

**An Organisational Culture Framework in
support of Ecotourism
in Zimbabwe**

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degree Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management at the
Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University**

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Declaration

I, Hazvineyi Alliens Saurombe, hereby declare that the thesis titled *An Organisational Culture Framework in Support of Ecotourism in Zimbabwe*, submitted by me in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management at the North-West University, is my independent work, and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university. Where sources were consulted, these were referenced accordingly.

Signed: -----

Date:

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Abstract

Tourism (and its subsectors) is a primary source of economic development for developing countries. Third World economies, in particular, are known to have little else than their natural resources (ecotourism) to depend upon for their development. In Zimbabwe, which is a Third World economy, ecotourism, therefore, presents itself as a special area of study.

The concept of ecotourism is relatively new to Zimbabwe. Although the country can be said to have a well-established natural potential for ecotourism, it forms only a subsector of the mainstream tourism industry. In the past, the country enjoyed several significant benefits of ecotourism (both social and economic) but unfortunately these ceased to be realised, causing the performance of the country as one of the most prominent ecotourism destinations in Southern Africa to deteriorate.

The aim of this study is to resuscitate the performance of the ecotourism industry in Zimbabwe by incorporating an organisational culture in its ecotourism practices. Developing an organisational culture has been known to be instrumental in the success of several business organisations; therefore, the study proposes that the development of an organisational culture in ecotourism practice in Zimbabwe may turn around the currently unsatisfactory performance of ecotourism, and assist in achieving the desired levels of performance envisaged by the management/leadership of the tourism industry.

The literature review conducted established the elements that made up an organisational culture as well as ecotourism. These were then amalgamated in order to come up with an ecotourism organisational culture. The qualitative data collection methods of interviews (with a total of ten participants) and document analysis were used.

The findings indicated that those involved with the practice of ecotourism were aware of what an ecotourism organisational culture should comprise, since their responses corresponded with the information available in existing literature. There was, however, a marked non-compliance with this culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe (pointing to the lack of an organisational culture), which was found to hamper the optimal performance of ecotourism.

Strategies that could be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture were suggested, and, in conclusion, an organisational culture framework was proposed that should be supportive of ecotourism in Zimbabwe.

Key words: Ecotourism, organisational culture, economic development, ecotourism organisational culture, leadership, Southern Africa

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, the success or decline of several major companies has been attributed to these companies' organisational culture (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012a; Muratović, 2013; Ojo, 2012). In business, the remarkable and sustained success of some organisations has not only been determined by specific external conditions, but also by organisational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). Organisational culture is an essential factor influencing the analysis of organisations in various contexts (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). Dauber *et al.*, (2012) comment that the importance of organisational culture in establishing competitive advantage in business or its impact on organisational performance has and continues to be a subject of great interest to researchers, to the extent that previous and current works on the subject are abundant in available literature. This growing awareness of and interest in the importance of organisational culture have resulted in research proving that organisational culture affects every facet of an organisation.

The topic of organisational culture is relevant today because in business organisations it forms the basis of the competitive edge of a business, which is what distinguishes one organisation from another and ensures its continued existence and sustainability. According to Alvesson (2002), the organisational cultural dimension is central to all aspects of organisational life, and, even in organisations where cultural issues receive little explicit attention, people in these organisations continue to be guided by ideas, meanings and beliefs of a cultural or socially shared nature.

Several definitions of an "organisation" exist, but the researcher prefers the formal definition provided by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000) stating that an organisation is "a structure through which individuals cooperate systematically to conduct business".

In formulating a framework for the development of an organisational culture in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe, this thesis aims to integrate the elements of organisational culture with the elements of ecotourism, forming a theoretical base. In order to achieve this, an explanation of the two key subject fields, namely,

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organisational culture and ecotourism, and their distinguishing elements or variables, is important and will be discussed below.

1.2 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture is “among one of the most important variables determining a company’s success or failure, and highly successful companies have capitalized on the value that resides in developing and managing a unique organizational culture” (Azanzaa, Morianob & Molerob, 2013, p. 45). Muratović (2013, p. 61) mentions that “in the developed countries, in the subject of theory and practice of the organisation and its management, organisational culture is gaining in importance”. According to Ojo (2010, p. 2), a review of literature on the subject of organisational culture and corporate performance reveals that “there is a dearth of literature on it in developing countries”. This research shows that, on the contrary, there is no “dearth of literature” on organisational culture in ecotourism.

Different definitions of organisational culture can be found in the literature. Chegini (2010) considers organisational culture as representing the beliefs, values and practices that characterise an organisation, and that have a significant influence on the performance and long-term effectiveness of that organisation. Schimmoeller (2010, p. 126) describes organisational culture as “a common set of values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation which influences how people perceive, think, and act”, while Tsai (2011) mentions that organisational culture refers to the beliefs and values that have existed in an organisation for a long time, and to the beliefs of the staff and the value of their work that will influence their attitudes and behaviour.

The three definitions mentioned above stand out because they specifically underline the three key elements of organisational culture, namely, the shared norms, values, and beliefs of the members of an organisation that influence their behaviour.

1.2.1 Components of Organisational Culture

Figure 1 below shows the components of culture as displayed in the iceberg model, indicating that most of culture is not visible and is embedded in values and basic assumptions created by a society, community or organisation.

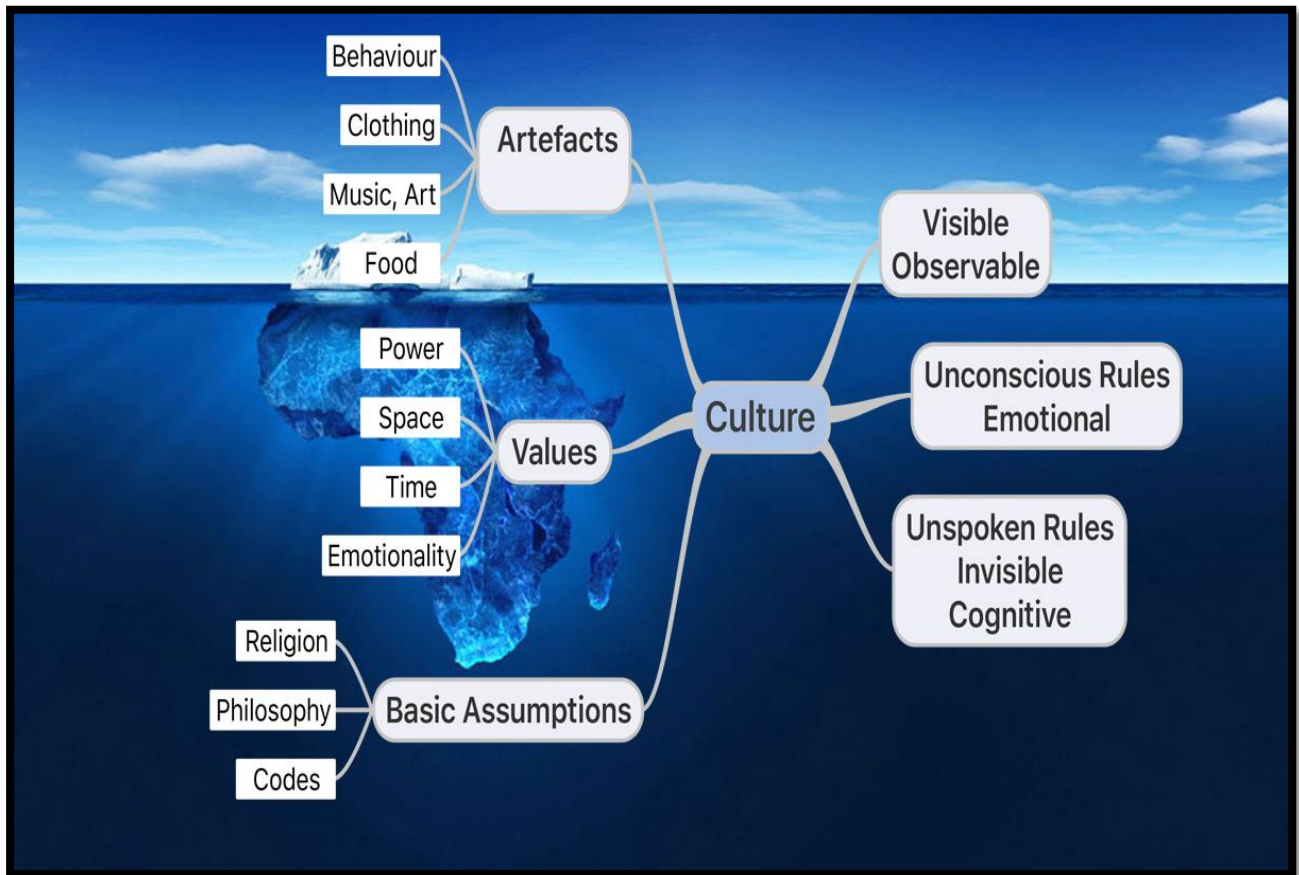


Figure 1: Components of culture.

Source: Reprinted from www.valuebasedmanagement.net on February 13, 2013.

Stoyko (2009) advises managers to develop an understanding of the elements of culture so as to avoid damaging an existent culture unknowingly. *Values, beliefs* and *norms* are believed to be the key elements that define corporate or organisational culture. Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) describe values as things that are important to organisations and that underpin decisions and behaviour. All organisations have values that influence the way employees behave in different situations, such as the way in which they treat customers, and the standards of performance and innovation they uphold.

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) explain further that values are the things an organisation considers most important with respect to its operations, its employees and its customers: these are the things an organisation holds most dear, strives towards and

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wants to protect at all costs. In the same vein, Oyserman (2002, p. 16151) asserts that “values are scripts or cultural ideas held in common by members of a group; the group’s social mind ... they are social agreements about what is right, good, to be cherished”. A value system is used as a reference by members to make decisions in the performance of their duties; therefore, values need to be integrated into every decision and strategy of the organisation to ensure cultural consistency and alignment, which will again inform and support organisational performance and competitiveness.

Beliefs are taken to mean assumptions that individuals hold about themselves, their customers, and their organisation, while norms are unwritten rules of behaviour that address such issues as how employees dress and interact (Flamholtz and Randle, 2012b). Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) further state that “norms help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs”.

1.2.2 Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a sub-segment of the tourism industry, and it has been singled out as the fastest growing tourism segment worldwide, growing at 20% to 25% each year (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2012a). In fact, *ecotourism has become one of the world’s major economic sectors with the capability of playing a significant role in the sustainable development in areas where nature attracts tourists* (Fennel, 2002, p. 12; Powell & Ham, 2008, p. 467).

Ecotourism, as defined by Ceballos-Lascurain (1996), is:

environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

Cosser (2013, p. 1) states that “ecotourism in particular, has significant practical value in developing countries where the needs of impoverished communities necessitate the need to capitalize on the growing tourism industry”. It aims to create viable and sustainable tourism opportunities and limit the impact of mainstream tourism activities on the environment while improving the lives of the local people. The

impact of mainstream tourism can include social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence and ecological degradation (Fien, Calder & White, 2010). Ecotourism is a market segment that Zimbabwe is attempting to penetrate, because, deducing from the above assertion made by Cosser (2013), it appears to have the potential for bringing about the much needed development that can alleviate the various economic problems faced by the populations living close to national parks. Southern African countries, such as South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, are endowed with a variety of natural and man-made tourist attractions as well as prime ecotourism destinations (mainly related to their abundant wildlife), and have actively taken up ecotourism.

1.2.3 Ecotourism in Zimbabwe

Ecotourism in Zimbabwe is a growing sector, and it is the latest trend in the mainstream tourism industry (Merand & Mouelhi, 2010). Learning about the impacts of tourism has led many people to seek more responsible holidays (Fien *et al.*, 2010) and to explore alternative forms of tourism, such as geotourism, pro-poor tourism, and green tourism.

According to Mawere and Mubaya (2012), ecotourism in Zimbabwe was first introduced under the Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in the mid-1980s to rural communities in the vicinity of national parks. CAMPFIRE is a programme designed to assist rural development and conservation. The programme involves the people who live in these communal areas, helping them to use wildlife as an important natural resource and manage the environment in sustainable and appropriate ways. Since the inception of this programme, many communities have begun to rely on an income from ecotourism, without which many indigenous people would suffer severe poverty. Ecotourism encompasses many activities, and in this thesis all these activities are taken into account, in other words, the ecotourism industry at large.

