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STRATEGIES FOR BRANDING THE CITY OF GABORONE

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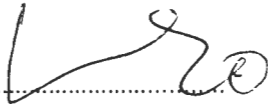
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DECLARATION

I, Leungo Sigwele, declare that this mini-dissertation that I am submitting to the North-West University represents my own work which is not plagiarized. I also declare that all relevant sources have been correctly and fully acknowledged and this work has never been submitted to any institution to obtain a similar qualification/degree.



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Firstly, I would like thank Almighty God for providing everything during the process of writing this dissertation. It has been an amazing journey that sometimes seemed to be insurmountable. I will forever be indebted to my God. I would also like to posthumously thank my parents - Dainah and Patterson Zakheli Sigwele - for continuously inculcating in me the value of education. In particular I am indebted to my father who strongly believed in academic achievement. I would also like to thank my brother Dr. Howard K. Sigwele for his continuous encouragement. I would like him to know that he is an amazing big brother. Indeed I feel proud to have him as a brother who is always fair and forward looking. Thank you so much my Dr. Sigwele.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate my accomplishment to my handsome son Bheki who makes me smile every day.

ABSTRACT

City branding is a 21st century phenomenon that has been enthusiastically embraced by cities in high income countries. In emerging markets or developing countries city branding has not received much enthusiasm for arguably varying reasons. Cities brand themselves as viable destinations for possible investment, good places to stay in, and good places to visit and work in. This study has shown that branded cities like London and Paris have been able to outcompete and out-stamina unbranded cities like Gaborone based on the fact that they have good media and marketing strategies, have better facilities and their identities are linked or associated with the cities' characteristics. Like in product branding, city branding reduces risk for the customer or the traveler and acts as a sign of quality. Branding a city is an endeavour to enhance brand equity and to strengthen the core values of the city which results in competitiveness.

The main objective of this study was to investigate possible ways that could be used to brand the city of Gaborone into a competitive city brand. The study used content analysis as a research technique and the respondents of this study came from the private sector and the academia. They were chosen to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Five main themes emerged from the study.

The findings of this study show that branding the city of Gaborone could result in a unique selling proposition and a well-thought identity. The respondents indicated that Gaborone was unknown and could not compete against cities like London, Paris and nearby Cape Town in South Africa. The second theme emerging from the findings of this study was that branded cities compete better than unbranded cities due to their identities and characteristics. This study also found that Los Angeles was in 2014 ranked at the top because of its good weather and clean beaches and Cape Town did well as well due to its association with Table Mountain and Robben Island.

It could be argued that a city must look at elements or characteristics that it can leverage on in order to become competitive. For example, the findings of this study showed that peace and security could be used to brand the city of Gaborone. However,

it is important to note that peace and security on their own are not an attraction but just enablers for the branding of a city. The findings also showed that visitors, students and investors looked for personal safety before they could choose to visit a place. This study was able to show that Los Angeles was able to attract more visitors because it had reduced the rate of crime in the city. Finally, branding a city undoubtedly influences customers' perceptions about the city and can create a good reputation about the city. Gaborone as well if branded would possibly have its current level of brand equity enhanced.

This explorative study has endeavoured to look for possible ways of branding Gaborone city. The findings of this study clearly demonstrated that indeed city branding is beneficial and makes the city competitive. Gaborone as the capital city of the Republic of Botswana should as well speed up endeavours to brand itself into a modern competitive city brand.

KEYWORDS: city branding, destinations, place branding, branding.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

“Paris is romance, Milan is style, New York is energy, Washington is power, Tokyo is modernity, Lagos is corruption, Barcelona is culture, and Rio is fun”, (Prophet 2006:2). The above statement encapsulates how societies perceive the cities mentioned in the statement. The perceptions are based on what the cities are known for. Cities brand themselves to attract visitors, to keep key skills or talent, and to look for investors for their industries. City branding is about creating an image and competitive identity that sells the city. It is all about differentiation. Zukin (2014) agrees with Saffron’s City Brand Barometer model¹ that a city is termed unique when it “pervades a sense of exoticism”. Cities must have a very well differentiated proposition to be uniquely positioned in the minds of visitors. Branding is a useful tool for cities to state what they stand for and to attract positive attention despite the “noise” of many messages communicated by other cities.

According to Michael (2014), the world’s most powerful city, Los Angeles (LA), topped the list followed by New York and London, Paris and Seoul. Los Angeles topped the list due to the reduction of crime rate, and provision of best beaches, incredible weather, and the city’s particularly exceptional arts. These factors have elevated LA to the table summit of powerful city brands. Other factors however that make other cities stand out are exceptional infrastructure such as that in London; shopping experiences like those found in Milan and Madrid; history and culture in Istanbul, and low crime rate as well as good climate (Michael 2014). However, two aspects differentiate modern cities from their rivals, namely: ‘buzz’ and ‘assets’. ‘Buzz’ refers to a combination of social media and media mentions of the city brand, and ‘assets’ refers to attractions, climate, infrastructure, and safety as well economic prosperity.

¹ Saffron model uses the IQ and EQ mix with IQ stating that rational and evidence-based analysis have to be in place first before EQ which is all about the emotional and intuitive, judgment-based understanding. * IQ are fundamentals that have to be in place for the brand to function, EQ are insights that make a winning brand.

Branding of cities in Europe and in North America is a phenomenon that has been going on since the 1970s. Zukin (2014) indicates that the city of New York with its, 'I (Heart) New York' T-shirts pioneered city branding in order to augment its dwindling tax base and to reduce its bank loans in 1975. City branding again gained traction during the time of liberalization under the late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the late United States President Ronald Regan in the 1980s when the European and North American cities became entrepreneurial. Clark (2011) points out that European cities, such as London, continue to brand themselves as meeting locations, and as fashion destinations and financial capitals. City branding should reflect the city's identity and values, as well as its characteristics. It is important to have a clear target audience after the city has identified its core value proposition based on its values and characteristics.

City branding can only be successful when stakeholders are involved from the initial stages in the creation of a brand strategy, brand promotion and brand management. City branding is a shared responsibility of all the city's main stakeholders. The involvement of stakeholders should lead to creativity, formulation of a brand strategy and a new form of leadership. Residents are the critical stakeholders in the creation of a city brand. They know the city, live in it and have ideas exactly about how it should be developed. Residents are not the only ones who have a vital say in the city brand creation. Other stakeholders such as the private sector, academia, tourism organizations, media, municipalities and civil society are fundamental in brand creation. However, this study will mainly focus on:

- Exploring strategies on how the city of Gaborone could be branded into an internationally competitive city brand.
- Identifying factors or ingredients that make a city competitive.
- Highlighting the potential benefits of branding the city of Gaborone.

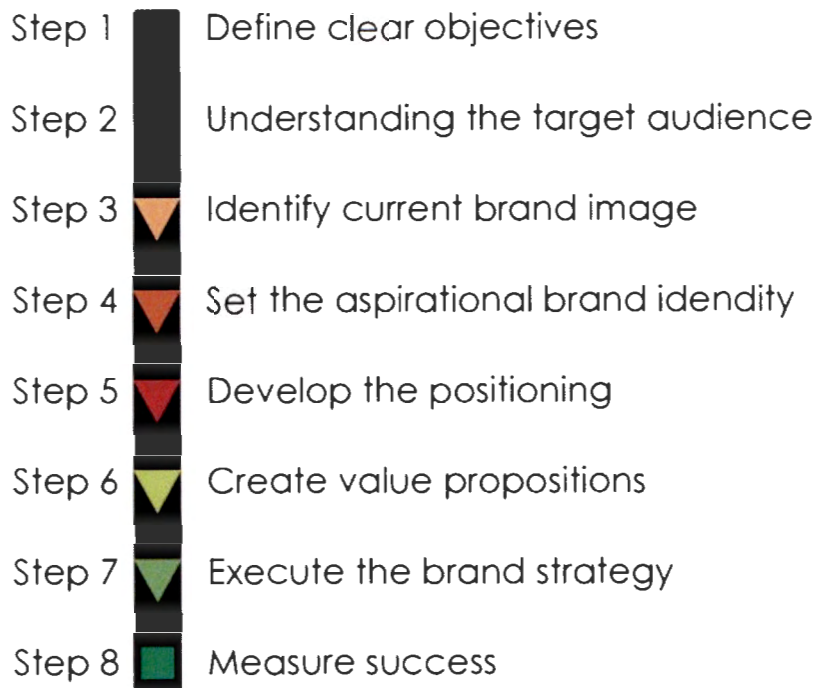


Figure 1. 1: Eight–Step Process to Develop a Place Brand (Source: Prophet 2006:7)

1.2 Research problem

In modern tourism, identity, marketing and image mean everything. Today, place branding and its tourism-related sub-area of city branding (Gnoth 2007: 350) are commonly used for promoting tourism destinations by tourism destinations marketers.

Florek (2013:139) indicates that a place or city's image culminates into a well-thought of branding process that takes into account how a destination should be perceived by investors, students, visitors and other relevant parties. The branding process includes designing, planning and communicating the destination brand identity. The identity of the city or its destination influences consumer decision making when it comes to *inter alia* holiday packages. Lack of identity or personality handicaps a city that wishes to be a winning city. It is important to note that there is no official or documented multi stakeholder-driven blueprint that guides Gaborone city's identity or developmental plans.

A city should be made identifiable and unique by what it possesses or promises. Anderson (2009:2) suggests that the city's image creates or exudes confidence for visitors or would-be visitors. It also communicates the brand's strengths and competitive edge. Baker (2007:40) stresses that branding cities simplifies choices for customers, promises certain quality level about the city destination, and builds trust for customers about the city brand.

Arguably a good number of cities in the world that have successfully branded themselves have an autonomous or semi-autonomous governance system. A city's autonomy results in quick decision making and implementation of policies without encumbrance of the national government. Furthermore, Hildreth (n.d:13) indicates that places or cities that are well governed make better brands that are easy to sell or market. This is because they do not attract negative publicity due to corruption and public malfeasance. Therefore, decentralization or city empowerment is vital in successful city branding. Centralization can give way to challenges and tensions between different levels of government (Bouchon, Tung & Lim 2009:86). Bouchon *et al.* (2009:88) further state that administrative configuration and centralization inhibit the emergence of recognized metropolitan regions with clearly defined powers and boundaries.

According to Bouchon *et al.* (2009:88) national branding approaches may not necessarily be fruitful for local or city needs. Cities should be independent and draft their own development agendas. For instance, the city of Cape Town in South Africa has its own Economic Growth Strategy which entails how the city should be developed. On the other hand, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia is guided by its Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020. Melbourne in Victoria (Australia) also has its own Destination Melbourne 3 Year Strategic Plan 2012-2015 as well as its new strategic plan 2015-2018. This may be the result of Australia's decentralization policy and its expeditious decision making. It is important to note that, compared to Melbourne, the city of Gaborone, in Botswana, is lagging behind as it does not have a formal city development plan. This is because its local governance is not independent from the central government (Nkaigwa 2014).

A branded city like Glasgow, known for its annual Celtic Connections Music Festival, competes effectively with other cities. It is easily remembered by visitors for its cultural identity. Baker (2007: 159) indicates that city brands like Glasgow are successful because of a collaborative process which includes all key stakeholders. According to Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher (2005:34) the collaboration between the stakeholders can be productive if the stakeholders have a common agenda and interests. The stakeholders may include the tourism industry, the Chamber of Commerce, Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), the government and the local media. Regrettably, the city of Gaborone does not have a collaborative process similar to that of Glasgow and as a result it struggles to compete against cities such as Barcelona, Cape Town and others.

Travelers easily remember cities that have branded identities and are associated with a particular ambience, show, activity, or culture. This explorative study therefore endeavored to explore opinions, insights and perceptions of various stakeholders and decision makers in Botswana in order to establish a 'theory' on how best to strengthen or transform the city of Gaborone into a brand.

The mayor of Gaborone City has lamented that the city does not have an identity or an image that exists in the minds of tourists and potential tourists. According to Njeru (2013:14), Nkaigwa (2014) and Jaiyeoba (2015), sometimes cities do not have the ability to compete because of limited resources; lack of customer input in branding initiatives; changing customer needs, wants and expectations; and the government's lack of understanding of the value of place branding. The above challenges are more common in emerging markets or developing countries. Almost all established city brands are found in high income or developed countries. Probably developed countries understand the value of place/city differentiation, stakeholder consultations and possibly have access to resources and technologies better than developing countries. Lack of knowledge and appreciation of city branding and its benefits may impede cities to brand themselves. This lack of knowledge and lack of stakeholder consultation has been found to be an impediment for cities in emerging markets (Nkaigwa 2014).

The objective of this study was to highlight that the city of Gaborone (in Botswana), did not have a clear image that comes to the residents and the visitors' minds because it does not have an official documentation pertaining to that. This study also sought to find factors that impede Gaborone from becoming a competitive city destination with a sustainable and convincing differentiator. The study argues that if Gaborone had a formal integrated branding strategy, perceptions held about it would have been arguably identical. An integrated branding strategy creates an identity for the city and gives it direction and a sense of purpose.

Thus, the problem statement of this study highlights the fact that Gaborone currently lacks an integrated brand building strategy for possible city brand purposes.

The global competitive world has made places or cities to cleverly and effectively brand themselves for competitive differentiation. In today's ever changing world, towns, cities, regions and nations are striving to become competitive and attractive to investors. They also endeavour to boost tourism, and to showcase their history, quality of place, culture, architecture and diversity (Winfield-Pfefferkorn (2005:3) and Kavaratzis (2004:58)). The challenges of globalization are immense and inhibit cities from competing effectively and sustainably. To compete effectively, cities must have proper infrastructure, thriving economies, proper government systems, strategic plans for branding, and proper services (Bouchon *et al.* 2009:84 & Kavaratzis 2004:61). Bouchon *et al.* (2009:84) and Winfield-Pfefferkorn (2005:2) stress that destinations should be competitive and redefined in the light of globalization and access to information. For example, Oudtshoorn (a town in the Karoo in South Africa) is synonymous with the annual ABSA "*Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees*" Festival (KKNK). Hong Kong (a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China) is rapidly getting known as the host for the wine and spirit fair, and Paris in France is Europe's compelling city brand due to its recognition and positive association. For these reasons, cities can brand themselves based on events and warmth and the ambience that they radiate. Therefore every city must have an identity to compete effectively, intelligently and sustainably to attract investors and visitors (Kotler, Asplund, Rein & Heider 1999).

Cities should be differentiated through creation and sustenance of effective branding (Bruce & Harvey 2008:17). The World Tourism Organization Draft Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding (2009: xxiv) quotes David Ogilvy as saying, "Any damn fool can put on a deal, but it takes a genius, faith and perseverance to create a brand". Arthur Blakey, the American legendary jazz musician once said, "If you're not appearing, you're disappearing". This suggests that branding should be accurate, relevant and well positioned in the consumers' minds. Destinations should stand the test of time, remain relevant to the consumers' needs and expectations and continuously re-brand and refresh (Molina, Gómez & Martin-Consuegra 2010: 722). Barcelona (the capital of Cataluña, Spain) has the 22@Barcelona approach that seeks urban refurbishment. Again this demonstrates continuous learning and brand revitalization for the city of Barcelona as it endeavours to remain relevant and competitive.

Destination branding is not entirely an old phenomenon. According to Gartner (2009:22) discussions on destination branding are relatively recent vintage in the academic literature although product brands can be traced back to antiquity. Balakrishnan (2008:62) concurs with Gartner that very little organized academic research exists on destination branding. Morrison and Anderson (2002:16) define destination branding as "a process used to develop a unique identity and personality that is different from all competitive destinations". Risitano (2005:4) understands destination branding as "a management process that leads to a strategic plan to build a brand identity based upon destination attributes selected on the basis of competitiveness, uniqueness and desired identity". The afore-mentioned definitions highlight the importance of an identity for a destination. City branding is important because it helps in creating a sound and competitive image in the minds of consumers and citizens who are important stakeholders in a city destination (Pritchard, 2009:21, Anderson, 2009:4 & Pride, 2009:24). It is the responsibility of marketers, the media, business leaders, architects, developers as well as estate experts to create a winning city brand.

Baker (2007:40) and Keller and Lehmann (2005:1) posit that branding simplifies choice, promises a particular quality level, reduces risk, and/or engenders trust for customers. According to Anderson (2009:2) the branding of destinations or places can promote the

attractiveness of a place for investors, export buyers, tourists, residents, students and employees. Anderson further emphasizes that branding a place should rigorously assess it by asking very fundamental questions. These questions may include how the place is or is perceived to be. More questions could be about the place's strengths and weaknesses and about its uniqueness.

According to the Mayor of the city of Gaborone, Gaborone does not have a strategic city/development plan that addresses the city's competitiveness or identity. In addition, the city does not have a coherent competitive positioning strategy that can result in increased visitor numbers and visitor receipts. The Mayor further pointed out that Gaborone did not have a communication plan that could send consistent and convincing messages about the city. This study argues that the city of Gaborone should address the above issues if it is to become a truly differentiated city. It can be reasonably concluded that, as far as literature is concerned, the city of Cape Town in South Africa arguably appears to be one of the few cities in Southern Africa to have a strategic development plan. The rest of the literature is from European, North American and a few Asian nations.

