: "Van ons kamers het buitestorte en 'n binnebadkamer ... Veral in die somermaande is dit baie warm – so dan kan jy buite stort. In koue water en nog steeds in die son stort ... Meeste van ons

nuwe kamers het 'n middeldeur. So as 'n familie van vier kom, sit ons die middeldeur oop en dan het hulle 'n groterige eenheid." (*Some of our rooms have outside showers and a bathroom inside ... Especially during the summer months it is very hot – so then you can shower outside. In cold water, but in the sun ... Most bedrooms have a connecting door. So, if a family of four comes, we open the connecting door, and then they have a large unit.*)

Respondent 5 focuses on hospitality and traditional food: "Elke aand maak ons vuur en is dit 'n worsie of 'n murgbeen of 'n skaapstertjie of so ..." (*We light a fire every evening and it is a little sausage, or bone marrow, or a sheep's tail, or so ...*) Another respondent on Route 1 concluded: "What we also want to do is sell honey and dates and ... we got so much that we still want to do to give the tourists something from our region." One respondent felt that the Route offerings could be expanded: "Hier lê baie goed ongerep. Die voëls is nog nie deel van die bestemming nie en dis vir my verskriklik belangrik, as jy my vra. Ja, dit is die verskillende natuur wat jy hier kry, rotsformasies en die Oranje. Die Oranje het soveel om te bied. Aktiwiteite wat daaruit kom, gastehuse. Daar is so 'n groot 'scope' met die kulture wat ons hier het ... wat jy Namastap-danse kan doen ... ons moet meer met dit maak." (*Here are many things that are still unexploited. The birdlife has not yet been made part of the destination, and this is very important if you ask me. Yes, it is the variety in nature that you get here, rock formations, and the Orange. The Orange [River] has so much to offer. Activities coming from that and guest houses. There is much scope with the cultures we have got here ... where you can do [present the] Namastap-dance ...we must do more with it.*) This is in line with Saraniemi and Kamppula's notion (2017:12), namely that local culture and nature are significant factors affecting brand identity. The authors specifically mention that local culture leads to positive visitor experiences.

Respondent 1 on Route 2 addresses the brand promises of the Kalahari Red Dune Route with hospitality, and emphasises the typical desert experience: "Eerstens om hulle welkom te laat voel as hulle hier kom ... hulle moenie voel soos 'n gas nie; dit moet vir hom voel soos sy huis." (*First of all to let them feel welcome when they arrive here ... they should not feel like guests; it should feel like home.*)

"... ons het soos bobotie en skaapnek en sulke goed om ons naam gestand te doen, die Kalahari-ervaring." (*... we offer 'bobotie' and lamb's neck and stuff like that to keep up with our name; the Kalahari Experience.*)

“... jy hou alles getrou aan die omgewing soos jou boustyl, jou tuine – alles moet, ongelukkig moet dit daar bly. Jy kan nou nie probeer Johannesburg wees nie dit gaan nie werk nie. Ons het eerstens nie die water nie ons het ook nie die infrastruktuur daarvoor nie. Dit is ook nie wat die toeris sal soek nie, hy soek ’n getroue Kalahari-ondervinding.” (... *you keep everything true to the area; for example your architecture, your gardens – unfortunately, everything has to stay there. You cannot try to be Johannesburg; it is not going to work. In the first place, we do not have water, and also not the infrastructure for that. That is also not what the tourists want; they want a real Kalahari experience.*)

Other owners on Route 2 also tried to convey the “true Kalahari experience” by entertaining guests with sundowners, offering local cuisine (springbok fillet, tripe, n’abba dishes), taking them for dune rides, watching stars, enjoying the silence. Four out of five owners indicated that they spoil their guests with Kalahari products (gift packets containing salt from the local salt pans, biltong, ‘droëwors’ (dried sausage), pods from the indigenous camelthorn trees). One owner added: “As ek ’n kaartjie by my sout sit, byvoorbeeld, dan sal ek daai akkedissie van die Rooiduinroete laat hy nou maar ook daar wees.” (*When I add a little card to my salt, for instance, then I will see to it that the Red Dune Route’s little gecko is on it.*) A second owner mentioned that Route members were frequently involved in events in the area and that they use local plant material from the veld and limestone for unique table decorations. One respondent entertained the history of the area and its “unpretentiousness” by hosting guests in the formerly weekend cottages on the church premises. “Doerie jare se tuishuisies wat ons net – jy weet – gerestoureer het. ...ek hou dit maar min of meer so. Dat dit nie lyk soos ’n ander een se plek ook nie. Daai uniekheid van jou plek ... Ek hou van die eenvoud van ’n plek en van ... ja ... daai onpretensieuse ‘soos dit was’.” (*The ‘tuishuisies’ that we – you know – renovated ...I keep it more or less like that. That it does not look like another person’s place. That uniqueness of your place. ... I prefer the simplicity of a place and of ... yes ... that unpretentious ‘the way it was’ feeling.* All five Route 2 respondents mentioned the importance of friendliness and hospitality and how they try to include that in their offerings. One Route 1 owner built a deck for their guests to enjoy a view over the vineyards (see 4.7.1.). “Uitsig. Ja, ek het daar by my so ’n plek ... so ’n ‘dekkie’ gemaak waar die ouens oor die landery kan kyk.” (*View. Yes, I have made there such a place ... a little deck where the guests can*

have a view of the vineyards.) He also added that they have a big garden and that they focus on garden lighting because the guests spend most of their time in the evenings at the guest house.

A Route 2 owner/manager said that the Kalahari environment provided the opportunity to guest houses to be unique: “Ons omgewing doen klaar eintlik sy eie werk ... jy hou alles getrou aan die omgewing soos jou boustyl, jou tuine ...” (*Our environment is already doing its own work ... you keep everything true to the environment, such as your building style, your gardens.*)

A second Route 2 respondent explained how she used the silence of the Kalahari to offer a unique experience: “... as jy op ‘n duin sit met hulle, sal jy sê, kom ons raak net stil. En dan sê jy, wat hoor jy?” (*... when you sit on a dune with them, you would say, let us just be quiet. And then you say, what do you hear?*)

A third Route 2 respondent mentioned her guests' appreciation for animal noises: “Die geluide; koeie wat in die oggend bulk, ‘n hoender wat kraai” (*The noises; cows that low in the morning, a fowl that crows.*)

One Route 2 respondent offered three types of accommodation to address different needs. A bush hut made from local plant life introduced something unique: “So, ek het so ‘n boshuisie met ‘n grasdakkie met driedoringbossiemure gemaak.” (*So, I made a little bush hut with a grass roof and walls from threethorn shrubs.*) “... in die somer rol die mense die seile op en dan waai die windjie daardeur en jy kan selfs die sterre sien. In die winter sak jy nou maar weer die seile en dan sit ek nou maar ‘n lekker dik kombers en jy maak maar ‘n vuurtjie. Sorg dat die ‘geyser’ nou lekker warm is. Maar dis nou als deel van die ervaring! Jy’s nou in die Kalahari! Ek wil graag hê ... Kyk ‘n gastehuis wat 5-ster is kan jy enige plek in die land kry, maar hierdie ervaring kry jy net in die Kalahari. En dis tog hoekom jy Kalahari toe kom.” (*... in summertime the people roll up the canvas and then the wind blows through the opening and you can even see the stars. In winter, you lower the canvas and I put out a nice thick blanket, and you light a fire. Make sure that the geyser is hot. But this is all part of the experience! You are now in the Kalahari! I would like ... Look, you can get a 5-star guest house anywhere in the country, but this experience you get in the Kalahari only. And that is after all why you come to the Kalahari.*) She adds to the experience by replacing the usual bunch of flowers in guest rooms with wild flowers and twigs from

natural plants. She welcomes her guests with homemade ginger beer in summertime, and traditional 'melkkos' or coffee during the winter.

Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:128) also mention the importance of offering tailor-made products to guests, and it emerged from the answers of owner/manager respondents that they do indeed do their utmost to meet clients' needs.

5.3.1.2.5.2 "Walking the extra mile"

One business guest (a tour manager) commented: "En dit is hoekom jy in die industrie is. Om daai 'extra mile' te loop." (*And that is why you are in the industry. To walk that extra mile.*) (See 4.7.6.)

Owner/manager respondents identified examples of extra services. Food services were one of the priorities. This is in line with Taylor's view that food forms a significant part of the farm tourism experience (2016:30).

Route 1 respondents stated:

"... we put meals in their rooms, but then they wanted to eat here. So we opened the restaurant, and we brought the meals down, and we warmed the meals, and we give them something to drink."

"... as sy die aand mieliepap wil hê wat hulle eet, en longe, en sy wil dit hê, 'by all means' – ons maak vir haar longe en mieliepap. Ons doen wat die gas wil hê. Ons probeer om almal te akkommodeer." (*if she wants maize porridge in the evening, and lungs, and that is what she wants, by all means – we prepare lungs and maize porridge for her. We do what the guest wants. We try to accommodate everybody.*)

"Byvoorbeeld, die hengel wat die ouens hier onder aanbied ... ons bied vir hulle 'n piekniek..." (*... the angling they offer down here, for instance ... we offer them a picnic ...*)

Route 2 owner/manager respondents also offered extra services:

"... 'baked potatoes' word mos nou nie elke dag gebruik nie. Jy moet dit voorberei maar nou eet niemand dit nie nou sit jy met die aartappels. Dan maak ons 'n aartappelslaai en dan gee ons dit komplimentêr vir die ouens wat kamp. (... *baked*

potatoes are not used every day. You have to prepare them, but when nobody eats them, you are stuck with the potatoes. Then we prepare a potato salad and offer it to the guys who have come to camp.) The same respondent explained that they offer campers homemade bread or toasted bread ('braaibroodjies') for free: "Dit staan nêrens vir hulle hulle gaan dit kry nie, so dit is elke keer vir hulle 'wow!', jy weet." (*It hasn't been written anywhere that they are going to receive this, so every time they feel 'wow!' you know.*)

"... die mense vergeet nooit 'n 'sundowner' nie." (... *the people never forget a sundowner.*)

"Vra, as hulle al lank 'travel', of jy kan wasgoed doen vir hulle." *If they have been travelling for a long time, ask them whether you can do their washing.*)

One Route 2 owner remarked: "Jou Suid-Afrikaanse toeris hou maar daarvan om die 'champagne' vir die bier se prys te kry. Maar vir die oorsese gas kan ek 'n glas water met 'n suurlemoenskyf gee en dis vir hom hemels om net te sit en hierdie stories te luister. (*Your South African tourist likes to get champagne for the price of beer. However, for the overseas guest, I can offer a glass of water with a slice of lemon, and it is heaven to him just to sit down and listen to these stories.*)

Accommodation establishments have indeed incorporated site attributes (interesting elements and aspects of the area) to add to the visitor experience. Apart from the abovementioned, all the owner/manager respondents pointed out that every guest house on the route offers something different. One Route 1 owner felt that guest houses did not have to rely on the Route for business, but could create their own unique elements: "Ja, maar ek dink daar is baie 'scope' vir 'n gastehuis om in plaas daarvan om bakhand te staan om te kry van die Roete, vir homself dinge te skep." (*Yes, but I think there is much scope for a guest house to create its own things instead of begging to get something from the Route.*)

5.3.1.2.5.3 Attractions and events

Schroeder (2017a:37) explains that it is typical of agritourism to offer guest houses and self-catering accommodation with different farm activities on farms. According to Taylor (2016:30), agritourism is desperately needed in South Africa because it familiarises South Africans with the beauty of their country, generates income, and

empowers local communities (see 4.5.2). A Route 2 guest respondent agreed: "We always try to stay in guest houses or farm stays because then we connect with the people who are living in the country ... to connect with the people, to see how they are living, to have a talk." This agrees with Saraniemi and Kamppula's statement (2017:12) that local culture and the natural environment were the main factors influencing brand identity and customer experiences.

An owner/manager respondent on Route 2 mentioned that guest houses on their route offer unique attractions that keep visitors in the area longer: "Die ou slaap mos nie net hier nie, hy het 'n drie, vier-dag toer wat hy doen en hy slaap by al die ander gastehuse. Soos tannie A by die meerkat 'sanctuary'. Baie van ons gaste gaan slaap daar vir een aand of hulle gaan kyk net daar na die meerkatte." (*The person doesn't only sleep, he has a three, four-day tour to do and he sleeps at some of the other guest houses [as well]. Such as Tannie A at the meerkat sanctuary. Many of our guests sleep there for one night, or they just go there and watch the meerkat.*) Another Route 2 guest house owner pointed out that many guest houses on farms offer unique attractions: "Dit mos maar die plase waar hulle meer bied. Waar 4x4-roetes is. Waar 'sandboarding' is ... of 'game drives' en sulke dinge." (*It is on the farms where they offer more. Where there are 4x4 routes. Where there is sandboarding ... or game drives and suchlike.*) A Route 2 guest house owner added: "... dan is dit vir hulle 'n vreeslike lekker ervaring om agterop 'n bakkie te staan ... En dan pak ek 'n lekker piekniekmandjie met drankies en goed (dis gewoonlik net so sonder se tyd). Dan kan ek hulle nou van die plante en van alles vertel. (... then it is a lovely experience for them to stand on the back of a bakkie ... And then I pack a nice picnic basket with drinks and stuff (it is usually almost sunset. Then I can tell them about the plants and everything.)

One Route 2 guest house owner runs a butchery: "X vat jagters uit – en dan doen ons hulle verwerking van vleis ... Partykeer koop hulle maar skaapvleis ook om te gaan braai in die Park." (*X takes hunters out – and then we process the meat for them ... Sometimes they buy lamb as well to braai in the Park.*) A second Route 2 owner also keeps meat products and runs a farm shop with local produce.

A fourth Route 2 owner shared her dreams to attract visitors in the off season: "... dat 'n mens 'n kursus aanbied in broodbak ... En soos 'n skryfkursus, 'n kort skryfkursus

... Of 'n kort fotografiekursus en sulke goeters.” (... *that you conduct a course in bread-baking ... And like a writing course, a short writing course ... Or a short photography course and stuff like that.*) She also mentioned that she put out food for the birds, as some guests were keen bird-watchers. “Ja, vir die voëltjies sit jy kos uit en sulke dingetjies wat voëls lok. Want jy kry nogal baie mense wat voëls kyk.” (Yes, you feed the birds and do things that attract birds. Because one gets many people who are bird-watchers.)

Apostolalis *et al.* (2015:205-208) include the staging of sustainable international events as one of three policy recommendations to facilitate a unique brand. Henning and Willemse (1999:5) highlight international events as an external influence that might bring about new business opportunities. Different owners on Route 2 mentioned their involvement in local events. One respondent pointed out that the whole route benefitted from events: “... soos wat nou met Bloodhound gebeur het. X het alles georkestreer maar die hele roete trek nou voordeel daaruit.” (... as *what was the case with Bloodhound. X orchestrated everything, but the whole route benefits from it now.*)

5.3.2 Section 2: Results from interviews with guest house visitors

As pointed out earlier, destination branding involves place brand production (management) and place brand consumption. The latter revolves around the tourists' own construction of place; this was tested during the interviews with guest house visitors.

5.3.2.1 Theme 3: Visitor brand awareness

This theme verified the degree to which the intended image had been accepted by destination visitors (Qu, Kim & Im, 2010:474).