Ecotourism in Zimbabwe supports close on five million people (about 36% of the population) and is, therefore, a very important part of the country's mainstream tourism. There are about 33 known ecotourism centres in Zimbabwe, 10% of which are operating tourism ventures, such as hunting (Madzara & Yekeye, 2012). As shown in

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Figure 2 below, ecotourism is practised mostly in the peripheral areas of the country where almost five million people live on arid and semi-arid communal lands covering almost half of Zimbabwe. Reference needs to be made here to the statement by Ojo (2010, p. 3) that “corporate culture is a key to organisational performance”, because if organisational performance in the ecotourism sector is to be enhanced to such an extent that large projects can be expected from marginalised communities, then a supportive culture has to be developed. In addition, ecotourism, being one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry, should embrace as its ecotourism mission the promotion of sustainable tourism practices. Ecotourism focuses on many of the aspects which mass tourism neglects; hence, it has been called the future of tourism. With this in mind, the proposal made in this study is that the development of an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism could be a valuable contribution to theory and practice, creating a future for tourism in Zimbabwe.

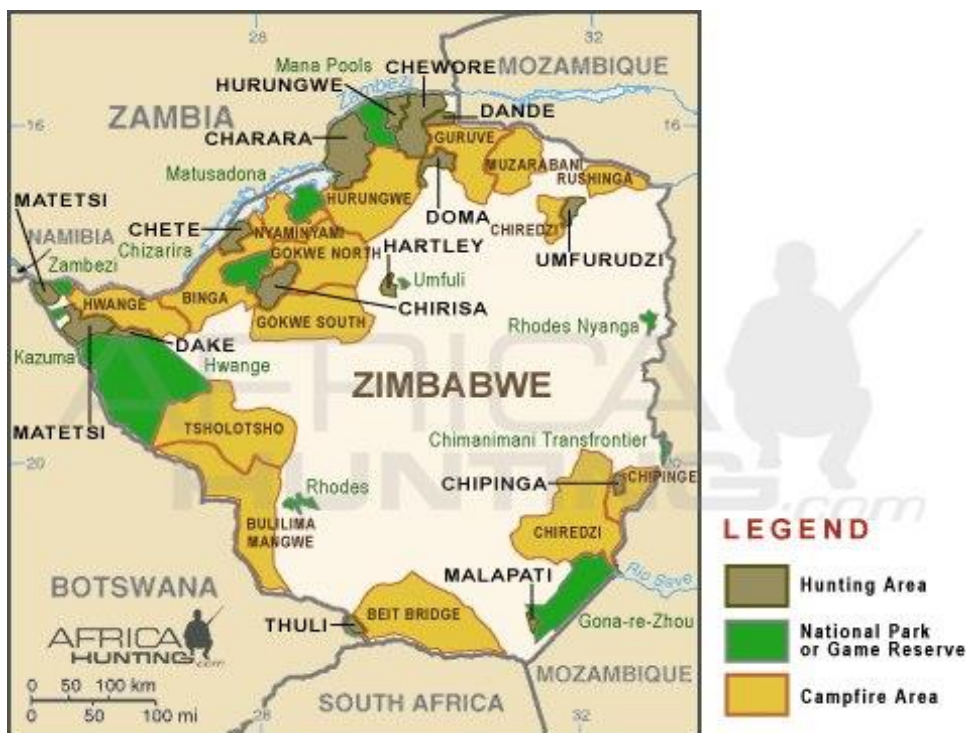


Figure 2. Map of Zimbabwe showing ecotourism areas.

Source: Reprinted from <http://www.facebook.com/CAMPFIREZIMBABWE> (n.d.) on 11/06/2014

1.2.4 Ecotourism Statistics

Pookaiyaudom (2012) remarks that a full understanding of ecotourism as a tourism product has not yet been reached; therefore, at present no global initiative exists for collecting ecotourism data. As far as can be gathered from the literature, the scale as well as the accuracy that is needed to collect precise data on the actual value of tourism seems to be out of reach (Stevens & Jansen, 2002). The available statistics on Zimbabwe were obtained from the CAMPFIRE projects mentioned later on in this research, and for the purposes of this research, these statistics will be used.

1.2.5 Elements of Ecotourism

According to Barna, Epure and Vasilescu (2011), Honey and Gilpin (2009), and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2006), the key elements of ecotourism, which distinguish it from other tourism operations (such as geotourism, pro-poor tourism, and responsible tourism) are that ecotourism:

- enforces ecological sustainability (nature conservation and protection), emphasises the need for planning and sustainable growth of the ecotourism sector, and seeks to ensure that its development does not exceed social and environmental carrying capacity;
- focuses on the natural environment (emphasises the lowest possible negative impact on the environment and on socio-cultural life);
- prioritises education and interpretation (an educational component that creates awareness about nature conservation, both among tourists and local communities. As pointed out by Stevens and Jansen, (2002) this education should focus on issues such as: the local ecology; the history and culture of the local people, and the role they have played in shaping their environment; the rules and regulations that are in force (if people understand their purpose, they are most likely to adhere to them); universal conservation issues; goods and services that are available from the host communities, and the importance of purchasing these locally; and culturally appropriate behaviour; and
- advocates local and regional benefits (supporting the well-being of local people, stressing local ownership and business opportunities for local people, especially in rural areas).

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By integrating the elements of an organisational culture (see paragraph 1.2.1) with the elements of ecotourism mentioned above, this research aims to develop an organisational culture framework in support of the ecotourism industry that, if implemented and lived (culture is lived because it is a way of life), will promote the necessary behaviours to improve ecotourism, in this case in the context of Zimbabwe. It is believed that if people associated with the ecotourism industry have a framework according to which they can carry out the mandate of ecotourism (that is, to focus on the natural environment, ecological sustainability, education and interpretation, and local and regional benefits), can be guided in their behaviour by the beliefs, values and norms of ecotourism, and can implement these beliefs, values and norms as part of their daily operational actions, then an organisational culture in support of ecotourism could be developed.

1.2.6 Contextualisation of the Thesis

As stated earlier, this thesis is about establishing organisational culture, in particular in terms of the ecotourism industry in Zimbabwe. The focus is on the way Zimbabwe should manage its ecotourism business in order to develop an operational culture in ecotourism based on living the beliefs, values and norms that support ecotourism, the goal being to realise an ecotourism culture in the operation of the ecotourism industry at all levels, whether they be strategic, business or operational.

1.2.7 Ecotourism Culture

Kassim and Yusof (n.d.) believe that organisational culture is a very important factor in effective business management, and they note that the management of ecotourism resorts, especially with regard to organisational culture, has received little attention in studies. Furthermore, Yusof, Fitri, Jamil, Said and Ali (2012, p. 417) mention that “the relationship between organisational cultures of ecotourism organisations and their performance has received little research interest”. According to these authors, not much is known about the influence of organisational culture, specifically in ecotourism performance. This research seeks to close this gap by researching organisational culture in the ecotourism sector, in particular in the context of Zimbabwe. In the ecotourism business, there is a need to develop a supportive organisational culture that could increase the attractiveness of destinations, attract more tourists, and

subsequently increase tourists' propensity to spend. Yusof *et al.*, (2012) refer to the conflicting views expressed in ecotourism studies in regard to what the best indicator is for good organisational performance. According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2004), ecotourism as a form of sustainable tourism should maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction, should ensure that tourists have meaningful experiences, should make them aware of sustainability issues, and should encourage them to practise sustainable tourism practices. Eraqi (2006) suggests that tourist perceptions and expectations of the attributes of a product or a service can be used as a tool for determining the quality of the product or service provided. Based on this input, the issue of meeting the needs of tourists is arguably critical for the survival of the ecotourism business. In ecotourism, as in any business, it is vital to build, maintain and manage good customer relationships. This principle is recognised in the following excerpt from a statement issued by the Botswana Tourism Organisation:

recreational experiences are difficult to evaluate prior to purchase, and as a result, word-of-mouth recommendation is particularly influential in tourists' choice of holiday destination. Visitor satisfaction is therefore vital to the continued economic sustainability of ecotourism operations.

(Botswana Tourism Organisation, 2002, p. 58)

The objective of establishing an operational organisational culture is, among other things, to deliver quality service to customers (ecotourists) and to ensure that they are satisfied enough to want to visit the destination repeatedly. In this way much needed foreign currency can be generated for the development of the local community.

1.3 STATEMENT OF STUDY PURPOSE

Zimbabwean tourism policy makers have declared their intention to make ecotourism a successful industry in Southern Africa. A few of the activities carried out to accomplish the envisaged improvement are the holding of conferences, the injection of considerable amounts of money, and the tabling of proposals to train and retrain employees. In spite of all that, says Muzvidziwa (2013), the country is experiencing low levels in terms of market demand for Zimbabwean ecotourist products, and stiff competition from other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries such as South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia. Against the background of all the above-

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mentioned activities that have been carried out (apparently with little success), this thesis represents a renewed attempt to turn Zimbabwean ecotourism into a success story in Southern Africa, this time through the development of an organisational culture that will strengthen the ecotourism sector. According to Ojo (2012, p. 3), “the development of an organisational culture has been instrumental in the success of several other organisations”; therefore, the researcher is of the conviction that the development of an organisational culture in the Zimbabwean ecotourism sector could produce positive results. With the aim of making the establishment of such an organisational culture possible, *this study will develop an operational organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe*. If this framework is implemented, it is believed that ecotourism performance in Zimbabwe will improve. It is important to consider the inclusion of the term “operational” in the purpose statement: an operational framework refers to a framework that will enable the operation of the ecotourism business through collectively implementing and living new values, norms and beliefs (organisational culture).

It should be noted that, as mentioned by Stoyko (2009, p. 4), “some time must pass and shared experience accumulate before a culture coalesces within a collective”. Positive results will therefore not be immediate. This is one of the reasons why most organisations fail in developing a new organisational culture when they want to implement changes in their values, norms and beliefs – it is not a “quick fix” solution to their problem of underperformance. It should also be noted that although operating organisations all have organisational cultures, their existing cultures might not support them in achieving their objectives.

1.3.1 Problem Statement

Ecotourism in Zimbabwe allows local communities be in control of the wildlife, flora and fauna in their area, and, in turn, to benefit economically. Sport hunters and ecotourists visit the communal areas to hunt a set quota of animals, or to track, observe and photograph wildlife. “These clients enjoy an experience encompassing notions of the wilderness and untamed landscapes, accompanied by quality service in the form of accommodation, cuisine and companionship” (Frost & Bond, 2008, p. 778).

In the delivery of ecotourism products and services, some scholars have noticed a discrepancy in quality. In this regard, Erdogan and Tosun (2009, p. 417) “equate poor ecotourism performance with the lack of a good culture within and among the service providers”. The behaviour, actions, and interactions of the members of an organisation emanate from the culture existing in that organisation, in other words from the way it conducts its daily business operations. This observation is in line with the statement of Lunenburg (2011, p. 1) that “organisational culture is the set of shared beliefs, values, and norms; and it therefore influences the way members [from top management down to the service personnel] think, feel, and behave”. Erdogan and Tosun (2009) are of the opinion that the absence of a specific organisational culture is actually the missing link that prevents organisations from achieving their missions. According to Muzvidziwa (2013), the country is currently experiencing low-level market demand for ecotourist products, with stiff competition coming from other SADC countries, despite the fact that Zimbabwe shares its natural resources with these countries, for instance in the form of trans-frontier parks. Geographically, these countries are located in the same region, and basically have the same climate. This discrepancy should not be permitted to occur. It is the researcher’s contention that if a desired ecotourism organisational culture is developed and fostered, ecotourism employees and local community members could be encouraged to think, act, and behave in support of ecotourism when they execute their ecotourism duties, leading to a successful national ecotourism industry over time. Lunenburg (2011) explains that the competencies and values of employees and their leaders, as reflected in the way work gets done on a daily basis, play a key role in determining the effectiveness and success of an organisation. Chiutsi, Mukoroverwa, Karigambe and Mudzengi (2011) mention that, in ecotourism, it is the local residents who provide authenticity and value to the ecotourism experience with their deep and privileged knowledge about their culture and the overall tourism resource base in the destination area, hence the need to incorporate them in decision making.