1.4 Research Objectives

Firstly, this study traced the origin and development of city branding since the 1970s. Secondly, the study endeavoured to understand the success behind branded cities vis-à-vis the failure of unbranded cities. Finally, the study determined the factors that make a city successful compared to its rivals, and analyzed the potential positive impacts that can make Gaborone as a city brand.

1.4.1 Primary Objective

The primary aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of academic and private organizations on how Gaborone should be branded in order for it to become a competitive modern city destination. Gaborone is the capital city of Botswana with a population of over two hundred and thirty thousand (Statistics Botswana, 2011).

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

The following are the secondary objectives of this study:

- To establish the origin and development of destination and/or city branding.
- To explore the importance of branding Gaborone.
- To understand how branded cities out-compete unbranded cities such as Gaborone.
- To determine the factors or ingredients that can make Gaborone a competitive city destination.
- To investigate the potential benefits of branding Gaborone as a city destination.

1.5 Research questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study the following research questions were asked:

- What makes branded cities perform better than unbranded cities such as Gaborone?
- What characteristics can be exploited to create a competitive city brand for Gaborone?
- What are the potential benefits of branding Gaborone as a city destination?

1.6 Purpose and significance of the study

According to Ndlovu (2007: 81) successful cities have branded their identities. For example, according to Prinsloo (2014, pers. comm., 21 November), Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan has differentiated itself as a future city with emphasis on innovation, integration and modernization; Paris for the iconic Eiffel Tower landmark; Dubai for luxury shopping (Raubo 2010:17). City branding influences people's behaviour and puts the city on the individual's mental map, and in the process enforces favourable perception of the city in relation to living, investing or visiting (Raubo 2010: 8). Thus, if done correctly, branding can contribute to the economic development of a place or city.

Without any form of branding, cities may struggle with foreign investment, increased taxes and tourism receipts. Discerning customers or visitors prefer to minimize risk when making travelling decisions and branded cities are a safe bet for such individuals. A branded place or city breeds confidence and provides a sense calmness, security and assurance for the customer. Successful city brands bring together dissimilar role players with diverse agendas. In this case, the power dynamics between the players should be managed correctly to have good working relations for the benefit of the place. It is against this background that the main purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of both academia and private sector entities and to explore strategies for branding the city of Gaborone. It is hoped that the findings of this study will benefit the following:

- **The tourism industry**

The tourism industry the world over is going through significant changes that are aimed at improving the industry's competitiveness. The industry embraces destination branding which has resulted in unique and genuine city brands that positively influence tourists' perceptions about destinations (Gnoth 2007:349). The findings of this study will equip the industry with the knowledge and understanding of the value of branding cities or places and help them to become competitive in the ever changing tourism and hospitality industry. The tourism industry can use this study as a baseline for the development of city branding strategies that can be applied in other urban areas in a germane way.

This study can also be used as a reference document to inform the branding of the city of Gaborone. It seems that city branding initiatives in Botswana are currently fragmented, unworkable and uncoordinated. It also seems that specific needs of towns and cities are not being adequately addressed. Therefore, city branding would provide a means by which a more focused approach could be used to deal with the issues of improving the image of Botswana's cities and towns. The city branding could start small in Gaborone and be later rolled out to other cities and towns in the country. To that end,

the findings of this study would inform the initiative to manage the image of Gaborone. Finally, the study may strengthen the theory that branded cities are competitive and contribute to the economic development of the country through tourism.

- **The scholars and/or students**

The study will also act as reference material for scholars and/or for students who may wish to do related studies. It will also act as a catalyst for promoting city branding in Botswana and other parts of the world. Finally, the study will add to the dearth of city branding studies in developing countries or emerging markets.

1.7 Research Design

Research methodology is a collective term that refers to the structured process of conducting research. This process includes research design, data gathering and data analysis. Research design refers to the roadmap that the researcher uses for conducting a research project. It provides a detailed step by step plan of conducting the research. A well thought research design leads to successful collection of all the data required to address the research problem. It provides for the collection of relevant data with minimal expenditure of time, effort and money. A content analysis approach was used to analyze data collected for this study. The content analysis technique was used to unearth possible ideas that could inform the branding or transformation of Gaborone into a competitive commercial city. A more detailed definition of content analysis will be given in the next section. Applied research is more solution-oriented and provides alternative solutions needed for sectors, commerce and other spheres of life (Ndlovu 2007: 225).

1.7.1 Research Approaches

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that qualitative research is a type of scientific research that systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer a research question,

to collect evidence and produce findings that were not determined in advance. According to Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005:1) qualitative research further seeks to understand a given research problem from the perspectives of the population it involves. Also, qualitative research effectively obtains culturally specific data about values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations (Mack *et al.* 2005:1). The qualitative research approach was chosen for this study because it is flexible, probes to get clarifications, and brings up issues that the researcher may miss. In addition, as the study progresses, the qualitative research approach can unearth new information.

Quantitative research on the other hand is an excellent way for finalizing results and proving or disproving a hypothesis. It also filters out external factors and makes the results appear to be real and unbiased. Quantitative research emphasizes validity and reliability and is replicable. It can have a high degree of trustworthiness.

This qualitative study however, with more emphasis on the content analysis approach, investigated the lack of competitiveness of Gaborone as an unbranded city. Furthermore, the study explored several ways of branding the city of Gaborone. This was done by gathering opinions and recommendations from the relevant respondents in Gaborone. Datt (2016) defines content analysis as “a research technique applied for content data interpretation through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. Content analysis was used as it is rigorous and can competently unearth rich data for the study. Furthermore, content analysis was used because there was constant comparison of data with emerging categories (Ke & Wenglensky 2010:1). This constant comparison of data tested differences and similarities in the emerging categories until five themes emerged. When the constant comparison reached a point where no more new categories emerged, then the study reached data saturation.

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because they are more probing and not entirely restrictive compared to structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews matched the content analysis used in this study and they could generate themes and

ideas as the study progressed. The interviews were administered only to marketing and branding practitioners in both the academia and the private sector.

1.7.2 Population

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that constitute the main focus of scientific query (Tawana 2011:22). A population can have identical or binding attributes which in turn helps in generalizing the findings. Conversely, the population can be heterogeneous, resulting in maximum variation of responses. However, sometimes where there is a larger population a sample is (normally segment of the population) selected to represent the entire populace. It is important to note that the sample should be accessible for the purpose of collecting data and the size of the sample is critical to the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The size of the sample size is determined by the nature of the study, the budget, time and sometimes accessibility.

For this study the population consisted of employees of both academic and private sector organizations that could play a pivotal role in branding the city of Gaborone. The inclusion of both academic and private sector respondents was an attempt to have a balanced, credible and representative study. Academics contribute in policy making and private sector organizations are service providers who know customers' perceptions about places. The study focused on both academics and private sector organizations to reduce biasness and improve the credibility of the study as already indicated. Academia was represented by a marketing practitioner and a tourism marketing practitioner, while the private sector was represented by three marketing professionals associated with advertising agencies.

1.7.3 Sample size, sampling d technique

The size of a sample is normally determined by the nature of the study, accessibility of the sample, resources and amount of time available to complete the study successfully without compromising its credibility. In this study, the sampling frame consisted of only

marketing and branding employees. Determining the size of the sample size in content analysis is always challenging because theoretical categories are not known in advance; instead more emphasis is on the data collected. The sample of this study consisted of five (5) respondents two of which came from academia and three from the private sector. Purposive sampling was used because the respondents were already known and were already doing the branding jobs in their respective organizations.

Additionally, networking or snowball sampling was used for the study but did not yield any deviation from main themes.

1.8 Data collection

Data collection is one of the most important phases of any research. It clearly spells out what type of data should be collected and how it will be collected. Data collection methods are selected based on their ability to get more raw data, and to get the correct data and to advance the study trustworthiness. The study used both secondary and primary data.

- **Secondary data**

Secondary data refers to information that is readily available or has been collected by other researchers, organizations or scholars (Struwig & Stead 2001:80). The information was collected from publications such journals, textbooks, past dissertations/theses as well as conference papers.

- **Primary data**

Primary data for this study was collected through researcher-administered interviews with the respondents of this study. Primary data was helpful in supplementing secondary data. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009:319) describe primary data as information obtained first hand for the specific purpose of the research. It can be through interviews, focus groups, observation and other methods.

The respondents of this study were interviewed at varying stages of the research. Semi-structured interviews were used as they allowed for pre-determined as well as follow-up questions that were generated using the answers to the pre-determined questions. The interview questions were piloted to eliminate possible ambiguity and errors.

1.9 Data analysis

Data analysis means turning data into meaningful information that is useful and easy to understand or interpret. It can either be done manually or by using a computer programme. To ensure the credibility of the data analysis in this study, data was edited for consistency and for omissions of answers. Correlation analysis was done to test the significance of the variables and relationships respectively. Descriptive paragraphs and a few tables were used to present the information. To reduce researcher bias and any misinterpretation of information, the researcher together with the supervisor reviewed and validated the codes.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Researchers are always expected to attend to the ethical considerations pertaining to their studies. Ethics means acceptable conduct expected from the researcher, which includes respect for study subjects as well as adherence to general national laws and norms and values. For this study, permission to collect data was sought from the participants. All participants received the interview questions with a letter that asked for their participation, and informed them that their participation was strictly voluntary. The respondents were also informed that their identities and the information they provided would not be disclosed without their written consent.

1.11 Definition of key terms

Branding: “branding refers to collective representation of what people feel, think and say about a product, service or company, and where meaning is established over time

through consistent positive experiences and engagements”, adapted (Talerman 2014:1).

City branding: “is a means of both achieving competitive advantage in order to increase inward investments and tourism and also for achieving community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city”, adapted (Kavaratzis 2004:62).

1.12 Limitations of the study and study area

Firstly, as far as the author knows, this study is one of the first of its kind to be undertaken in and around Gaborone, and for that reason it may have omitted information deemed critical for its credibility. Limited literature on place branding, particularly city branding, in emerging markets may have compromised the credibility of the study. Secondly, due to the cross-sectional nature of the study it may not have adequately covered all necessary aspects to deem it credible. Finally, since the study used the content analysis approach, new data may emerge after data saturation which may bring into question the trustworthiness of the study.

The study was only conducted in the city of Gaborone, a city located on the southern part of the Botswana. Gaborone is the commercial and capital city of the Republic of Botswana. Its geographic coordinates are Latitude 24.65° South and Longitude 25.91° East.

1.13 Conclusion

City branding cannot be wished away by cities that want to remain as competitive investment destinations and as good places to study, work and visit. Cities that have embraced branding such as Paris, New York *et cetera* have been able to compete effectively as compared to cities that are not branded. Unfortunately the city of Gaborone is not branded and seems to struggle to attract investors, students and visitors. Cities should be uniquely competitive and easily identifiable choices for visitors

and customers. It is important therefore that the city of Gaborone should look at possible ways to competitively brand itself.

CHAPTER 2: CITY BRANDING

2.1 Introduction

Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003:3) argue that branding is not just about a logo or trademark that an organization can casually use. Instead, it is about standing out from the surfeit of competing brands. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003:3) believe that branding is a composite of the essence, identity, image, personality and character. Keller and Lehmann (2005:8) added other elements such as slogans (e.g. Nike's "Just Do It") and packaging (e.g. Coke's contour bottle) that play a significant role in branding offerings. Presentation is also important in branding because it evokes an emotional response from customers. All the above-mentioned elements are meticulously combined to give a service or a product a competitive differentiation. Holt, Quelch and Taylor (2004: 70) accentuate that branding should meet the customers' needs and wants wherever the products and services are sold or offered. Keller and Lehmann (2005:8) state that branding helps organizations to recognize and differentiate their products and services to customers and other parties. Branding can also be seen as "the best psychological vehicle for delivering the meaning" (WTO 2009:7).

According to Mpalo (2005:6) branding was started by porters and bakers in 1266 in medieval times by putting marks on their works and breads. Mpalo, like Low and Fullerton (1994:175), states that the period between 1860-1914 saw the emergence of national manufacturer brands such as Procter and Gamble. Between 1915 and 1929 there was dominance of mass marketed brands such as Wheaties. According to Low and Fullerton (1994:175) from 1930 to 1945 brands belonging to manufacturers experienced challenges such as the Great Depression in the 1930s and World War II (1939-1945). It is important to note here that brands such as Harley Davidson survived the Great Depression, World War II as well as World War I (Maisel 2010). Harley Davidson lived to tell the tale because the company listened to the customers' advice and repositioned itself. This affirms the above assertion by Holt *et al.* that branding should put the customers' wants and needs first. Low and Fullerton (1994:181) indicate

that the concept of branding grew between 1946 and 1985 after World War II as a result of the growth of the middle class's income and an explosion of sales

Branding may be seen as a trying to establish a connection with the target audience because of the "identifiability" of the products and services. Unbranded products are like clutter. Through branding, the owner endeavours to outmaneuver his or her rivals by being able to stand out from the 'unidentifiable noise'. Brands are a promise of an experience. According to Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003:4), New Zealand is a brand whose essence is 'landscape' and its brand positioning is 'New Pacific Freedom'. The authors explain that this promises an adventurous new land and culture on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, the person creating brands should critically deliver or fulfill what they promise. Branding is based on the customers' perceptions about offerings and it should influence the customers' mind in relation to other competing brands (Linh, 2012:15). Keller and Lehmann (2005:1) and Baker (2007:40) believe that from a customer's perspective branding should be seen as an intention to create a bond with the product, a signal of quality, and a cost and risk reducer. On the other hand, from the company's point of view branding is meant to increase the value (brand equity) of the product, to be a source of financial returns, and a means of legally protecting unique features about the product (Mpalo, 2005:18). Branding according to Linh (2012:8) can be a strategy to confirm, enhance and strengthen the core values of the company.

Since the 1970s places started to brand themselves when they realized that their products were more competitive because they were branded. New York, according to Salman (2008) and Zukin (2014), is one of the first cities in the world to actually brand due to its sliding tax base and reduction of bank loans during 1975. Since then other cities such as Sydney, Paris, Glasgow, and Milan have branded themselves (Prophet, 2006:2 & Salman, 2008). Unlike product brands such as Coca Cola, place or city brands are not created but brand practitioners work with what already exists and endeavour to portray or mold a particular characteristic about the city. For example, Los Angeles is a city that is endowed with beautiful beaches and good weather. City branding is also characterized by intangibility whilst product brands such as Nivea and Samsung *et cetera* are tangible brands.

This chapter compares the literature on city branding and explores the objectives, challenges and positioning of city branding. The following section specifically concentrates on the basic understanding of city branding, why cities brand as well as models that can be adopted for successful city branding.

2.2 City branding

Laksiri (2009:19) and Balakrishnan (2008:62) indicate that the concept of city branding is not entirely old. It is only new especially in the tourism academic literature (Gartner 2009:22). City branding in Van Gelder and Allan's (2006:3) opinion is now developing quickly with theoretical underpinnings that have been developed and put into full practice in recent years. According to Tayebi (2006:2) city branding nowadays has literature that has resulted in better understanding of the subject. Branding of cities has been enthusiastically embraced in Western Europe and North America as evidenced by almost all examples of cities that have branded themselves e.g. Berlin, Manchester and Lyon (WTO 2009:72, EURO CITIES 2010: 8, 10). However, it seems that in low income countries or emerging markets the concept of city branding is not fully understood. South African cities such as Cape Town and Durban are an exception in Africa. It can be arguably concluded that other African cities have not been branded as there are no strategic document/s that can testify to their branding. These cities might not be branded because of lack of understanding of the value of city branding or because of lack of interest in branding them.

City branding is not all about the size and richness of the city. In fact, size does not matter in city branding (WTO 2009: xvii). Research (The Communication Group 2012:20) shows that people prefer to live and work in small cities because "mega cities have poor transport systems, indecent and expensive housing, and expensive life styles". On the contrary, small cities are affordable and easy to invest in. For this reason, it seems logical to argue that a small city like Gaborone can potentially be branded into a successful African city.

It should be noted, however, that many cities have failed in their branding efforts. For example, according to Insch (2013:220), Belfast (the capital city of Northern Ireland's),

just announced a logo without any brand idea behind it and failed spectacularly. Brands must have a meaning, and convincingly meet the customers' expectations and interests. Cities can fail to compete internationally because they do not have identities or visual representations of their offerings.

Toronto, according to Salman (2008) is overshadowed by Montreal and Vancouver because its identity is weak and does not evoke any emotional memories that can be branded in the customer's mind. Successful and progressive city brands like New York have a story to tell to their audience and have clear coordinated messages. In addition, a city like Jerusalem is struggling to brand itself because of its uncertain and ambiguous purpose (Salman 2008). Consequently, a successfully branded city needs a clear strategy and an unambiguous message disseminated in various channels and a clear purpose that is understood by all relevant stakeholders.

According to Robert Jones, a consultant director at Wolff Olins (Salman 2008), reality is more paramount than image as far as city branding is concerned. He cautions that before embarking on a branding exercise it is crucial to look at the investment climate in the city and to transform the city first. In other words, the city should do an audit first and brand when adequately satisfied that it can have a competitive image. On the other hand, Jonathan Gabay, founder of Brand Forensics (Salman 2008) argues that successful cities, such as Windhoek in Namibia, pay attention to miniscule issues such as clean streets. Salman further indicates that cities should also instill a sense of pride in the residents who can act as city brand ambassadors. Finally, it is important for the city to look at key assets that make it irresistible, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Cities need to build marketable and sustainable brands to compete exceptionally well.