Tangible brand elements that emerged during interviews with guest house guests included name and logo, and intangible aspects included awareness and brand perceptions.

Route 1 guest respondents indicated that they did not hear about the guest house through any Route marketing initiative. Two respondents drove past previously and decided to book there in the future. Two respondents indicated that they usually use

LekkeSlaap as a booking agent for accommodation. One of them mentioned Safari Now as well. Two respondents specifically asked if the Route had a website and if guest houses were listed on the website.

Two guests suggested that the Route should advertise itself through more signage.

The four business tourists included in the study indicated that the company had made their bookings at the respective guest houses. Two of them specifically pointed out that price was a central deciding factor. Three of the leisure respondents mentioned WOM.

“We have seen it in the past when we drove past. En ek het nog altyd gewonder hoe dit hier lyk en toe het ek dit nou op LekkeSlaap gesien.” (*And I have always wondered what it looks like here and then I saw it on LekkeSlaap.*)

“Ja hulle kan maar sê X is deel op die webtuiste. Ek het dit nie raakgesien nie – dit kan dalk wees — ek het dit ook nie hier gesien by die bord nie ... Hulle moet kokerbome hê eerstens, hulle moet die produkte hê waar jy ontvangs dalk, hulle moet dit op hulle borde hê en op hulle advertensies.” (*Yes, they should say on the website that X is part [of it]. I did not spot it – it might be – I also did not see it on the board ... They should have quiver trees in the first place, they should keep the products [at reception] maybe, they should have it on their signage and on their advertisements.*)

“Ons gebruik baie vir LekkeSlaap of Safari Now ... Het hierdie Food & Kokerboom hulle eie ‘website’? ... ‘Website’ is nogal vir my belangrik. As ek na ’n streek se website toe gaan, dat ek al die verblyf daar sien.” (*We often use LekkeSlaap or Safari Now ... Does this Food & Kokerboom have their own website? ... Website is rather important to me. When I go onto the website of an area, that I see all accommodation [options] there.*)

A business traveller mentioned: "It is about the price actually because the company was looking for a cheaper quote actually. But they do not go for a cheaper quote if the service at the place is not."

A second business traveller explained that in the first place the guest house promoted itself face to face at their business, whereafter colleagues recommended the place to one another. "Hulle het self bemark. Hulle het daar by ons maar uitgegaan en besigheid gaan soek, ja." (*They marketed themselves. They went out to us looking for business, yes.*) "Die plek is aanbeveel deur 'n kollega by die werk ... ons het nog nie

nodig gehad om 'n ander plek te kry nie en ons beveel almal aan en ons ouditeure, selfs ons eksterne ouditeure kon hiernatoe.” (*The place had been recommended by a colleague at the workplace... [up until now], we did not need to get another place, and we recommend [it to] everybody and our auditors, even our external auditors come [to stay] here.*)

“My vriendin” (*My friend*)

“Deur self verby te gery het en hom gesien het en dan nou by ander mense ook. Dis ‘word of mouth’.” (*Through driving past and seeing it and then through other people as well. That’s word of mouth.*)

Some Route 2 guest respondents also felt that there was not sufficient information about the Kalahari Red Dune Route and its guest houses available.

“I find there is not so much information about ... or I was looking at the wrong sites ... to stay here ... About the Dune Route, okay I have read the ... what you call it? ...The signage everywhere, but I have not find on the Internet info about this.”

Another respondent added: “Dit is eintlik hartseer aan die een kant dat almal dit as 'n deurgang beskou na die Kgalagadi toe. Daar is soveel meer om te sien hier, die roete wat ons vanoggend gery het was fantasties gewees. Om 'n honderd meter hoog bokant 'n soutpan te sit en af te kyk op die soutpan is ‘actually’ wonderlik gewees. Daar is nie genoeg publisiteit uit vir dit nie. Die Roete kan meer bemark word.” (*it is a pity on the one hand that everybody just sees it as a thoroughfare to the Kgalagadi. There is so much more to see here, the route we travelled this morning was fantastic. To sit a hundred metres above a salt pan and look down on the salt pan was actually wonderful. There is not enough publicity out there for this. The Route could be marketed more effectively.*) The same respondent explained that they had read about the area via a forum to which they belong. He admitted that the name of the Red Dune Route was mentioned a few times: “Dit was 'n paar keer genoem.” They had stopped at the guest house for refreshments only, but the friendly reception on the porch convinced them to stay for two nights. “Ek het maar 'n verslag van iemand anders gelees uit 'n forum waaraan ek behoort en dit is hoe ons in die omgewing geëindig het met aanvanklike idees van waar ons gaan bly maar dit het toe anders uitgewerk. Ons het hier gestop en hier het 'n man op die stoep gestaan en gesê goeie middag, hoe kan ons help? En nou slaap ons vir twee nagte hier.” (*I had read a report from*

somebody else on a forum to which I belong, and that was how we landed up in the area with initial ideas of where to stay, but it worked out differently ... We stopped here, and a man stood on the porch and said, good afternoon, how can we help? And now we are sleeping here for two nights.) The respondent added that they were not on social media at all (“ons is glad nie op sosiale media nie”) and preferred a simple website with two or three pictures of the place, and a telephone number for them to enquire about availability. “Al het jy ’n eenvoudige website met twee of drie prentjies van dis hoe die plek lyk, hier is ’n telefoonnommer, dan kan ek iemand bel en ek kan hoor wat is beskikbaar.” The respondent concluded: “Ons het vandag van die bordjies gesien van die Red Dune Route, niks voor dit nie.” (*We saw some of the Red Dune Route boards today, but nothing before that.*)

One guest respondent (Route 2) referred to photographs she had seen of the guest house: “Dit was baie mooier as wat dit op die foto’s was.” (*It was way more beautiful than on the photos.*) She pointed out that she usually relied on visitor comments on the Internet before booking: “Ek kyk eerste na die resensies of die kommentaar wat die mense gelewer het. Uhm ... ek hou nogal daarvan om vir Hello Peter te gebruik om seker te maak, is dit wat die gastehuis uitbeeld die waarheid.” (*First of all I read the reviews or comments of people. Uhm ... I like to use Hello Peter to make sure whether that which is portrayed by the guest house is the truth.*) Another Route 2 guest indicated that they choose accommodation using tourists’ commentary: “But if I choose one, it is not for the view only. It is more recommendations.”

Three Route 2 respondents were in the area for business. One pointed out that he received an accommodation budget from his employer and that he was price-sensitive when choosing this guest house, but that he also relied on local referrals: “... ek meen, ons het ook net ’n ‘budget’ wat ons volgens werk.” (*I mean, we also have a budget to work from.*) “... toe het ek maar bietjie navraag gedoen oor blyplek en toe sê hulle vir my hier is een van die beteres hierso.” (*... then I made enquiries regarding accommodation and then they told me this is one of the better ones here.*) The other respondent said that her employer had made the booking, but that she used Google to get more information about the establishment: “Maar voordat ek gekom het, het ek dit geGoogle.” (*But before I came, I Googled it.*) She mentioned that she usually uses LekkeSlaap or Funseekers to book accommodation: “LekkeSlaap of ... maar ons behoort aan Funseekers.” (*LekkeSlaap or... but we belong to Funseekers.*) The third

business respondent was a local tour operator who was familiar with the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the guest houses on the Route.

Although she had not been aware of the existence of the Kalahari Red Dune Route, a guest respondent pointed out that she had learnt more about the destination offerings through marketing material in her room at the guest house: "There is a lot of info in the room, and that is what I like. 'Ja', when I go back, I know a lot from the area, you know. And I find that important. Because maybe there are things here that we have not done, they can invite you to come back next time and do that. Or spend more time in between and not just going to the Kgalagadi." Another guest regarded guest houses as a major marketing medium: "By Ontvangs het hulle 'n rak met allerhande 'folders' so hulle is beslis die hoof-voermiddel van bemerking." (*At Reception they have a shelf with different folders, so they are definitely the main marketing channel.*)

Not many visitors were familiar with the logo. Three guest respondents on Route 1 knew the logo: "Die kokerboom ... ja. Dit is vir my 'n baie mooi logo." (*The quiver tree ... yes. I find it a very attractive logo.*)

"O ja." (*Oh yes.*)

"Ja." (*Yes.*)

Another Route 1 guest said that he thought he had seen it in an advertisement: "Ek dink ek het die advertensie al gesien. In die koerantjie adverteer hulle dit." (*I think I have seen the advertisement. They advertise it in the little newspaper.*) Three Route 2 respondents had seen the logo before.

One Route 1 guest confirmed that she had not been aware of the existence of the Route: "Nee, ek het regtig nie geweet nie." (*No, I really did not know.*) Another guest asked: "Het hierdie Food en Kokerboom hulle eie website?" (*Does this Food and Kokerboom have its own website?*) A third Route 1 guest said that he had only become aware of the Route after he saw the signage at the entrance. A fourth guest (a tour leader) said: "Ek het nie geweet dit is die Route nie." (*I did not know this is the Route.*) One Route 1 guest had been aware of the existence of the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route: "Ek het gehoor, ja." (*I had heard [about it], yes.*) Another regular Route 1 guest said that she had become aware of the Route after staying in a guest house during the launching of the Route.

The abovementioned reflects on the importance of brand communication (“poetics of destination branding”) as antecedent for destination branding (see 3.5.4).

One Route 2 guest mentioned that although she had not known the logo, she became aware of the Kalahari Red Dune Route through social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as through road signage: “Op die pad, ja, is baie bordjies en op ‘social media’ wys al die goedjies mos vir jou as jy navorsing doen. So ja. Ja, Facebook, Instagram ...” (*On the road, yes, there is plenty of signage, and on social media, all the stuff is shown when you do your research. So yes. Yes, Facebook, Instagram.*) Another Route 2 guest did not know the logo, but was aware of the Route: “... die kern van hierdie roete is die Kgalagadi ...” (*... the core of this route is the Kgalagadi ...*). A third Route 2 guest said that the name “Kalahari Red Dune Route” had been mentioned to him more than once before: “Dit was 'n paar keer genoem.” Concerning the logo, he said: “Ons het vandag van die bordjies gesien van die Red Dune Route, niks voor dit nie.” (*We saw some of the signage of the Red Dune Route this afternoon, but nothing before this.*)

It became clear that, although guest respondents concurred to some extent regarding the images and elements of the respective areas, they were not necessarily familiar with the brand.

This conclusion was verified by the responses to the question as to how the guests booked their accommodation. During interviews, it became clear that most tourists booked their lodging through accommodation booking agents, on advice from other (WOM), or based on previous experience rather than through destination marketing efforts such as a Route website, or Route literature.

5.3.2.2 Theme 4: Factors influencing guest house visitors’ experiences

The tangible and intangible aspects in place consumption that were identified during the interviews on the two routes are discussed below.

5.3.2.2.1 Unique features

Respondents identified a number of unique accommodation features as discussed in the subsections below. Uniqueness is also an antecedent for destination branding (see 3.5.10).

5.3.2.2.1.1 Star grading

Authors such as Henning (2008:194), Du Plessis and Saayman (2011:133) and Coetzee (2015:121) regard the star grading system as a tool to communicate value and quality to potential tourists. Guests, as well as owners/managers, voiced their opinions regarding star grading: An owner/manager respondent on Route 1 pointed out that they were recently told that, although they were 4-star rated, they qualified for 5-star grading and suggested that their level of grading indicated comfort: "Gerief, ons is mos nou 'n 4-ster gastehuis. Ons het altyd goeie terugvoering van ons gaste af, ja." (*Comfort, we are a 4-star guest house now. We always get good feedback from our guests, yes.*) Not all guest house owners believed that star grading creates more business. Another Route 1 owner believed that star grading has also been linked to price and that potential guests could be discouraged by that: "... soos op booking.com – jou reviews wat jy kry ... jy moet daarop werk. Dis vir my baie meer werd as gradering. Baie ouens, dink ek, gradering skrik hulle af. As hul sien 5-ster ... outomaties dink hulle "duur prys" (... *as on booking.com – the reviews that you get ... that is what you have to work on. It is of much more value to me than grading. I think many people will be put off by grading. When they see 5-star ... automatically they think 'high-priced'.*)

The response of Owner 5 summarises the sentiments of Route 2 respondents regarding star grading: "Ons doen dit net omdat dit tipe van op ons afgedruk word. Maar ek dink nie dit is vir my so belangrik nie. Niemand het nog ooit gevra wat is julle gradering nie. Maar daar is sekere beperkinge wat maak dat niemand in die Kalahari meer as 'n 3-ster sal kry nie ... Maar nou kom hulle en sê (dis nou SATOER wat die gradering doen) jy kan nie as 'n 4-ster kwalifiseer as jy nie 'n 'flat screen' in die kamer het nie. Nog nie een toeris het vir my gevra of hy kan televisie kyk nie. Hulle wil nie hul televisie aanskakel nie." (*We only do that because we are, in a way, forced to do that. But I do not think it is so important to me. Nobody has ever asked about our grading. However, there are certain restrictions that cause nobody in the Kalahari to get more than a 3-star rating ... However, now they come and say (that is SATOUR who does the grading) you cannot qualify for a 4-star rating if you do not have a flat-*

screen in the room. Not one tourist has asked to watch television. They do not want to switch on the television.) Another Route 2 owner mentioned that she was not interested in better grading because she did not qualify for four stars because they did not have a swimming pool – a facility that might not be sustainable in a semi-desert environment with inadequate water quality.

Henning (2008:194) warns that guest houses without star grading will lose business as government departments may only make use of graded establishments when seeking accommodation. One Route 2 owner felt that government departments were not part of her market, and she agreed that tourists did not ask her about their grading: "Gradering het ek gedoen, ja. Uhm ... ek het nie baie staatsamptenare wat by my slaap nie. So ek het absoluut toeriste. So ek weet nie of ... jy kry seker van hulle vir wie dit baie belangrik is, maar oor die algemeen kan ek nie sê dat iemand al nie my plek geboek het omdat ek net 3-ster is nie." (*Grading I did it, yes. Uhm ... I do not get many government officials here. So I get real tourists. So I do not know – maybe you get some of them who feel it is essential, but in general, I can say that nobody has not booked here because I am a 3-star establishment only.*)

Owner-manager respondents on Route 2 addressed the quality issue through employing the destination brand: "En dit is waarom ons die Roete geskep het. Was om samehorigheid te kry en almal op 'n standaard te kry dat ons 'n goeie beeld van ons hele omgewing kan uitdra." (*And that was why we created the Route. It was to get uniformity and to get everyone on a standard so that we can convey a good image of our whole area.*)

A guest respondent on Route 2 (a tour manager who regularly brings tour groups to the area) stated: "Ons slaap meestal nou maar by stergegradeerde gastehuse." (*Nowadays we mostly sleep at star-graded guest houses.*) Another guest respondent on Route 1 (also a tour manager) indicated: "Jy weet nou alreeds as dit 'n sekere ster is, gaan jy sekere dinge kry. So jou verwagtinge is al klaar op daardie vlak." (*You already know that when it is a specific star, you are going to get certain things. So your expectations are on that level already.*) A Route 2 guest confirmed: "Ek kyk gewoonlik drie, vier, vyf sterre." (*I usually look for three, four, five stars.*)

Except for the last three responses in favour of star grading, it seemed as if owner/manager respondents and guest respondents were not very enthusiastic about

grading. Coetzee (2015:121) recognises this issue when stating that star grading cannot predict tourist satisfaction, memories, arousal, and value because of its focus on the tangible aspects of the accommodation supply.