According to Kulvinskienė and Šeimienė (2009, p. 28), “scientists have proven that the development of an organisational culture in turn leads to organisational success”. If an organisational culture (together with all its components) is not developed, employees, in trying to meet the goals of the organisation, will not perform their work with honesty and integrity (Kelchner, 2013). As a result the ecotourism organisation’s reputation for quality service might be compromised, high volumes of

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tourists prepared to spend their money on ecotourism products might not be attracted, and the anticipated success of the organisation will not materialise.

Lunenburg (2011) mentions that every organisation has a culture that can significantly influence the attitudes and behaviours of that organisation's members. In the light of the discussion in this section, the following **problem statement** is formulated for this study: *Zimbabwe, an important ecotourism destination in Africa, is not performing as well as it could in terms of ecotourism, and the creation of an organisational culture in support of ecotourism should aid the country in improving its ecotourism stature.* Existing literature points to the importance of organisational culture in achieving organisational performance; however, the role that the elements of an ecotourism culture can play in creating an operational organisational culture, in particular in support of the ecotourism sector in Zimbabwe, have not been studied before.

1.3.2 Research Question

With reference to the problem statement made in section 1.3.1, the main question that this research seeks to answer is: What are the defining elements in an operational organisational culture framework that could support the ecotourism industry in Zimbabwe?

1.3.3 Research Sub-questions

The following sub-questions that support the main question and rationale of this study are also important:

1. What constitutes organisational culture and ecotourism?
2. How do members in Zimbabwe's ecotourism industry view and describe the elements of a desired ecotourism culture, and do they comply with this culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe?
3. How can the ecotourism industry and its members develop a desired organisational culture that supports the dimensions of sustainable ecotourism development in Zimbabwe?
4. How will the development of a supportive organisational culture in ecotourism enhance the economic performance of the ecotourism industry?

5. What strategies can be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture in support of establishing and institutionalising an operational ecotourism culture?

1.3.4 Justification of the Study

It has been proven that organisational culture is the remedy for organisations that want to develop themselves. Ojo (2012, p. 48), among several others, mentions that “organisational culture has an effect on the productivity level of an organisation in the sense that it influences employees’ behavior to work”. It is the input of an organisation’s employees that determines the productivity level of an organisation. Cosser (2013) is of the opinion that ecotourism in particular has a significant practical value in developing countries where the needs of poor communities necessitate the need to capitalise on the growing mainstream tourism industry. Bearing Cosser’s statement in mind, this study on Zimbabwe’s ecotourism industry has particular relevance. Zimbabwe’s population stands at 13,72 million people (World Bank, 2013). Of these, 68% live in the rural areas, are dependent on their close environment for food and shelter (Zimbabwe Demographics, 2013), and live on less than USD1,25 per day (World Bank Indicators, 2013), which is indicative of the high levels of poverty. From these statistics, it can be understood why more than half of Zimbabwe’s population is dependent on tourism, in particular ecotourism. As mentioned earlier on, one of the important goals of an ecotourism enterprise is to achieve benefits for the rural community in the surrounding areas; therefore, if a supportive and progressive ecotourism organisational culture that focuses on this goal is created for Zimbabwean ecotourism, and if the country manages its ecotourism well, then it could alleviate the plight of the country’s people.

1.3.5 Contribution of the Study

Since tourism (and ecotourism, being a subsector of mainstream tourism) is considered to be a driver of economic development, findings from this research will add to the existing body of knowledge on how Zimbabwean tourism policy makers can prioritise the development of ecotourism and make it successful. This research is timely in that it will drive urgent decision-making that is required for the country’s much needed economic recovery. In support of this, Makochekanwa (2013, p. 53) mentions that:

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a major policy implication which emanates from this study is that SADC countries can improve their economic growth performance, not only by investing in the traditional sources of growth such as investment in general physical and human capital, trade, and foreign direct investment, but also by strategically harnessing the economic contributions from the tourism industry in terms of its contributions to, among other things, employment, foreign exchange earnings, GDP and physical capital investments.

This study could also empower local communities through knowledge. The findings could shed light on how local communities could be informed of the elements of an ecotourism organisational culture, and be persuaded to behave in accordance with them, in other words to do things in a way that will support ecotourism activities. Ultimately, they will be empowered by having a say in matters that affect them economically. Without a strong organisational culture (one that is shared among the majority of employees) it is impossible to position the country as an ecotourism destination of note that can compete with other regions. According to Boo (2001), ecotourism policies, if applied wisely, may support and maintain desired traditional practices that visitors would like to experience.

A major contribution of this study is the incorporation of the concept of organisational culture into tourism studies. Similar kinds of research have been done in other sectors of the economy, but not in tourism; hence, the endeavour of this particular study is to close this theoretical gap. This thesis will thus contribute to existing theory through the development of a framework that is supportive of an ecotourism organisational culture, serving as a base that could be adapted to suit any organisation or country wishing to turn around the performance of its ecotourism sector.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

According to Vargas-Hernandez, De Leon and Valdez (2011), a research methodology describes the research purpose, activities, procedures, measurements and applications used. Noorderhaven (2004) defines methodology as a system of ontological and epistemological assumptions on which research is based. These

underpinnings or assumptions provide the foundation for each step in the research process (Myers, 2009).

1.4.1 Interpretive and Constructivist Research Paradigm

Research in management and tourism studies “has revealed two major social science paradigms that have dominated claims regarding their superiority – the ‘positivist/functional’ approach and the ‘interpretive’ approach” (Pansiri, 2008). The approach of this research study is to look through the philosophical lens of the interpretivist framework of qualitative research with a view to reaching an understanding of the construct of organisational culture within the context of ecotourism in a specific country. The question to which an answer is being sought is: What are the defining elements in an operational organisational culture framework supporting ecotourism in Zimbabwe?

According to Myers (2009, p. 38), “Interpretive (or interpretivist) researches assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructs such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments”. The interpretive paradigm in this research aims to reconstruct employees’ understanding of the ecotourism organisations in which they are actively engaged, and in which they have vast experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

1.4.2 Ontological Assumptions

Blaikie’s definition of ontology (as cited in Grix, 2004, p. 59) is that it is the study of “claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other”. In simpler terms, the study of ontology involves the study of the existence of something. According to Ernest (1994, p. 25), “the ontological assumptions of Interpretivism are that social reality is seen by multiple people and these multiple people interpret events differently leaving multiple perspectives of an incident”.

1.4.3 Epistemological Assumptions

Crotty (1998, p. 3) defines epistemology as “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology”. Maxwell (n.d., p. 10) refers to epistemology as “how we know and the relationship between the knower and the known”. He explains that it is a tool that a researcher may use in a personal way; firstly to formulate appropriate questions, and secondly, to find reasonable answers.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:19) explain that “Interpretivism’s main tenet is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside, rather it must be observed from inside through the direct experience of the people”. Therefore, the role of the researcher in this paradigm is to “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants” (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In terms of this paradigm, the intention of the researcher in this particular study is to seek to understand organisational culture. The main epistemological and ontological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Interpretivist ontology and epistemology

Ontological assumptions	Epistemological assumptions
Reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective.	Knowledge is gained through a strategy that "respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman in Grix, 2004, p. 64).
People interpret and make their own meaning of events.	Knowledge is gained inductively to create a theory.
Events are more distinctive and cannot be generalised.	Knowledge arises from particular situations and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation.
There are multiple perspectives of one incident.	Knowledge is gained through personal experience.
Causation in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols.	

Source. Mack, 2010, p. 7

1.4.4 Qualitative Research Method

The purpose of qualitative research "is to provide a new understanding to a phenomenon" Riviera (2010, p. 1300). Creswell (2009) adds that the qualitative research method is used when exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative research methods are used in this study, but, as mentioned earlier on, they are used to produce data that is recorded in the form of language (unlike other methods that record data as numbers). Some of the factors identified by Padgett (2008, p. 2-16) formed the basis of the decision to use a qualitative rather than a quantitative research design, and they are that a qualitative design:

- favours interviewing (Through a qualitative research design (and through interviews) detailed data on ecotourism and the development of the organisational culture that is under study will be gathered.);

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- allows for a degree of closeness to respondents and is less control-orientated, thereby favouring the nature of the topic being investigated in that it allows informants to give as much information as possible without fear;

Table 2 gives an outline of the sub-research questions and the proposed methods.

Table 2: Methodology as per research question

Sub-research question	Approach and methodology used to inform research question
What constitutes organisational culture and ecotourism?	Literature study Descriptive Qualitative
How do members in Zimbabwe's ecotourism industry view and describe the elements of an ecotourism culture, and do they comply with this culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe?	Literature study and document analysis Descriptive In-depth interviews (expert level, operational level) Qualitative
How can the tourism industry and its members develop an organisational culture that supports the dimensions of sustainable ecotourism development in Zimbabwe?	Literature study In-depth interviews (expert level, operational level)
How will the development of a supportive organisational culture in ecotourism enhance the economic performance of the ecotourism industry?	Literature study Descriptive In-depth interviews (strategic level, expert level) Qualitative
What strategies can be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture in	Literature study Descriptive In-depth interviews (strategic, expert and

Sub-research question	Approach and methodology used to inform research question
support of establishing and institutionalising an operational organisational culture?	operational levels) Qualitative

1.5 SAMPLING

Generally speaking, sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from a population to represent the characteristics or properties of that population. Kothari (2008) defines it as the process of gathering information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. Qualitative sampling, however, can be done purposefully. Creswell (2007) and Silverman (2010) define purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which particular settings, persons or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide which cannot be obtained from other samples.

The appropriate sampling strategy is determined by exactly what the researcher wants to know and accomplish. For this research, the researcher opted to use "expert sampling", a sampling method according to which the researcher looks for individual entities (organisations, groups, or communities) that have the expertise that will most likely advance the researcher's interests and open new doors for further development in the area of research (Given, 2008). It is imperative that the sample of participants be selected on the basis of their extensive experience in the field of study, in this case, ecotourism activities. Table 3 below shows the selected participants for this particular research.

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Table 3: Research participants

Where research participants were drawn from	Number of participants
Expert level group: Academic experts from institutions of learning	3
Operational level group: National Parks and Wildlife; Zimbabwe Tourism Authority; Tourism Board member	3
CAMPFIRE: managerial level	1
Strategic level group (decision-makers): Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality (senior management)	3

N (total sample) = 10

The above-mentioned groups, namely the expert level group, the operational level group, and the strategic level group, formed the purposeful sample group, which the researcher believed could provide adequate information for the envisaged research. The following selection criteria were applied for the relevant groups:

Expert group criteria: These individuals were experts (theoretical and practical) in ecotourism practices.

Operational group criteria: These participants had several years' experience in the practical aspects of ecotourism.

Decision-making (strategic) group criteria: These individuals were policy makers as well as custodians of organisational culture, and they were selected because culture is implemented from the top downwards.

Over and above the criteria mentioned, each of the participants selected had to be in a position to give first-hand accounts of their experiences in their workplaces. This was in agreement with the statement made by Merriam (2009) that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The qualitative paradigm offers participants the opportunity to relate these experiences.

1.5.1 Sample Size

The principle of theoretical saturation, which refers to the point at which no new concepts emerge, determines the size of a sample, and this researcher arrived at theoretical saturation point at ten participants. Creswell (2007) advises that the intent in qualitative research is not to generalise information but to elucidate the particular, the specific. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) propose that if sample sizes in qualitative research are too large it is difficult to extract thick, rich data, and if they are too small it will cause informational redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The number of participants should be such that it enables the collection of sufficient information. The sample size for this research is set out in Table 3.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Hart (2010, p. 13) defines a literature review as:

the selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contains information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed.

The aim of a literature review, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 64), is “to describe the theoretical perspectives and previous research findings regarding the research problem”. In other words, a literature review is meant to place the study within the context of existing knowledge or research on the problem under consideration. In this research, the literature review will be focusing on organisational culture and its components; the practice of ecotourism; and what constitutes an ecotourism organisational culture.