2.2.1 Building the city brand

Building a city brand is a very strenuous exercise when compared to building a product brand. A product brand is manageable because it has few stakeholders such as employees from different departments within the organizations. A city brand on the other hand involves an assortment of internal and external stakeholders who all have their own interests albeit divergently. The WTO (2009:57) suggests that stakeholders should form a steering committee to coordinate all city branding activities. Destination

management organization (DMO), residents, academics, chamber of commerce, the government, municipality, visitors and the media are all stakeholders of a city brand (WTO 2009:59, Wagner & Peters 2009:4).

The DMO normally plays the role of a brand custodian and establishes city branding strategies. They are more like the secretariat of a committee. Residents are the mirror of the city and their values are the values of the city. Academics advise on sound development ideas whilst the chamber of commerce makes inputs on how the city has to be branded. Most of the time the advice of the chamber of commerce is a reflection of the views of the tourists who frequent businesses such as hotels, parks and museums. The government as a dominant and influential stakeholder guides the development of the city and city brand through the laid down policies. The government as always insists on sustainable developmental approaches. The municipality or the council is concerned about the benefits that accrue to the city residents whilst the visitors contribute to city brand building through their comments and suggestions in the establishments they use or visit. According to Tayebi (2006:15) the media are one of the most important stakeholders in building a city brand. Tayebi suggests that print media, broadcast media and electronic media aid to market and promote the city brand.

2.2.1.1 Dealing with different stakeholders in city branding

The WTO (2009:57) states that to achieve a certain degree of cooperation in city brand building it is vital to involve all the stakeholders from the beginning so that there can be a sense of ownership. The EUROCITIES (2010:6) accentuates the WTO's view by saying that key stakeholders should be engaged in all the stages of building the city brand. However, Wagner and Peters (2009:4) caution that when dealing with a mixture of stakeholders it is important to guard against overplay power because it can antagonize role players and wreck everything. In fact Bhat (2009:74) emphasizes that there should be power balance between stakeholders, as well as trust, sincerity and self-regulation. The WTO (200:159) for example mentions that in 2013 the Norwegian Tourist Board (NTB) had to discontinue the branding exercise as stakeholders saw it as an exclusive NTB project. The NTB example teaches that a balanced empowerment of the stakeholders ensures that during challenges and criticisms the city brand

practitioners could have backers who would support them. It is important to state in clear terms branding a city should consider the value that can be derived from the exercise and the crucial role each stakeholder should play in building a successful city brand.

Kasim, Celtek and Nor (2009:226) concur that city branding activities receive heavy criticism when stakeholders are not involved from the beginning. Kasim *et al.* give an example of Malaysia which failed to promote the country by using trade shows and overseas visits. The stakeholders used this failure to batter the concerned authorities. Pakistan, Turkey and Indonesia, according to Kasim *et al.* (2009:226), are good examples of successful place brands that attached value to the importance of inter-organizational collaboration and partnerships for tourism development. Klijn, Eshuis and Braun (2012:503, 505) argue that sometimes stakeholders can exercise an unwritten “veto” power. This can be demonstrated by citizens of Cape Verde who felt Brand Cape Verde was not authentic enough and did not “encapsulate the Cape Verde experience” (Dos Santos & Campo 2014:97). Figure 2.1 below reflects the city/place branding process and how stakeholders partake in city brand development. It also shows other aspects that should be taken into account when branding a place.

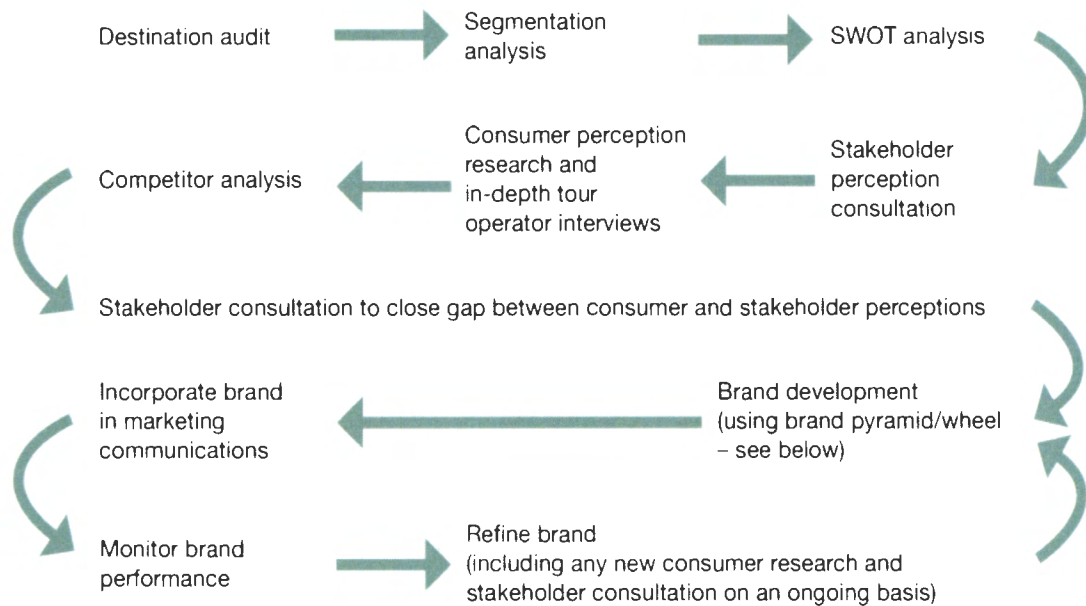


Figure 2. 1: The branding process (Source: WTO 2009: 35)

Saraniemi (2009:374) reasons that lack of collaboration between critical stakeholders in place branding can kill the communication of the brand promise entirely. Stakeholders' involvement can be the difference between brand success and failure. Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele (2009:397) highlight the importance of the stakeholder theory which "argues that the interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value". Therefore it is essential to know the thoughts of key stakeholders, what motivates them and what it is that they value dearly. When all stakeholders are engaged in every stage of city branding there is collective response when there are challenges and difficulties (Oliveira 2015:23). Stakeholders, according to Oliveira legitimize a city brand and influence the meaning of the city (i.e. Barcelona is anchored around urban planning) because of their buy-in. For instance, in 1988 Barcelona, together with the main actors, adopted a strategic plan which resulted in an acceptable outcome of the whole branding exercise before and after the Olympic Games in 1992. In the United Kingdom, the city of Manchester used the partnership of the stakeholders to create an enduring city brand after the success of the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

The EUROCITIES (2010:9) insists that to construct and maintain a successful city brand there are certain requirements that have to be met vis-à-vis stakeholder involvement. The report from the EUROCITIES suggests the following:

- Partnership: The relationship with stakeholders should be treated like a partnership to ascertain the buy-in and brand credibility.
- Leadership: Due to the varying and competing needs, stakeholder partners need effective leadership to make decision making swift and to handle internal differences. Van Gelder and Allan (2006:11) add that shared leadership requires a degree of common understanding and joint thinking.
- Continuity: For an enduring city brand strategy there has to be continuity even if other stakeholder representatives leave the committees.
- Shared vision: Almost all successful brands, whether product brand or place brands, have a vision and mission. In the absence of the vision the stakeholders do not know what binds them together. Therefore a vision that is realistic and appropriate is required to make the stakeholders want to be part of the whole city brand building initiatives.
- Action-based implementation: Van Gelder and Allan (2006:9) indicate that building a brand is like project management. Each stage of the process has to be accounted for and closed out before moving to the next stage. The stakeholders must agree on the appropriate set of actions at each stage.

Brand Cape Town for instance, according to Du Toit-Helmbold (2011), started in 2001, held workshops with stakeholders in 2010, undertook the stakeholder engagement in January 2011, and sought industry endorsement in February 2011. In March 2011 the Cape Town Brand was presented to the City of Cape Town. Brand Cape Town was then finally rolled out between April and June 2011. The above sequence of events shows that it takes time to build a city brand and it involves multiple stakeholders. It is very important that after the roll out of the city brand or place brand, the toolkit that includes all aspects of the brand building process should be given to all stakeholders so

that they know what is expected of them pertaining to city brand marketing and promotion.

Du Toit-Helmbold (2011) indicates that building a city brand firstly involves looking for the single-minded idea of the city brand and secondly establishing key pillars that must underpin the city brand. Thirdly, the city brand should identify the actual target market that it seeks to satisfy. Fourthly, it is important when building a city brand to know what makes your city different and competitive in relation to other cities. Finally, Du Toit-Helmbold mentions that it is fitting to establish the macro trends that the city should leverage. Cities must state why they want to brand as the following section explains. Figure 2.2 reflects how cities can build their brands using both internal and external assessments.



Figure 2. 2: The five-stage brand pyramid (Source: WTO 2009:45)

2.2.2 Why do cities brand?

Van Gelder and Allan (2006:7) define city branding as a conscious decision of creating, developing and demonstrating a promise through appropriate actions such as investment, events, as well as physical and economic plans Prilenska (2012:12) however, defines city branding as “a complex multi-faceted notion which consists of multiple place brand which in turn address various stakeholders”. City branding is giving the city an identity and an image that makes it a favourite city to live, work, study and invest in (Clark, Evans & Nemecek 2011:1). To brand a city requires creativity, leadership, strategy as well as being realistic about what you offer or promise. The Communication Group (2012:3) stresses that kaleidoscopic economic conditions will present challenges but also opportunities for cities as they embark on branding themselves. Cities’ marketing techniques should be correct, innovative and creative. Branding a city bridges the gap between the city’s vitality and the perceptions and expectations of its visitors. It also helps to create a city’s image differentiation (Linh 2012:16). Cities with strong images spend less on promotion because they are already known by their visitors. These cities do little self-positioning because of the reputation they already have. For instance, Cape Town’s image makes it miles ahead compared to a city like Bloemfontein. Linh (2012:17) further says city branding brings intangible and tangible values to the city.

Linh (2012:13) states that cities must be suitable for residence, tourism, work and investment. According to the Communication Group, the city should also have interesting arts and culture. A typical example would be Istanbul, where according to Michael (2014) the “east meets west”. It must also have quality housing and guarantee personal safety. The city should also provide opportunities for high employment, (e.g. Dubai); have a robust local economy (e.g. Milan and Melbourne); and have modern transport infrastructure. According to Michael (2014) London has matchless world class transport infrastructure. San Francisco is also performing well in transport infrastructure. The city of Gaborone, Botswana, could brand itself as a reliable local economy with a stable currency, an easy place to start business, and a favourable tax environment. For example, in Kigali, Rwanda, it takes about six hours to register and operate a business

according to the Rwanda Development Board. A city should have a sustainable unique feature that makes it stand out and out-compete others.

A city should act as a window for countries to showcase what they have to the outside world. According to the Communication Group, “the world’s leading cities are the prism through which countries are viewed”. Therefore, countries can actually piggy-back on their cities for competitiveness. A city with a good image such as Cape Town with its modern infrastructure, clean beaches and attractions (e.g. Table Mountain and Robben Island) is an excellent microcosm of South Africa. Sometimes cities that are not capital cities can actually ‘outperform’ the capital cities and act as a reflection of the country. For example, Barcelona is more of a reflection of Spain than the capital Madrid, Vancouver reflects Canada more than Ottawa, and Amsterdam is more of a Dutch reflection than The Hague. Furthermore, the Communication Group emphasizes that cities should “bring cosmopolitan aura and innovation to their countries”. For instance, Pentland (2013) says Eindhoven is according to Forbes the most inventive city in the world due to its highest number of patents in the world (22.6 patents for every 10,000 residents). The city came up with Bio-needles that have the potential to reduce hepatitis and HIV infection. In short, every city must have its own strong point or brand essence which acts as the nucleus of its competitiveness.

Michael Hayman, the Chief Executive of The Communication Group PLC points out that, “the world’s leading cities are bringing instant recognition, style, substance and air of sensation to the identity of their home countries”. Today’s world is characterized by stiff competition and cities have to be unique to compete. For example, according to Salman (2008), Paris is known as a city of romance and Hong Kong as a city of trade. Milan, according to Prophet (2006:2), is a city of style and fashion, London is known for business and Las Vegas for non-stop entertainment. Zerrillo and Thomas (2007:90) believe that cities must have competencies and the essence. Competencies are what the city is able to do absolutely excellently and essence is the soul of the city brand. Zerrillo and Thomas (2007:90) refer to the essence as the values and manifestations of the place or the city. It is what makes people come to the city in the first place. For instance, Clark *et al.* (2011: 3) indicate that Barcelona is a city associated with design and architecture that attract tourists. The whole idea of the brand essence is to create a

sense of enduring nostalgia in the minds of customers so that they come again. Sebastian Coe, the former Chair of the London 2012 Organizing Committee sums this up by indicating that cities should have the power to influence perceptions and to bring together their assets that make them unique. Tayebi (2006:11) concurs and stresses that cities must develop original and inimitable identities.

2.2.3 Challenges of building a city brand

Not all places have been successful in branding or giving themselves an identity. As mentioned earlier, challenges of city or place branding can be from within or due to exogenous factors (Linh 2012:13). However, most of the challenges are self-inflicted. For example, the city of Belfast failed because it meaninglessly branded itself. On the other hand, Malaysia got its marketing communication wrong. The WTO (2009:xiii) states that the biggest problem is that sometimes cities lack a balanced representation of themselves. Tourism, most of the time overshadows other economic, cultural, political and industrial activities. This can be a downside as the city is perceived as leisure-oriented although it might be an investment destination or technological power. The WTO further points out that the lack of objectivity impedes brand practitioners from effectively branding cities. This results from lack of market research and poor communication from the people who have been tasked to brand the city.

According to the WTO, branding a city becomes a challenge when there is difficulty in achieving stakeholder buy-in; in other words key stakeholders may not see the value of city branding or they may disagree with the way that the branding process is carried out. Ultimately they do not offer support and may actually sabotage the whole branding initiatives (WTO 2009:77).

Cities struggle to put up better brands because they cannot explain who they are. As illustrated in Figure 2.3, it is critical the city brand practitioners to take time, to know what their cities have and base their branding on that. Additionally, cities must decide on the life span of their city brand. Ideally brands should have longevity and city brand practitioners should be mindful of this. However, rebranding is allowed if the city brand is losing resonance with the target audience.

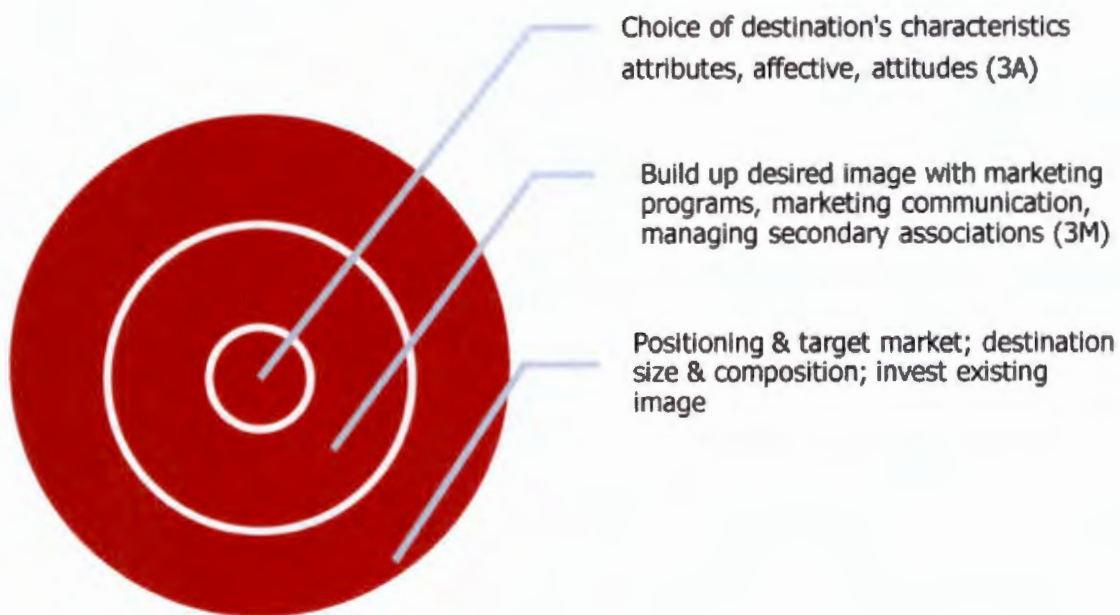


Figure 2. 3: Cai's destination branding model (Source: Linh 2012:21)

Linh (2012:18) identifies challenges faced by places or cities that want to brand themselves. According to Linh, these challenges comprise politics, people, money and natural condition. For example, Nkaigwa (2014) says politically centralized policies or systems make it difficult to start the city branding process. Semi-autonomous cities can make decisions quickly as opposed to centrally controlled cities like Havana in Cuba and Beijing in The People's Republic of China. Secondly, poor security can be an impediment to a city that wants to brand itself. If people are unsure of their safety they would not come to live, invest, or visit the city. For example, a city like Lagos in Nigeria with the continuous threat of Boko Haram (although not directly in Lagos) and coupled with its corruption will always find it difficult to brand itself and to change people's perceptions about it. Linh (2012:19) as well concurs with the WTO that stakeholders are crucial in building and maintaining the place brand. Lack of consultation of the stakeholders may become risky to the whole process of branding. Therefore, stakeholders should be identified and updated and partnerships should be established. In fact Figure 2.4 encapsulates what Linh is referring to when he or she emphasizes

that the city that brands itself should have a good investment climate; a rich culture that people want to experience; and good tourism facilities.