5.3.2.2.1.2 Green practices

Authors such as Heath (2002:331), Keyser (2009:30-31) and Millar and Balogu (2011:302) refer to responsible/sustainable tourism products as a new trend in the tourism industry. They suggest that establishments and destinations that practise responsible tourism will have a competitive advantage due to modern-day tourist demand. The demand for sustainability at guest houses was tested in the study. Although most guest respondents thought that green practices at guest houses were crucial, only two admitted that it would influence their choice of accommodation. When asked if they would choose one guest house above another because of its green practices, a Route 1 business guest (a tour manager) said: "Ek wil byna sê nee want vir die maatskappy gaan dit oor geld." (*I would almost say no because for the company it is about money.*)

5.3.2.2.1.3 Accommodation's responsiveness to site attributes

A Route 1 guest respondent confirmed the importance of the environment for a guest house visitor: "Dit gaan oor die natuurskoon van die omgewing. (See 4.7.1.) As jy aan die einde van die dag die heeldag in die chalet sit en TV kyk omdat hulle al die kanale beskikbaar het, dan mis jy die omgewing." (*It is about the natural beauty of the environment. If you sit in the chalet the whole day and watch television due to the availability of all the channels, then you miss out on the environment.*) Both Qu *et al.* (2010:467) and Schaar (2013:4) believe that the unique image of a destination has a vital role in installing the overall image in the mind of the consumer. Schaar (2013:2) as well as Oliveira and Panyik (2014:54) comment on the highly competitive nature of the tourism environment and suggest that tourists can only be attracted through unique attractions.

Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:128) identified quality of the service product, high levels of hygiene, quality food, décor and linen, as well as well-trained staff, as critical success factors for guest house management. When owner/manager respondents were asked about the aspects they focused on for guest satisfaction, they appeared to emphasise neatness, friendly service, food services, sensitivity to the

needs of guests, welcoming gifts/drinks/flowers, tranquility and relaxation, and area information. The significant needs expressed by guest respondents were largely in line with guest house focus areas: neatness, friendliness, and welcoming gifts/drinks/flowers. Guests also indicated their preference for a kitchen facility and local food. A Route 1 guest respondent summarised: "Dit hoef nie altyd goud en silwer en 'fancy' goed te wees nie. Ek dink dit moet net skoon en netjies wees, half die 'basics' as ek dit so kan stel." (*It does not always have to be gold and silver and fancy stuff. I think it should just be clean and neat, the basics so to say.*) The same guest mentioned that friendliness was highly noticeable at the guest house where he was booked at the time: "Almal is vriendelik, almal is bereid om te help, as hulle by jou verby stap, groet hulle jou of hulle jou nou al vandag gesien het of nie." (*Everybody is friendly, everybody is willing to help, when they walk past you they greet you whether they have seen you today or not.*)

Table 5.6 compares guest house owners' answers with the needs as expressed by guest house guests.

Table 5.6: Relationship between guest house priorities and the needs of guests

FEATURE	ROUTE 1 OWNERS/ MANAGERS	ROUTE 2 OWNERS/ MANAGERS	ROUTE 1 GUESTS	ROUTE 2 GUESTS
Neatness, tidiness	3	3	7	7
Friendliness	5	4	7	7
Reception, information about guest house facilities			4	2
Clear signage to rooms/ reception			1	
Accessibility	1		1	
Sensitive to the needs of guests	3	4	4	
Staff appearance	3	1		
Welcoming presents/drinks/flowers	2	4	5	3
Food/wine from the region	5	5	2	4
Excellent food/in-house restaurant			3	1
Tranquility, relaxation	3	4	2	1
Privacy			1	2

Area information	3	4	3	1
Wi-fi, DSTV, airconditioning	1	2	1	2
Quality bed and linen		2	4	3
Safety	1	1	3	1
Safe parking			3	
Shelter for vehicle			1	
Shower with good shower head/shower not in the bath			5	2
Shower that does not spill water			1	
Good water pressure in bathroom, sufficient water, enough hot water			2	
Availability of towels/good quality towels			5	1
Braai facilities			4	1
Modern facilities			1	
Bath mat			1	
Bath			2	2
Mirror in the room			1	
Art/pictures			1	
Amenities (soap/shampoo)			2	
Heating			1	
Kitchen facilities, dishcloths, dishwashing liquid			5	2
Everything works (e.g. television, light bulbs, appliances)			2	3

Heide and Grønhaug (2011:37) state that the atmosphere can be measured by factors such as relaxation, refinement, distinctiveness, and hospitality (see 4.7.7). Spontaneous answers of respondents reflected that they placed high priority on atmosphere dimensions. Four business clients pointed out that because they are away from home so often, they prefer an atmosphere close to what they experience at home: "... is amper soos 'n tweede huis" (... *is almost like a second home*). In addition to their preference for "home food", they did not want the staff to be overly professional and impersonal. One of the Route 1 guests commented: "Hulle laat jou voel asof jy familie is." (*They make you feel as if you are family.*) This contrasts with the view of authors such as Radder and Wang (2006:554) who identified professionalism of staff

as more critical than the friendliness of front desk staff towards business travellers. One of the Route 1 business clients said: "Dit moenie te professioneel wees nie ... veral as ek vir besigheid 'travel', moet dit nou nie ... dan wil ek wegkom van die omgewing wat besigheidsgeoriënteerd is." (*It should not be too professional ... especially when I travel for business, it should not be ... then I want to escape from the environment that is business-orientated.*) A Route 1 leisure guest agreed about warm hospitality. One Route 2 business guest appreciated a laundry service at guest houses. Two business guests wanted problems to be sorted out without delay: "As daar 'n probleem is, dit geniet dadelik aandag." (*When there is a problem, it gets attention immediately.*)

A Route 2 guest respondent mentioned that the destination should capitalise more on the rich history of the Kalahari: "Hulle moet meer van die geskiedenis inbring." (*They should bring in more about the history.*) He used Scotty Smith and the battle between the German soldiers and the Nama people at Grootkop as examples and suggested that more history be added to the existing Route brochure: "Die boekie wat ek gesien het van die huidige ... van die Rooiduin Roete en goed ... is meerendeels die plekkie het soveel kamers en dis die eienaars en goed, maar is niks van die geskiedenis nie." (*The booklet on the current ... on the Red Dune Route and so on that I have seen ... [states] mainly [that] the places have so many rooms, and these are the owners and so on, but is nothing about the history.*)

A Route 2 guest respondent commented about the relationship between expectations and the cost: "As jy R300 vir 'n plekkie vir 'n nag betaal, dan verwag jy 'n sekere 'level' van standaard." (*When you pay R300 for a little place for the night, then you expect a certain level of standard.*)

5.3.2.2.1.4 Special services

Guest respondents pointed out that they appreciated it when guest houses walked the extra mile. A Route 1 guest said: "Hulle het 'n voertuig gehad wat hulle gesê het kom ons gaan wys julle dit of dat." (*They had a vehicle and said let us show you this or that.*) Also: "Toe ons hier stilhou, het sy ons buitekant ontmoet en ingeneem." (*When we stopped here, she met us outside and took us inside.*) Another Route 1 guest liked being welcomed on arrival: "We just arrived, and they came already outside to meet us and explaining from the room." A Route 1 guest respondent (tour manager)

preferred her tour group to be welcomed with a special drink such as champagne with berries or some kind of trimming: "... glasië sjampanje byvoorbeeld met ietsie daarin, berries of iets wat dit mooi maak." She also appreciated chocolates on the pillows after the beds are turned down, as well as a personalised bottle of local wine for her as the tour manager. Three guest respondents referred to some winter treats in their rooms. Route 1: "There is sherry on the side table"; Route 1: "Daar is van die gastehuse wat byvoorbeeld uit hulle pad sal gaan as dit winter is om vir jou nou byvoorbeeld 'n glasië hanepootjie by jou kamer by jou bed te los." (*There are guest houses that go out of their way, for example, to put out a little 'hanepoot' in your bedroom during winter.*) "... 'n ou kraffie in my kamer met 'n ou soet wyntjie in die winter". (... *a carafe in my room with some sweet wine during winter.*) The guest also mentioned that a little chocolate on her bed or some rusks make her feel welcome: "... 'n ou tjoklitjie op die bed of iets spesiaal ... 'n ou bakkie met 'n paar ou beskuitjies in vir die ontbyt." A Route 2 guest mentioned: "There is coffee, there is tea, there is rusks. These are little things, but for us, it is a lot." Another Route 2 guest liked the little bottle with red desert sand and a brochure of the area that she received as a welcome gift. One Route 2 guest respondent explained that he was not focused on any welcoming gifts in the room, but expected something special on request for special occasions: "As dit 'n geleentheid is, 'n 'anniversary' of huweliksherdening of 'n verjaarsdag of so iets en jy het vir die mense gesê ons kom soontoe vir die geleentheid, dan verwag ek hulle moet net ietsie doen. Al sit hulle dit op die rekening, dit is oukei, maar doen net daardie ietsie moeite. (*If it is a special occasion, an anniversary or birthday or suchlike and you have informed the people that you are coming there for the event, then I expect them at least to do something. Even if they put it on the account, it will be okay, but just make that little effort.*)

One of the business travellers (tour manager on Route 2) appreciated private space to enjoy her meals on her own: "Jy het opsies waar jy kan sit. Mens het nie altyd lus om in die eetsaal te gaan sit daar stokstyf nie ... en vra kan hulle dit vir my kamer toe bring omdat ek alleen is en dit sê nogal vir my regtig baie." (*You have options where you can sit. One does not always feel like sitting formally in the dining room ... and ask if they can bring it to my room because I am on my own and that says a lot.*) (See 4.7.2.) She also mentioned flexibility of breakfast time slots or takeaway breakfasts as an alternative: "... ontbyttie, want ons beweeg baie vroeg in die oggende". (...)

breakfast times, because we move very early in the morning.) A Route 2 guest stated that she appreciated it when guest houses made a special effort to accommodate particular dietary needs, such as banting.

Another tour manager (guest respondent on Route 1) added: “Hulle onthou daai mooi opdis van ’n ete op jou bord, al is dit boerekos. Net die manier van ‘presentation’.” (*They [tourists] remember the attractive way in which a meal is dished up on your plate, even though it is boerekos [farm cooking]. Just the way of presentation.*) The respondent also said: “... dan tog vir ’n keer lekker as jy weg is van die boerekos-styl af en hulle bedien ’n carpaccio of iets anders op ’n spyskaart wat jy nie verwag op ’n platteland gaan gebeur nie ... soos in die Karoo almal ‘present’ lam. Maar ná ’n paar dae het jy ook nou genoeg lam gehad.” (*... then for a change it is nice when you are away from the boerekos style, and they serve a carpaccio or something different on the menu that you do not expect to happen in the countryside ... like in the Karoo, everybody presents lamb. However, after a few days, you have had enough lamb.*)

A Route 2 guest said: “Dis maar net jou gasvryheid is ongelooflik hier in die Kalahari.” (*It is just that your hospitality here in the Kalahari is unbelievable.*) This correlates with Ingram’s (2002:4–11) comment that guests perceive rural people as friendly and welcoming towards visitors and the countryside as a cure for the stresses of the city lifestyle.

5.3.2.2.1.5 Aesthetics

Coetzee (2015:121) identified aesthetics (décor and surroundings), entertainment, education, and escapism as the most critical factors to achieve guest satisfaction and pleasant memories. This author also pointed out that aesthetics is the most important of the four factors (see 4.7.3.1).

A Route 1 guest respondent (a tour manager) referred to both tangible and intangible elements of the accommodation experience: “... die ingang. Ek bedoel, as jy inkom by ’n plek moet daar iets wees wat bietjie uitstaan.” (*... the entrance. I mean, when you enter a place there should be something that stands out a bit.*) She later mentioned: “Jy kan in hoe ’n slegte plek bly, maar as die personeel vriendelik is, het jy al klaar die helfte van jou verblyf geniet.” (*You can stay in a pretty bad place, but when the staff is friendly, you have already enjoyed half of your stay.*) Another guest respondent (a tour manager on Route 2) questioned the focus of some guest houses in general: “Jy weet

mense is baiekeer geneig om dit ongelooflik mooi te maak, maar het hulle alles daarbinne wat jy nodig het? Jy weet dan, mens kan meer fokus op om dit vir die kliënt dit meer gemaklik te maak ... 'n sakkie of iets kry waar jy 'n naald en 'n gare en 'n knopie en sulke goed het ... 'n Panado ... daai ekstra buisie tandepasta of sanitêre goedjies.” (*You know people often tend to make it unbelievably beautiful, but do they offer everything you need inside? You know, one can focus more on making it comfortable for the client ... a little bag or something containing a needle and thread and a button and suchlike ... a Panado ... that extra tube of toothpaste or sanitary products.*) This respondent’s remarks confirm what Heide and Grønhaug (2011:37) noted. These authors also pointed out that guests will be satisfied with mediocre design if they are treated hospitably. They emphasise that the focus on design features should not be at the expense of hospitality.

Guests also mentioned interior aspects when asked about previous and recent positive guest house experiences:

Route 1 guest respondents said: “Dit wat jy sien as jy inkom; die stoele en die tafels, sitplekkie, mooi lampe en so aan ...” (*What you see when you enter; the chairs and tables, seating, beautiful lamps and so on ...*)

“... ’n mooi kussing en kleur. Kleur in die kamer – dink ek – speel ’n rol.” (*... a beautiful cushion and colour. Colour in the room – I think – plays a role.*)

“Jacuzzi.” A second respondent also mentioned a jacuzzi at a previous stay but said that it was not important to him.

“... die hele DSTV ...” (*... the full DSTV [package] ...*)

Route 2 guest respondents added: “Because it was an old house with old furniture and it was nice.”

“In XYZ het ons in ’n grot, letterlik ’n gastehuis wat in ’n grot ingebou is, gebly.” (*In XYZ we stayed in a cave, literally a guest house that was built in a cave.*)

“... elektriese komberse ...” (*... electric blankets...*)

The availability of a kitchenette was essential to several Route 1 guest respondents:

“Ek hou van die kombuisie en ek hou van die bank-opset om die televisie.” (*I like the little kitchen, and I like the couch arrangement around the television.*)

“Ja dis leerbanke. Dit gee vir my atmosfeer; dit laat mens welkom voel.” (*Yes, they are leather couches. I feel, it creates atmosphere and that makes you feel welcome.*)

“Hier is tot ’n perkoleerder.” (*There is even a percolator.*)

“Daar moet ’n ys-/vrieskassie wees, mikrogolf is nie vir my so belangrik nie, maar koffiestasie, jou wasbak, jou eetgerei – dit moet darem net ordentlik wees. Dit is nogal vir my goed wat ek dadelik raaksien: die kastrolle, die ‘casseroles’, die koffiebekers, die messe en vurke. Dit sien ek dadelik raak. En die ketel – hoe lyk hy. Dit sê vir my dadelik van hoe die kombuis is.” (*There should be a fridge/freezer, a microwave is not so important to me, but the coffee station, your sink, your cutlery – that should be decent at least. These are things that I notice immediately: the pots, the casseroles, the coffee mugs, the knives and forks. These I spot immediately. And the kettle – what it looks like. That immediately tells me what the kitchen is like.*) The same respondent said that they need more freezer space because they travel with perishables: “... ’n groter vriesplek ook wil hê want gewoonlik het jy vriesgoed in jou voertuig en vanaand wil jy dit in die vrieshokkie sit.” (*More freezing capacity as well, because usually you have frozen stuff in your vehicle and tonight you need to put it in the freezing compartment.*) Kitchen facilities were essential to other guests as well. One business client stated: “When it is a self-catering, there must be a stove a microwave, fridge, utensils, pots and pans.” The guest also mentioned cleanliness and the availability of cleaning agents.