Critical reviews of the literature on the above-mentioned aspects will be done. Information will be gathered from renowned internet websites, such as EBSCOhost and Nexus. Internet portals, such as Google and Google Scholar, will be consulted to glean information from scholarly articles, and findings from other empirical studies. Literature will also be gathered from government policy documents and any other organisational

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documents pertaining to the operations of ecotourism. Other research techniques for this study will include doing desktop research and carrying out key informant interviews.

1.7 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

There are many forms of data collection strategies that a researcher can use when conducting qualitative research. According to Brenner (2006) and Yin (2008), the major methods for qualitative data collection are observation, field notes, document analysis as well as interviews. In line with that, Merriam (2009, p. 85) notes that “qualitative data collection strategies consist of direct quotations from the people whose situations are being studied; therefore, their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge can be captured vividly”.

Data collection methods are the techniques and procedures that a researcher uses to collect data. As suggested by Bisman and Highfield (2012), interpretivist research focuses on the meanings embedded in textual and verbal accounts and generally involves the analysis of archival materials, documentary sources and/or oral and personal histories and narratives garnered through data collection strategies such as interviews.

This research used in-depth interviews (qualitative method) and document analysis to gather data.

1.7.1 In-depth Interviews

In order to access an individual’s perceptions and interpretations of reality and phenomena on issues of organisational culture in ecotourism, in-depth interviews were conducted. Since qualitative research focuses on studying individuals in their “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3), physical visits were made to the research participants in their workplaces.

The in-depth interview is a data collection method that is relevant in terms of informing the research, and Richards (2009) has termed the interview as “the most

intrusive way to collect information". Lewis (2003, p. 60) declares that "in-depth interviews are appropriate when the objective is to examine issues in detail, and to understand the context of complex situations, and the motivation, decision, impact and outcomes of specific processes". In this research, in-depth interviews were used to examine in detail the existence and impact of an organisational culture in the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe, and the responses were recorded using a digital voice recorder.

Hatch (2002) and Yin (2008) both acknowledge that the interview is a powerful tool for gathering data in qualitative research, while Wellington (2007) adds that an interview is a conversation with a purpose.

1.7.2 Document Analysis

Documents containing information regarding tourism, ecotourism and organisational culture were consulted. According to Myers (2009, p. 161), "documents are relatively cheap and quick to access; they make things visible and are traceable ... documents have the advantage of being mostly produced for non-partisan purposes, and are not subject to limitations as ... observations and interviews".

In this research, Zimbabwe's National Tourism Policy document, and various other tourism documents (such as the recorded speeches of the Tourism Minister, and other responsible dignitaries at the historic launch of the National Tourism Policy) were analysed.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

The collection of qualitative data generates a considerable amount of data, and in order to manage this information, computer software is often used to enable data analysis through computerised coding, organising, searching and retrieving the data. Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p. 147) define qualitative data analysis as "working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns". The ultimate aim of all this activity is to discover possible concepts, patterns, meanings and themes. The descriptions that have been gathered of feelings, thoughts and behaviours are identified and coded using a coding

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system that should be both comprehensive and accurate in recording what is being reported. In this research, data analysis was done manually as the researcher could not find any suitable and comprehensive computer software program that could perform this task.

1.8 STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENSURE QUALITY DATA

To ensure accurate and high-quality data, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose a number of strategies to evaluate interpretive research work and to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

- Credibility

According to Trochim (2006b), credibility involves establishing that the results are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research. Credibility can be achieved by making certain that information-rich participants are identified and interviewed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose a number of activities to enhance credibility, among which are triangulation and member checking. Member checking is the process of getting feedback on and interpreting data, and obtaining conclusions from the selected participants themselves. Inclusion of participants, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) “is the most critical technique for establishing credibility”. They also suggest that transparent processes be designed to code and draw conclusions from the raw data.

- Transferability

Research findings are said to be transferable only if the data sets and descriptions are rich enough to enable other researchers to make judgements about the transferability of the findings to different settings or contexts (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

- Dependability

Dependability has to do with the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar subjects in a similar context.

- Confirmability

Confirmability is defined by Bradley (1993) as “the extent to which the characteristics of the data can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results”.

In the process of collecting high-quality data, it is important to acknowledge that there is always room for error, as data-gathering techniques are prone to some inconsistencies; therefore, triangulation may be necessary. Both the interview and document review methods were employed in order to increase the reliability of the findings.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In doing qualitative research, a researcher interacts closely with the selected participants, and can be said to intrude in their private space; therefore, ethical considerations come into play. Ethics, as defined by Cooper and Schindler (2001), are the norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationship with others. The ultimate aim of considering ethics in research is to make sure that no one is harmed, or suffers adverse consequences from research activities.

Creswell (2003) states that the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants, and part of doing that entails strict observance of what various authors consider to be important, such as:

- Informed consent (Do participants have full knowledge of what is involved?) (Creswell, 2007);
- Harm and risk (Can the study hurt participants?);
- Honesty and truth (Is the researcher being truthful in presenting data?) (Myers, 2009); and
- Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity (Will the study not intrude too much into group behaviours?).

Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so that they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether or not they want to participate (Mack, Woodsong,

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Macqueen, Guest & Name, 2005). Prior to conducting this research, an informed consent form was obtained from the Ethics Committee, and participants were asked to read it and make sure they understood it before signing it. This process was one of the ways used to show respect for the people taking part in the research.

1.10 PROPOSED CHAPTER DIVISIONS

The chapters in this thesis are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and research orientation

Chapter 2: Presentation of the first part of the literature review, focusing on organisational culture, identifying its origins, its development over the years, and its significance in establishing business excellence in ecotourism organisations

Chapter 3: Presentation of the second part of the literature review, focusing on ecotourism, and how organisational culture can be employed in developing and nurturing ecotourism

Chapter 4: Discussion of the research methodology, research philosophy and paradigm, research design, planning of the research, methods used for data collection, implementation of research methods in the fieldwork, and data analysis

Chapter 5: Presentation of the findings, and the analysis and findings of the research data

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

Chapter 7: Discussion of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to give an introductory overview of the entire thesis, and an outline of all its chapters. Chapter 2 will focus on the literature review of organisational culture.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to review available literature regarding the concept of organisational culture, which is one of the important disciplines discussed in this study. Key theoretical constructs relating to the concept of organisational culture are addressed, including its historical origins, the theories that inform it, how it has been defined in the past, and the models that have been used to describe it. In this chapter, the benefits of organisational culture and its importance in augmenting change that will bring about organisational success are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of an organisational culture model on which this particular research will be based. The goal of these discussions is to achieve the aim of this research, which is to come up with a framework for the development of a sound, operational organisational culture in the Zimbabwean ecotourism sector with a view to transforming this sector and achieving an increase in its current economic contribution to the GDP from 9,6% (The Herald, 17/01/2013) to 15% by 2015, as projected by the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality and the UNWTO (The Herald, 17/01/2013). The significant discrepancy between the current contribution of 9,6% to the GDP and the contribution projected by the UNWTO indicates that the tourism sector in Zimbabwe is not performing to its full potential. The UNWTO remains optimistic about future growth in the tourism sector despite current global financial challenges (Strategic Solutions Inc., 2012).

Great academic interest has been generated in the field of organisational culture, and the subject has become theoretically complex as it has drawn on a great variety of intellectual sources. Klein (2008) comments that the cumulative result of the past twenty years of studies in organisational culture provides strong support for the notion that culture does matter in organisational performance, while Lok and Crawford (2004) and Al-Bahussin and El-Garaihy (2013) assert that organisational culture is positively associated with good organisational performance and commitment, as well as the survival and longevity of an organisation. Rosenfeld, Flores and Abele (2006) mention that every company must ultimately satisfy three stakeholder groups (namely, its employees, customers, and shareholders), and unless it has a strong organisational culture, success in these three realms will not be possible. Timeyin (n.d.), therefore,

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urges organisations to have a better understanding of organisational cultures so as to realise a higher potential for organisations' success.

In order to find out how an appropriate organisational culture in the ecotourism sector can be developed, a theoretical frame of reference is required. The greater part of the theoretical section in this chapter relates to organisational culture and its components. In the next chapter, ecotourism, its practices and related theories will be discussed. Combined, these reviews will provide a solid foundation for the discussion of the research topic.

2.2 DEFINITION OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Stoyko (2009) maintains that despite decades of scholarship and academic debates on organisational culture, the term has remained elusive. Many definitions of organisational culture exist, the most commonly known one being “the way we do things around here” (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Lundy & Cowling, 1996). However, in this research the researcher is guided instead by the definition of Schein (1985, p. 9) which states that organisational culture is:

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Rosenfeld *et al.*, (2006, p. 1) give a more condensed definition of organisational culture as a “people-generated milieu in which the company operates, characterized by how people interact, organize their tasks, conduct business, and relate to leadership”.

The problem with giving a definitive description of organisational culture is that literature defines both the actions of and reactions to organisational culture (Shili, 2008). Contrary to many of the other definitions of organisational culture, the definition by Schein (1985) (as cited above) includes the most important components of this concept, prompting Muratović (2013, p. 63) to comment that “this is the definition that an increasing number of authors on organisational culture have accepted and which they continually make reference to”. In the light of the above considerations, the definition by Schein (1985) was adopted in this research.

2.2.1 Origins of Organisational Culture

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) mention that, although the evolution, development and management of organisational culture are elusive because organisations are peculiar entities, these are critical processes in organisations at all stages of growth. Of interest at this stage is how organisational culture evolved.

The concept of organisational culture was introduced in studies done by Hawthorne, who referred to it as work group culture, as early as between 1927 and 1932 (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). According to Baker (2006), organisational culture became an important topic of study in the early 1980s, and the following four publications were influential in this regard:

- Ouchi. (1981). *Theory Z: How American business can meet the Japanese challenge*
- Pascale and Athos. (1982). *The art of Japanese management: Applications for American executives*
- Deal and Kennedy. (1982). *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life*
- Peters and Waterman. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best run companies*

These four books highlighted the fact that organisational culture was critical to organisational performance, and that corporate culture could be *managed* to improve a company's competitive advantage.

2.2.2 Contextualisation of Organisational Culture

Organisational culture plays a very important role in formulating and implementing organisational strategies as well as in determining performance, but its importance has tended to be neglected in the literature on hospitality management (Dwyer, Teal & Kemp, 2007). On the other hand, Kallarakal, Mathew, Paul and Thomas (2011) report that available literature in the field of organisational culture demonstrates that the subject has been extensively studied in the manufacturing, information services and hotel industries. Kallarakal *et al.*, (2011) further note that it has been studied in relation to employee relationships, managerial work behaviour, project management, supply chain management, market orientation, and attraction and recruitment of

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employees. In spite of that abundance of research, these authors note that very few similar studies have been carried out in the context of the tourism sector. In particular, no such study has been carried out in the Zimbabwean context, and this is what prompted the researcher to embark on the present investigation.

Organisations have been reported to survive in tough environments because of their strong organisational cultures. Every organisation has a particular culture, but not all cultures contribute equally to the success of their companies (Rosenfeld *et al.*, 2006), and a company's culture can significantly influence its performance (Cavallari, 2007; Kaviris, 2012; Lunenburg, 2011). When a strong organisational culture exists, one characterised by a consensus on the values that drive the company and an intensity that is recognisable even to outsiders (Nelson, Armstrong, Condie & Quick, 2012), one that reflects an organisation's desired value structure and which is aligned to the values and beliefs of the organisation, employees become committed and feel compelled to expend the best of their abilities towards the achievement of organisational values. It can be said that these employees have achieved organisational buy-in. Mohant and Rath (2012, p. 76) describe this state where organisational members' behaviours exceed their basic job requirements as a state in which members' behaviours demonstrate that these members "go above and beyond the call of duty".

Looking at the situation in Zimbabwe against the background of the preceding discussion, it has to be said that the country's economic situation is in a precarious state (Kachembere, 2014) and that the survival of business organisations is at stake. Organisational success is no longer guaranteed. Note should perhaps be taken of the statement made by Cameron and Quinn (2005, p. 4) that "the success of organisations is not only determined by specific external conditions, but that remarkable and sustained success of some companies has had less to do with market forces than with company values (organisational culture)". Consideration should be given to the need for developing strong organisational cultures, which could result in the achievement of business competitiveness in spite of prevailing economic conditions. According to Schein (2004, p. 7), "the stronger the organisational culture, the more effective the organization".