Figure 2. 4: The hexagon of competitive identity (Source: WTO 2009: xii)

Linh (2012:19) further argues that the city should have a relative budget and a sizeable number of investors or tax payers to do the branding. Otherwise it may find it extremely difficult to initiate the branding process. However, the WTO (2009:78) disagrees and states that even small cities with small budgets can brand themselves; it just needs a sound idea on city branding. Finally, Linh contests that natural conditions, such as erratic weather conditions may affect the city branding initiatives as customers may not know what to expect. The following section elaborates on how positioning can be used to influence people's perception of a city.

2.2.4 City brand positioning

Brand positioning concerns customers' thoughts about a specific city. According to Van Auken (2013), brand positioning is the way the brand is perceived within a given competitive set in the consumers' mind. Brands can be seen as compartmentalized "rivals" in the consumer's mind. The brand that appears first or in the top compartment of the consumer's mind is the one that has done excellent positioning because it seems to be remembered first by the customer. Trott and Whitfield (2009:410) concur that

positioning refers to “influencing the ways in which people perceive certain products in relation to others”. Positioning puts more emphasis on what the consumer thinks about what you are offering. For instance, according to Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003:4), when a customer hear the word Kellogg's or Tony the Tiger, he or she may associate it with Battle Creek in Michigan which is known as the “Cereal Capital of the world”.

Brand positioning is not only limited to product brands but extends to regions, countries and cities as they position themselves to undercut the competition. According to Linh (2006:22), city brand positioning involves having a set of competitive attributes or characteristics which make the city identical to others or even unique. In other words cities should have strong characteristics that reverberate with the customers and can last in their memories. In the process of city brand positioning it is important that the city does not become “all things to all people”, (Kaplanidou & Vogt 2003:4). The city or the place must create a unique position in the minds of the consumers which becomes difficult to dislodge. Additionally, this unique position has to be practised and maintained consistently and known to all stakeholders. For example, Las Vegas is known as a city of endless entertainment and the city lives up to such positioning expectations (Kaplanidou& Vogt 2003:3). Las Vegas' positioning consistently and constantly gives it a competitive advantage. Customers prefer consistency because continuous changes confuse them. A consistent city brand positioning should actually communicate the city's essence.

As times change and business environments continually pose challenges, cities have to sharpen their marketing techniques to survive. It is important to have a sound communication plan that can accentuate the city brand positioning. Sometimes positioning can mean changing with times. For example, the city of Manchester in the United Kingdom, which has been one of the pioneers in place branding, changed its positioning from being a ‘creative city’ to a ‘mature city’. The city did this to ensure new attractiveness. It has actually resulted in a renaissance for the city (EUROCITIES 2010:8). Hassan, Hamid and Al Bohairy (n.d.:275) explain that city brand positioning is important as it should be able to establish a fit between the supply and demand perspectives on the destination attributes. Every city should conduct market research to know the intrinsic motivation or values of its customers (Ma 2009:29). Therefore, the city

brand positioning when being created should dovetail with the demands of the customers.

Clark (2011) re-emphasizes that city brands should continue to adapt lest they fail to keep up with the competition. Clark further says that there is a new different kind of city brand that is emerging especially in high income countries. Clark calls this the leader/innovator brand. Cities that are leaders in sustainability, science and technology, creativity or cosmopolitanism, according to Clark (2011), offer a positioning which may be construed to communicate success in the future because it is seen to be offering solutions to the problems of the world. For instance, Bristol positions itself as a conservation-oriented area, Silicon Valley in southern San Francisco in California is synonymous with technological innovation, and London and Paris are renowned for their cosmopolitan aura. The afore-mentioned cities compete based on those perceptions from a customer's perspective. For instance, a city like Beijing in China due to its horrendous pollution levels cannot outsmart Bristol city which is more of a "green" city.

Consequently, positioning has no substitute in a city that wants to compete successfully. Different places or cities position themselves in different ways after careful analysis and thorough assessment of their strong points. City brand positioning should be based on facts and should be a wide-ranging initiative for all key stakeholders in the city. However, positioning may not necessarily be based on facts especially for a city such as Paris which is known for intangible characteristics such as warmth and romance. Cities that position themselves as business hubs may have longer economic diversification and development as compared to cities that just position themselves as cities to visit. Vienna and Barcelona are such cities that have transformed from being cities to visit to being places to invest in (Clark 2011).

Hassan *et al.* (n.d.:275) stress that city brand positioning should be able to arouse consumer senses, touch their hearts and stimulate their minds. The city brand practitioners should make the city brand appeal to the consumers' emotions and minds. Brands that evoke emotional responses have a compelling competitive advantage.

Hassan *et al.* (n.d.:275) offer three ways in which city brand positioning should be done. These consist of:

- Identifying a set of possible competitive advantages upon which to build a position.
- Selecting the right competitive advantage.
- Effectively communicating a delivering the chosen position to a carefully selected target market.

2.3 Conclusion

Branding is all about identity that differentiates a product from others. Branding creates a competitive advantage if properly planned. Since the 1970s places have been branding themselves, especially in Europe and North America. Places or cities need to brand themselves to attract investors, visitors as well as students. City branding is now a global 21st century phenomenon and cities cannot afford to be left behind. For cities to be successful brands they should have wide ranging consultation with key stakeholders. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, stakeholders can be the difference between success and failure of a city brand. The lack of consultations can be an impediment to city branding. Other impediments or challenges include lack of clarity on what the brands stand for and poor marketing communications. Finally, branding is all about influencing the customer's mind in relation to the offerings of your competitors. Positioning means understanding how customers and investors perceive your city brand. Their views are very important and your brand has to be the first one that comes into their minds.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is a collective term for the structured process of conducting research. It usually includes research design, data gathering and data analysis. Methodology is also a plan that promotes systematic management of data collection, and dictates what the researcher needs to do to answer the research question. This study was biased towards content analysis because this methodology is more solution-oriented and provides alternative solutions that are needed for sectors such as commerce and other spheres of life (Ndlovu 2007: 225). The study endeavoured to unearth possible ideas that can be used to help brand Gaborone to be a competitive commercial city.

Research design is the roadmap that the researchers use for conducting the research and for providing details of each step in the project. Successful implementation of the research design must always result in the provision of all information required to solve the research problem. It should provide for the collection of relevant data with minimal expenditure, time and effort.

3.2 The research problem and purpose

City branding, especially in developed or high-income countries, is a modern phenomenon that has aided cities in competing absolutely excellently. City branding according to Van Gelder and Allan (2006:3) is now developing quickly with theoretical underpinnings that have been developed and put into full practice in recent years. City branding is giving the city a personality and creating an image that makes the city a favourite place to live, work, study and invest in (Clark *et al.* 2011:1). However, it seems that in developing countries or emerging markets city branding has not been embraced enthusiastically as compared to the situation in developed countries.

When doing preliminary literature review for this study the researcher realized that the city of Gaborone in Botswana did not have a competitive identity to make it a distinctive

city destination with a sustainable and convincing differentiator. Hence, the author identified this as a research problem that needs to be explored. This lack of identity, together with the absence of an integrated brand strategy, has arguably made Gaborone a less competitive city destination. To address this research problem, this explorative study solicited opinions, insights and perceptions of various stakeholders and decision makers in order to establish an acceptable framework on how best to strengthen or make the city of Gaborone a competitive city brand. As mentioned earlier in chapter Two, the study identified and discussed the reasons why cities brand themselves in order to be the best destinations for investors, visitors, students and residents.

3.2.1 Research questions

The purpose of this research was to explore practical ways that could be used to brand the city of Gaborone so that it can become a competitive city destination.

The study therefore asked the following questions:

- How do branded cities perform compared to unbranded cities such as Gaborone?
- What measures can be put in place to brand or make the city of Gaborone competitive?
- What are the potential benefits of branding Gaborone as a city destination?

3.2.2 Research objectives

Groenewald (2013:102) indicates that research objectives “flow naturally from the research purpose”. Groenewald further explains that the objectives should be unambiguous, logical and attainable. If they are not clear it is highly unlikely that the study will achieve its purpose competently and credibly. That being the case, the objectives of this study were to:

- Trace the origin and development of city branding since the 1970s.
- Identify the reasons behind the success of branded cities vis-à-vis the failure of unbranded cities.

- Analyze the potential positive impacts of branding the city of Gaborone.

3.3 Research Approaches

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as “a type of scientific research that uses a pre-defined set of procedures to answer a research question, collect evidence and produce findings that were not determined in advance”. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on understanding the research problem through the eyes or prisms of the population it involves. According to Singh (n.d.: 1) qualitative research also obtains data about values, opinions and social contexts of certain sections of the population. Qualitative research was chosen for this study because it is flexible, probes to get clarifications and highlights issues that the researcher may miss. It is more inductive.

On the other hand, quantitative research is an excellent way of proving or disproving a hypothesis. It also filters out external factors and makes the results appear to be real and unbiased. Quantitative research, according to Molokwane (2015:72), is very deductive, replicable and emphasizes validity and reliability.

This qualitative study however, with more emphasis on the content analysis approach, investigated the lack of competitiveness of Gaborone as an unbranded city. Furthermore, the study explored several methods of branding the city of Gaborone. This was done by gathering opinions and recommendations from the relevant respondents at organizations in Gaborone.

Content analysis according to Marks and Yardley (2004:212) is “a method of data analysis that involves categorising and quantifying the characteristics of qualitative data that are of interest to the researcher”. It is a qualitative research technique that helps the researcher to make valid inferences. Furthermore, Ryan and Bernard (2000) define content analysis as a technique “. . . that forces the researcher to make judgments about the meanings of contiguous blocks”. This technique provides valuable insights into texts and is unobtrusive in nature. This study used content analysis because it is rigorous and can competently unearth rich data for the study. Furthermore, content

analysis was used because it allowed for constant comparison of data with emerging categories (Ke & Wenglensky 2010:1). The data was tested for differences and similarities and categorized until one core or major theory emerged on how to brand Gaborone as a city brand. When constant comparison reaches a point where no further categories are emerging, then the study would have reached data saturation. At this point a “persuasive perspective” on how to brand Gaborone would be revealed.

Semi-structured interviews were used in the study because they are more probing and not entirely restrictive compared to structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews perfectly complemented the content analysis and provided the ability to generate themes and ideas as the study progressed. The interviews were conducted at the respondents’ place only with employees from the marketing and branding departments.

Content analysis naturally renders the concepts of validity and reliability irrelevant because it neither believes in absolute truth, nor is it interested in replicating a study like this one. However, for the purpose of this study, credibility was ensured by sharing the transcripts of interviews with participants, and by triangulation and collection of data that correctly reflects the phenomenon (Brown, Stevens, Troiano & Scheider 2002:8). Reliability and validity in this study was achieved by a constant comparison and accuracy of data collected (Kolb 2012:85 & Brink 1993:37). Qualitative studies generally are difficult to generalize but the study findings could be generalized if similar conditions are present in another city in a developing country which is at an identical developmental stage as Gaborone.

Content analysis as an interpretive method is more about trustworthiness. Zhang and Wildemuth (2005:6) explain trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The trustworthiness of this study will be covered in detail later in this chapter under Section 3.9.

3.3.1 Why content analysis?

Content analysis, according to Datt (2016), is “a research technique applied for content data interpretation through systematic classification, coding and identification of themes

or patterns". The Colorado State University (CSU) (2017) argues that content analysis is a time consuming research technique because it analyses data manually or sometimes with use of mainframe computers. Due to huge reliance on manual analysis, this technique is fraught with a lot of human errors. This technique despite its shortcomings was widely used in the 1940s, and by the 1950s it was improved to introduce better methods of analysis focusing on concepts and relationships. According to CSU (2017) nowadays content analysis is used in mental models, marketing, and in socio-cultural and historical fields. Content analysis appeals to researchers as it offers systematic qualitative analysis with crystal clear procedures for checking the quality of analysis itself. Datt (2016) explains that content analysis has nothing to do with statistical analysis or interpretation but it interprets opinions and perspectives and helps reduce the reliance on the dominating nature of other theories in sociological research. It is a sound response to the over reliance on positivistic approaches. In short, content analysis provides space for new and contextualized theories.

Initially designed as an alternative to quantitative method, content analysis with its lack of universal understanding uses a "system of categories" as its core tool (Kohlbacher 2006). Babbie (2001: 309) thinks highly of content analysis as a "coding operation" that translates raw data into general meaningful descriptions. This research technique originates from the phenomenological and interpretive paradigms and does not have "clear-cut objectivity" (Cassell & Symon 1994: 5) like as is the case with the positivist paradigm. Unlike the positivist paradigm, its meanings are not "standardized from place to place", (Rubin & Rubin 1995: 31). According to CSU (2017), content analysis can generally be used to:

- Detect propaganda.
- Describe attitudinal and behavioural responses to communication.
- Identify the intentions and communication trends of an individual or groups.
- Reveal thoughts of society in chosen topics.

Content analysis is also an “in-depth, exploratory” approach that can provide a model for practice that can be used in future by other scholars (Marks & Yardley 2004:57, Sbaraini, Carter, Evans & Blinkhorn 2011:1 & Mewborn 2005:8). Like grounded theory, content analysis is inductive, rigorous and explorative. It can “provide insight into areas that are relatively unknown” (Jones and Alony 2011:95 & Zhang and Wildemuth 2005) such as the low understanding of the concept of city branding in developing countries. Mewborn (2005:44) further reasons that like grounded theory content analysis helps to generate a framework grounded in data which can be applied in modern city branding. Sbaraini *et al.* (2011:1) agrees that content analysis like grounded theory can actually increase the quality of research in a given field. Content analysis is premised on the understanding that the views of the participants are central to the methodology. It is a research technique that revolves and evolves in which there is simultaneous data collection and analysis in order to develop an emergent “theory” or framework. As Bryman (2004:392) puts it, content analysis means “searching out for underlying themes in the materials under scrutiny”. Figure 3.1 in the following page shows the logical elements of analyzing issues in content analysis.

According to the Colorado State University (2017), content analysis can be advantageous because it can:

- Allow both quantitative and qualitative operations.
- Allow closeness to text which can alternate between specific categories and relationships.
- Be used to interpret texts for the development of expert systems.
- Get to the central aspect of social interaction through texts or transcripts.
- Provide valuable insights over time through analysis of texts.

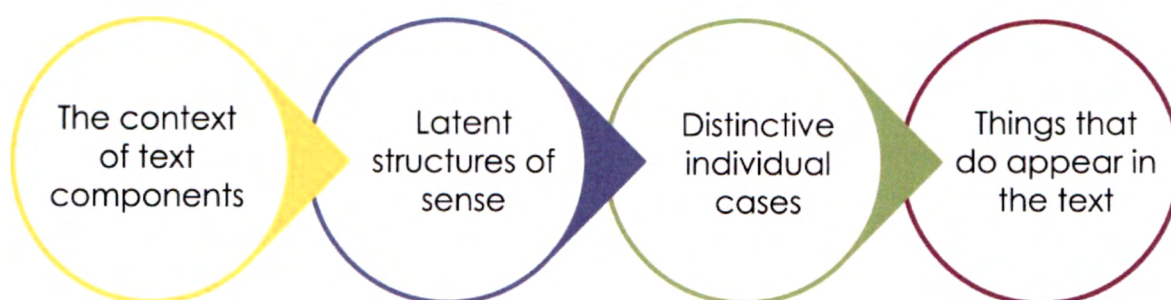


Figure 3. 1: Major elements of basic content analysis (Source: Kohlbacher 2006)

Content analysis can help to interpret complex phenomena. It is imperative to emergence of persuasive perspectives and does not commence with pre-conceived ideas i.e. confirming or disconfirming a hypothesis. In fact, a hypothesis can actually emerge from a content analysis-driven study. A well-researched content analysis study does result in a persuasive argument or acceptable framework. This study selected content analysis as there appeared to be dearth of proper research pertaining to city branding especially in emerging markets or developing countries like Botswana. For the study, the views of selected respondents were analyzed to develop a persuasive framework or more cautiously a “persuasive perspective” that could be adopted to guide Gaborone city branding efforts. Content analysis helps to explore possible ways that could be used to brand Gaborone by soliciting views of participants of the study. According to Molokwane (2015:11) the grounded theory helps to generate a theory based on the analysis of “patterns, themes and common categories”. Content analysis can achieve the same as it can result in themes and categories. Molokwane further states that these patterns, themes and categories are used to develop a theory that is evidence-based. However, with content analysis it may not necessarily be a theory but a persuasive argument or framework. Therefore, the study with the help of the content analysis technique, tried to generate a data-rich and driven framework that could help to brand the city of Gaborone.