Two guest respondents working for touring companies as tour managers mentioned a kitchenette as added value: Route 2: “... ook ’n kombuisie het. Soos ’n ‘self-catering’ gedeelte ... en iets wat ’n mens nooit aan dink nie is om byvoorbeeld net om ’n sout-en peperpot daar neer te sit nie. Met sout en peper in ... en ag, miskien net ’n houertjie met ’n olietjie in, en asyn.” (*... a kitchenette as well. Like a self-catering area ... and something one never thinks of, for instance, is to put out salt and pepper pots. With salt and pepper in them ... and maybe a little container with oil and vinegar.*) She also referred to the importance of lighting for business visitors: “Hy moet ’n ordentlike lig hê waarby hy kan sit en werk.” (*He needs sufficient light to sit and work at.*) The other tour manager (Route 1) said: “... ‘self-catering’, ’n lekker yskas en as jy nou ’n lekker bottel wyn het van die streek.” (*... self-catering, a nice refrigerator and if you have a nice bottle of wine from the region.*) The respondent also added an electric socket high enough on the wall so that tourists do not have to bow down, international adapters in

the room, in-room coffee station with a choice of hot drinks, and something fresh on the bed such as a flower or lavender. She mentioned that a television in the room is not crucial to their company.

Three other business clients mentioned the importance of a kitchen and a refrigerator in the room. Two of them revealed, in line with the findings of Radder and Wang (2006) regarding the preferences of business travellers, that they liked themed rooms and attractive interiors. Two of the business travellers referred to consistency when travelling as a group. Route 1 respondent: "Ons is baie keer in groepe, dan kry jy inkonsekwentheid tussen die groep in kamers. Almal lyk nie dieselfde nie." (*We are often part of a group, then you get inconsistency of group members' rooms. The rooms do not look the same.*) The Route 2 business traveller said: "Elke hotel of gastehuis – ek gaan nou maar noem – het sy beter kamers en het sy slegte kamers. So mense dink nie altyd dat mense kyk na die ander kamers van die hotel nie." (*Every hotel or guest house – I am going to mention that – has its better and its bad rooms. So people do not always think that people look at the other rooms of the hotel.*)

One Route 1 guest respondent mentioned room space, and two guests (one on Route 1 and one guest on Route 2) mentioned a spacious shower as features that impressed them: "Die kamer is dalk net 'n tikkie groter ... of in plaas van hierdie gewone plasties ingeboude stort is dit hierdie groot oop stort, of jy kan darem omdraai in die badkamer, jy weet." (*The room is perhaps just that little bigger ... or instead of this usual plastic built-in shower, it is a big open shower, or you can turn around in the bathroom, you know.*) The one Route 1 guest also appreciated privacy: "Ons was kilometers van die naaste mense af; daar was niemand in sig nie." (*We were kilometres away from the nearest people; there was nobody to be seen.*)

Heide and Grønhaug (2011:37) identified distinctiveness as the most crucial element in explaining the general atmosphere and recommend that managers capitalise on unique features such as design, décor, and location.

When asked about positive guest house experiences anywhere in the world, Route 1 guests answered as follows:

"Dis buite Upington; mens wil nie altyd in 'n groot dorp wees nie. So ek dink omdat jy hier tussen die wynboere is jy kry tog daai gevoel van plaas." (*It is outside Upington;*

one does not always want to be in a big town. So I think because you are here among the wine farmers, you somehow get that 'farm' feeling.)

“Natuurskoon.” (*Scenic beauty.*) “Die omgewing, die natuur, die ou bokkies en ganse op die werf. Die diertjies op die werf. Jy kry dit nie oral nie.” (*The environment, nature, the little deer and geese on the premises. The animals in the yard. You do not get that everywhere.*)

“’n Mooi uitsig” (*A beautiful view*)

“That is what we love, you see in the house, the history of the house.”

“Die braaiplek. Ja, daar moet ’n vuurherd wees.” (*The braai facilities. Yes, there must be a fire-place.*)

“Ag, net die mooigheid as jy so hier af teen die rivier kyk en dit is nie in die dorp nie.” (*Oh, just the beauty of it when you look down the river, and it is not in the town.*)

Another respondent also appreciated view: “As ek uitsig het en ek kan op die stoep sit en kan kyk na ’n ander tipe natuur wat ons nie het nie.” (*If I have a view and I can sit on the porch and then look at a different kind of nature that we do not have.*)

A guest respondent (tour manager) mentioned: “Jy wil daai Afrika gevoel hê van ’n lodge met huisies met braai vir buite.” (*You want that Africa feeling of a lodge with chalets with an outside braai.*) Also: “Meeste mense hou van ’n stoepie jy weet, soos nou wat jy nou buitekant sit met ’n glasie wyn.” (*Most people like a little porch you know, like now where you are sitting outside with a glass of wine.*)

Two guests mentioned space: One of them said: “Mens kry plekke wat partykeer baie opmekaar is en dan hoor jy alles wat langsaan is.” (*One finds places that are sometimes very close together, and then you hear everything that is going on next door.*)

“Ja, jy kry party van die gastehuse wat absoluut inpas by die omgewing waar hulle is. Dan voel dit sommer vir jou, jissie, hier wil ek graag bly.” (*Yes, you find some guest houses that absolutely fit into the environment in which they find themselves. Then it feels like goodness, here I would like to stay.*) Two other guest respondents on Route 2 agreed: “Dit pas by die omgewing.” (*It fits in with the environment.*) “Die ou geboutjies, wat maar net so Kalahari is en die ou plekkies buite om, dis alles maar net so plat en Kalahari en alles maar net so ... ek hou van dit.” (*The little old buildings, that are just so Kalahari and the little structures outside, they are all just so flat and Kalahari and just so ... I like it.*)

Other Route 2 remarks included:

"And suddenly you came into an oasis. I mean green, palm trees ... it was blue swimming pool. It was like: how do they do it here? It was like in the middle of a barren ... 'ja', and then you came to an oasis."

Two guests pointed out that they did not care about gardens and a view. A Route 1 respondent said: "Omdat 'n mens slegs daar slaap as ek toer, kom jy daar gewoonlik in die aand en jy ry vroeg in die oggend." (*Because one only sleeps there when one is touring, you usually arrive there in the evening and depart early in the morning.*)

Some guests disagreed. A Route 1 respondent said: "Dit is eerste indruk, maar ek dink tuin maak tog 'n verskil." (*It is the first impression, but I think a garden does make a difference.*) "... 'n mooi tuin, blomme as jy daar inkom ... wil jy ... jy voel sommer welkom, jy weet." (*... a beautiful garden, flowers when you enter ... you want to ... you feel welcome, you know.*) One Route 2 guest described a positive previous guest house experience: "... 'n tuin en dan was daar ook mooi swemfasiliteite soos 'n mooi swembad wat mooi uitgelê is." (*... a garden and then there were also beautiful swimming facilities such as a beautiful swimming pool that was attractively laid out.*) She liked the desert garden of the current guest house as well: "... tuin area en die swembad, dit lyk netjies ... die klippetjies ... die rotsies." (*... garden area and the swimming pool, it looks neat ... the pebbles ... the little rocks.*)

Other qualities mentioned by guests included animals on the premises, the scenery, peacefulness, the availability of an in-house restaurant, a pool, a dartboard, and a pool table.

5.3.2.2.2 Negative experiences

Guest respondents were reasonably positive about the guest houses they were staying in during the interviews but identified some negative experiences from previous stays at guest houses elsewhere.

Route 1 remarks included:

"Dit was ou beddens en jy was te bang om om te draai. En 'n ou stort wat water gesukkel het om uit te kom." (*The beds were old and you were afraid to turn. And an old shower with water that struggled to come out.*)

“Wel ’n mens kan mos maar gou sien as ’n plek nie na gekyk word nie” (*Well, a person can see fairly early when a place is not being looked after.*)

“... oorweldigende musiek.” (... *overwhelming music.*) Two respondents mentioned this aspect. One of them (a business traveller) added vehicle noise and loud children.

“... badkamer ... dit was bietjie ingekrimp.” (... *bathroom ... it was a bit cramped.*)

“... toilette wat heelyd lek ... toilette wat glad nie wil ‘flush’ nie, storte wat jy ure en ure wag vir die warm water om warm te word, beddegoed wat jy nie seker is, is hulle gewas nie ... al die koffie en goed is in ’n kombuis uit jou kamer uit ... nie ‘airconditioners’.” (... *toilets that are leaking the whole time ... toilets that won’t flush, showers where you have to wait hours and hours for the warm water to get warm, bed linen of which you are not sure they have been washed ... all coffee and stuff are kept in a kitchen away from your room ... no airconditioners.*)

“... as mense vir jou sê jou ‘check-in’ tyd is van twee tot ses en jy kom drie-uur in die middag daar aan en die plek is nog nie skoongemaak nie ... uitgebrande ‘plugs’ in die mure ... handdoeke is gewas maar dit was nog nie beskikbaar en droog toe ons daar opdaag nie.” (... *if people inform you that check-in time is between two and six and when you arrive at three o’clock in the afternoon and the place has not been cleaned yet ... burnt plugs on walls ... towels washed, but not available and dry when we arrived.*)

Another guest also preferred to be welcomed in person: “Om ’n mens te ontvang, somtyds los hulle mos maar net ’n sleutel of so.” (*To welcome you, sometimes they just leave a key or something to that effect.*)

Response from a tour manager: “... gastehuse waar jy korrespondensie doen, maar jy kry dit nie op tyd terug nie.” (... *guest houses [with whom] you correspond, but you do not get [a response] in time.*)

Route 2 remarks included:

“Geyser het die hele nag geraas ... probleme met die vlermuise ... net die sleutel in my hand prop en sê oukei daar en daar, jy weet nie eers regtig waar dit is nie, maar ek meen jy moet maar jou weg vind. Daar is nie hulp van ‘kan hy jou tas dra?’ of ‘kan ek iemand sê om vir jou te help nie?’” (*Geyser made a noise throughout the night ...*

problems with bats ... the key just dumped in my hand and told okay there and there, and you don't really know where it is, but I mean you have to find your way on your own. There is no help such as 'shall he carry your bag?' or 'may I tell somebody to help you?')

Also: "Van die personeel is miskien moeg en nie lus nie." (*Some of the staff may possibly be tired and don't feel like attending to you.*)

Responses in this theme touched upon the essential elements of reasonable accommodation as identified in Chapter 4, namely pleasant views and location, privacy, comfort and luxury, and staff. Most owner/manager respondents indicated that they focus on these characteristics and many more. Responses also highlighted the impact of agritourism activities (often part of guest house offerings on tourist routes) on the Route as a tourist destination.

5.4 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

When taking into account the aim of this study, namely to investigate ways in which guest houses in a specific destination can enhance a destination brand, it was evident from the data that there are four areas that would play a significant role in this matter, namely brand participation, living the brand, visitor brand awareness, and visitor experiences.

An effective brand depends on sufficient congruence between the branding strategy and the tourists' construction of place. Figure 5.3 summarises the themes derived from the interviews, by structuring them according to the conceptual summary in Chapter 3 (see Figure 3.4). Figure 5.3 reflects conformity between the tangible and intangible elements in destination brand management and the tangible and intangible elements on the destination brand consumption side.

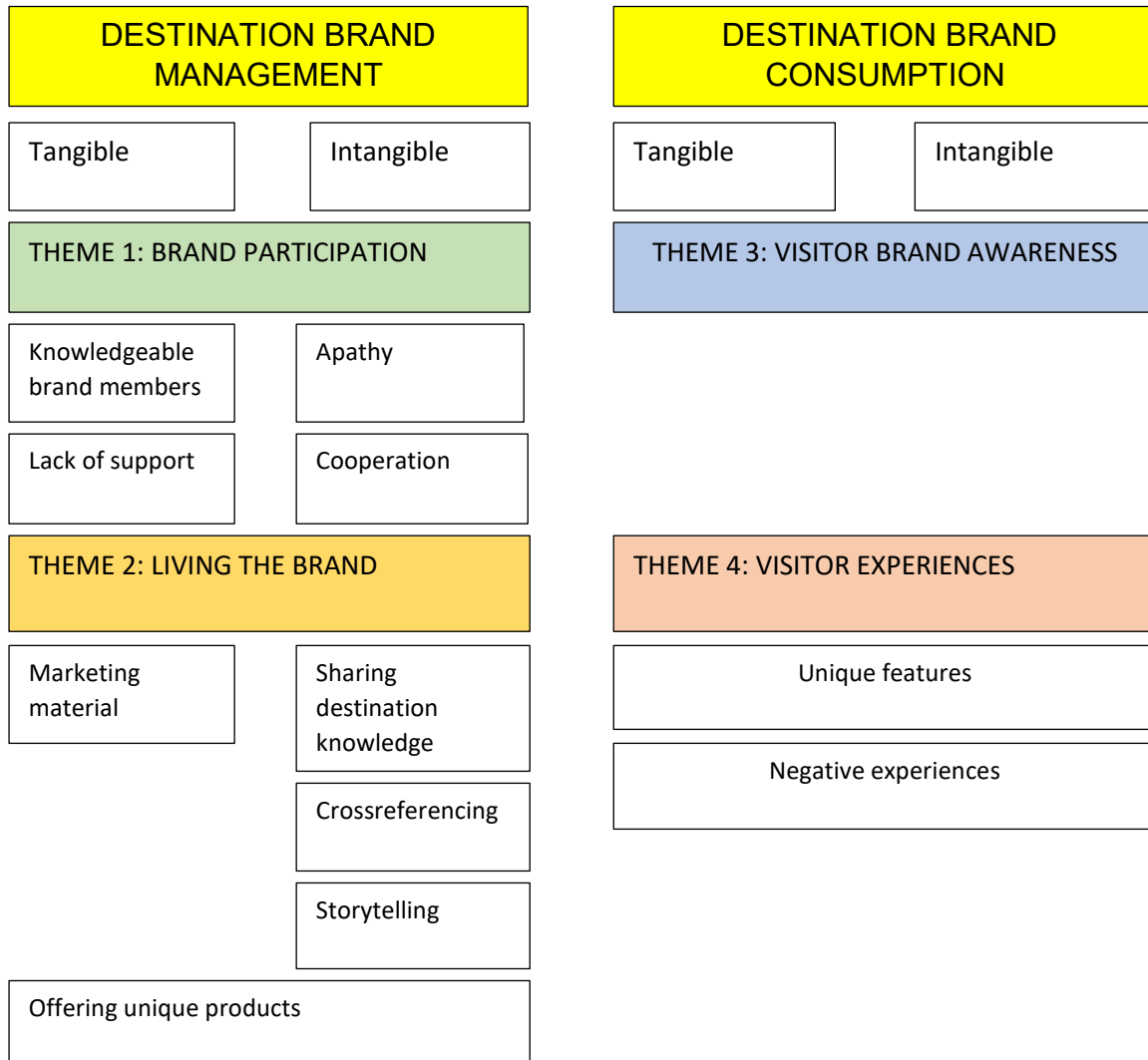


Figure 5.3: Summary of themes derived from data

In the next and final chapter, the literature that was reviewed on the guest house industry will be combined with the insights gained from the empirical research results (summarised in Figure 5.3) to propose guidelines to enhance a destination brand.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendations of the study, drawn from the data gathered during the empirical research and against the background of the literature review and conceptual analysis done earlier in the study. The information provided in the previous chapters clearly indicated that destinations increasingly turn to branding as a way to position themselves in a highly competitive market. Throughout the study, it became evident that guest houses, as the basis from which tourists explore destinations, can play a significant role in destination branding. However, it is apparent that accommodation establishments do not make optimal use of branding to support the brand of their destination, possibly because destination branding systems are not yet fully functional and the importance of destination branding is not fully realised at present. Furthermore, accommodation providers often appear to be oblivious to customer needs and the possibility that their guest houses can have an impact on the destination brand. Another challenge, namely quality issues, may arise from the fact that hospitality grading in South Africa is not compulsory (see Figure 1.1). This chapter elaborates on these issues.