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This research aims to establish through fieldwork whether an organisational culture exists in Zimbabwe's ecotourism sector, and whether such a culture is being complied with.

2.2.3 Organisational Culture in Countries with Highly Successful Ecotourism Practices

Organisational culture is among one of the most important variables determining a company's success or failure, and, according to Azanzaa *et al.*, (2013, p. 45), "highly successful companies have capitalized on the value that resides in developing and managing a unique organisational culture". In addition, Muratović (2013, p. 61) mentions that "in the developed countries, in the subject of theory and practice of the organisation and its management, organisational culture is gaining in importance", and Ojo (2010, p. 2), in a review of literature on the subject of organisational culture and corporate performance, finds that "there is a dearth of literature on it in developing countries".

This research seeks to close this gap in the literature. What follows below is a brief description of how organisational culture has been incorporated in the ecotourism business management sector in one of the world's renowned ecotourism countries, namely Costa Rica, as well as in some countries on the African continent, compared to the situation in Zimbabwe.

2.2.3.1 Costa Rica

Internationally, Costa Rica is seen as a model of good ecotourism practices. The management of the Hotel Presidente in San Jose, Costa Rica, (a hotel highly rated by the Costa Rican National Tourism Board) declares as follows: "Our philosophy and leadership of social and environmental responsibility runs deep and is fundamental to our hospitality and service ... we have adopted a corporate culture that promotes environmental conservation and ecotourism and sustainable adventure for our people and planet" (Hotel Presidente, n.d.).

The Hotel Presidente can be regarded as an example of a tourism enterprise in Costa Rica that has implemented a corporate culture which it follows religiously, hence the success of the country's tourism industry.

2.2.3.2 South Africa

South Africa is a country with a vibrant ecotourism sector. As far back as in 2002, South Africa developed a strong policy basis for responsible tourism practices (Spenceley, 2007). Its success in this regard can be attributed to the development and subsequent implementation of a tourism manual for the country (Spenceley, Relly, Keyser, McKenzie, Mataboge, Norton, Mahlangu & Seif, 2002). According to Spenceley *et al.*, (2002), the aim of the manual is to provide "mainstream" as well as community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) with information about responsible tourism and the opportunities it presents for improving business performance. The existence of a strong policy basis (Spenceley, 2007) is in itself an indication of the existence of an organisational culture in the South African tourism sector.

2.2.3.3 Botswana

Botswana has a solid reputation as a progressive, sustainable tourism destination and a premier safari destination. The country as a whole is committed to ecotourism, as evidenced by the government's conservation and wildlife management policies, along with the ecotourism strategies of the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO), which ensure that the nation's tourism is sustainable for its inhabitants and future generations of tourists, while contributing meaningfully to the national economy. As mentioned by Stevens and Jansen (2002) Botswana Tourism also has an operational ecotourism manual containing guidelines to ensure that both development and growth have a minimal impact on the environment.

2.2.3.4 Zimbabwe

The literature reviewed for this research indicates that until June 2014 no manuals have been documented and no policies or strategies have been published on any philosophies related to responsible leadership aimed at ensuring the success of the tourism industry (ecotourism in particular). On this topic, an article in the Zimbabwean media ("How sustainable is tourism in Zimbabwe?" Daily News Zimbabwe, 1 October, 2012) reads:

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Judging from recent media reports, tourism in Zimbabwe is neither responsible nor sustainable ... The Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force for example released a report ... estimating 60 percent of Zimbabwe's wildlife had died since 2000 due to poaching and deforestation. The report warns that the loss of life combined with widespread deforestation is potentially disastrous for the tourist industry.

Compared to the other countries referred to above it is evident that ecotourism is managed differently in Zimbabwe. In spite of the negative report in the media that tourism in Zimbabwe is neither responsible nor sustainable (Daily News Zimbabwe, 1 October, 2012), ecotourism is still acknowledged as one of the strongest aspects of Zimbabwean tourism. The question that remains to be answered is how organisational culture can be incorporated as a tool to enhance the economic performance of Zimbabwean ecotourism.

2.3 THE IMPACT OF AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The culture of an organisation has a strong influence on its decisions and actions. Rosenfeld *et al.*, (2006) mention that having a strong organisational culture makes good business sense because it can foster a more cohesive, motivated and productive workforce that yields higher profitability, sales growth, and market value. In a survey on the impact of an organisational culture, Rosenfeld *et al.*, (2006) have discovered that, based on the Denison Culture Survey, stronger cultures outperform weaker cultures in all three dimensions of profitability, sales growth, and market value. In organisations where culture is not heeded, their well-being tends to be undermined. According to Tharp (2009), a company's prevailing ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs guide the way in which its employees think, feel, and act – quite often unconsciously. Erdogan and Tosun (2009) are of the opinion that if an organisation does not perform as expected, it can be attributed to a lack of a good culture in delivering its products and services. The existence of an organisational culture signals to workers that the practices it stands for are acceptable and worthwhile, and that these practices make sense and contribute to the success of the business.

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Previous studies have shown that an organisation's culture correlates either with high performance (Booz & Company, 2010) or low performance. In addition, Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) as well as Shani and Lau (2005) assert that organisational culture affects such outcomes as productivity, performance, commitment, self-confidence, and ethical behaviour. Therefore, organisational culture is regarded as one of the core determinants of every organisation's success.

2.3.1 Elements of Organisational Culture

Tharp (2009), having analysed research work on organisational culture in sociology, psychology, anthropology, and management science, concludes that this subject has many symbolic and cognitive layers – culture is thick and resides at all levels. Stupak (n.d.), Schein (1992), and McShane (2011) contribute to an understanding of what organisational culture actually is by identifying three levels of culture, namely, artefacts (visible), espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. McShane (2011) points out that the assumptions, values, and beliefs that represent organisational behaviour operate beneath the surface of organisational behaviour; they are not directly observable, but their effects are everywhere. According to McShane (2011), assumptions represent the deepest part of organisational culture because they are unconscious and taken for granted. Assumptions are the shared **mental models**, the broad worldviews or theories-in-use that people rely on to guide their perceptions and behaviours. Schein (1992), who is acknowledged as a principal author as far as organisational culture studies are concerned, proposes that the structure of organisational culture can best be thought of as consisting of three different levels (see Figure 3 below).

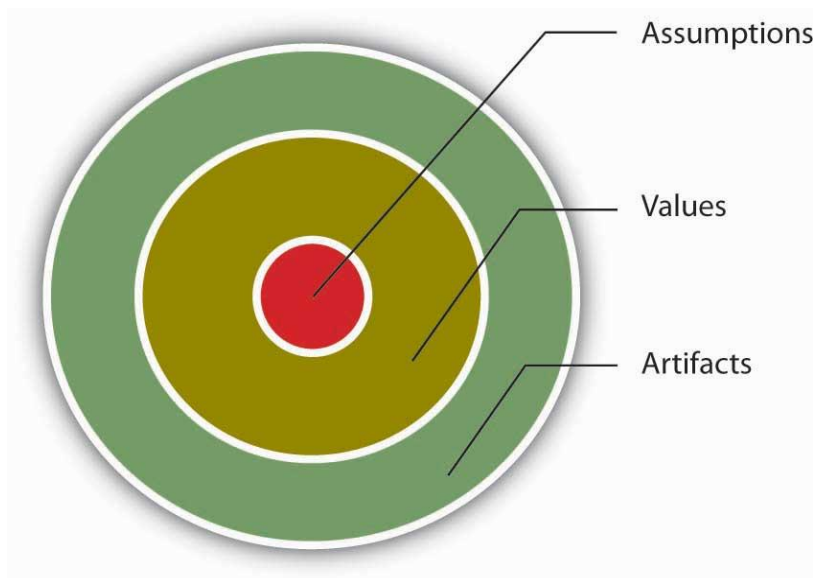


Figure 3: The three levels of organisational culture

Source: Schein (1992, p. 17)

Schein (1992), and more recently McShane (2011), explain the diagram as follows:

Artefacts “are the explicit factors, the observable symbols and signs of an organisation’s culture” (McShane, 2011, p. 500). Artefacts represent an organisation’s attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs. According to Schein (1992), these artefacts are portrayed through architecture and physical surroundings, its products, its technologies, its style (as shown through, for instance, clothing, art, and publications), its published values and mission statement, its language, gossip, jargon, and humour, its myths and stories, and its practices, rituals, ceremonies, and taboos. Basically, artefacts are things that are easily noticeable upon entering an organisation. There are several categories of artefacts, among which are organisational stories and legends, since, in relation to organisational culture, they serve as powerful social prescriptions of the way things should (or should not) be done.

Espoused values are those values championed by a company’s leadership and management, in other words, what *they* say they value with the aim of displaying a particular public image. These values are described by Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) as follows:

Values are the things an organisation considers most important with respect to its operations, its employees, and its customers; they are the things an

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organisation holds most dear – the things for which it strives and the things it wants to protect at all costs.

Espoused values explain "why you are doing what you are doing" (Schein, 2004) within a particular organisation, and Oyserman (2002, p. 16150) states that "values are implicit or explicit guides for action, general scripts framing what is sought after and what is to be avoided".

Organisational values need to be understood, because, according to Nowaczek (2009), these values are believed to be instrumental in influencing behaviour. In terms of this research study the implication is that organisational values lead to certain behaviours that are consistent or possibly inconsistent with the basic tenets of ecotourism.

Basic assumptions or **beliefs** are situated on the deepest level of culture, and, says Schein (2004), in order to understand organisational culture it is necessary to delve into the level of assumptions and beliefs (the deepest level) to explain the manifestation of an existent culture within an organisation. McShane (2011) explains that beliefs that gain long-term acceptance often become so ingrained and taken for granted that individuals are usually unaware of their influence. These beliefs usually provide a sense of security and an unquestioned impetus for perceptions and behaviour. To further clarify the influence of beliefs, Carpenter, Bauer and Erdogan (2010) offer the following allegory: Just as water is invisible to the fish swimming in it, yet affects their actions, culture consists of unseen elements such as assumptions and values that affect organisational life. This is in line with the theory of McGregor (1960) which states that if people are treated consistently in terms of certain basic assumptions they eventually behave according to these assumptions in order to make their world stable and predictable.

To relate Schein's diagram (Figure 3) to the ecotourism organisation, the images (under artefacts) portrayed must be truly representative of what the organisation (Zimbabwe ecotourism as the organisation in this context) wants to communicate to the outside world as this has an impact on perceived quality. Therefore, when doing business, Bustam and Stein (2013) encourage that market segmentation be practised: images that attract the desired market group (families, retirees, couples), or reflect a

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certain activity type (high adventure, cultural tourism), or represent a specific experience outcome (relaxation, solitude, thrill) should be utilised. Ecotourism can be built on the assets of local people, such as their traditions, festivals, land, and natural as well as built heritage (Fairbairn, 1988; Samvura, 2014).

Bustam and Stein (2013) also mention that a culture of providing excellent customer service in the ecotourism sector includes not only friendliness and helpfulness but also the quality delivery of ecotourism services (highly qualified guides, low guest-to-guide ratio, diverse lodging and food service amenities). The quality delivery of these services can lead to customer satisfaction, loyalty ensuring repeat business, and long-term profitability.

According to Asong (2014) it takes months and years to grasp “how things are done” in an organisation; however, symbolic objects and activities can give clues to a firm’s culture.

2.3.2 Storytelling as artefacts in organisations

According to Schein (1992), myths and stories form part of an organisation’s artefacts. Storytelling, or oral tradition as it is known in Zimbabwe, has been used as a method of passing on information from one generation to the next. Sole and Wilson (2002) have established that business organisations also use it as a mechanism to share knowledge within organisations. These authors corroborate the statement made by Louis (1980) and Brown (1982) that stories can be a very powerful way to represent and convey complex, multi-dimensional ideas as well as to socialise new employees. Below are some of the ways in which storytelling are beneficial to organisations:

- According to Prusak (in Denning, 2002), stories powerfully convey norms and values across generations within an organisation, and while they coalesce aspects from the organisation’s past, they can also describe its future.
- Through stories, management can emphasise the more empowering aspects of an organisation’s past and place them in context for the future (Buckler & Zien, 1996).
- Brown (1982) expresses the opinion that the extent of a member’s familiarity with the dominant story of an organisation might indicate the member’s level of adaptation to organisational norms and values.