Generally, content analysis can be divided into three approaches namely: conventional qualitative content analysis, directed content analysis and summative content analysis, (Zhang and Wildemuth 2005:2). Conventional qualitative content analysis is when

categories come “directly and inductively” from the collected raw data, and in most studies this content analysis approach has led to the development of grounded theory. Secondly, directed content analysis is when the first kind of coding begins with a theory or research findings. Under this approach researchers focus more on the data and allow themes to emerge from the data during data analysis. The major reason for adopting directed content analysis is to confirm a “conceptual framework or theory”. Finally, summative content analysis, which is more biased towards quantitative methodology, is more centred on counting words and latent meanings and themes. For this study however, directed content analysis was used due to the fact that the researcher together with the supervisor focused more on the data and allowed the themes to emerge. This finally resulted in a persuasive framework that could be adopted to brand the city of Gaborone.

3.4 Criticism and challenges of content analysis

Like any other research technique that is qualitatively-driven, content analysis has its critics who deride it as a research technique that just claims to discover a “theory”. For example, Kohlbacher (2006) says in highly open-ended and explorative research questions content analysis may not necessarily be the best method to use. The author further says the second weakness of content analysis is that “replicating a mixed-method is nearly an impossible task”. Finally, Kohlbacher argues that content analysis can be a limiting technique if the text or material itself is “not subject to examination”.

The “definitive” style of some content analysis adherents may mislead aspiring content analysis researchers into believing that what they have “discovered” is unchallengeable and absolute. Like grounded theory, content analysis can be dismissed as being less deductive and found wanting when there is a large amount of data (Molokwane 2015:11). Again like grounded theory, according to Hoda, Noble and Marshall (2011), content analysis may “lack specific validation phase compared to most scientific methods”. In other words, it means content analysis may have dubious validity and may be difficult to replicate. Furthermore, and more importantly in content analysis generalizability may not be achieved due to the subjective nature of responses.

The Colorado State University (2017) indicates that, besides being time consuming, content analysis has both theoretical and procedural weaknesses. It can be subject to error when relational analysis is used for higher degree of interpretation. Content analysis can again be merely deductive when “dealing with complex texts”. Furthermore, content analysis comes across as a theoretically weak technique and tends to focus on the text rather than on the context that produced the text. Finally, some scholars or researchers see content analysis as a boulevard to a “theory”. But this notion is dangerously misplaced as content analysis should be seen as a compass that helps navigate the terrain of qualitative inquiry or as a sign post that leads to the destination. It may be safe to suggest that content analysis should not be seen as possessing “absolutism”. It lacks more authoritativeness and should be treated more as a precursor in a study especially in an explorative study like this one. This study as well did not harbour illusions of exceptionalism but endeavoured to bring convincing perspective into how cities can brand themselves with specific reference to Gaborone.

3.5 Population

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of scientific inquiry (Tawana 2011:22). Mostly this population has identical or binding attributes; this in turn helps in generalizing the findings. Conversely, the population can be heterogeneous resulting in maximum variation of responses. However, sometimes due to a larger population, a sample is normally decided that is representative of the entire populace. A sample is a subset of the population or segment of the population selected to represent the entire population in the study. Additionally, the sample has to be accessible to correctly and easily collect data. The size of the sample is also critical to the reliability and credibility of the study. The sample size means the actual number of respondents for the study. The sample size is determined by the nature of the study, the budget, time and sometimes accessibility.

For this study the population comprised of carefully selected marketing and branding practitioners in academia and from the private sector organizations that could play a

pivotal role in branding Gaborone to be a competitive city destination. The inclusion of the academia and private sector is an attempt to have a balanced, credible and representative study. The academia is an important stakeholder in Gaborone branding efforts because they can conduct research or surveys on behalf of the city and help in city branding strategy formulation. The academia also offers evidence-based advice that could be used for Gaborone branding initiatives. The private sector organizations are service providers, implement policies and can render pertinent advice pertaining to Gaborone's branding efforts especially during city branding strategy formulation and city marketing. The study focused on both academia and private sector organizations to reduce biasness and improve the credibility of the study. Furthermore, making both academia and the private sector organizations the study population is to generate a wide-ranging set of opinions pertaining to city branding. It may be safe to state that including academia and private organizations is a way of triangulation.

3.5.1 Sample size

The sample size means the actual number that is to be chosen to be actual respondents in the study. The sample is selected from the entire population or *universum* that will provide reliable and valid responses to the study. Groenewald (2013:128) defines the target population as "a body of people or to any other collection of items under consideration for the purpose of the research". The sample is normally determined by the nature of the study, accessibility of the sample, resources and amount of time available to complete the study successfully without compromising its credibility. In this study, the sampling frame comprised of only employees of the aforementioned organizations. From the academia and private sector organizations only employees in the marketing departments were selected as the sample of the study. Determining the sample size in content analysis is always a difficult task as theoretical categories are not known in advance; instead more emphasis is on the data collected. Groenewald (2013:128) in her work uses the following steps for correct sampling procedure.

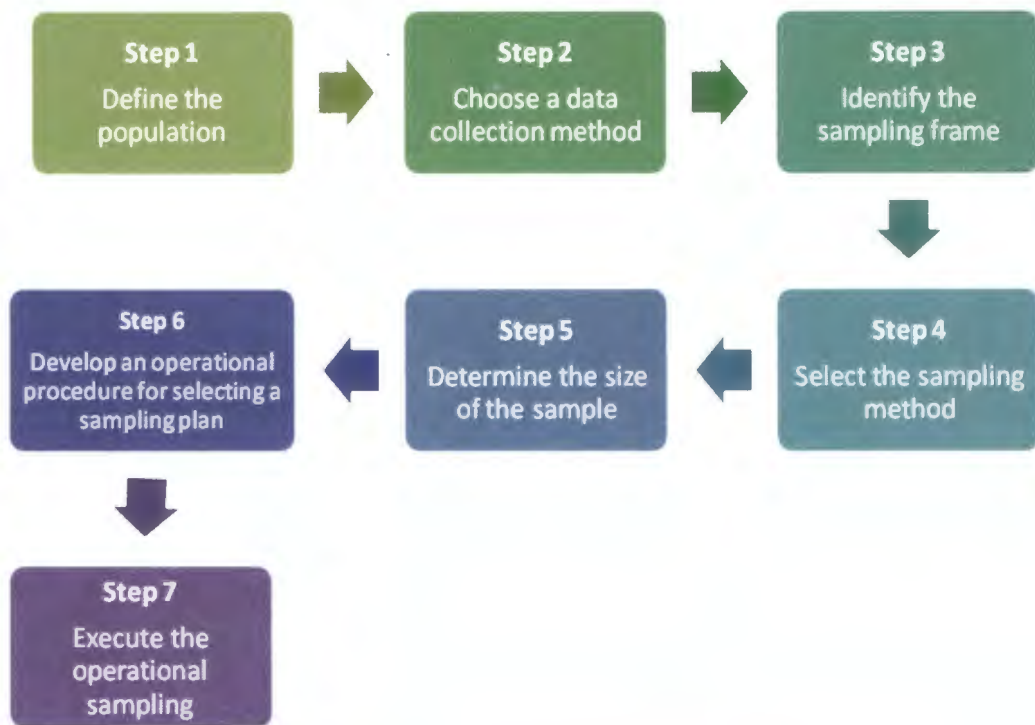


Figure 3. 2: The sampling procedures (Source: Groenewald2013:128)

3.5.2 Sampling method and sampling technique

The study used a total of five (5) respondents from academia and the private sector organizations. From academia a marketing practitioner and a tourism marketing practitioner were used as participants. From the private sector organizations a creative director and two marketing professionals were selected for the interviews. Purposive sampling was used as the selected respondents were already known and were the right people to provide credible and correct data as they were already doing that job. Purposive sampling was appropriate because the participants were already known to the researcher, time was saved and rich data was collected.

All the respondents were chosen because they were accessible and fit for the nature of the study. The sampling method of the study was non-probability as the sample possesses rich data. Marketing professionals were interviewed within the mentioned targeted groups because they have the data that is relevant and enriches the study. Additionally, it is important to note that network or snowball sampling was used twice as slightly different new data was revealed by some of the participants. However, the views

of snowball sampling participants did not in any way have big deviations from the views of the original study participants. As such the views of the further two snowball sampling participants did not have any noticeable influence on the study findings. The inclusion of the academia and private sector organizations was to understand and appreciate their different views on city branding and to create a sense of ownership in what could be arrived at. In addition, the diversity of views improved the credibility of the study.

3.6 Pilot study

For every study to achieve good data collection a pilot study is advisable. A pilot study is a “small-scale of a complete survey or a pretest for a particular research instrument”, (Janghorban, Roudsari & Taghipour 2013:4). Groenewald (2013:109) advises that there has to be similar circumstances and similar participants when doing pilot testing. Pilot testing avails the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of research instruments. According to Janghorban *et al.* (2013:5), a pilot study gives contextual sensitivity which is a key component of the inductive analytical process which involves the theoretical development process.

According to Janghorban *et al.* (2013:4) pilot studies can be used in four areas:

- To find problems and barriers related to participant's recruitment.
- For being engaged in research as a qualitative researcher.
- For assessing the acceptability of observation or interview protocol.
- To determine epistemology and methodology of research.

The instrument used in this study was piloted with three selected participants so that if there were issues that needed modifications they could be attended to. Research experts were also used as part of the pilot study to find out if the study questions had been arranged correctly, did not infringe on participant's privacy and if the research instrument could competently unearth the wanted data. Ethical issues were also to be adhered to.

3.7 Data collection

For most content analysis studies, interviews and observations are commonly used methods for gathering data. For this study however, interviews were used and there was no observation. Interviews were chosen as they generated good raw data and allowed interaction with the participants which is the whole essence of content analysis. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Hoda *et al.* (2011) reckon that voice recording the interviews makes sure that no information is lost and helps the researcher to focus on the conversation s/he is having with the respondents. Furthermore, Hoda *et al.* (2011) state that the gathering of data and analysis has to be “iterative” so that continuous data comparison guides forthcoming interviews and interview analysis to add value to emerging results.

The participants were interviewed in the study at varying stages. Follow-up questions yielded more information during the interviews. Semi-standardized or unstructured interviews were used as they allowed for pre-determined questions and questions that were generated by answers to pre-determined questions. Semi-structured interviews were better and relevant for the study due to the fact that they “helped with emergence of the real concerns of participants rather than forcing the topic that may be viewed as trivial by the participants”, (Hoda *et al.* 2011). To gather data more correctly, the interview questions were piloted first on people who specialized in research to eliminate ambiguity and any errors that might appear in the interview questions.

Data collection is one of the most important phases of any study. It clearly spells out how data will be collected. Chosen data collection methods should be able to help the researcher answer his/her research questions adequately. The methods are also selected based on their ability to get more raw data, their ability to get the correct data and their ability to advance the study trustworthiness. The study used both secondary data and primary data.

- **Secondary data**

Secondary data refers to desktop research or any information that is readily available that has been collected by other researchers, organizations or scholars (Struwig & Stead 2001:80). It is cheaper than primary data and for it to be effective it requires the researcher to search by specific topic and requirements. The researcher compared other authors' opinions and findings related to the study. For the credibility of the study, information was acquired from all relevant materials or publications such journals, textbooks, past dissertations/theses as well as conference papers. Any information not readily available but relevant for this study, was gathered through interviews (primary data) directed to the targeted respondents of this study.

- **Primary data**

Primary data was helpful in supplementing secondary sources. Saunders *et al.* (2009:319) describe primary data as information obtained first hand for the specific purpose of the research. Primary data can be both oral and written testimonies (Groenewald 2013:110). It can be through interviews, focus groups, observation and other methods. For this study, data was obtained through semi-structured interviews from the respondents.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis means turning data into meaningful information that is useful and easy to understand or interpret. It can either be done manually or using a computer programme. Correct data analysis may result in credible study findings. To ensure credible analysis, data was edited for consistency and omissions of answers. Furthermore, codes were validated by way of a review together with the supervisor. This was meant to reduce researcher bias and any misinterpretation whatsoever. Data was analyzed through coding. There are substantive codes and theoretical codes. Hoda *et al.* (2011) define substantive codes as “the categories and properties of the theory that emerge from and conceptually image the substantive area being researched”. On the other hand the

same authors describe theoretical codes as those that “implicitly conceptualize how the substantive codes will relate to each other as a modeled, interrelated, multivariate set of hypothesis in accounting for resolving the main concern”. Zhang and Wildemuth (2005:3) and Datt (2016) proposed the following steps when conducting qualitative content analysis:

3.8.1 Prepare the data

As always with content analysis, collected data has to be transformed before any analysis is done. Mostly, in qualitative content analysis studies interview transcripts are analyzed to show the participants’ thoughts and opinions. When transcribing, the researchers should have answers to the following questions: (1) Should all questions from the interviews be transcribed; (2) Should verbalizations be transcribed literally or only summarily; (3) Should observations during the interviews be transcribed or not? The answers to the above questions should be based on what the study wishes to achieve. Figure 3.2 below shows the steps that are followed when using content analysis as a research technique.



Figure 3. 3: The process of qualitative content analysis (Source: Adapted from Zhang & Wildemuth 2005:3)

3.8.2 Define the unit or theme of analysis

Under this step the content is classified according to a few words, sentences or phrases. The phrases or sentences should correctly capture the “idea” and all related content. They should link with the objectives of the study.

3.8.3 Develop categories and a coding scheme

Successful qualitative content analysis requires a sound development of sub-categories and coding system. These can be drawn from theories, identical research topics, primary data and other empirical studies. Categories for inductive content analysis for studies such as this one originate from raw data. These categories should be compared

to make distinctions between them. Constant comparison is meant to bring together categories and their properties through interpretive memos.

3.8.4 Pre-test coding scheme on sample

Pre-testing is meant to achieve consistency in coding and this can actually be achieved by coding a sample of the collected data. After the sample is coded and consistency is satisfactory then the researcher can move to the next stage. However, when coding consistency is in doubt then re-coding has to be done or revised. This can be a long iterative process but must be done until such time that consistent coding is attained.

3.8.5 Code all text

When coding consistency has been attained, the data coding process can take place. Due to simultaneous coding and constant data collection, it is possible that new themes may emerge. This will again require further coding from the researcher.

3.8.6 Assess coding consistency

After completion of data coding the consistency coding can be done again. This is meant to ensure validity and reliability of the coding process.

3.8.7 Draw inferences from coded data

After codes and categories have been generated and further coding has been done inference can take place. This involves making meaning of what the data says. During meaning making properties and dimensions are explored, relationships between categories are identified and category testing is done against the data. It is also vital under this step to uncover patterns to present the analysis.

3.8.8 Present the findings

The results presented according to specific themes and conclusions should be buttressed by secondary data and quotes from the developed code. The results may be presented in the form of graphs, matrices, or conceptual frameworks. They should also be presented in such a way that the reader is able to understand the basis of their

interpretation. There should always be a healthy balance between description and interpretation.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness according to Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs (2014: 2) simply refers to convincing the readers that the findings of the study are worth paying attention to. The trustworthiness can be promoted by the quality of the data collection and sampling method or techniques that have been used in the study. Elo *et al.* further point out that trustworthiness can be assessed through credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Another criterion called authenticity was later added in 1994 by Lincoln and Guba. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2005), credibility refers to “adequate representation of the construction of the social world being studied”. In other words the study participants should be correctly identified and defined. In this study, only people with marketing background were selected as participants in the study. Transferability means the extent to which the study findings can be applied or “extrapolated” (Elo *et al.* 2014: 2) from another context with probably similar conditions. For example, the findings from Gaborone, a city in a developing country, could be cautiously used in another city at a similar developmental level.

Dependability on the other hand means “the coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomena”, (Bradley 1993:437). The interviews were conducted in strictly identical fashion and there were no noticeable change of conditions that may have influenced the study. Conformability means the extent to which other scholars or researchers can confirm the characteristics of data. Bengtsson (2016:13) defines conformability as the “objectivity or neutrality of the data”. Member checking or member validation was done to ensure the accuracy of the interview transcripts and coder reliability was also used to re-affirm the code’s interpretation as well as to make sure that other researchers can have same interpretation. Creswell and Miller (2000: 127) describe member checking as “the crucial technique for establishing credibility”. Finally, authenticity refers to the purpose and value of the research and its usefulness. Participants indeed saw the value of branding

the city of Gaborone and offered their opinions on the way the city could be branded to have a competitive identity.

Credibility is synonymous to validity, dependability to reliability and transferability to generalizability (Bengtsson 2016:13). Content analysis is biased towards manifest analysis. Manifest analysis focuses on the respondents' exact answers, uses the respondents' words exactly as they were recorded, and "describes the visible and obvious in the text", Bengtsson (2016:10). On the other hand, trustworthiness of data collection is based on selecting the most appropriate method that ensures credibility in content analysis (Elo *et al.* 2014: 3). The method used should be the best in answering the research question and most content analysis studies use unstructured interviews and observation. This study used semi-structured and a bit of unstructured interviews as other questions were generated by answers provided to semi-structured questions.