The primary aim of this study was to provide guidelines to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry. To address the aim of the study, and the theoretical research question, conclusions relating to the conceptual, meta-analytical and normative research questions were drawn and discussed. This chapter provides conclusions related to these objectives. The primary research question of the study will be answered by means of recommendations linked to the conclusions. The chapter will conclude with the value of the study, and suggested topics for further research.

6.2 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

In this section, the primary research question will be answered after the three secondary research questions are addressed.

6.2.1 Conclusions regarding Objective 1: Conceptual foundation of destination branding

The aim of Objective 1 was to analyse the destination brand. From the conceptual analysis it was concluded that the characteristics of destination branding should be considered on two levels. On the one hand, destination branding includes both tangible and intangible offerings on the destination management side, and on the other hand, one finds tangible and intangible elements of the destination that are constructed by the tourists themselves. Tangible offerings include the physical tourism products, the combination of businesses involved, and the brand elements (see 3.3.1). A unique destination image that includes cognitive and affective elements, brand quality and credibility, and personality represent the intangible offerings (see 3.3.2). It can be concluded that the variety of stakeholders involved may create a management challenge that calls for an inventive branding strategy (see 3.3.3).

Through the conceptual analysis, antecedents that have an impact on destination branding were identified. These antecedents are brand culture, sense of place, brand leadership, brand communications, structure and coordination, stakeholder partnerships and collaboration, a dimension of pleasure, emotional connection, interactive online processes, uniqueness, brand image, brand promise, and brand personality (see 3.4). It can be concluded that employees' commitment to the brand should be a focus area in the branding strategy, as employees are crucial to the environment in which the brand values should develop, as well as to how visitors will experience the brand culture (see 3.4.1). Another focus area is to get the residents committed to the brand, as the people living in the area help to shape the sense of place (see 3.4.2) and may act as brand ambassadors. It can also be concluded that brand communications require more than consistent two-way marketing and public relations communication with visitors, but should include stakeholder communication, trust building and emotional connection (see 3.5.8) through a structured and

coordinated internal branding strategy (see 3.5.5) aimed at healthy partnerships and collaboration (see 3.5.6) that include the local residents. It can be construed from the fact that consumers increasingly become co-creators of the brand through social media, that destinations should employ creative interactive online processes (see 3.4.9). Furthermore, it is suggested that destinations focus on uniqueness by incorporating unique cultural heritage, traditions and international events in their offerings – competitive image, brand personality and brand promises that can and will be delivered – to become better positioned (see 3.5.10–3.5.13). These aspects require exemplary leadership (see 3.5.3).

Lastly, through the conceptual analysis it was concluded that, with the different antecedents in place, destination branding might result in various positive outcomes (see 3.5).

6.2.2 Conclusions regarding Objective 2: Context within which destination branding is practised

Objective 2 reflected on the nature, role and scope of the commercial accommodation sector in the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Kalahari Red Dune Route as tourism destinations.

The Open Africa tourism routes were developed to assist entrepreneurs in rural areas in creating jobs, increasing income, and offering authentic visitor experiences (see 4.3). It can be deduced that the Open Africa initiative is in line with the vision of “a new tourism” that stimulates other sectors of the economy, creates opportunities for previously neglected groups, is kind to the environment, and brings enjoyment. The vision, explained in the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, also identified “Responsible Tourism” as the most appropriate concept for tourism development in South Africa.

Both routes included in the study marketed friendly people and warm hospitality as typical area characteristics. The Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route particularly identifies the Kalahari as a place to relax and to rejuvenate. This confirms Ingram’s (2002:4–11) notion that tourists perceive country people as friendly and welcoming,

and that they experience rural areas as peaceful and a cure for stress. As many guest houses on the two routes are situated on farms, it can be concluded that the routes are in a position to stimulate agritourism, which is described by Taylor (2016:30) as a much-needed offering to show the natural beauty of the country, generate income and empower communities. The literature study also revealed that guest involvement in farm activities has not taken off in South Africa, and this aspect can be regarded as a gap in the market.

As accommodation is the basis from which tourists explore a destination, it can be described as an indispensable support facility in tourist destinations (see 4.2.3).

The literature study included marketing planning suggestions for guest houses (see 4.4.1.4). It can be concluded that being part of a successful brand can assist guest houses in learning about their competition with the aim of offering unique services and facilities (see 4.4.1.4.1), determining target markets, and matching guests with suitable hosts (see 4.4.1.4.2). Brand membership may assist with HR coordination – specifically skills development and the internal branding process – as every staff visitor contact may influence the corporate brand experience (see 4.4.1.7.1). Lynch (2002:112) highlights the importance of networking, cooperation, training interventions and quality control for guest houses. Brand membership provides the opportunity in this regard. The literature emphasises star grading (as a tool to communicate value) and sustainability (for a competitive advantage), but the empirical study contradicted these perspectives. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

From the outcomes of effective tourism accommodation (identified in Chapter 4), it can be concluded that guest houses on tourist routes may contribute to neighbourhood safety, improve the image and aesthetics of the area, as well as property value. Guest house visitors spend money on other local businesses in the area, and serve as catalyst igniting the emergence of other businesses. Employment opportunities created by the accommodation sector have an impact on the living conditions of the local people. Furthermore, guest houses contribute to economic development through creating business linkages and local procurement. Lastly, as choice of accommodation reflects tourists' needs and expectations, guest houses directly influence the type of tourists that the destination will attract.

6.2.3 Conclusions regarding Objective 3: Ideal manner in which a destination brand can be enhanced through the guest house industry

Objective 3 attempted to determine which factors influenced guest house client's experiences of the destination, as well as owners'/managers' knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding.

6.2.3.1 Conclusions regarding guest house owners'/managers' perceptions and experiences regarding destination branding

The themes relating to the destination brand management included owner/manager participation in the branding effort, and how the brand was used by guest houses on the routes.

Theme 1: Brand participation

From the variety of perspectives, it was concluded that guest houses on tourist routes should become part of the destination brand, but there was uncertainty regarding the effective functioning of the brands.

The following conclusions were drawn regarding brand participation :

- From the fact that some route members did not attend meetings, did not become familiar with information on the website, did not know who the other product owners on the route were, did not advertise their guest houses as part of the Route, or did not offer their services and activities in a branded manner, it was concluded that not all route members were fully committed to the brand.
- Uncertainty regarding the role and functions of Open Africa, the Provincial Tourism Department and the product owner committee in some cases pointed to confusion about leadership and it was concluded that leadership roles were in some cases not clearly established, or successfully communicated.
- It was also concluded that destinations, where leadership roles and functions were clearly established, functioned more effectively.

- Study results confirmed that cooperation of route members brought business opportunities, technical assistance, occasions to socialise, financial benefits and savings through collective marketing and referencing.
- It was concluded that brand participation could pave the way to a supporting system for training, as well as the sharing of knowledge, resources, and ideas.
- It was finally concluded that destination marketing was more successful when the route membership committee took full responsibility.

Theme 2: Living the brand

Campelo *et al.* (2014:155) explain *genius loci* as the shared sense of the spirit of a place which includes an attachment to and bonding with the place (see 3.4.2). Destination product owners cannot articulate the brand, or define the destination if there is no attachment to the place. *Genius loci* forms part of the broader concept, namely “sense of place” which deals with the atmosphere, local habits, history, communal practices, weather, geographical location and landscape to create an identity (see 3.2.2). Destination branding is about the communication of this identity, and how to do things at that place (Campelo *et al.*, 2014:162).

On this topic, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Stakeholders were “living the brand” by offering local products at their establishments and supporting brand promises and images. There was a prominent focus on friendliness and hospitality (viewed as area images on both routes).
- Guest house owners/managers over the spectrum were passionate about the area in which their guest houses were located.
- Guest houses were important sources of much-needed area information, and the study revealed that most establishments provided information with great enthusiasm.
- The guest house industry contributed to the visitors’ understanding of the area and its special characteristics, as several respondents mentioned that they went

beyond just providing tourist information of the area, but explained unique characteristics, such as water quality, fauna and flora and climate.

- With different institutions involved in local tourism and destination branding, destinations and individual product owners in some cases found it difficult to establish responsibilities. This is not a unique challenge. Ooi (2010:109) calls it “politics of destination branding” and defines the term as “the dynamic processes of drawing support and cooperation by the brand authorities from different tourism agencies and local residents, so that the brand will be accepted, communicated and manifested through official and unofficial publicity and products” (see 3.4.4).
- Marketing, in cases where the brand’s product owner committee took all responsibility for their marketing actions, was more successful. As stated in Chapter 3, Morgan *et al.* (2012:81) explain that stakeholders are active investors in the destination offerings and that leadership should be a collective endeavour, including all stakeholders in “shared leadership”.
- Guest house guests place a high premium on a personalised service and hospitality.
- Not only guest houses, but other route members and product owners in the destination were gaining through cross-referencing. Guest houses got guests through referral from other guest houses when the latter were fully booked. All respondents indicated that they referred their guests to attractions and places of interest in the area.
- Guest houses enhance the visitor experience when they motivate their guests to visit the other guest farms with unique offerings.
- Guest houses themselves are in the position to expand the destination offerings;
- The area benefits through guest house owners/managers who offer local products at their guest houses and stimulate sales of local produce by introducing them to visitors.
- Heritage and traditions are important contributors to market positioning. Kemp and Bordelon (2011:122) posit that destinations capitalising on their heritage and traditions are competitively better positioned.
- Guest houses are in the position to improve the appearance of the area, as owners explained that they clean up the area around the guest house, invest in adjacent

land to protect indigenous vegetation, and convert old buildings into tourist accommodation.

- The guest-host relationship is seen as the backbone of rural tourism (Gössling & Lane, 2014:1401).
- Events may bring business opportunities as well as the opportunity for networking and socialising.
- Guest houses in general did not only attempt to meet the basic needs of guests but attempted to enhance the guest experience with more services and even tourist attractions and activities. They went beyond the call of duty by taking guest food preferences into account, treating self-catering guests with complementary salads or homemade bread, preparing special picnics, and offering to do laundry.

6.2.3.2 Conclusions with regard to visitor perceptions and experiences

Theme 3: Visitor brand awareness

The success of a brand lies in the overlap between destination brand management and destination brand consumption (the tourists' own construction of place). The "poetics of destination branding" aim at influencing potential visitors' perceptions with a unique brand story (Ooi, 2010:109) – in other words to create visitor brand awareness.

Guests were generally in agreement regarding dominant area characteristics and images, but many were not familiar with the brand or the logo. In most cases, it was not Route marketing initiatives that attracted them to book their accommodation, as bookings were made through booking agents, the companies they represented while visiting the area, the own marketing efforts of the guest house, WOM and by spotting the guest house when visiting the area in the past.

From these perspectives, it can be concluded that brand communication and marketing were specific areas of concern.

Theme 4: Factors influencing guest house visitor experiences

The following conclusions were drawn from visitor experiences:

- Guest respondents mostly agreed about their basic accommodation needs, which corresponded with the critical success factors identified by authors such as Van der Westhuizen and Saayman (2007:128). It was concluded that cleanliness and neatness are the most basic needs, supplemented by friendliness, welcoming gifts/drinks, a kitchen facility, and local cuisine.
- These are only elements of reasonable accommodation and do not distinguish the guest house, or the destination, in a competitive market.
- Although the literature places a high premium on the star grading system (Henning, 2008:194; Du Plessis & Saayman, 2011:133; Coetzee, 2015:121) and green practices at guest houses (Heath, 2002:331; Keyser, 2009:30–31; Millar & Balogu, 2011:302), the findings contradicted the significance of these factors in creating demand or visitor satisfaction. It was concluded, however, that star grading communicates quality.
- The literature accentuates the competitive nature of the tourism environment and acknowledges the importance of uniqueness to differentiate the product (Schaar, 2013:2; Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:54). Respondents favoured guest houses which accentuated their surroundings.
- History relating to the area should be incorporated in the offerings.
- Business guests who are away from home regularly appreciate warm hospitality and a homely atmosphere to staff that are “too professional”. This contradicts the notion of Radder and Wang (2006:554) regarding the professionalism of the staff that takes higher priority amongst business clients than the friendliness of front desk staff.
- Memorable offerings do not necessarily imply substantial expenses, as guests appreciate attention to small detail.
- Since hospitality, a personalised service and friendliness are priority needs of guests, the human factor is important to influencing guest house visitor experiences.
- From the results of the study one can conclude that décor and surroundings (aesthetics) are important to most guests, although the focus on design should not overshadow hospitality. This agrees with the notion of Coetzee (2015:121) who

identifies aesthetics as the most critical factor in achieving guest satisfaction and positive memories, but also agrees with Heide and Grønhaug (2011:37) that the focus on design should not overshadow hospitality. Furthermore, remarks of business guests construe the view of Radder and Wang (2006) regarding themed rooms and attractive interiors, although two of the business respondents referred to consistency, especially if the guest house receives group business.

- Distinctiveness is a crucial factor for creating atmosphere.
- Guest house management should be mindful of certain aspects that may result in negative guest experiences caused by poorly maintained facilities, excessive noise, and apathetic staff.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept of destination branding was summarised in Figure 3.3. This figure reflects the basis from which the results of the empirical study were integrated (see Figure 6.1). Figure 6.1 serves as the framework from which guidelines to guest houses for enhancing the destination brand are recommended.