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- According to Wilkins (1984), stories about the organisation and management can convey information about the organisation's trustworthiness vis-à-vis its employees, which can reinforce or undermine employee commitment.
- In a document published by the Institute for Knowledge Management (1999) it is stated that generating commitment is a key function of organisational stories and legends, and that stories enable a more efficient exchange of the embedded and embodied highly contextual knowledge that can help to solve difficult problems quickly.

To conclude, organisational stories and legends, in relation to organisational culture, serve as powerful social prescriptions of the way things should or should not be done, hence the emphasis on describing their role in an organisation.

2.3.3 The Concept of Organisational Culture

Organisational culture affects every facet of an organisation (Shahzad, Luqman, Khan & Shabbir, 2012), and has been associated with all three major levels of organisational behaviour, being the individual, the group and the organisation. On an individual level, its association relates to aspects such as job satisfaction and employee retention (Macintosh & Doherty, 2010; Park & Kim, 2009); on a group level it affects, for instance, leadership behaviour (Tsai, 2011); and on an organisational level it has an effect on organisational effectiveness (Gregory, Harris, Armenakis & Shook, 2009).

Schimmoeller (2010, p. 126) defines organisational culture as “a common set of values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation which influences how people perceive, think, and act”. Chegini (2010) and Tsai (2011) consider longstanding beliefs, values and practices to form the characteristics of an organisation, which, in turn, have a significant influence on the performance and long-term effectiveness of the organisation. On the web page of the organisational effectiveness consulting company New Horizons (2009, p. 1) it is mentioned that “these beliefs and values, shared by members of an organisation, become visible in the way work gets done on a day to day basis”. This company proposes that the culture of an organisation be thought of as the organisation's DNA – invisible to the naked eye, yet a powerful template that shapes what happens in the workplace. According to Levin (2012), culture is the fingerprint and

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the personality of an organisation that is built on the values the company stands for. Shazaad *et al.*, (2012, p. 976) sum up all the definitions of organisational culture developed over the years and conclude that culture “is gained knowledge, explanations, values, beliefs, communications and behaviours of a large group of people, at the same time and same place”. As there are so many definitions in the literature, the researcher has chosen to agree with Tharp (2009) that it is evidently not easy to capture or define the concept of organisational culture. Based on all the definitions mentioned above, the researcher can only conclude that organisational culture consists of norms, values and beliefs, and that these three form the basic elements of an organisational culture. The general consensus among authors is that it is a powerful (but invisible) force present in any organisation. Figure 4 gives a representation of the ideal manifestations of organisational culture.



Figure 4: The manifestations of organisational culture

Source: Adapted from New Horizons, 2009, p. 1

2.3.4 Effects of Culture in an Organisation

Jaber, Abuzant and Hirbawi (2013) propose that organisational culture is a lens through which we can view an organisation. Different management scholars and consultants comment as follows on culture in organisations:

- It is important in shaping organisational practice and performance (O'Donnell & Boyle, 2008).
- It provides competitive advantage, which is what sets an organisation apart from others (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012b), and, according to Lado and Wilson (1994), and Martins and Martins (2002), the culture of an organisation contributes to maintaining this strategic competitive advantage. Corporate culture is not only transparent to employees in a firm but also to customers and investors (Mahrokian, Chan, Mangkornkanok & Lee, 2010).
- It has the ability to attract, motivate and retain people, and it enables a company to attract the best and the brightest talent (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012b).
- The existence of an organisational culture helps members of an organisation to know what is acceptable or unacceptable in their organisation (Ojo, 2010).

It is important to emphasise that this particular study focuses on culture within an organisation, and not culture from an ethnic perspective; in other words, culture that is of significant importance in how companies function, for instance, issues related to strategic change, everyday leadership, interaction between managers and employees and customers, and the way in which knowledge is created, shared, maintained, and utilised. The functions of culture in an organisation are manifold, as reported by various authors. For instance, Tharp (2009, p. 3) mentions that

it reduces uncertainty by creating a common methodology and language for interpreting events and issues; provides a sense of order so that all team members know what is expected; creates a sense of continuity; provides a common identity and unity of commitment, as well as a sense of belonging; and offers a vision of the future around which a company can rally.

Stoyko (2009, p. 1) adds that “the existence of an organisational culture can reduce unproductive conflict, promote collaboration, and align work towards a single purpose”. Ojo (2012, p. 47) mentions that an organisational culture is a “major determinant of employees’ efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out their jobs”, and

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as such it is one of the key factors that determine how employees perform or behave in carrying out their prescribed tasks.

Flamholtz and Randle (2012a, p. 83) assert that “a company’s culture – if well managed – is transmitted to generations of employees through the company’s ‘DNA’”, thus perpetuating its source of competitive advantage. These authors also state that the unique circumstances of every company’s situation and history make cloning another culture a virtual impossibility. With reference to the reported effects of a culture in an organisation, it can be said that if Zimbabwe develops and nurtures its own organisational culture in its practice of ecotourism, other regional competitors will be unable to clone its organisational culture, making it a unique Zimbabwean ecotourism organisational culture. Furthermore, as stated by Flamholtz and Randle (2012a), issues such as differences in leadership personalities, organisational size, and historical experiences all combine to make an organisation’s corporate culture unique. By using these issues to the advantage of the country, Zimbabwe could turn around its economic performance and meet the target of a 15% contribution to GDP by 2015 as proposed by the UNWTO and the Government of Zimbabwe (The Standard Newspaper, 27/10/2013).

2.4 PERSPECTIVES OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Timeyin (n.d.) mentions that there are two schools of thought that dominate the theoretical landscape of organisational culture, namely the managerial and social sciences perspectives.

2.4.1 Organisational Culture: A Sociological Perspective

There is no culture without a society, just as there can be no society without individuals. According to Silverman (1970), organisations are conceived of as little societies, as social systems equipped with socialisation processes, social norms and structures. Mbabazize, Mucunguzi and Daniel (2014, p. 3) emphasise that

culture forms an integral part of every society (organisation) and it is exemplified in the way the members of that community behave, for example, in terms of dressing styles, social relationships, the language used, its work

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attitudes, its attitudes towards outsiders and the way it structures the political, social and economic modes of life for its members.

The presence of an organisational culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe should therefore be evident in these attributes.

Literature provides much evidence pointing to the fact that organisational culture can be viewed from a sociological perspective (Hofstede, 1991; Kroeber, 1987; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007; Tharp, 2009). Sagiv and Schwartz (2007, p. 83) mention that “organisations operate under societal pressure”, which, in the context of the business world, refers to, for instance, that organisation’s external environment and the institutions surrounding it. The organisation’s ideals, namely, its pattern of shared meanings and values, systems of knowledge and beliefs, are, therefore, interwoven with the social structure. According to Timeyin (n.d.), the social sciences perspective propounds that organisational culture is an ambiguous product of the shared experiences between individuals, often developed in an ad hoc fashion resulting in fragmented microcultural elements. Hofstede (1991) concurs, and adds that culture is always a collective phenomenon because it is at least partly shared by people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. It is, therefore, the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. Tharp (2009) mentions that organisational culture is constructed socially and is affected by environment and history; it is learned (from one’s society) and not inherited. Flamholtz and Randle (2012, p. 91) note that culture “has a profound impact upon organisational success or failure”. Culture awareness is present in all organisations (Kaviris, 2012) but the way it is managed determines the degree of its successful implementation.

2.4.2 Organisational Culture: A Management Science Perspective

According to the managerial approach, culture is espoused and influenced by a leader or management team to create one unified performance enhancing culture (Timeyin, n.d.). In Timeyin’s view, the most prominent of the managerial perspectives is the one proposed by Schein (2004, p. 1), who defines organisational culture as being

both a dynamic phenomenon that surrounds us at all times, being constantly enacted and created by our interactions with others and shaped by leadership

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behaviour, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behaviour.

One of the impacts of organisational culture on organisational management is that the kind or type of organisational culture adopted by an organisation determines the organisation's style of management; therefore, management styles differ. To this, Wilderom, Glunk and Maslowski (2000) and Janićijević (2012) add that the different types of culture in organisations imply, for instance, different strategies, organisational structure models, organisational learning, compensation systems, motivation, and leadership styles. All these develop from the way in which employees and management understand organisational reality and behave in it.

It can be suggested that if the Zimbabwean ecotourism industry adopts this managerial perspective, organisational culture could be used as a tool for aligning the values of the employees with the values and objectives of the organisation, leading to increased motivation, productivity and excellence (Timeyin, n.d.).

This research will embrace both perspectives of organisational culture, namely, the managerial and the social sciences perspectives from which organisational culture will be viewed.

2.4.3 The Themes of Organisational Culture

The literature review revealed that there are several themes of organisational culture, and, according to Sun (2008), these themes can be used by management to gain a competitive advantage. Maull, Brown and Cliffe (2001) identify four themes, one of which is that culture is a learned entity. This theme is derived from the definition of Schein (1985, p. 9) that culture is a

pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

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Later work by Lundberg (1990) supports the view that culture is socially learned and transmitted by members and that culture provides them with rules for their organisational behaviour.

Secondly, culture is viewed as a belief system (Maull *et al.*, 2001), and this theme emanates from Davis (1984) who defines culture as “the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give members of an institution meaning, and provide them with the rules for behavior in their organisation”. Lundberg (1990) describes culture as a common psychology in that it denotes the organisation’s uniqueness and contributes to its identity.

Thirdly, culture is seen as strategy (Maull *et al.*, 2001), and this view is derived from Bate (1995) who mentions that “culture is a strategic phenomenon: strategy is a culture phenomenon”. To be more explicit, Bate (1995) suggests a twofold implication: first, that any kind of strategy formulation is in fact a cultural activity; secondly, that all cultural changes should be viewed as strategic changes.

The fourth perspective views organisational culture as mental programming (Maull *et al.*, 2001), and this view is attributed to Hofstede (1980) who mentions that culture is the “collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another”.

Lundberg (1990) and Robbins and Coulter (2005) present further themes of organisational culture, such as:

- Culture is a perception: Individuals perceive the relevant organisational culture on the basis of what they see, hear or experience in the organisation.
- Culture is a shared frame of reference (Lundberg, 1990; Robbins & Coulter, 2005): Individuals may have different backgrounds, or may work at different organisational levels, yet they tend to describe the organisation’s culture in similar terms.
- Culture endures over time: It can be found in any fairly stable social unit of any size, as long as it has a reasonable history (Lundberg, 1990).

These themes of organisational culture are used constantly to measure the culture of an organisation (Sun, 2008); therefore, an awareness of these themes needs

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to be prioritised and inculcated into the minds of employees during training and induction into an ecotourism organisation.

2.4.4 The Social Function of Organisational Culture

Scholl (2003) and Lipshutz (2009) mention that the existence of an organisational culture serves to uphold several important social functions among employees, among which are: controlling behaviour, encouraging stability, and providing a source of identity and cooperation. There is general consensus among many modern writers, such as Tharp (2009), Stoyko (2009), Lipshutz (2009), and Mohant and Rath (2012), about the social function of organisational culture, namely that it exists to achieve oneness of purpose within an organisation.

2.4.5 The Business Function of Organisational Culture

An important business function of an organisational culture is the establishment of organisational control. Ekwutosi and Moses (2013) define organisational control as a process through which an organisation influences its members to behave in ways that lead to the attainment of organisational goals and objectives.

Ekwutosi and Moses (2013, p. 83) state that organisational control can be viewed as the coordination of the following three elements:

- The direction of work – what needs to be done, by whom, in what order, to what degree of precision or accuracy, and in what period of time
- The evaluation of work – how each worker is supervised and how output is evaluated to determine which worker (or group of workers) is performing well or not up to standard
- The disciplining of work – how each worker is rewarded or punished in relation to the evaluation of the work carried out according to instructions (Edwards, 1979, in Ekwutosi & Moses, 2013).

Furnham and Gunter (1993) summarise the functions of organisational culture by classifying them either under the internal integration function or under the coordination function. Internal integration refers to the bonding of new members in an organisation, the establishment of a feeling of identity among employees, and employees'

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commitment to the organisation. Martins (2000) describes coordination as creating an organisation's competitive edge, making sense of the environment in terms of what is considered as acceptable behaviour, and establishing social system stability (which is the social glue that binds the organisation together).