Semi-structured and unstructured questions were more appropriate as they unearthed more rich data. To guarantee trustworthiness it is important to choose the right sampling technique because it should include participants who have good knowledge of the research topic. Purposive or judgement sampling was used because it leads the researcher to the right people with marketing background and those already in the tourism marketing industry and related fields. Finally, the sample size was limited to five respondents. In Botswana there are essentially few people who are informed about the concept of city branding. Therefore, the five who were purposefully selected represented the most appropriate sample for the study's trustworthiness.

In conclusion, Billups (2014: 1) in Table 3.1 compares the elements of trustworthiness in qualitative research with those in quantitative method.

Table 3. 1: The trustworthiness framework: Quantitative to Qualitative applications

Quantitative	Qualitative	Translation
Validity (internal)	Credibility	Truthfulness
Validity (external)/generalizability	Transferability	Applicability
Reliability	Dependability	Consistency
Objectivity	Conformability	Neutrality
Accuracy	Authenticity	Reality

Source: Adapted from Billups (2014: 1).

3.10 Limitations of the study

By its very nature content analysis is characterized by a lack of informed and sound generalizability. The study was limited to Gaborone City only and its findings may not be applied on another city in Botswana or developing country. However, the findings can be used with caution. Although the respondents were marketing personnel in their organizations some may not be so competent to speak authoritatively about city branding. In addition, as the study is exploratory in nature, its findings may not necessarily be seen as an authoritative framework for city branding in developing countries. Instead, the study should be viewed as a tip of an iceberg to arouse further studies in the area of city branding. However, the findings may be used as baseline for further studies but not as an unchallengeable framework.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Researchers are always expected to attend to the ethical considerations pertaining to their studies. Ethics means acceptable conduct expected from the researcher. It simply means respect for study subjects as well as adherence to general national laws and

norms and values. In the study, permission to collect data was sought from the relevant or participating respondents. After this was granted, all participating employees in these organizations received the interview questions with a letter that sought their participation and informed them that their participation was strictly voluntary.

The respondents were informed that their identities would not be disclosed without their written consent and that no information would be divulged without the written permission of the respondents. The respondents' identities were concealed, participation was voluntary and information provided was for the purposes of the study only and will continue to be confidential. Furthermore, participants that wished to end their participation were allowed to do so. Only the study findings are made public.

3.12 Conclusion

The chapter explained and justified in detail the research methodology that was used in data collection for this study. It also explained every stage or phase of the data collection and substantiated the choices made. This chapter clearly stated why content analysis was the appropriate methodology for the study as there appeared to be paucity of literature and acceptable theories about city branding in developing countries or emerging markets.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study. The data for this study was gathered using interviews which were conducted on one-on-one basis with five selected respondents in Gaborone. The interview questions solicited ideas on how the city of Gaborone could be developed into a modern competitive city brand. The study asked the following questions: How and why do branded cities perform better than unbranded cities such as Gaborone? What characteristics can be exploited to create a competitive city brand for Gaborone? What are the potential benefits of branding Gaborone as a city destination? This chapter consists of the summary of questions; the emerged themes from the findings; and themes description coupled with literature support of the emerged themes.

4.2 Responses to research questions

This section presents responses to questions that were asked during the interview sessions. In total there were five interview questions administered face-to-face to the interviewees by the researcher. The responses are discussed in the following section and other results are presented in the form of tables.

4.2.1 "Is branding Gaborone a beneficial exercise?"

The first question wanted to establish if branding the city of Gaborone would be worthwhile and beneficial. All the respondents, except one, agreed with the interview questions although they gave different reasons to support their stance. All the four who agreed stated that Gaborone could become more competitive if properly branded. This finding is in harmony with Linh's (2012:16) contention that city branding creates image differentiation, which leads to uniqueness and competitiveness respectively. Furthermore, Salman (2008), Prophet (2006:2), Clark *et al.* (2011: 3); Tayebi (2006:11); and Zerrillo and Thomas (2007:90) again argue that a city brand must be unique with an enduring brand essence and inimitable identity. The findings of this study therefore

suggest that the city of Gaborone should brand itself in order to have a competitive identity and to stand out in a “sea” of rivals.

One of the four respondents contended that branding Gaborone would increase its chance of growing commercially. This is consistent with the earlier assertion by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) that a well branded and efficient city is remarkably competitive as a trade hub. The RDB claims that branded cities attract investment more than unbranded cities because of investor friendly policies. For example, Rwanda offers a seven year tax holiday in priority sectors. This by extension benefits cities such as Kigali. Similarly, branding Gaborone may improve productivity levels, reduce labour costs, and improve telecommunications infrastructure as well as the costs of telecoms services. As mentioned earlier in this study, in Kigali, Rwanda, it takes only six hours to register and operate a company. Sadly, this is not the case with Gaborone. Branding Gaborone therefore has the potential to make it a commercial or trade hub that has all macroeconomic fundamentals as Salman (2008) argued earlier.

Finally, it is unfortunate that currently Gaborone cannot be associated with any unique brand, and is regrettably unknown and cannot compete with branded cities. If properly branded, Gaborone may have an enduring brand essence and a specific target audience or market. The city of Gaborone should be associated with a particular characteristic that communicates what it stands for. For example, as indicated earlier by Prophet (2006:2), “Barcelona is culture, Tokyo is modernity and Rio is fun”. This a clear manifestation that cities compete based on their strong characteristics. Branding a city in essence requires consistency, a sense of pride from the all stakeholders, and continuous brand refreshment that does not compromise the city’s brand essence. When there is no buy-in from stakeholders the city brand cannot be a success. For instance, citizens in Cape Verde rebelled because they felt Brand Cape Verde was not representative of their country (Dos Santos & Campo 2014:97). Table 4.1 shows the different responses on how branding Gaborone will be a beneficial exercise.

Table 4. 1: “Is branding a beneficial exercise to Gaborone?”

Category	Code	Quote to support category creation	Comment
Branding as beneficial to Gaborone	Unique selling proposition	“Yes, branding Gaborone is indeed a beneficial exercise. It results in unique selling proposition”	It might mean getting out of the comfort zone to look distinctively competitive.
	Commercial growth	“Most definitely! Branding Gaborone will result in sustainable multiplier effect and potential for GDP growth”	Growth of other sectors, livelihood improvement and increased production.
	Competitiveness	“Yes! Branding increases any place’s competitiveness. If Gaborone is branded it will be known for a particular competitive character”	Again this may mean Gaborone doing away with its usual basic tag and becoming known for something else.
	Existential expression	“Yes! Branding Gaborone will give the city or any other city an existential expression. Branding brings a sense of pride to citizens”	“...existential expression” means the purpose why the city is what it is.

4.2.2 “How do branded cities outperform unbranded cities”?

The study also sought to find out the recipe for success for branded cities vis-à-vis unbranded cities. Irrespective of personal, product or place orientation, branding should

have a purpose that is unambiguously communicated to the target audience. All kinds of brands carry memories and values cherished by customers.

Successful city brands possess unique elements that give them a competitive advantage. Salman (2008) and Prophet (2006:2) indicate that cities such as New York, London, Milan and Hong Kong are competitive because they have good marketing strategies, are devoted to elements that support their branding efforts, and have their identities associated with their characteristics. For example, London has its own Communications Strategy 2015-2018; and Melbourne has the Melbourne City Marketing Strategy 2013-2016. These documents promote and enhance the images of these cities and outline the direction for their marketing. In contrast, according to the interviewees of this study, Gaborone does not even have any strategic document whatsoever that guides its development.

A strategic document gives birth to marketing and communications strategies. A city or place that does not have a marketing and communications strategy by default does not have a strategic document. Successful cities such as Paris and London have properly researched marketing programmes and marketing communications approaches, as indicated by Linh (2012:21). These marketing programmes are dedicated to managing the city's image consistently and effectively promoting its content through correct channels. Regrettably, unbranded cities like Gaborone are so behind and cannot compete due to the absence of marketing strategies. Correct city marketing strategies increase city brand awareness and help in brand building. A city brand that is continuously in the mind of the customer competes effectively because of unceasing marketing efforts. In the customer's mind if you are not appearing you are disappearing.

Successful cities are also associated with particular visual elements or events. A mere mention of the landmark or visual element effectively brings into mind the name of the city. For example, Table Mountain and Robben Island represent the City of Cape Town and the Rio Carnival is synonymous with the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The successful cities leverage on these landmarks and events and consciously make these landmarks or elements conspicuous in their marketing activities. For example, Paris

uses the Eiffel Tower in virtually all its promotional initiatives and even uses the tower as its visual representation. However, unbranded cities like Gaborone cannot be successful if they do not have anything associated with them.

Furthermore, the interviewees in this study argued that cities with better facilities and attractions tend to outperform unbranded cities. This finding confirms The Guardian's survey (2014:1) which picks Los Angeles as a top city brand due to its clean beaches and infrastructure. The findings again corroborate Michael's (2014) claim that city brands become successful when they have assets such as attractions, infrastructure as well as safety for the visitors. Cities with Blue Flag beaches such as Cape Town by far out-compete their rivals. For a city to compete internationally it must have proper signage, clean amenities at points of entry and so forth. The attractions have to be clean, pristine and sustainably managed like the Okavango Delta, Table Mountain and the like.

The findings of this study show that Gaborone, however, falls short of international branding standards due to below average facilities. For example, Gaborone currently does not have either a man-made or even a natural world class attraction for it to be competitive. Comparatively, Barcelona has the Museum of Contemporary Art and Sydney has The Sydney Opera House. The interviewees in this study argued that Gaborone City should be innovatively branded in order to compete effectively in the 21st century. City branding is all about being different and not being loyal to conformity. An exceptional city brand should be deferential to maverickism. Properly branded cities are cosmopolitan and good for staying, working and studying. The interviewees indicated that the city of Gaborone should benchmark from successful cities because branding gives a city a sustainable competitive advantage.

Finally, successful city brands have been able to package their elements competitively compared to unbranded cities. These elements or characteristics form the essence of the city brand. The combined elements complement each other and together form a city's identity. For instance, Sydney gets its superb identity from brilliantly blended transport, shopping, economic opportunity and good climate. A well branded city also

enjoys wide media coverage for awareness purposes. The interviewees in this study contend that patriotic media coverage helps to shape and market a city brand. Appropriate communication channels should be used to meet the needs of the target audience. The findings of this study showed that sadly the city of Gaborone does not have an integrated identity that can receive media coverage. Unfortunately the media cannot give Gaborone exposure as the city has nothing and as a result the city is not internationally well known. Table 4.2 shows the respondents' answers on how branded cities do better than unbranded cities.

Table 4. 2: “How do branded cities outperform unbranded cities”?

Category	Code	Quote to support category creation	Comment
Performances of branded cities	Marketing strategies	“Cities like London and Cape Town have been in existence for a long time and embraced globalization quite early. And most importantly they have more resources and correct marketing strategies and consistency in brand promise”	Being proactive and correct marketing
	Association with visual element	“Branded cities i.e. Cape Town are successful due to their association with a particular element which is correctly positioned i.e. Table Mountain”	Selecting what works for Gaborone and enhancing a city’s ability to compete
	Facilities and attractions	“Branded cities are able to outperform unbranded cities because they have better facilities, world-class attractions and information accessibility”	Branded cities are developed
	Creation of identity	“Branded cities have packaged their elements or characteristics competitively; the way they present themselves to their audiences and because they have an	Knowledge of what the city has and must do to be successful

		identity”	
	Media coverage	“Branded cities have pronounced identity and have proper and patriotic media coverage. Secondly, these cities send correct content through correct channels”	The ability of the city to share with the audience who they are and what they have

4.2.3 “What characteristics can be used in branding Gaborone”?

The most successful cities have characteristics that have competitively helped them to outmaneuver the maze of competing rivals. These enduring characteristics are associated with the cities as enablers. For example, warmth, peace and safety are good elements that city brands exploit to remain competitive. The interview findings revealed that elements or characteristics on their own are not draw cards to destinations but provide conditions good enough for cities to excel. For example, Sydney and Los Angeles have a relatively good climate as an element and Istanbul has a rich culture as an attraction. The characteristics are an ignition that launches the journey to the city destination. Characteristics can be natural or man-made. Climate for example, is a natural characteristic whilst investor friendly environment or policies, warmth, and safety are man-made characteristics. Successful city brands have these characteristics and meticulously and expertly exploit them to create competitive city brand personalities.

The interview findings also suggest that Gaborone does not have well researched specific characteristics or attributes that might be used as a competitive advantage. Again Gaborone is unfortunately hamstrung by centralism. Unlike semi-autonomous cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Cape Town, the city of Gaborone is not empowered to take responsibility of its own development. Unluckily for Gaborone, its governance is completely centralized.

However, the findings positively revealed that all five respondents thought that Gaborone is blessed with peace and tranquility, peace and security, and investment opportunities. Indeed the mentioned elements can be accentuated to brand Gaborone as a competitive modern city brand. However, it is important to note that elements alone are simply appetizers and are not the main ingredients of branding. Forty percent (40%) of the interviewees said peace and tranquility are the right elements to brand Gaborone; twenty percent (20%) indicated peace and security are the bases that Gaborone can use to brand itself; twenty percent (20%) thought that safety alone was non-negotiable; while the remaining twenty percent (20%) were convinced that a combination of safety and investment friendly policies were sound characteristics needed to brand the city of Gaborone. The referred responses show that almost all responses lean towards peace and safety. This again validates the assertion by The Guardian (2014) that “the improving crime rate” helped Los Angeles to the top of the 2014 Guardian Cities brand barometer. A safe environment is good for students, visitors, local community and more essentially for investors. For instance, China has special economic zones (SEZ) in cities that have their own investment and tax policies. Similarly, the city of Cape of Town positions itself not only as a visitor friendly city but investor friendly city as well. The evidence shows that investment friendly policies are vital in helping cities to brand themselves. Table 4.3 captures the actual responses on which characteristics Gaborone can use to brand itself.

Table 4. 3: “What characteristics can be used in branding Gaborone”?

Category	Code	Quote to support category creation	Comment
Gaborone branding characteristics	Peace and tranquility	“Gaborone and Botswana by extension is a peaceful city. Batswana are warm and friendly and Gaborone can leverage the peaceful environment to brand itself”	Gaborone as a city has an advantage of being free of crime
	Peace and security	“Gaborone can use peace and security. However, peace and security on their own are neither services nor products; they just provide a supportive and enabling environment. People don’t come for peace. For example, Melbourne is peaceful but people do come for other things i.e. the Melbourne Cricket Ground”	Safe and secure environment is good for the city but coupled with attractions
	Peace and tranquility	“Gaborone is a modern cosmopolitan city with peace as its strategic advantage. Gaborone has zero chances of mugging, terrorism and uncontrollable criminal activities”	The city is a safe place where people can visit and stay
	Safety	“The city can use safety simply because safety is the cog in city branding.	Batswana prefer secure environment for people to visit the

		Secondly, people (Batswana) in Gaborone are hospitable, courteous and the country is stable politically”	city
	Safety and investment	“Gaborone is safe unlike other cities in neighbouring countries i.e. Johannesburg. Again there are liberal economic policies making it a good place to invest in”	People can open businesses in safe places

4.2.4 “Why should Gaborone use the selected characteristics to brand itself”?

Cities around the world justify the decisions they make when choosing certain characteristics to brand themselves. In personal branding, individuals select certain characteristics about themselves that they sometimes commercially exploit to make a living. Likewise, cities select certain characteristics or elements that can brand them. Selecting those characteristics requires consultation and participation of all relevant stakeholders. City characteristics are the pillars that distinguish the city from others; make the city different; and are the unique strengths that the city exploits in order to compete with other cities. The characteristics help to distinguish the city from other competing cities provided there is consistency in these characteristics. In branding, consistency is a competitive advantage and it should be closely guarded.

The interview findings also point out that all the respondents believed that using the characteristics mentioned will give Gaborone a competitive advantage. For example, the respondents emphasized that Gaborone should use peace and tranquility as its competitive advantage. They argued that a peaceful environment is an enabler for students, tourists, and for immigration. Peaceful cities are more competitive than cities with many incidents of crime. For example, Michael (2014) says that crime in Rio de

Janeiro discourages people from going to the city. It should be noted, however, that peace with nothing for visitors, investors and students is also not economically beneficial.

A peaceful environment prepares the ground for city branding. Good schools, good investment policies, good attractions and good facilities are required to improve a city's competitiveness. Peace without activities, facilities and attractions is pointless. Sadly, Gaborone falls into this unenviable category. Gaborone does not have world class man-made or natural attractions that can lure tourists, investors and students. For instance, low ranking tertiary institutions discourage students from high income countries from studying in Botswana. For example, the University of Botswana (UB) in Gaborone offers Master of Business Administration (MBA) for two and half years at a cost of BWP76 000. But just across the border in Mafikeng, South Africa, the School of Business and Governance at North West University (NWU) offers the same programme for two years at a cost of ZAR90 000. Using the average exchange rate of the years 2016 and 2017 which is BWP1= ZAR1.3, it means the UB programme is expensive as it costs ZAR98 800 and takes longer. This means that the business school at NWU, which offers an internationally accredited Association of MBAs (AMBA) MBA, gives NWU a competitive advantage, and by default gives Mafikeng a head start compared to Gaborone. A prospective student will choose a school that has gone through a thorough and rigorous process for international accreditation. Therefore, this highlights the fact that peace alone is not enough for city branding purposes.