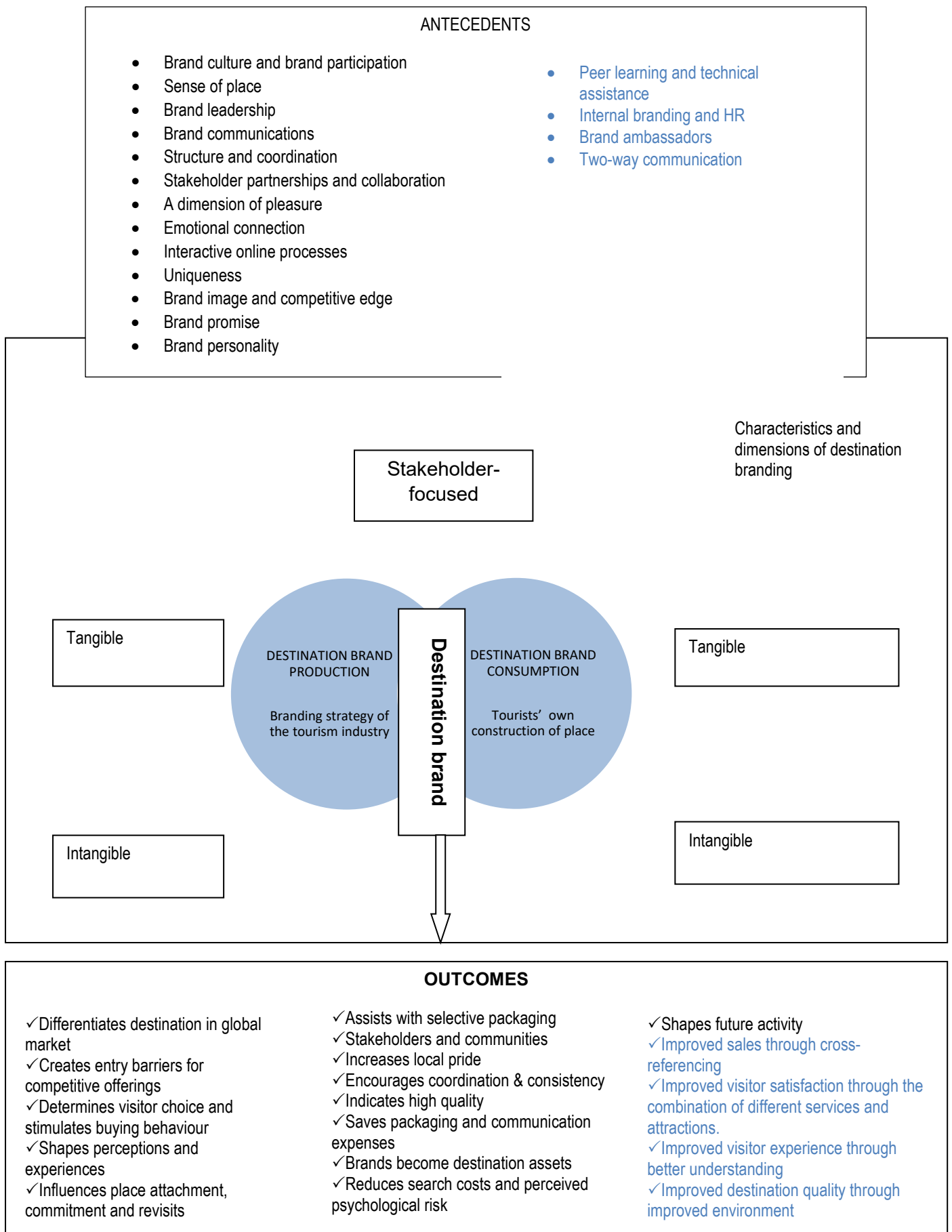


Figure 6.1: Framework for recommendations

The research conclusions discussed in this chapter have added to the antecedents and outcomes in the initial summary. All additions have been indicated in blue in Figure 6.1. Additions to the list of outcomes of successful branding were discussed in 6.1.1. Figure 6.1 forms the framework to provide guidelines addressing the grand research question.

6.3.1 Guidelines to enhance a destination brand through the guest house industry

As indicated previously, the aim of this study was to provide guidelines to stakeholders in the guest house industry to enhance the brand of their destination. The framework in Figure 6.1 includes antecedents, characteristics and dimensions, as well as outcomes of destination branding. These served as points of departure for the formulation of the guidelines. The guidelines are presented in Table 6.1 to Table 6.3.

Table 6.1: Guidelines regarding destination leadership

ASPECT	GUIDELINE
Brand complexity	Destination branding should be approached as a systematic process influenced by various factors.
Dimensions of branding	Destination branding should be managed from the perspective of two dimensions, namely destination brand management and destination brand consumption.
Stakeholder orientation	A strong stakeholder orientation should be established in destination branding.
Brand leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destinations should clarify roles and responsibilities of all role players related to the destination brand. • Managers of destinations should establish a marketing model that fits their particular needs and situation. • Brand leadership should secure all product owners' buy-in into the process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideal approach is to address the “politics of branding” by convincing all stakeholders to apply the brand logo and to offer all products and services with the brand in mind, supplemented by cooperation and social relationships amongst brand members. • As they are active investors in the destination product, all stakeholders should be included in shared leadership. • Residents should be regarded as essential destination stakeholders and possible place ambassadors. Brand leadership should investigate ways to encourage WOM by making residents and local communities become more involved, allowing them to identify with the brand and to become committed to the brand (see 3.4.3).
Brand strategy	Brand leadership should ensure that the destination has a brand strategy in place. This strategy should be effectively communicated to all role players and stakeholders that should assist in building the brand.
Brand culture and brand participation	Destinations should focus on their internal brand communication to obtain consensus, and build a brand culture. This requires dedicated brand leadership that assists role players in incorporating the brand in their activities and services.
Brand communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal brand communications should include a clear clarification of roles and responsibilities. • The stakeholder membership committee should act as the primary destination management organisation. This includes the marketing function. • Members should communicate with one another regularly and provide feedback consistently. • The external brand communication function should include the creation and coordination of communication platforms, such as a website and social media accounts, as well as marketing material.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing material should include an up-to-date map of the destination, area information, and route marketing material. • Membership fees could be used to fund marketing material. • Brand communication messages to potential visitors should reduce options, save time and costs and make the interpretation of information easier. • Members should get assistance in becoming linked to the main attraction of the area via Google Maps.
Structure and coordination	Effective leadership should oversee the coordination of the brand, and create structures for communicating consistent brand messages to product owners and employees.
Dimension of pleasure	Destinations should include a dimension of pleasure in the brand name and/or brand promise.
Communicate quality	As resource status suggests quality, it is recommended that the main attractions on both routes (Augrabies Waterfall National Park and Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park) apply for World Heritage Status.
Distinctiveness through uniqueness	To increase visibility and underline the unique elements of the destination, tourist routes should look for opportunities to host or become involved in events.
Brand personality	As a destination personality is a method for understanding tourists' perception of the destination, enhance the brand identity, differentiate the destination from competitors, and assist in customer emotional brand attachment, a destination should incorporate a brand personality. The brand leadership should also develop strategies to align projected and perceived brand personalities.

Table 6.2: Guidelines for guest houses to enhance the destination brand

ASPECT	GUIDELINE
Tourist satisfaction.	Guest house management should realise that tourists' perceptions and experiences are shaped by all the different aspects of the journey, including accommodation, and that visitor satisfaction influences intention to revisit and word-of-mouth marketing.
Brand culture and brand participation	Guest house management should become active and committed members of the brand. They should attend meetings, cooperate, use the brand name and logo in their own marketing communication, offer products that endorse the brand, include local produce on the menu, and introduce visitors to local products by offering some as welcoming presents.
Sense of place	<p>Brand members articulate the brand best when they are attached to, or bonded with the place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses should therefore capitalise on local heritage and traditions in their offerings to foster a sense of place and distinctiveness of the brand. • Guest houses could celebrate their cultural and natural heritage by offering traditional dishes, utilising historical buildings, displaying antique and vintage objects, buying land to conserve natural heritage, labelling indigenous trees, using local plant material and stone as table decorations, and gardening with climatic conditions in mind. • Sense of place could also be enhanced if guest house staff enthusiastically explain the environment and offering advice to visitors.
Brand communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As brand members, guest house management should create awareness and promote the destination brand. • Sharing of information should be a key function at guest houses.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest house management should assist in creating marketing material that includes updated destination maps, area information, and Route marketing material. • These materials should be on display at the guest house, or available in guest rooms.
Stakeholder partnerships and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest house management should stimulate other sectors of the economy – especially stakeholders of the brand – by forming business linkages and through local procurement. • To establish a strong destination brand, guest house owners/mangers should cooperate through cross-referencing, teamwork, and sharing resources. • The questions on guest house customer feedback forms should also include visitor destination satisfaction questions for the eventual improvement of all destination offerings and services.
Dimension of pleasure	Guest houses should include a dimension of pleasure in their offerings to enhance visitor destination experience.
Emotional connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses could foster an emotional connection between die tourists and the destination, and enhance the destination brand experience, through personal service and storytelling. • “Storytelling” should also be used in destinations with special or unusual conditions, natural elements and different cultures to enhance visitors’ understanding of the environment.
Interactive online processes	Guest house management should utilise all relevant platforms (e.g., the Internet, social media, Web 2.0) for destination communication amongst themselves, brand members and visitors.
Uniqueness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guest house industry should enhance the destination brand experience by offering unique products, such as game drives, sundowners, picnics with a view, animals/waterfowl in the garden, and by using local elements for building material. • As guest houses on tourism routes are often situated on farms, they are in the ideal position to offer agritourism. Route

	<p>members should therefore focus on agritourism as a way to empower the local community, increase income, and improve the destination brand experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses should consider ways to combat low tourist seasons by offering short courses in relevant topics such as nature photography, baking, creative writing, and painting. • All products sold should carry the destination brand logo. • Since guest involvement in farm activities is still a gap in the South African agritourism market, guest houses on farms could expand the destination brand attraction menu by including activities such as feeding livestock, collecting eggs, shearing sheep, or harvesting grapes/pruning vineyards as possible tourist activities. • Guest houses could augment Route offerings by including the bird life, unique topography, local culture performances, and river activities. • Visitor experiences could be enhanced by elements that do not involve costs. Visitors should therefore be made aware of these destination assets. Free elements include silence of the area, animal noises, stars, and vegetation. • As atmosphere dimensions were highly prioritised, guest houses should explore ways to incorporate the environment and environmental characteristics – including area history and historical architecture – to create a unique atmosphere.
<p>Brand image and competitive edge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses should create brand awareness by applying the destination brand identity, including the logo. • Guest houses should see how they can apply the projected images of their respective routes in all their offerings. • Guest house management should support destination values through their offerings.
<p>Brand promise</p>	<p>Hospitality seems to be a basic need for any guest, and while hospitality counts as a brand promise on both routes, guest houses should at least capitalise on this aspect.</p>

Peer learning and technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses should learn from one another and share technical knowledge with other members of the brand. • Through building social relationships with co-members, guest houses can become part of a valuable support system.
Internal branding and HR	Hospitality and a homely atmosphere were identified as crucial needs, putting a focus on the importance of the HR function. The guest house industry, as a labour-intensive industry, should focus on HR and internal branding for a competitive edge. This includes staff training.
Brand ambassadors	Guest house management should engage all stakeholders to act as brand ambassadors (see 3.4.6).
Two-way communication	Guest house management should share customer feedback data with the brand members to avoid one-way message transmission in brand communications, and to gain knowledge of the “brand reality” (see 3.4.4).
Image of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest house management should realise that, by keeping up their own landscaping and buildings, they improve the image of the destination brand. • Aesthetics can be enhanced by “adopting” the area adjacent to their properties.
Star grading	The guest house industry should propose guidelines to the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa that incorporate the intangible aspects of the accommodation offerings, as grading directs and communicates quality.
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As it was also identified as a priority need, as well as one of the dimensions of atmosphere, guest houses should continue to deliver outstanding levels of hospitality for a competitive advantage and to contribute to a positive experience of the destination brand. • Guest houses should involve their guests, and make them feel at home, by telling stories about the area, its history, and its attractions.

Guest-host relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses with public restaurant facilities and porches offer opportunities for visitors to meet local people, as the guest-host contact is seen as the backbone of rural tourism.
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses should walk the extra mile with regard to service delivery. • Guest houses could enhance the visitor experience with a variety of services, and by offering activities or attractions themselves. • Services should be personalised, including aspects such as catering for special dietary needs, or the option to serve meals in rooms to individual travellers.
Events	Events do not only provide business opportunities and occasions for guest houses to network and socialise; they could also contribute to brand awareness.
Responsiveness to site attributes	Accommodation that responds to its site attributes by incorporating typical area characteristics in the architecture, food services, and aesthetics could assist in enhancing the brand.

Table 6.3: General recommendations for guest houses

Aesthetics	Aesthetics should be part of all guest house aspects, including food presentation, and interior and exterior appearance. Management should consider the following elements identified by guests: an inviting entrance, chairs, a leather couch, tables, decorative lamps (and proper lighting for business guests), cushions, colour, and furniture that complements the architecture.
Creating atmosphere	Management should consider incorporating distinctive area elements to create atmosphere. Such elements include the “farm feeling”, scenic beauty, nature, animals on the premises, distinctive views, fitting into the environment, “breathing history”, outdoor living space, braai facilities, and peacefulness.

The extra mile	<p>Since guests appreciate it when the guest house staff walk the extra mile, the following could be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects with a financial implication include space (including shower space), electric blankets, more freezer space, a laundry service, a Jacuzzi, a kitchenette, a coffee station/percolator with a choice of hot drinks and rusks, a microwave oven, utensils, pots and pans, the availability of cleaning agents, international plug adapters, an in-house restaurant, a pool, a dartboard, a pool table, and DSTV full package. • Aspects with a smaller financial implication include a personalised bottle of local wine in the room, wall electric plugs at a convenient height, to be welcomed in person on arrival, welcoming drinks, sherry in the rooms, brochures with area information, something special on the bed (lavender, flower, chocolate, or a little bottle containing desert sand), prompt response to problems, the option for single travellers to enjoy meals in private, salt-and-pepper pot, container with oil and vinegar, a needle, string, an extra button, safe medication, and toiletries, as well as flexibility of breakfast slots, or takeaway breakfasts.
Avoiding pitfalls	<p>Guest house management should be mindful of typical elements that may lead to negative experiences. These elements include old beds and shower heads, small bathrooms, leaking toilets and imperfect flushing mechanisms, insufficient hot water systems, badly maintained facilities, overpowering music, vehicle noise, noise caused by appliances, loud children, insufficient air conditioning, coffee station in a space outside the bedroom, towels not ready at check-in time, dysfunctional electric wall plugs, bats in the room, no luggage assistance, no personal check-in service, and staff that appear to be tired and not in the mood to assist.</p>

6.4 VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study revealed that the guest house industry – being a major source of area information, and a significant contributor to brand image and the destination experience— plays an important role in destination branding.

The study contributes in the following ways:

To the guest house industry – The study provides guidelines to guest house owners and managers on what they can do to enhance the destination brand. The study also offers insight into clients' basic needs, preferences, and previous positive and negative experiences of accommodation offerings. Guest house management can use the information to enhance their own products and services.

To the two Open Africa tourism routes included in the study (Kalahari Red Dune Route and the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route) – The study identified both positive and negative aspects in the branding efforts of the respective routes, as well as opportunities brand leadership can exploit. The study specifically provides guidelines to enhance the destination brand.