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) as well as Kotter and Heskett (1992, in Rajegopal, 2013) assert that organisational culture is an intangible but very real "economic asset" of business organisations. The literature reviewed fully supports the view that organisational culture is an economic asset; therefore, the suggestion can be made that the management of the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe will greatly improve its economic performance by adopting a sound organisational culture that employees conform to in support of its mandate. Developing such a culture is the aim of this research.

2.5 HOW AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE DEVELOPS

Since organisational culture is considered one of the central elements contributing to organisational success (Mohant & Rath, 2012), its formation and subsequent development are relevant to this research. Tharp (2009) and Hanenberg (2009) state that an organisational culture is constructed socially and is affected by the environment and history. The principles of this culture (the correct ways to perceive, think and feel) are imparted to new members who join the organisation.

With the passage of time, the assumptions and beliefs that are passed on "thicken" and slowly come into existence as a culture, which ultimately goes unquestioned and influences the behaviour of the organisation's members. Leland (n.d.) concludes that a culture becomes so central to an organisation that it is taken for granted and is rarely spoken or written about explicitly.

Finnegan (2000) indicates that values and norms, which are the basis of culture, are formed through the following four ways:

- By leaders in the organisation, especially those who have shaped them in the past (beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders): People identify with visionary leaders – how they behave and what they expect. They note what such leaders pay attention to and treat them as role models. Nellen (1997) states that it is the organisational

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founders who are key in culture creation, and their impact is considered to be very important.

- Through critical incidents or important events from which lessons are learned about desirable or undesirable behaviour (learning experiences of group members)
- Through effective working relationships among the organisation's members: Beliefs, values, and assumptions brought by new members are also embraced, leading to the establishment of new values and expectations.
- Through the organisation's environment: Culture is learned over a long period of time, and when this happens, it becomes firmly embedded and is difficult to change quickly.

A number of literature sources attribute the formation of organisational values and beliefs to organisational leaders. Ekwutosi and Moses (2013) note, however, that it is becoming evident that organisational culture is more concerned with shared sense-making as a whole rather than just shared internalised beliefs and values, and that people choose to behave according to what they personally prefer, and what they believe will lead to valued outcomes. Cameron and Quinn (2005) add that apart from culture being developed by an organisation's founder, it can be developed by management as they try to improve their company's performance. This is the case in the context of this particular research: the organisational culture under scrutiny was developed by management (a government department).

2.5.1 Transmission of Organisational Culture by Leaders

Once culture has been created, organisational leaders are responsible for its transmission to the other members, ideally upon induction into the organisation. Jaber *et al.*, (2013) indicate that employees learn of this culture through a variety of ways, such as the following:

Stories: a narrative of significant events or people

Rituals: repetitive sequences of activities

Material symbols: essential in creating an organisation's personality

Language: the unique jargon that an organisation develops

Nellen (1997, p. 9) provides the following list showing the primary culture-embedding mechanisms used by leaders in organisations:

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- What leaders pay attention to on a regular basis
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organisational crises
- Observed criteria by which leaders allocate scarce resources
- Deliberate role modelling, teaching and coaching
- Observed criteria by which leaders allocate rewards and status
- Observed criteria by which leaders recruit, select, promote, retire and excommunicate organisational members

As shown in the list above, one of the primary embedding mechanisms is deliberate role modelling, teaching and coaching. Teaching and coaching employees how to offer quality service at competitive prices is of paramount importance in a service organisation such as ecotourism. The fieldwork done in this research will:

- determine whether the management of the ecotourism sector is making use of the known primary embedding mechanisms referred to above in order to transmit organisational culture to employees;
- seek to find out what competitive edge the Zimbabwean ecotourism service providers are offering in order to outcompete regional competitors such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia (Clearly identified ecotourism products or services need to be promoted vigorously as ecotourists will visit the sites to have specific experiences they cannot have in other areas.);
- establish the kinds of stories that are being told as part of culture building, the rituals and ceremonies, the language in use within the organisation, and whether the physical structures and symbols all form part of culture building; and
- establish whether the behaviour demonstrated by the employees at work is representative of the culture that management wants to portray (espoused versus enacted values).

2.5.2 Models of Organisational Culture

Several descriptive models have been developed by researchers in an attempt to explain organisational culture. The works of Schein (produced from as early as 1980) have been cited frequently by scholars as they are regarded as valid sources of reference.

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2.5.2.1 The onion model

Schein (1980) makes use of the metaphor of peeling an onion to describe organisational culture. According to him, we can easily see the outside skin of the onion (behaviours), but without peeling away the layers between the external skin and the core of the onion (the assumptions), we cannot really understand the onion (the people in the organisation). Later work by Hofstede (1991) also makes use of the onion model, in which he views culture as a system that can be peeled layer by layer to reveal the content. He suggests that culture, presented as an onion, implies that as you peel on, you see different levels which work on and influence culture (in any particular organisation). In similar work done by Rousseau (1998), a multi-layered model is proposed, structured as rings that resemble those of an onion. Rousseau's rings are organised from outer layers that are readily accessible to inner layers that are difficult to access. These models proposed by Rousseau, Schein, and Hofstede appear to capture all the key elements of culture, which move in a continuum "from unconscious to conscious, from interpretative to behavior, from inaccessible to accessible" (Rousseau, 1998, p. 158).

2.5.2.2 The iceberg model

Another model that addresses organisational culture is the iceberg model, first proposed by Schein (1980) and later on developed by Stoyko (2009). This model conveys the same idea as the onion model, but advocates thinking of organisational culture as an iceberg,

with most of it unseen because it sits below the surface of the water. The visible part, which is the peak jutting out of the water, includes language, fashion, lore, vision, and group routines. The part around the waterline that takes effort to see but is nonetheless observable includes spirits, aspirations, stable opinions, and preferences. The rest composes the largest portion of the iceberg, with the deep center of buoyancy being the values, assumptions, principles, and mental models. (Stoyko, 2009, p. 5)

This research will be referring to both the iceberg and onion models to explain organisational culture as it relates to the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe.

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Stoyko (2009, p. 1) mentions that, in an organisation

the deep and invisible elements are the most difficult to detect and change because they are the most strongly embraced. They influence thinking in ways that are not always conscious and straightforward. Identifying them may require collective reflection exercises involving probative questioning.

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) explain that the deep and invisible area of the iceberg (or the core of the onion) forms the “DNA” of organisational culture, and in a business setting this DNA comprises issues such as attitudes towards risk or ethics; propensity towards planning (or not); systems and processes; and attitudes towards professionalism, or entrepreneurialism, or even bureaucracy. These authors conclude that these underlying cultural attributes drive the core beliefs, values, and norms that constitute the most observable level (level one) of culture. Jaber *et al.*, (2013) comment that it is this “hidden area” that underlies our behaviour, influences our perceptions, and remains outside our immediate frame of reference until we plunge beneath the surface, or perhaps encounter it unexpectedly.

2.5.3 The onion and iceberg models as a basis for explaining organisational culture

Based on the models described above, O'Donnell and Boyle (2008) conclude that organisational culture is comprised of aspects that are more “superficial”, inclusive of patterns of behaviour and observable symbols and ceremonies, as well as underlying values, assumptions and beliefs that are more deep seated. The analysis of McLean (2009) of the cultural onion and the cultural iceberg leads to the conclusion that it is a challenge to try to understand organisational culture. The question that arises is how to peel away the layers of the onion or get to the bottom of the iceberg (that is, the organisation). Schein (2004, p. 8) comments that “perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious”.

The onion and the iceberg models are similar in many respects as far as organisational culture is concerned, and their emphasis on values is of particular relevance to this research. This aspect of values will be used in this research to measure the presence and effectiveness of the organisational culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe. Researchers such as Deal and Kennedy (1982) emphasise the

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levels of culture that are more visible (heroes, rites, rituals, legends and ceremonies) because they believe these attributes help shape the behaviour of members of an organisation. However, this line of thinking is rejected by others (such as O'Donnell & Boyle, 2008) based on research findings that the invisible levels (deep-seated values) are influential in either progressing or impeding organisational development. Cummings and Worley (2005), supported by Hill (2009), highlight the fact that these deep seated organisational values provide the framework for an organisation's culture and affect nearly all the organisation's activities. Based on the discussion above, the researcher will pay particular attention to the aspect of values in organisational culture models because values influence the thinking in an organisation.

Jones (2010) states that values are the general criteria, standards or principles enacted or championed by a company's leadership and management, and that these values guide the behaviour of organisational members. For this reason it is considered important to explore the aspect of organisational culture in conjunction with the aspects of leadership and management in organisations as these are known to constitute critical components of the success of organisations.

2.6 LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Leaders are said to play a key role in the promotion of desired cultural traits. In the opinion of Robbins and Coulter (2005), managers are directly responsible for an organisation's success or failure, while Ojo (2010) asserts that organisational culture is defined mainly by the leadership of the organisation (and the CEO in particular). Rosenfeld *et al.*, (2006) are convinced that one of the best practices for building and maintaining a strong organisational culture is to have leaders who understand the essential qualities of the desired culture and who reinforce the necessary behaviours throughout the organisation by establishing appropriate policies, management practices, and goals.

A divergent view is offered by O'Donnell and Boyle (2008) who propose that the influence of leadership in the context of organisational culture includes, but is not limited to, the chief executive. They suggest that the management team or leaders at other levels in the organisation, depending on the organisational structure of the organisation under scrutiny, could exert the most influence. Nevertheless, it appears that the

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mission, vision and strategy communicated by the pool of senior management form the glue which holds the organisation together and moves everybody in the same direction (Jaspal, 2010). This research drew on the viewpoint of O'Donnell and Boyle (2008); therefore, in seeking to answer the research questions, the views of management teams in each of the representative departments was regarded as critical in providing information.

In their research, Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) emphasise that leaders are critical in turning knowledge into action. Bennis (1989, in Klein, 2008, p. 5), mentions that firms need to put in place leaders who have personal experience and intimate knowledge of the working processes of their firm; knowledgeable leaders, particularly those with both task-oriented and people-oriented skills and styles, who create positive cultures in their organisations.

Leadership is clearly important in determining the effectiveness of organisational culture (O'Donnell & Boyle, 2008). Schein (2004, p. 11) emphasises that “the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture; the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture”. An example of the importance of leadership is chronicled by Behar (2008), the President of Starbucks International (the largest coffeehouse in the world), who makes it clear that his company's success is about leadership and organisational culture rather than its product. He states that this success has been accomplished by managing the company's corporate culture in a distinctive and superior way, influencing the behaviour of people. Goffee and Jones (1998), along with Cameron and Quinn (2005), mention that for decades now, economists have been trying to determine the elements embedded in truly great companies and have, ironically, found the answers not in hard economic facts but in the nature of relationships within the organisations and their organisational values (existent organisational culture).

Another example of success attributed to organisational culture is of the company Dell. Its founder, Michael Dell, explains the company's spectacular success over the years as follows: “While Dell does have a superior business model, the key to our success is years and years of DNA development that is not replicable outside the company” (Rogers, Meehan & Tanner, 2006).

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In the context of this research, if the ecotourism leadership in Zimbabwe could exercise patience and accept that it may take years to develop their DNA (organisational culture), and if they would focus on that instead of on investing in other physical assets, a scenario similar to that of Starbucks International and of Dell could play out in the Zimbabwean ecotourism sector. From the comments made by the management of the said successful organisations, it can be deduced that the role of organisational leadership is to cement the vision and strengthen the organisational culture in the organisation. This notion is supported by the statement in a publication issued by the Northern Leadership Academy (2007, p. 4) that “leaders form, shape and embed culture, and are themselves formed by culture”.

2.6.1 Leadership Style, Organisational Culture and Organisational Performance

Schimmoeller (2010) indicates that organisational culture is indeed an important factor in influencing the competitive strength of a firm, and alongside leadership and management, these two become powerful determinants of organisational performance. By way of example and in support of the notion put forward by Schimmoeller (2010) it can be mentioned that under its current influential leadership the Zimbabwean Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality is the only ministry that registered a 5% increase in economic growth in 2014. (Muzembi, 2014)

This research will proceed to explore the interrelationship among organisational culture, leadership and organisational performance.