The respondents to this study believe that Gaborone should use peace and safety to create a sense of belonging in the city. A safe and tolerant environment is an asset for the city; it creates a welcoming and homely atmosphere for visitors, students and investors. Safety does not only mean lack of crime but also refers to the absence of ills such xenophobia, racism, tribalism or any other circumstance that may cause anxiety or discomfort to the visitors. Policy changes such as a sudden introduction of strict visa requirements may unsettle students, visitors and investors. Investors prefer certainty but the absence of it causes jitters in the market. For example, the continuous assessments by rating agencies on the South African economy in 2016 and throughout

2017 caused uncertainty and capital flight and investors are hesitant to invest in an economy that is just above junk status. In fact, Fitch and Standard & Poor's downgraded South Africa into sub-investment or junk status in the first quarter of 2017. Only Moody's from the three big credit rating agencies did not junk South Africa. The cities in South Africa are by extension affected. It is therefore important that cities have a broader meaning of safety and security.

Gaborone however, is doing very well when it comes to peace and safe environment. Gaborone does not experience high incidents of violent crime as compared to a city like Johannesburg in South Africa. The city of Gaborone enjoys policy certainty, stable currency and economy, and low labour unrest. It does not have any reported cases of xenophobia and other associated kinds of discrimination and this is a characteristic that the city should use to brand itself. Table 4.4 shows the answers that were given by respondents on why the city of Gaborone should use the given characteristics.

Table 4. 4: “Why should Gaborone use the identified characteristics to brand itself”?

Category	Code	Quote to support category creation	Comment
Characteristics justification	Comparative advantage	“Gaborone should use peace and tranquility because that is its comparative advantage”	The city should emphasize what works in its favour
	Sense of belonging	“Safety and peace result in a homely environment and in a sense of belonging. Safety is an asset for any city brand. Los Angeles has greatly improved that and gone up in cities’ competitiveness index”	Safe places are preferable to both citizens and visitors and increase competitiveness
	Competitive strengths	“The city has to use safety and peace as they are the city’s strengths. Places select what works and then consistently provide that”	Gaborone should stick to what works for it to compete
	Competitive advantage and uniqueness	“The characteristics chosen give the city a competitive advantage and will make Gaborone unique”	Differentiation can be attained through the ability to stand out

4.2.5 “What are the benefits of branding the city of Gaborone”?

The literature review in Chapter Two shows that branding a city is a worthwhile exercise. City branding brings immeasurable benefits if done correctly. Good examples can be cited of cities that have had spectacular improvements in their competitiveness

after branding. London, Melbourne and Hong Kong are examples of cities that have grown in visitor numbers and as recipients of foreign direct investment because they got the fundamentals of city branding right. City branding brings different benefits to different cities depending on the city's positioning. For example, London is the world's leading financial capital and Hong Kong is known for trade. Cities should have brands that are well-researched and consistent and known by all stakeholders. City branding gives residents a sense of pride, helps guide city development or urban renaissance, improves quality of services, promotes the city's activities and attractions, gives the city an integrated identity and has potential for attracting investment.

Branding the city of Gaborone will help it to enjoy numerous benefits. Forty percent (40%) of the interview respondents in this study said branding Gaborone would improve the city's brand equity; forty percent (40%) said the city would experience value addition if branded; twenty percent (20%) were of the opinion that branding Gaborone would make the city identifiable among its peers.

Branding a city in many cases has resulted in the improvement of the city's brand equity. Brand equity is all about the value that customers attach to the brand. This value is based on the customers' perceptions on what the brand can do for them. Cities do not create brand equity but the consistent and constant rendering of services attach value to both tangible and intangible services. Customers' perception towards the services is the beginning of brand equity. Good brand equity is built over a long period of time after the consistency in delivering services and products. Cities as well are no exceptions. The brand equity of every city can only soar if all sectors of the economy in the city and all stakeholders play their roles in consistently rendering exceptional and value adding services. This ranges from attractions, accommodation facilities, entry points, restaurants, immigration, police, banks, medical facilities and so forth.

Sadly, Gaborone is well known for lukewarm services both in the public and private sectors. Long queues at entry points, banks, retailers, municipal offices are very common in Gaborone. For Gaborone to kick start branding initiatives it has to improve a lot of things including the mentioned shortcomings. Gaborone cannot have high value

brand equity whilst it still renders mediocre services. Cities are aggressively competing to be at the top and like fishes in an aquarium those who are weak will be swallowed. Gaborone is no exception. The city must have a wide ranging consultative meeting with its stakeholders to improve service delivery and product quality. If the city addresses all its shortcomings and brands itself, its brand equity should improve as well. Strong brand equity can stand the test of time even when circumstances are tough; and it simplifies choices for customers.

Branding the city of Gaborone may result in value addition for the city and surrounding areas. If Gaborone is branded, its standing may definitely rise because people's perception would be correctly influenced by the city brand communication. An unbranded city does not know its value until it is branded and people start to look at it through different lenses. The perceived value of a place tends to improve when it is associated with a particular image or identity. A well branded city communicates quality, status, a certain reputation and city-specific perceptions. It might be safe to say Gaborone will have an upward swing in value if it is branded. Value addition will only happen when Gaborone gives customers good experiences and memories and consistently responds to customers' needs, wants and expectations as demonstrated by Holt *et al.* (2004: 70).

A successful city tends to empower nearby places economically. For example, places such as Watford, Harrow, and Harlow benefit immensely from their physical proximity to London. By the same token, branding Gaborone would improve the city's surrounding areas economically. Places such as Mochudi, Ramotswa, Tlokweng and Molepolole would benefit from being in the vicinity of a well branded Gaborone. These places could piggyback on the success of a branded Gaborone and open new enterprises, engage in cultural renaissance, develop a supply chain, and embark on infrastructural improvements. Places in the periphery of a branded city or place are always recipients of trickle down advantages. It is envisaged that places around Gaborone would also see the benefits of being economically and socio-culturally linked to a branded city.

The findings of this study showed that branding Gaborone would result in easy identification of the city. This confirms the assertions of Kavaratzis (2004:62), Morrison and Anderson (2002:16) and Risitano (2005:4) that city branding is a conscious process of having a “unique and desired identity” or a process of “developing a unique identity and personality that is different from competing destinations”. Without a doubt branding gives a city a competitive identity. It makes the city known and it gets it registered in the customers’ minds. A city that does not have an identity is virtually unknown and cannot be marketed. Cities like Paris, New York, Tokyo, Milan, and Barcelona have identities that benefit their competitiveness. Paris is known for romance and ambience; New York for energy; Milan for fashion; and Barcelona for the Cataluña culture. Due to branding, the above elements have reinforced the identities of these cities. Identity is a distinguishing feature of a city and helps it to uniquely present itself to its audience.

Gaborone, sadly, falls into the unwelcome category of cities that are virtually unknown. A city identity that exudes confidence, energy, value and memories makes the city competitive. A specific identity and theme would arguably make Gaborone competitive. Branding the city of Gaborone may further well position it and make it a springboard for entrepreneurship and new industries. A city identity comes from the skillful packaging of its elements for differentiation purposes. Differentiation sells as it caters for a particular segment or niche. As the WTO (2009:7) puts it, branding is the “best psychological vehicle for delivering the meaning”. Table 4.5 below shows the responses that were provided by respondents when asked about the potential benefits of branding Gaborone and Botswana at large. The following section will discuss the themes that emerged from the interview responses in this study.

Table 4. 5: “What are the benefits of branding the city of Gaborone”?

Category	Code	Quote to support category creation	Comment
Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Gaborone brand equity	“Indeed the benefits are immense. Branding the city will create jobs but most importantly branding Gaborone will improve the city’s brand equity”	Branding can bring many improvements and shape perceptions about Gaborone
	Value addition	“Of course yes. If Gaborone is branded there will be addition of perceived value to the city and its periphery”	This can mean being able to compete because of branding
	Value addition	“Every place or city that brands itself will have enduring benefits. If Gaborone is branded there will be value addition to the city and surrounding places. And there can be supply chain improvement”	This can mean being able to compete because of branding
	Easy identification	“For Gaborone the benefits will be massive; the city will have a known identity with a theme. Again branding the city can act as a springboard for entrepreneurship and new industries”	If a city is not branded it is basically unknown. However, branding cities may re-invigorate other economic sectors
	Competitiveness	“Yes. Gaborone will be competitively unique due to correct packaging of its	Means grouping all that the city has to help the city known and compete

		characteristics. And there is a possibility of other places nearest to Gaborone piggy-backing”	effectively.
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The following section shows all responses from all participants for all the questions.

4.3 Detailed responses from interview questions

This section discusses responses to the questions that the participants of this study were asked. The questions were asked in the order they appear in the **addendum**. For trustworthiness purposes, the same setting was adopted for all the interviews i.e. interviews were conducted at the interviewee’s work place and recorded using a tape recorder. Furthermore, member checking was done to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Table 4.6 reflects all responses that were provided by the respondents during interview sessions.

Table 4. 6: Detailed responses for interview questions

RESPONDENT 1	Responses to interview questions
Q1. Branding as beneficial exercise to Gaborone	Yes, it results in unique selling proposition
Q2. Performances of branded cities	They have more resources and have correct marketing strategies
Q3. Gaborone branding characteristics	Peace and tranquility
Q4. Characteristics justification	Due to their comparative advantages
Q5. Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Employment and will improve Gaborone’s brand equity
RESPONDENT 2	
Q1. Branding as beneficial exercise to Gaborone	Yes, but for what purpose?
Q2. Performances of branded cities	Due to their association with particular element i.e. Cape Town has Robben Island, Cape Point , Table Mountain etc.

Q3. Gaborone branding characteristics	Peace and security. But the two are neither product nor services; they just provide supportive and enabling environment for a city's success
Q4. Characteristics justification	None
Q5. Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Yes, because it will add perceived value to Gaborone and its periphery
RESPONDENT 3	
Q1. Branding as beneficial exercise to Gaborone	Yes, due to multiplier effect and potential for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth
Q2. Performances of branded cities	They have better facilities, world-class attractions and information accessibility
Q3. Gaborone branding characteristics	Peace and tranquility
Q4. Characteristics justification	Safety and peace which result in a sense of belonging
Q5. Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Value addition and supply chain improvement
RESPONDENT 4	
Q1. Branding as beneficial exercise to Gaborone	Yes, for the city to be known for a particular competitive character
Q2. Performances of branded cities	They have packaged their characteristics/elements competitively; the way they present themselves to the audience, and because they have an identity
Q3. Gaborone branding characteristics	Safety (a key cog in city branding), warmth, friendliness, political stability and courtesy
Q4. Characteristics justification	Because they are Gaborone's competitive strengths
Q5. Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Gaborone will have a known identity with a theme. Can be springboard for entrepreneurship and new industries
RESPONDENT 5	
Q1. Branding as beneficial exercise to Gaborone	Yes, for cities to have existential expression

Q2. Performances of branded cities	They have pronounced identities and have proper and patriotic media coverage
Q3. Gaborone branding characteristics	Safety and growing place with strong economy to invest in
Q4. Characteristics justification	They give Gaborone a competitive advantage and make the city unique
Q5. Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Gaborone will be competitively unique due to correct packaging of its elements

The first question asked the participants whether branding Gaborone would be a beneficial exercise. Four of the five respondents believed that branding Gaborone would result in a unique selling proposition. The remaining respondent was undecided. A unique selling proposition essentially means the ability to be different from your rivals due to what you have and what you do that distinguishes you from your rivals. It is therefore safe to say that the respondents overwhelmingly believed that branding Gaborone would be a beneficial exercise. The responses leaned towards differentiation, uniqueness in presentation, unique existential expression and competitiveness. Consequently, unique selling proposition emerged as the central theme. The emergence of this theme confirms the work of Keller and Lehmann (2005:8) who state that the benefit of branding is the ability of the city to differentiate its products and services. Indeed branding Gaborone would benefit the city. In supporting this theme one of the respondents answered as follows:

“There are a number of benefits to city branding. The most critical of the benefits is the city’s unique selling proposition. Unique selling proposition can be due to infrastructure, political stability, and peace and tranquility or what you are associated with. Branding a city is like someone who walks into a club and lightens up the whole club with her attire, her own style and her confidence; she has her own unique persona. She is unique and branding does that to a city” (Q1: Respondent #1).

The unique selling proposition should always be anchored on the city's strong points. These could be the weather, affordability, good transport network, scenery, safety and security and diverse tourist attractions. Michael (2014) and Prophet (2006:2) emphasize this by saying London's uniqueness is based on its image as Europe's financial capital and Las Vegas uses entertainment as a unique selling proposition. Again this theme confirms the work of Clark *et al.* (2011:3) who say branding gives a city uniqueness based on what it excels at or does best. For instance, the authors give an example of Barcelona which uses design and architecture as a unique selling proposition. Branding the city of Gaborone would also give it a unique selling proposition. But the question that remains, what is that would make Gaborone unique? Or what does Gaborone have that can result in branding or giving it a unique selling proposition? Or what potential does Gaborone have? Gaborone is the headquarters of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and headquarters of the Diamond Trading Company (DTC) making the city a hub for diamond dealers (buyers and sellers). Ideally it would make sense if Gaborone could consider branding itself as more of a business or trade hub. This would arguably give the city a unique selling proposition but the city then has to work hard on other fundamentals such as roads, ease of doing business, telecom infrastructure and prices *et cetera*.

The second central idea or theme that surfaced from this study is that branded cities surpass unbranded cities like Gaborone due to the city brand identity association with the city's characteristics. City characteristics or elements include culture, climate, facilities, attractions, safety *et cetera*. For branded cities good media coverage and marketing strategies are reasons for their success. Furthermore, other respondents cited facilities and attractions as elements that help successful city brands to compete. However, the main theme appeared to be the city's brand identity association with the city's characteristics or elements. This confirms the work of Michael (2014) and Salman (2008) who believe that cities are competitive because the visitors associate them with certain elements. For example, Salman (2008) talks about Paris' ambience and romance and this has always been the nucleus of Paris competitiveness. Clark *et al.* (2011:3) again emphasize how Barcelona is associated with design and architecture and in the process making the city competitive.

Almost all successful city brands have been able to successfully promote themselves using all available media. These cities continuously learn and adapt by using the medium that the customers prefer. For example, nowadays cities have Twitter, Instagram, Facebook as well as Pinterest accounts. By doing this cities are responding to customer preferences and are being present in all channels or touch points. And more importantly, association with a city's characteristics helps a city to compete as evidenced by Paris' association with Eiffel Tower and Cape Town with its weather together with Robben Island and Table Mountain. This was endorsed by one respondent who said:

“Successful cities have identities and elements that the city brand is anchored on. For example, London has Wembley, the Trafalgar Square and Cape Town has the Cape Point, Robben Island and Manchester has Manchester United and Melbourne has the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Sometimes things like weather, innovation may be used to increase a city brand's performance” (Q2: Respondent #2).

As mentioned earlier in this study, cities like Melbourne and London have well researched and focused marketing and communications plans. Cities use events, like the Olympics, Commonwealth Games (i.e. Manchester in 2002), expos, indabas and trade shows to market themselves. For instance, the Cape Town annual International Jazz Festival and Table Mountain are used to market the city *ad infinitum*. Cities that do not have strategic marketing plans will never make any substantive progress whatsoever. City marketing is like a light amid darkness; it connects the city to the audience, and is the “thermometer” that gauges the audience's reaction to the communicated messages. Marketing is made effective when accompanied by correct content for a specific target audience. Every stakeholder in the city is a marketer and should have a marketing toolkit. Marketing a city and harnessing its characteristics is central to its continued success and as such the emergence of this theme (brand identity association with city's characteristics) is observed as maybe accurate.

Thirdly, the theme that emerged when respondents were asked about best characteristics to brand Gaborone was peace and security. Peace and security basically mean a friendly and safe place to study, invest, visit and reside in. All the respondents agreed that peace and security should be used to brand Gaborone. Peace and security or safety provides an enabling environment for students, for visitors, for residents and for investors to do whatever they wish to do. This finding confirms Michael's (2014) assertion that tourists prefer places where their personal safety is guaranteed. The Guardian (2014) newspaper gives an example of Los Angeles which topped the list of the most powerful city brands because it reduced crime rate. In November 2015, Paris in France was rocked by coordinated terrorist attacks and the city of Nice (again in France) in July 2016 was again another victim of terrorist attacks on Bastille Day. More recently, in May 2017 Manchester was rocked by terrorist attacks during a music festival. The two French cities experienced a drop in visitor numbers due to the customers' fear for their lives. There were many cancellations and lost revenue because of the perceived risk. Manchester may experience the same.

On the other hand, a friendly, safe and peaceful environment is a vital ingredient for city branding. Cities like Dubai are very safe for visitors. Proper security gives customers a piece of mind and may lead to repeat business. The researcher believes that a safe and secure city should outcompete and out-stamina its rivals and the city of Gaborone would do well to use this characteristic to brand itself. As mentioned earlier Los Angeles rose to the top of the most powerful city brands in 2014 according to The Guardian newspaper because of its concerted effort in crime reduction. In fact one of the respondents cited this as follows:

"Gaborone is a modern cosmopolitan city with peace as its strategic advantage. Gaborone virtually has zero chances of mugging, terrorism and other silly uncontrollable criminal activities unlike a city like Johannesburg. In Johannesburg an electric fence is a must have" (Q3: Respondent #3).