To the scholarly community – The research specifically contributes to the prescribed study material for tourism students (Guest House Management) at the different Vaal University of Technology campuses in the following areas: Guest house marketing as part of destination branding, and factors impacting visitor satisfaction, WOM and return visits.

To the particular profession/discipline – Branding is one of the key functions of destination marketers. The study emphasises that the contribution of guest houses in a destination is more than merely a key support facility in the tourism industry. Destination marketers should take note of this fact.

To other interested parties – Various destination stakeholders will benefit from the outcomes of the study. The study provides information regarding tourists' preferences and experiences to sectors of the tourism industry offering tourist-related products and services. It specifically points out what guest house owners/managers can do to enhance the destination brand. The study provides information to governing authorities responsible for branding and destination marketing. Future visitors to the

destination should benefit from the research, as the study aimed to contribute to an improved tourism experience.

6.5 LIMITATIONS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY

Time limitations, geographical distances and budget restricted the sample to two Open Africa tourist routes in one province. Destination brands in other geographical areas could have yielded different results.

The empirical study included guest house guests, and guest house owners/managers, but did not include the perspectives of destination marketers or the product owner committees of the respective brands. These perspectives could provide more insight into brand leadership challenges and suggestions.

6.6 SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

Some guest house owners who participated in the study perceived that certain tangible preconditions of the star grading system limit their establishments from better grading – especially in areas where both water capacity and television reception are limited. This correlates with Coetzee's (2015:121) recognition that a focus on tangible aspects is not decisive in guest satisfaction, arousal and memories. Further research on grading in the guest house industry is recommended, as it has an impact on the quality of the destination brand.

Although sustainable development and green practices are promoted in South Africa as the most suitable concepts for tourism development, tourist respondents in the study were apathetic regarding these factors and pointed out that they did not influence their accommodation choices. Research to develop guidelines on creating awareness amongst South African tourists is recommended.

The literature study has highlighted that brand personality (“the set of human characteristics associated with the brand”) has recently been regarded as a key instrument in market positioning, creating a unique identity and building customer loyalty (Ekincy & Hosany, 2006:127; Murphy *et al.*, 2007:6; Van Meer, 2010:15; Usakli

& Baloglu, 2011). The findings of the current study confirmed Usakli and Baloglu's (2011) notion that many destinations promote similar functional attributes such as outstanding scenery, and that a unique brand personality might add to a more successful distinction of the destination from competing destinations. Ekinci and Hosany (2006:127) furthermore regard destination personality as instrumental in understanding tourist's perceptions of places. Against this background, it is suggested that destinations such as the Open Africa Kokerboom Food and Wine Route and the Open Africa Kalahari Red Dune Route investigate the brand personality of their destinations and incorporate the results in their branding efforts. As a result of the impact of the guest house industry on destination image, guest house owners/managers could fully express the brand personality in their products and services.

It is suggested that similar research be conducted on Open Africa routes in different provinces to include heterogenous tourist markets and destinations. Further research could also include the perspectives of destination marketers, or the product owner committees.

The tourism industry was hit hard by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and it brought new concerns regarding tourism's vulnerability to external influences to the fore. Research and guidelines for the diversification in offerings of tourism businesses, destinations and the guest house industry – to make businesses less dependent on tourism – are recommended.

6.7 IN CONCLUSION

The study was undertaken to provide guidelines for accommodation establishments on how to make better use of branding in order to enhance the destination brand.

It was important to understand the "what" and the "how" of the guest house industry and destination branding. The qualitative and interpretive approach of the study added multiple perspectives, to develop a better understanding of the role of the guest house industry in destination branding, because it focused on inner feelings and personal experiences. This approach also brought to light valuable information for guest houses

regarding customer needs and preferences, which can be used to improve the accommodation product and ultimately enhance the destination brand.

Three strategies were applied to address the study aim, namely conceptual analysis to explain destination branding as the first objective, a literature review to explore the context in which destination branding was explored (second objective), and semi-structured interviews as an empirical means to address the third objective.

Two theoretical domains were relevant to the study, namely the guest house industry and destination branding. For this reason, systems theory was applied in the study as the grand theory, as the interconnectedness of the guest house industry and destination branding was studied. The study was constructed according to Young's (1999) social construction of a tourist destination (as cited in Oliveira & Panyik, 2014:55) who regard the destination brand as the overlap between destination brand management/production and destination brand consumption.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the study will be of value to scholars in general, to destination marketers, and to different destination stakeholders. The study has provided theory that will be used as the framework for a textbook on guest house management for tourism students and prospective guest house owners and managers. The theory has accentuated that tourist accommodation should be strategically planned and managed according to business principles. Strong emphasis has been placed on the human factor as well as internal branding in accommodation. The results of the study have confirmed that a guest house on a tourist route can be more than an "essential support facility for tourist destinations". Guest houses can be valuable providers of destination information, amongst other things. Guest house staff who are passionate about the area when they provide information are key to the communication of the destination brand. This points to the role that guest houses can play in matching brand identity with the brand image. Guest houses that convey quality, and capitalise on destination brand values can influence the destination image, affecting word-of-mouth and repeat visits to the destination. It is clear that the guest house industry stimulates local production and has an impact on visitors' destination experience and understanding of the area. As many guest houses offer agro-tourism

activities or expand the variety of the destination's attraction by offering other unique experiences, they become tourist attractions in their own right.

The study has also provided guidelines for destination leadership as well as destination stakeholders regarding destination branding. The study focused specifically on the role that the guest house industry can play in destination positioning and the enhancement of the destination brand. It has revealed the host community and tourists as destination brand consumers that should be satisfied through outstanding levels of hospitality, service, quality and unique products. The study provided guidelines to achieve this aim. Finally, the empirical results added antecedents of destination branding, and outcomes of successful branding to the theory. The study has revealed how both the accommodation sector and the destination can benefit by a strong brand, and points out to guest houses how their establishments can impact the destination brand. Regarding the guests quality factor, the study have affirmed that the branding strategy can influence quality in the destination's accommodation offerings. Consequently, tourists and the community alike will benefit from an improved experience, a quality environment and job opportunities brought about by an enhanced brand.

The main finding of the study was that guest houses within a specific destination are more than indispensable facilities, as they have the potential to contribute in different ways towards enhancing a destination brand.

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Appendix A: Participant consent form



RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM: GUEST HOUSE GUESTS

DATE: 27 August 2019

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The guest house industry's contribution to building a destination brand

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Name of researcher: Erica Strauss Student number: 1985259272 Contact number: 0833888475

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Name of Faculty: Faculty of Humanities

Name of Department: Communication Sciences

STUDY LEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Name of Study Leader (UFS staff member): Dr. Dalmé Mulder

Contact number: 051 401 2975

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

Destinations need to create a brand to assist in their positioning and to emphasise the uniqueness of the place (Pereira, Correia & Schutz, 2012:82). Destination branding is about the development of a destination image in relation to the needs and wants of a target market (George, 2015:523). Communicating one single message focusing on quality, promise, story, or attribute, depending on consumer needs, is important. The guest house industry is viewed as easily accessible, not requiring special training or formal qualifications. Furthermore, the grading of these establishments is also not compulsory in South Africa. These aspects could contribute to quality issues and could have a negative impact on customer perceptions, and ultimately impact negatively on the destination's brand and tourism industry. The above mentioned gives rise to the following question: How can the guest house industry cooperatively enhance the brand of the destination they are situated in?



WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH

The researcher has grown up in Upington and is a lecturer in Tourism Management at the Upington Campus of the Vaal University of Technology for the past 23 years. Her “Lecturer’s Notes on Guest House Management” has been prescribed for all VUT campuses. The results of this research will add to the study material of Tourism Management students. The study aims to empower guest house owners (not only on the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, but globally) with knowledge about destination branding and specifically the place and role of guest houses in destination branding.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Two Open Africa tourist routes will be included in the study. The names and contact details of all guest houses on the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route were derived from the Northern Cape Info website, and 3-5 guesthouses from each route were randomly selected to be invited for participation in this project. You, as a guest of one of the selected guest houses, are invited for an interview. Interview questions will reflect on your experience of the guest house industry, as well as your experience of the tourist destination in which this guest house is situated.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves the audio-recording of semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Questions will aim at “what” respondents have experienced and “how” they have experienced it. The guest house owner, as well as any three residents who are willing to participate, will be individually interviewed. Interviews will take up between 30 and 45 minutes each.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Please note that participation is voluntary and that there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. It will not be possible to withdraw once the interview has been completed.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participation is voluntary. Although recorded, participants will stay anonymous, but will add value in different ways: Information gathered from participants will point out to marketers and different levels of government the role guest houses play/ have the potential to play with regard to destination image. The accommodation sector will gain from information regarding their products and services. The local tourism industry will benefit as the study aims to contribute to the branding of the destination and an improved tourism experience.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The interviews will take place in a secure and safe environment on the guest house premises. Interviews will be recorded for the data analysis process, but interviewees will stay anonymous, and recorded interviews will be stored in a locked office. Participants, though, might experience inconvenience offering leisure time for participating in the study.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The name of any participant, as well as the name of the guest house, will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect the person to the answers. Answers of a participant will be given a fictitious code number, and the person will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting method. In case any transcriber/external coder will have access to the data, these individuals will maintain confidentiality by signing a confidentiality agreement. (Answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee). Otherwise, records that might identify a participant will be available only to people working on the study, unless permission is obtained from the participant for other people to see the records. Anonymous data may be used for other purposes, e.g. research report, journal articles, conference presentation, etc. and the identity of the participant or guest house will not be made available. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Please take note that participation is voluntary and that any participant can stop being in the study at any time.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Audio-recordings of interviews, as well as field notes made by the researcher during/after the interview will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the VUT Upington Campus for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Information will be destroyed after five years by deleting all electronic information and destroying recordings.



WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no payments or rewards for participating in the study. There will be no costs involved for participants to participate. The impact of the research on the time and contribution of the participants is highly appreciated.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Erica Strauss on 0833888475 or email ericas@vut.ac.za. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr. Dalmé Mulder on 051 401 2975 (email mulderd@ufs.ac.za) or Ms. Charné Vercueil on 051 401 7083 (email vercueilcc@ufs.ac.za).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY: GUEST HOUSE GUESTS

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree with the recording of the *semi-structured interviews*.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____



Appendix B: Permission to conduct research form



REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND OWNER/MANAGER PARTICIPATION

Dear *Guest house owner*

I am doing research and would like to request permission to conduct our research at your guest house. The research will on take the form of individual interviews with you as owner or manager, as well as with two or three of your guests who are willing to participate.

DATE

Date: 27 August 2019

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The guest house industry's contribution to building a destination brand

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Name of researcher: Erica Strauss Student number: 1985259272 Contact number: 0833888475

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Name of Faculty: Faculty of Humanities

Name of Department: Communication Sciences

STUDY LEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Name of Study Leader (UFS staff member): Dr. Dalmé Mulder

Contact number: 051 401 2975

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

Destinations need to create a brand to assist in their positioning and to emphasise the uniqueness of the place (Pereira, Correia & Schutz, 2012:82). Destination branding is about the development of a destination image in relation to the needs and wants of a target market (George, 2015:523). Communicating one single message focusing on quality, promise, story, or attribute, depending on consumer needs, is important. A synergetic interaction and collaboration among stakeholders is essential for a positive outcome as far as destination branding is concerned (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003: 2869). The accommodation sector (of which the guest house industry forms part) represents one of the stakeholders of a destination. The guest house industry is viewed as easily accessible, not requiring special training or formal qualifications. Furthermore, the grading of these establishments is also not compulsory in South Africa. These aspects could contribute to quality issues

and could have a negative impact on customer perceptions, and ultimately impact negatively on the destination's brand and tourism industry. The above mentioned gives rise to the following question: How can the guest house industry cooperatively enhance the brand of the destination they are situated in?

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

The researcher has grown up in Upington and is a lecturer in Tourism Management at the Upington Campus of the Vaal University of Technology for the past 23 years. Her "Lecturer's Notes on Guest House Management" has been prescribed for all VUT campuses. The results of this research will add to the study material of Tourism Management students. The study aims to empower guest house owners (not only on the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route, but globally) with knowledge about destination branding and specifically the place and role of guest houses in destination branding

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher. The approval reference number is UFS-HSD2019/0139/1308.

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Two Open Africa tourist routes will be included in the study. The names and contact details of all guest houses on the Kalahari Red Dune Route and the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route were derived from the Northern Cape Info website, and 3-5 guest houses from each route were randomly selected to be invited for participation in this project. Your guest house was one of the randomly selected guest houses. It is important to note, though, that interviews with you as a guest house owner/manager (as well as with any guest at your establishment), will depend on availability and willingness to participate.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves audio-recording of semi-structured in-depth interviews in a safe and private space on the guest house property. Questions will aim at "what" respondents have experienced and "how" they have experienced it. The guest house owner, as well as any three residents who are willing to participate, will be individually interviewed. Interviews will take up between 30 and 45 minutes each.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participation is voluntary. Although recorded, participants will stay anonymous, but will add value in different ways: Information gathered from participants will point out to marketers and different levels of government the role guest houses play/ have the potential to play with regard to the destination image. The accommodation sector will gain from information regarding their products and services (factors influence guest house clients' experiences). The study also aims at pointing out how guest house managers can incorporate the destination brand into the positive experiences of their guests. The local tourism industry will benefit as the study aims to contribute to the branding of the destination and an improved tourism experience.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The interviews will take place in a secure and safe environment on the guest house premises. If private venues (such as meeting rooms/ conference rooms) on the premises are rented out on the date of the interview, the researcher might request the use of a private office or any space that will allow for a private interview. This may cause temporary inconvenience for the person usually occupying the office or space. If a lounge is used, guests might experience the inconvenience of restricted access during interviews. The guest house owner interviews (just like guest interviews) will be recorded for the data analysis process, but interviewees will stay anonymous, and recorded interviews will be stored in a locked office. The guest house owner or manager who participates in the study might lose work time for the duration of the interview (30-45 minutes), as well as the possibility of economic harm associated with underutilized working minutes. Guest participants might experience inconvenience offering leisure time for participating in the study.

WILL THE INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The name of any participant, as well as the name of the guest house, will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect the person to the answers. Answers of a participant will be given a fictitious code number, and the person will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting method. In case any transcriber/external coder will have access to the data, these individuals will maintain confidentiality by signing a confidentiality agreement. (Answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee). Otherwise, records that might identify a participant will be available only to people working on the study, unless permission is obtained from the participant for other people to see the records. Anonymous data may be used for other purposes, e.g., research report, journal articles, conference presentation, etc. and the identity of the participant or guest house will not be made available. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Please take note that participation is voluntary and that any participant can stop being in the study at any time.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Audio-recordings of interviews, as well as field notes made by the researcher during/after the interview will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the VUT Upington Campus for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Information will be destroyed after five years by deleting all electronic information and destroying recordings.

WILL THERE BE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no payments or rewards for participating in the study. There will be no costs involved for participants to participate. As pointed out, the guest house owner or manager might forfeit 30-45 minutes of working time. The impact of the research on the time and contribution of the participants is highly appreciated.