The fourth theme that emerged was that Gaborone should use the selected branding characteristics to gain competitiveness. Every city meticulously researches, analyzes and selects the appropriate characteristics to gain a competitive advantage. Competitiveness in simple terms refers to performing better than competitors. Basically, every characteristic chosen is meant to enhance a city's ability to compete intelligently and robustly and this is what came out from the interviews. Selecting characteristics for branding is a wide ranging exercise that involves all stakeholders for buy-in at the end. There is no successful city brand without stakeholder involvement as corroborated by Bhat (2009:74), Linh (2012:19) and the WTO (2009:57). Characteristics selected should dovetail with the city's value system, residents' culture and be the perpetuation of the good that a city can offer. Correctly selected characteristics make a city ultra-competitive and unique. Cape Town is a very perfect example of a city that has good characteristics for competitive advantage. The Huffington Post (2014) says Cape Town has boosted its competitiveness by packaging its gardens, beaches, and Mediterranean climate exceptionally well. The respondents in this study unanimously agreed that the city of Gaborone should use these characteristics for competitiveness or as a source of competitive advantage. This was confirmed by one respondent who indicated that:

"Yes. Gaborone should use peace and security because the two give Gaborone a competitive edge. Safety and peace result in a homely environment and in a sense of belonging. Safety is an asset for any city brand" (Q4: Respondent #2).

Finally, the respondents unanimously agreed that branding Gaborone would enhance its brand equity. Brand equity refers to any commercial value of a brand apart from money. Brand equity sums up expectations and associations that stakeholders have about the place based on their experiences, perceptions and communications over time. Branding Gaborone would arguably see value addition, a known competitive identity due to the correct packaging of its characteristics. Positive interactions and perceptions about the city of Gaborone would definitely enhance the city's brand equity. This theme dovetails with Mpalo's (2005:18) reasoning that branding increases the value of the city. Linh (2012: 15), Baker (2007: 40) and Keller and Lehmann (2005:1) also concur that

branding influences peoples' perceptions and attachment to the brand. Communicating what the city of Gaborone is able to offer would immensely improve Gaborone's brand equity. This assertion was again confirmed by one respondent who indicated that:

"Indeed the benefits of branding Gaborone are immense. Branding the city will create jobs. But most importantly branding Gaborone will improve the city's brand equity" (Q5: Respondent #1).

Other respondents also indicated that:

"Of course there will be benefits. If Gaborone is branded there will be addition of perceived value to the city and its periphery or surrounding areas" (Q5: Respondents #2 and #3).

Value addition simply refers to adding features to a product or service to increase its market positioning. Alternatively, it may mean what customers in their minds assume to be the value or worth of a service, product or place. Positioning essentially refers to customers having positive affinity about a brand. It can be safely argued that perceived value addition can be merged into one theme *viz*, brand equity. Branding a city undoubtedly influences the customers' perceptions about the city as indicated previously. Branding gives a city a unique identity, a strong image, a good reputation and ultimately enhances its brand equity. Even in this study, brand equity enhancement was the central theme that emerged. Gaborone would benefit from branding because the branding process would arguably enhance its brand equity. The following section reveals the core themes that emerged from the entire study.

4.5 Emerging themes

Except for Question 1, all answers from the respondents to the other four questions gravitated to one general theme. In Question 1 one respondent was unsure about his answer whereas the other four answers were unanimous. The discussion between researcher and the supervisor played a role in reducing researcher bias and improving

trustworthiness of the study. All interview responses (both hard copy and recorded) were discussed and analyzed until the core themes emerged. New categories did not emerge meaning that the data analysis was basically saturated.

Clearly from the study five major themes emerged. Firstly, the respondents believed that branding the city of Gaborone would be a beneficial undertaking as it would give the city a unique selling proposition. The answers that were given centred around a unique selling proposition as a central theme. The second theme that emerged was that cities such London and Paris were competitive because of their identities' characteristics. Peace and security emerged as the third theme. All the respondents' unanimously said Gaborone should use peace and security to brand itself. Competitiveness emerged as the fourth theme. Here the respondents argued that peace and security could give the city of Gaborone a competitive advantage. The final theme that emerged is brand equity enhancement. All the respondents said branding the city would result in brand equity enhancement for the city of Gaborone. Table 4.7 below shows the emerged central themes of the study or saturation coding.

Table 4. 7: Emerged themes

QUESTION 1		
Category	Central theme	Interviewee
Branding as beneficial exercise to Gaborone	Unique selling proposition	1, 2, 4 & 5
	Purpose is unsure	3
QUESTION 2		
Performance of branded cities	City brand identity association with city characteristics	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
QUESTION 3		
Gaborone branding characteristics	Peace and security	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
QUESTION 4		
Characteristics justification	Competitive advantage	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
QUESTION 5		
Branding benefits for Gaborone and Botswana	Brand equity enhancement	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

4.6 Conclusion

The above section discussed the findings of this study and the subsequent themes that emerged from the discussion. It has been revealed that cities do benefit immensely from being branded. Branded cities tend to outperform unbranded cities because they have good marketing strategies and are boosted by their association with some of their competitive characteristics. The findings showed that branding Gaborone would improve its competitiveness as it would have an existential expression like other brand cities. The findings also showed that Gaborone could use elements such as peace and security and investment friendly policies to become a competitive and unique city. Finally, five major themes emerged that Gaborone can use as a possible framework for its branding efforts. Branding Gaborone would give the city a unique selling proposition due to characteristics it may select to use and give it a sound idea on how to market itself. The city should use peace and security as the core characteristic for branding competitiveness and brand equity enhancement.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this study by underscoring the findings. The conclusion also re-emphasizes the importance of this study and highlights its possible limitations. Finally, this chapter based on the findings will offer recommendations that can be the basis of further research in the area of city branding.

5.2 Discussion of key findings

It was important to conduct this study in order to explore the possibility of Gaborone becoming a well branded city. This study has shown that cities all over the world have been making concerted efforts to brand themselves regardless of whether they are in developing countries or developed countries. Branding efforts have made cities such as Paris, Melbourne and New York known around the world and this has aided their competitiveness. In developing countries or emerging markets it seems there is no appetite or interest in the concept of city branding. This is confirmed by limited literature or examples of branded cities in emerging markets. Literature on city branding is predominantly about cities in developed countries specifically in North America and Europe. Sadly, the city of Gaborone is amongst cities that are not branded and as such do not have an identity. Gaborone's lack of brand identity compromises its ability to compete. Literature shows that the lack of brand identity can become an impediment to competitiveness. Therefore this study sought to underscore the importance of branding Gaborone so that it can become competitive.

Literature as well as the findings of this study shows that city branding is beneficial. Branding a city has been found to have the potential of enhancing its brand equity. Branded cities remain in the customers' minds unlike unbranded cities. Branding a city gives it a unique selling proposition due to its differentiated identity. It helps the city to transition from an ordinarily unknown city to a city that is known for a unique identity or proposition. Indeed this was confirmed by the majority of respondents in this study. It is clear from this study that Gaborone should be branded to have a unique selling

proposition. Branded places stay in the customer's mind for a long time compared to unbranded places. That is why it is important to brand Gaborone so that it can be remembered by current and prospective visitors for a long time. The respondents of this study also felt that it would be beneficial to brand Gaborone in order to increase its potential for commercial growth and competitiveness.

Literature shows that branded cities competitively overshadow unbranded cities because of their unique characteristics and landmarks. For example, the city of Cape Town is known for Table Mountain and Paris for the Eiffel Tower. A city can capitalize on its characteristics to leverage or position itself for competition with other cities. For example, Paris uses the visual representation of the Eiffel Tower in its marketing. City's elements may include weather, culture, natural attractions *et cetera*. Cities select these characteristics as anchors for their competitiveness after careful consideration. Unfortunately, Gaborone does not seem to have a landmark of any international stature that can be exploited for competitiveness. This may present a challenge to this city's branding efforts. However, De Beers has moved its Diamond Trading Company from London to Gaborone which Gaborone can use in its branding initiatives.

Branded cities again do better than unbranded cities because they have better marketing strategies and better resources. Better facilities and attractions have also enabled branded cities to perform better. Better or basic facilities may include clean ablution blocks at entry points, world class hotels and good transport systems. Unfortunately, some of Gaborone's facilities are below standard and unknown. The roads are bad, streets lights do not function and the transport system is not entirely satisfactory. Branded cities also package their elements into one encompassing identity and receive good media coverage because they send correct content through correct channels. For these reasons Gaborone should brand itself with well packaged elements like other well branded cities.

This study has also clearly revealed that Gaborone should use peace and security as a strategy to brand itself. As previously indicated, safety catapulted the city Los Angeles to the apex of cities' competitive index in the world. A place or city free of petty and violent crime is attractive to students, visitors and investors. Furthermore, a city that is

not susceptible to terrorist attacks can be a favourite to customers. Fortunately, the city of Gaborone has a good safety record that can be used as basis to launch its branding efforts. As mentioned by one respondent, Gaborone is a “cosmopolitan city with peace as its strategic advantage”. Results from this empirical study show that peace and security could enhance Gaborone as a brand.

However, peace and security alone are not the only characteristics that attract visitors. Instead peace and security are just enablers. The city of Gaborone should be creative and develop man-made attractions such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.

Finally, the study has revealed that branding Gaborone would definitely enhance its brand equity. Branded cities have huge brand equity due to what they are known for and what they offer. As it stands Gaborone does not have any brand equity whatsoever because in the customer's minds it is not known. This therefore accentuates the need for the city of Gaborone to brand itself. A hugely known brand equity can be attractive to investors and visitors and can have associations with international brands or multinationals. For instance, London has massive brand equity as demonstrated by a lot of financial institutions domiciled there. This is the major benefit of branding a city.

Branding Gaborone would add more value addition to the city and its periphery. There cannot be value addition if a city does not have an identity. A city identity tends to portray a certain image which may be helpful in addition of perceived value. Branded cities have perceived value and unbranded cities such as Gaborone do not. This arguably limits the city's growth. This therefore compels the city of Gaborone to brand itself and to take advantage of huge potential benefits.

5.3 Contribution of the study

This qualitative study has shown that city branding is an area of study that has not been fully explored in especially developing countries. The findings of this study will therefore inform city branding decision making in developing countries such as Botswana. This study has also demonstrated the benefits of city branding, especially from an emerging market perspective. It appears there is limited literature about city brand in emerging

markets especially in Africa. This study therefore has endeavoured to make a contribution to the limited literature about city branding in emerging markets.

Furthermore, it seems that this is the first study that has explored possible ways of branding Gaborone. As such this study may act as basis for Gaborone branding efforts.

5.4 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the study only had a small sample that in a way may be seen as less representative of a possible wider relevant population. The sample size was small due to the limited number of people who know and understand city branding. Therefore, judgement sampling was used in this regard. However, diversity-wise the study did fairly well. It included academics, creative directors and branding practitioners in the marketing industry albeit in Gaborone only.

Since the sample was small the study may fail the generalizability test. Furthermore, due to the insufficiency of relevant literature pertaining to city branding in emerging markets, the credibility of the study might be seen as not entirely satisfactory. The exclusion of policy makers or government departments in the study may also be seen as another blemish to the credibility of the study. In spite of the mentioned deficiencies of the study the insights are highly valuable and this obviously requires further study. This study was more like a tip of an iceberg in terms of branding cities like Gaborone in emerging markets.

5.5 Recommendations and further research

City branding according to Zukin (2014) started in the 1970s by the city of New York and followed by other cities around the world. City branding continued to be embraced by other cities in different continents especially during the liberalization era under former British premier Margaret Thatcher and former United States president Ronald Reagan. Cities had to be entrepreneurial to survive and that is how the concept of city branding gained traction. City branding gives a city an identity that is difficult to imitate. When cities brand themselves they want to have an existential expression and want to occupy a certain position in the customer's mind. This can be summed up by concluding that a

city with the afore-mentioned characteristics has a competitive brand identity. A huge number of cities mainly in developing or emerging markets have not enthusiastically embraced the city branding concept. Unfortunately, Gaborone as well has not done anything to have its own brand identity.

Cities that are branded are able to out-compete unbranded cities because they have strategic associations with elements found in their environments. They have better facilities and well managed attractions and have well-rounded and encompassing identities i.e. Manchester. Lack of identity renders a city uncompetitive because it is unknown. As mentioned earlier in this study successful city brands tend to have guiding documents. For example, Melbourne has its Three Year Strategic Plan 2012-2015 and Kuala Lumpur has its own Structure Plan 2020 (The city of Melbourne has since adopted a new strategic plan for 2015-2018 replacing the 2012-2015 plan). The researcher recommends that the city of Gaborone should seriously consider branding itself for competitiveness purposes. The findings of this study show that successful cities are those with identities. These identities are an offspring of strategic initiatives found in strategic documents. The researcher recommends that the city of Gaborone should develop a strategic plan pertaining to its own branding after a wide ranging stakeholder consultation process.

Gaborone should also improve the ease of setting, registering and operating a business. This policy should be cascaded from the national to the city level. Again, this is by extension a recommendation to national policy makers that cities such as Gaborone can start branding initiatives under conducive free market conditions and "federalism". Federalism gives cities autonomy in decision making. For example the City of Cape Town has its own Economic Growth Strategy. Semi-autonomy or complete autonomy gives the city authority on its developmental agenda. Unfortunately, Gaborone is still saddled with an albatross of being centrally controlled by the national government. This inhibits quick and smooth city decision making. The government of Botswana should consider partial or complete decentralization to enable cities such Francistown, Kasane, Maun as well as Gaborone to take control of their strategic developmental needs. It is prudent that the city of Gaborone should also improve its

infrastructure and service quality, and should reduce red tape, and upgrade the state of attractions and facilities.

It is important also to improve the quality of education particularly tertiary education. Places or cities like Cape Town have universities, such as the University of Cape Town, that offer good quality education which is an attraction for students from other places and countries to come and study in Cape Town. For instance, by end of 2016 six South African universities had the internationally recognized accreditation Association of MBAs (AMBA) which improves the standing of such universities internationally. However, in Botswana there is no higher institute of learning with such vital accreditation or any other internationally recognized accreditation. It is fair to suggest that institutes of higher learning should improve their quality of education so that foreign students can be attracted to these learning centres. The Botswana Qualifications Authority should be adequately capacitated to monitor the quality of education provided by education and training providers in Botswana.

Finally, this study appears to be the first one of its kind although it may have its own inadequacies. As mentioned earlier the small number of respondents might compromise the representativeness of the study. However, the researcher is convinced the study carries reasonable credibility because suitable respondents were selected. It is for this reason that the researcher recommends that further studies with different methodologies or approaches be conducted to further understand how Gaborone could be branded to become a competitive city brand.

5.6 Final conclusion

The study wanted to solicit ideas on how Gaborone as the capital city of the Republic of Botswana could be branded to become a competitive city brand. It can be reasonable to conclude that the respondents unanimously agree that the city of Gaborone has to be branded to be a competitive city brand. The study has revealed that branding Gaborone would be a very beneficial exercise as the city would have a unique selling proposition. Secondly, it also came out from the study that branded cities are competitive because their identities are associated with the cities' characteristics or elements. Furthermore,

this study has found out that cities around the world select certain characteristics and stick with them as chosen characteristics give cities competitive advantages i.e. this study showed that Gaborone should use peace and security as an anchor characteristic. Finally, the study has unveiled that if Gaborone is branded, its brand equity will be significantly enhanced in similar fashion to other branded cities.

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06 August 2016

Dear Participant

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN AN INTERVIEW

I am a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student in the School of Business & Governance at North West University (Mafikeng Campus), South Africa and I am conducting a research study under the supervision of Prof. JJ Prinsloo. My research is focusing on **possible ways that can be used to brand Gaborone to be a modern competitive city brand**. I therefore request to conduct an interview with you on this subject.

As a fellow citizen, your participation will assist me in answering the research questions and achieving the research objectives. I therefore, would kindly appreciate your help in participating in this study. Conducting the interview may take half an hour to an hour which is dependent on the follow up questions that might be raised. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If there are any other questions you prefer not to answer, you have a right to do so.

All the information that you will provide through your participation in this study will be kept confidential. Furthermore, you will not be identified in the thesis or in any report or publication based of this research. There are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.

If after receiving this letter, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participating, please feel free to contact Prof. JJ Prinsloo (Supervisor) at +27 18 3892387 or myself at l.sigwele@gmail.com or mobile at +267 72871947.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in my research.

Yours sincerely

Leungo Sigwele

RESEARCHER

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1. In your opinion, do you think branding Gaborone, or any city in Botswana is a beneficial exercise?
2. How do branded cities like Paris, London etc outperform unbranded cities like Gaborone?
3. What are the characteristics that Gaborone has that can be used to brand the city (Gaborone)?
4. Why would you specifically select and use those characteristics about Gaborone?
5. If Gaborone is branded, do you think there will be benefits for Gabs or even Botswana at large?