HOW WILL THE INSTITUTION / ORGANISATION / COMPANY BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Erica Strauss on 0833888475 or email ericas@vut.ac.za. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may either contact Dr. Dalmé Mulder on 051 401 2975 (email mulderd@ufs.ac.za) or Ms. Charné Vercueil on 051 401 7083 (email vercueilcc@ufs.ac.za).

Yours sincerely

Erica Strauss

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY: GUEST HOUSE OWNER/ MANAGER

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications, and/or conference proceedings.

I hereby give permission to the interviewer to approach guests during check-in time, asking for their voluntary participation in interviews.

I agree to provide free of charge a safe and private space for interviews to take place.

I agree with the recording of a semi-structured interview between myself and the interviewer.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____



Appendix C: Academic project support letter



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
DEPARTEMENT EKONOMIESE ONTWIKKELING EN TOERISME
UMNYANGO WEZOKUTHUTHUKISWA KOMNATHO NEZOKUVAKASHA
LEFAPHA LA TLHABOLOLO YA EKONOMI LE BOJANALA

Metlife Towers
Market Square
Private Bag X8108
KIMBERLEY
8300
Tel : +27 – 053 – 830-4882
Fax : +27-85-543-1064
Email : ivs.dtec@gmail.com

Enquiries :
Diphetiso:
Imibuzo : J. van Schalkwyk
Netrae :

Reference :
Tshupelo :
Isaleliso :
Verwysing:

Date :
Leshupelo:
Umhla : 28.05.2018
Datum :

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

ACADEMIC PROJECT SUPPORT AND APPROVAL: THE ROLE OF THE GUEST HOUSE INDUSTRY IN CREATING DESTINATION BRAND PERSONALITY (ERICA STRAUSS)

I am the Director for Tourism Development in the department of Economic Development and Tourism of the Northern Cape provincial government. As such my broad responsibilities are tourism enterprise development and destination development.

I am aware of the planned Masters Degree research project to be undertaken by Erica Strauss and would like to register our support for this important project.

The Northern Cape promotes itself as a destination preferred by travellers interested in extreme sport, adventure, nature and heritage. To ensure the most lucrative matching of the destination to target markets we emphasise sense of place and how such impacts destination reputation, brand personality and brand acceptability.

We will have a keen interest in the progress and outcome of the research project as it will assist us to optimally guide guesthouse development in the province in support of creating the best possible brand personality for Destination Northern Cape.

Yours faithfully

Johann van Schalkwyk
DIRECTOR: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

RESTRICTED

Appendix D: Questions for semi-structured interviews with guest house owners/managers



Thank you very much for participating in my study regarding the guest house industry's contribution to building a destination brand.

You have received a research information leaflet, but I just want to highlight some of its contents:

You will know that tourism destinations often create a brand when they want to emphasise the uniqueness of their destination. Branding is about the development of a specific image for that destination and to communicate one strong message to their target market. To illustrate this: If any person thinks about Paris, the Eiffel tower comes to mind, if somebody mentions Cape Town, you will see Table Mountain.... Stellenbosch: vineyards, etc.

Interaction and collaboration among stakeholders is essential for successful destination branding. The accommodation sector represents one of the stakeholders of a destination.

You are also aware of the fact that this area is already branded as the Open Africa Kokerboom Food & Wine Route and your guest house, of course, is part of the Kokerboom Food & Wine Route brand. The study aims to empower guest house owners with knowledge about destination branding and specifically the place and role of guest houses in destination branding. We specifically would like to know how can the guest house industry cooperatively enhance the brand of the destination they are situated in.

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

We included two branded tourism destinations (routes) in this study – the Kokerboom Food and Wine Route is one of them. 5 guesthouses on each route were randomly selected for participation in this project and your guest house was one of the selected guesthouses. *Interview questions will reflect on your experience of the guest house industry, as well as your experience of the tourist destination in which this guest house is situated.*

REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY...

Please note that your name or the name of your guest house will not be recorded anywhere and that no one will be able to connect a person to any answer. Please feel free to ask questions and please elaborate as much as you want on your answers.

Research Question What are the guest house manager's current knowledge and perceptions regarding destination branding?	
Interview Questions	Memoing and Field notes
<p>I: What do you view as the general image of this particular area as a tourist destination?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: What do you think is the brand promise of this tourist destination?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: A brand has to be based on the strengths of the destination. How would you describe the strengths of this route?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: Would you say that the Kokerboom Food & Wine Route is a successful brand? Why?</p> <p>R:</p>	
<p>I: Should a guest house on a tourist route form part of the destination brand? Why?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: What are the benefits to you as the guest house owner/manager of being part of a branded destination?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: In your opinion, what are the improvement opportunities of the <i>Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food & Wine Route</i>?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: Do you believe that cultural differences among tourists can have a significant influence on how they perceive your brand?</p> <p>R:</p>	
<p>I: Destination branding is focussed on matching the marketers' promoted image with the perceived image of the visitors. Do you think this specific route is successful in matching promoted image and the image that visitors perceive? How is it done? Why not?</p> <p>R:</p>	
Research Question How can guest house managers incorporate the destination brand into the positive experiences of their guests?	
Interview Questions	Memoing
<p>I: On which aspects do you as the guest house owner focus to offer your guests a positive guest house experience?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Outstanding views</p> <p>Comfort</p> <p>Room</p> <p>Bathroom</p> <p>Reception , Service delivery, Personal attention</p>	

<p>Architecture and appearance</p> <p>First impressions</p> <p>Exterior (Gardens and environment)</p> <p>Food services</p> <p>Atmosphere.</p> <p>Luxury, Quality</p> <p>Grading</p> <p>I: On which aspects do you as the guest house owner focus to make your clients feel welcome and cared for?</p> <p>R:</p>	
<p>I: How do you advertise your guest house?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: How do your guest house marketing activities contribute towards the destination brand?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: Is this image familiar to you?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: Do you use the <i>Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food & Wine Route</i> logo on your marketing materials? How is it done? Why not?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: Do you refer your guests to other points of interest or attractions along the Kokerboom Food & Wine Route?</p> <p>R:</p> <p>I: Do you stock Kokerboom Food & Wine Route brochures or any marketing material of the specific route?</p> <p>R:</p>	
<p>I: What is the contribution that guest houses, in general, can make towards a positive destination experience?</p> <p>R:</p>	
<p>I: How do the service delivery activities at your guest house contribute towards the destination brand?</p> <p>R:</p>	
<p>I: The image of a guest house is influenced by every aspect, including physical appearance, quality assurance, stationary, competition. Would you say that the image of your guest house matches the destination brand? Why?</p> <p>R:</p>	

NOTE: Although this is a guide, all questions will be covered. Follow-up questions to probe responses will be included if necessary.

The study will make use of Thick Description by providing a detailed account of the context within which the study takes place, as well as a thorough description of all procedures. This type of auditability will ensure that the reader will be able to follow the progression (Brink, 1993:38) as well as ensuring universality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:76). The latter refers to

the degree to which the research project can be carried out by any competent person taking the researcher's place.

Appendix E: Questions for semi-structured interviews with guest house guests



Thank you very much for participating in my study regarding the guest house industry's contribution to building a destination brand.

You have received a research information leaflet, but I just want to highlight some of its contents:

It is not unusual for tourism destinations to create a brand when they want to emphasise the uniqueness of their destination. Branding is about the development of a specific image for that destination and to communicate one strong message to their target market. To illustrate this: If any person thinks about Paris, the Eiffel tower comes to mind, if somebody mentions Cape Town, you will see Table Mountain, etc.

You will probably know that this area is branded as the Kalahari Red Dune Route and that this guest house is part of this brand. The study aims to empower guest house owners with knowledge about destination branding and specifically the place and role of guest houses in destination branding.

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

We included two branded tourism destinations (routes) in this study – and the Kalahari Red Dune Route is one of them. 5 guesthouses on each route were randomly selected for participation in this project and you, as a guest at one of the selected guesthouses, are invited for an interview. *Interview questions will reflect on your experience of the guest house industry (any experience wold wide), as well as your experience of the tourist destination in which this guest house is situated*

REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY...

Please note that your name or the name of the guest house will not be recorded anywhere and that no one will be able to connect a person to an answer. Please feel free to ask questions and please elaborate as much as you want on your answers. Any questions?

Questions for **guests** may include the following:

<i>Research Question:</i> Which factors influence clients' guest house experiences?	
<i>Interview Question</i>	<i>Field notes</i> <i>Memoing</i> -
<p>I: What was the reason for your stay at this guest house: business/leisure? R:</p>	
<p>I: From which country or region are you? R:</p>	
<p>PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES</p> <p>I: I want you to think about previous experiences with guest houses anywhere in the world. Please take your time to identify as much as possible positive guest house experiences from previous stays in guest houses. R:</p> <p>Location Outstanding views Comfort Room Bathroom Luxury, Quality Reception , Service delivery, Personal attention Architecture and appearance First impressions Exterior (Gardens and environment) Food services Atmosphere</p> <p>I: Identify your negative guest house experiences from previous stays in guest houses. R:</p> <p>I: What aspects of a guest house experience make you feel welcome? R:</p> <p>I: What aspects of a guest house experience let you feel unwelcome or not cared for? R:</p>	
<p>I: Which aspect of the atmosphere at any guest house is most important to you? R:</p>	
<p>CURRENT EXPERIENCE</p> <p>I: When you booked a room at this guest house, what were your expectations regarding your room R:</p>	

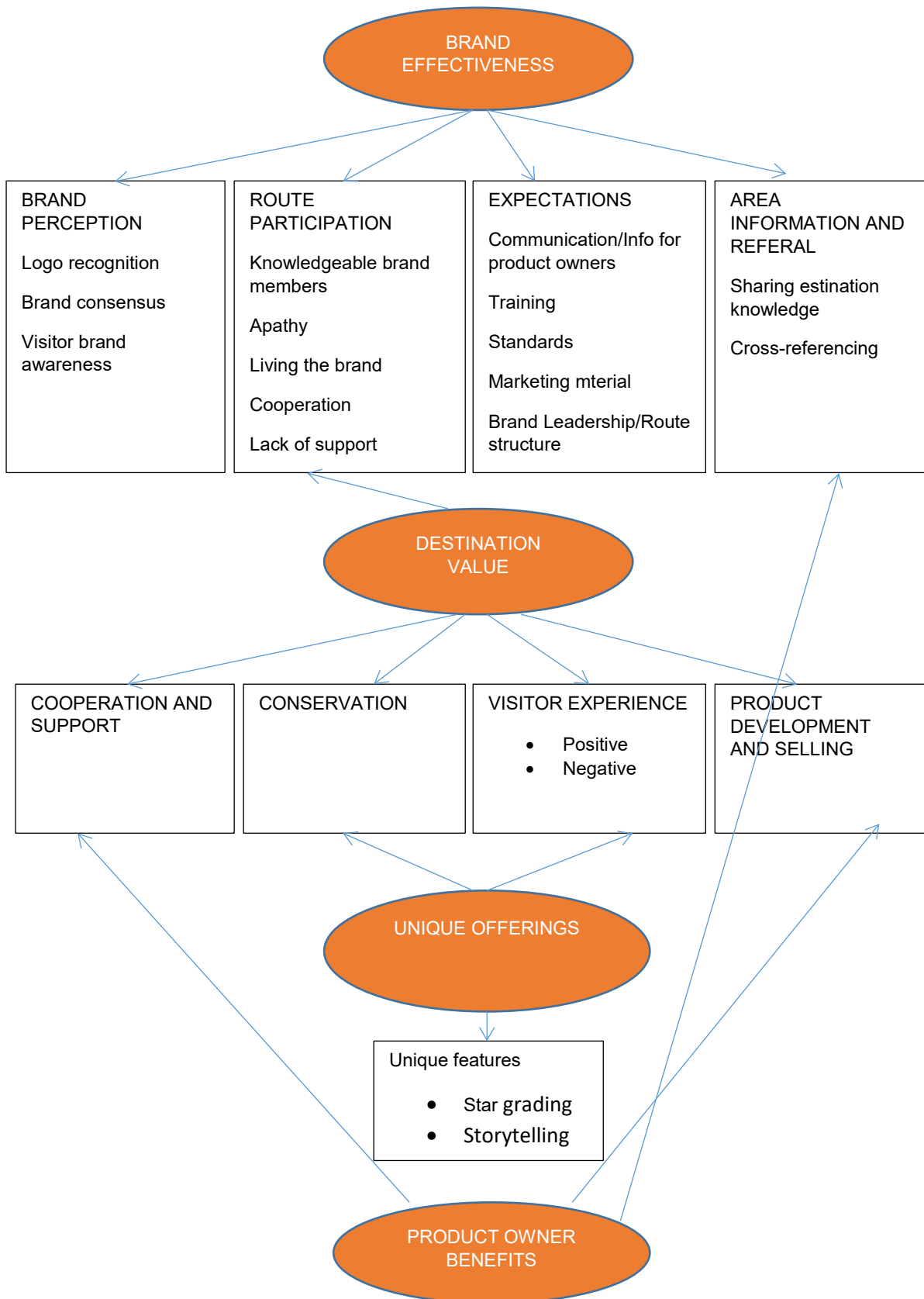
<p>I: Regarding your room at this guest house, how did your experience meet your expectations? R:</p>	
<p>I: Is there anything that impressed you during your stay at this guest house? Something that stood out. R: I: How do you feel about green practices at guest houses? R: I: How do you feel about green practices or sustainability at this guest house? (recycling, resource management,,,) R:</p>	
<p>I: Regarding service at this guest house, how did your experience meet your expectations? R: I: Booking services Reception Explaining the amenities R: I: Is there anything that you feel that should be improved or added to the service at this guest house? R:</p>	
<p><i>Research Question:</i> What role does the guest house industry play in the tourism sector?</p>	
<p><i>Interview Question</i></p>	<p><i>Field notes memoing</i> -</p>
<p>I: Through which source or marketing communication did you hear about this guest house? R: I: Why did you choose this guest house? R:</p>	
<p>I: Regarding the <i>Kokerboom Food & Wine Route/ Kalahari Red Dune Route</i> as a tourism destination, which situations or offerings affected your perception of the route? R:</p>	
<p>I: Did your stay in this guest house influence your feelings about this area? R: I: What do you see as the general image/brand of this destination (<i>Kalahari Red Dune Route/ Kokerboom Food & Wine Route</i>)? R: I: How can the guest houses on this route contribute towards the image/brand of the <i>Kokerboom Food & Wine Route/ Kalahari Red Dune Route</i>? R: I: Is this image familiar to you?</p>	

R:	
I: Would you recommend this guest house to other people? Why? R: I: Would you recommend this destination to other people? Why? R:	

NOTE: Although this is a guide, all questions will be covered. Follow-up questions to probe responses will be included if necessary.

The study will make use of Thick Description by providing a detailed account of the context within which the study takes place, as well as a thorough description of all procedures. This type of auditability will ensure that the reader will be able to follow the progression (Brink, 1993:38) as well as ensuring universality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:76). The latter refers to the degree to which the research project can be carried out by any competent person taking the researcher's place.

Appendix F: Mind map of initial themes



Appendix G: General Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) approval



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

13-Aug-2019

Dear Ms Strauss, Erica E

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

The role of the guest house industry in enhancing a destination brand

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2019/0139/1308

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Prof Derek Litthauer

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Digitally signed
by Derek
Litthauer

Date: 2019.08.14
11:10:47 +02'00'

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