Pfeffer (2002) is of the opinion that leadership is the single most important factor when a business wants to maintain its competitive advantage, while Lamond (2003) finds culture to be one of the most influential forces in an organisation and critical to organisational effectiveness. Schein (2004) and O’Farrell (2006) suggest that culture and leadership are conceptually intertwined as shown in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5: The links between leadership style, organisational culture and organisational performance

Source: Adapted from Ogbonna and Harris (2000, p. 771)

As portrayed in Figure 5, there is constant interplay between leadership and organisational culture (Berrio, 2003; Parry, 2002), and this leadership-culture relationship significantly influences the performance of organisations (Aluko, 2003; Block, 2003). Good leadership is important for the success of any organisation (Schyve, 2009). In order to create a strong, functional corporate culture, organisations must first be able to develop strong leadership that is capable of dealing with environmental pressures/forces that will inevitably arise. According to Kritsonis (2013), there are *driving* forces as well as *restraining* forces which must be dealt with, and dealing with these is the duty of the leadership. Therefore, in order for the Zimbabwean ecotourism sector to succeed in its efforts to improve its performance, it needs to first develop a strong leadership as mentioned by Schyve (2009) above. Mahrokian *et al.*, (2010) comment that poor leadership results in a failure to communicate a firm's strategy to employees as well as in making the mission, vision, and objectives of the organisation transparent to employees; these are important leadership functions and are required to execute goals effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, Mahrokian *et al.*, (2010) highlight that clear communication is a key aspect in developing culture, and top management

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should communicate its commitment to building and managing a strong corporate culture, and should make such thoughts transparent to all employees.

In general it has been observed that very few companies are good at creating and maintaining a strong corporate culture. This is due to the fact that culture typically takes time to develop, and the leadership is impatient to the extent of adopting “quick fix methods” to develop a culture. Accepting that it takes a lot of time and effort to develop a strong culture will pay off in the long run.

2.6.2 Characteristics of Successful Service-orientated Organisations

Ecotourism, as a subsector of mainstream tourism, is categorised as a service organisation. As mentioned previously, culture is organisation-specific (Mahrokian *et al.*, 2010) and the cultures of service organisations tend to have certain characteristics that are peculiar to them. Flamholtz, Kannan-Narasimhan and Nayar (2005) have identified elements of an effective organisational culture in the service sector that have an impact on financial performance. These elements were modified by Flamholtz and Randle (2012b p. 86) to be as follows:

- (1) Customer-client orientation
- (2) Orientation toward employees
- (3) Standards of performance and accountability
- (4) Innovation and/or commitment to change
- (5) Company process orientation

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) recommend that the above core elements be included in the organisational culture of a service organisation to ensure an effective organisational culture.

In regard to customer/client orientation in the ecotourism sector, Bustam and Stein (2013) mention that a culture of carrying out research on ecotourists' geographic, demographic, and psychographic differences is needed for ecotourism to be successful, and according to Goeldner and Ritchie (2009), such research should investigate the following:

- Who are the present/potential ecotourists and where do they come from?

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- What are their likes/dislikes?
- What are their destination preferences?
- What is the service provider's competitive situation?
- What are the likely future trends in the ecotourism market?
- What are the prospects for increasing demand?

According to Clarke (2006), successful destinations are those that offer the visitor something unique and that create a sense of place and an identity which is different from that of competitors as the replication of similar attractions in the same region tends to limit rather than encourage tourism success. Clarke (2006), therefore, encourages the need for ecotourism service providers to realise that no two regions are ever exactly the same, either in terms of what they have to offer, or the visitors they can attract.

To increase its chances of success, an ecotourism destination should provide unique and convenient recreation activities, offering an experience that will enhance its competitive advantage. Differentiation should be established in the type of ecotourism services offered, for instance, an ecotourism destination in Zimbabwe could offer traditional Zimbabwean foods served by waiters wearing their traditional or cultural attires, sleeping accommodation outdoors, and visits to traditional villages to observe general day-to-day chores. Bustam and Stein (2013) emphasise that such offerings are important as ecotourism should afford ecotourists with opportunities to learn about the environment (in the form of nature trails), relieve stress (in the form of areas to escape crowds and urban life), and bond with family and friends (in the form of family and group camping areas).

Jaber *et al.*, (2013) assert that no organisational culture is superior to others: each has its own strengths and weaknesses. It is also possible for organisations to display several cultural types (Bradley & Parker, 2006). Furthermore, according to O'Donnell and Boyle (2008, p. 62), "there is no one generic model for addressing culture in an organisation because a number of factors are at play", such as the organisation's scale, structural framework, leadership style, management buy-in, professional/administrative split, stability, modernisation, recruitment methods, and explicit inclusion of culture in strategy statements/business plans. Although there are several types of organisational culture, Joseph and Dai (2009) and Jaber *et al.*, (2013) point out that each organisation has a unique organisational culture, and different

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organisations have their own distinctive cultures. Owing to this diversity, those organisations that do not have strong cultures most probably find it difficult to settle for one they can identify with. According to Ogbonna and Harris (2000, p. 769), “an organisation therefore needs to analyse its existing organisational culture, as well as to map out the desired one”, while O'Donnell and Boyle (2008) suggest that the type of culture that an organisation chooses should be congruent with and meet its needs.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive analysis of the history, elements, development and current effectiveness and relevance of organisational culture, thereby answering the first research question about what exactly constitutes an organisational culture. Chapter 3 will focus on answering the second part of the first research question, namely what constitutes ecotourism.

3 CHAPTER 3: ECOTOURISM

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The aim of this chapter is to review existing literature regarding the concept of ecotourism in order to find out what constitutes ecotourism, and, subsequently, to establish what an ecotourism culture is. It also seeks to clarify the defining elements of an ecotourism organisational culture framework.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the global development of tourism and the issue of sustainability, which eventually gave rise to the concept of ecotourism. Theoretically, the descriptive elements of an organisational culture will be amalgamated with those of ecotourism in an attempt to come up with an ecotourism organisational culture.

Tourism is a very vibrant industry, and is said to have enabled over one billion tourists to travel the globe in 2012 (UNWTO, 2012a). Telfer and Sharpley (2008, pp. 21-22) remark that “global tourism is predominantly driven by tourists who travel from developed to less developed countries”. Therefore, it is a primary source of economic development for developing countries (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). The World Bank Institute (WBI, 2012) describes a developing country as one in which the majority of the people live on far less money and with far fewer basic public services than the population in highly industrialised countries. Zimbabwe has a population of 13,72 million people, of which 68% live in rural areas and are dependent on their areas for food and shelter (Zimbabwe Demographics, 2013). The majority of the population live on less than USD1,25 per day (World Bank Indicators, 2013), which is indicative of the high levels of poverty. Therefore, in terms of the definition provided above by the WBI (2012), Zimbabwe is a developing country. Zimbabwe is a Third World economy, and according to Mawere and Mubaya (2012), such economies have little more than their natural resource endowment upon which to base their development. Furthermore, according to the Zimbabwean Minister of Tourism and Hospitality,

ecotourism and biodiversity is most relevant to African countries such as Zimbabwe because it is our area of competency; while the rest of the world has replaced its biodiversity with ‘concrete jungles’... come to Africa, and that is where you get to see the real jungles. Tourists do not come here to sleep in

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our hotels ... we do not have any hotels that compete really ... on an international scale. They actually come to feel the bush effect ... that's the biggest attraction. (Muzembi, 2014)

While it is desirable for a developing country to aim for higher numbers of incoming tourists, Preston-Whyte, Brooks and Ellery (2006) and Eriksson and Lidström (2013) point out that when great numbers of tourists travel to developing locations, they have a potential effect on local communities and the environment. For example, as recorded in a document compiled by the UN World Tourism Organization, the UN Environment Programme, and the World Meteorological Organization (UNWTO, UNEP and WMO, 2008, p. 132), “in 2005, five per cent of the total carbon dioxide emissions of the world were directly assigned to tourism; including transportation, accommodation and other tourism related activities”. These statistics have prompted writers such as Budeanu (2005, p. 92), Hall (2005, p. 264), and Meletis and Campbell (2009, p. 757) to conclude that if tourism is not managed well, the increased numbers of tourists may result in natural resources being over-exploited and the ecosystems of developing tourism destinations being damaged and destroyed. Hall (2005) warns that increased tourism may end up undermining the tourism industry itself and causing this primary source of income for many developing nations to be challenged. This environmental cause-and-effect dilemma in the tourism industry necessitated sustainable development (in the form of ecotourism) in the mainstream tourism sector. In a report compiled by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs”.

3.2 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

While the value of tourism has long been recognised all over the world, Okech (2010, p. 1) laments that “international attention to the role of tourism (and its subsectors) development especially in Africa is still lacking”. This author further notes that, with its huge diversity, its rich supply of natural resources, and its wealth of wildlife and cultural heritage, Africa is one of the main destinations for international tourism in the world. The study of tourism as an academic field is a recent phenomenon (Xiao & Smith, 2006), and the same is true of its subsectors, particularly ecotourism.

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Eriksson and Lidström (2013, p. 15) note that “there is limited research support of the field of ecotourism in some geographical areas of the world”. In support of this observation, Lu and Nepal (2009) report that from 2003 to 2007 only 6% of the published academic articles they reviewed on sustainable tourism had been done on Latin and Central America whereas 37% were done on Europe. Research carried out by Ballantyne, Packer and Axelsen (2009, p. 4) shows almost the same result (over-representation of Europe) but they have noted “the gradual erosion of the dominance of North America; the increasing contribution of Australia, New Zealand and Asian countries”. Eriksson and Lidström (2013) express concern about these statistics which point to a geographical gap in research on sustainable tourism (ecotourism), implying that more effort should be directed towards conducting research in academic fields that have been neglected (such as sustainable tourism in Africa). Makochekanwa (2013) comments that ecotourism, in particular in the SADC region, has attracted relatively limited attention in terms of scholarly research. This comment, among others, has motivated the researcher to carry out this particular study.

Although ecotourism is still in its infancy in Zimbabwe (Siamachira, 2011), research interest in it is growing. In an attempt to address the existing gap in research done in the field of ecotourism in some geographical areas (Eriksson & Lidström, 2013), some scholars, such as Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011), Muzvidziwa (2013), Mawere and Mubaya (2012), and Mutana, Chipfuva and Muchenje (2013), have done research on Zimbabwe. However, this particular study takes a different approach by focusing on the development of an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe with the aim of addressing the poor performance of Zimbabwe’s tourism sector and its subsectors. In 2011, the contribution of this sector to the GDP stood at 10,3% (Mushawevato, 2012). In a report by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the projection is that it can be higher, and that it should rise to 15% by the year 2015 (The Herald, 17/01/2013). According to Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011), this poor performance is partly due to the international condemnation of Zimbabwe’s land reform programme, as well as to perceptions of poor governance. However, Erdogan and Tosun (2009) are of the view that poor ecotourism performance is associated with a lack of good organisational culture in this sector and among ecotourism service providers.

3.2.1 Rationale for Studying Organisational Culture in Zimbabwe's Ecotourism Sector

The development of an organisational culture has been proved to be instrumental in the success of several organisations (Muratović, 2013), and the same is likely to happen in the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe if a supportive organisational culture is developed. Ecotourism thus presents itself as a special area of study in the sense that “ecotourism is most relevant to Africa; most relevant to countries like Zimbabwe, because it is our area of competency. The rest of the world has replaced its biodiversity with concrete jungles ... the pull factor here is actually the jungle” (Participant 1 (henceforth referred to as P1) in this research).

Zimbabwe is rich in the natural resources that attract ecotourists. One of the country's well-known and most popular tourist destinations is the majestic Victoria Falls, which, being a natural resource, costs nothing to exist. However, the preservation of such resources is important to the sustainability of the tourism sector (Munyeza, 2009). In spite of its rich endowment of natural resources, the country is still unable to fully utilise the sector's potential.

Zimbabwe is a Third World government without financial capability and in serious need of foreign exchange. The exploitation of the country's natural resources for tourist consumption, therefore, becomes an easy option because they are “low-hanging fruit, ready for the picking” (P1). Tourism and all its subsectors should be stimulated as it is one of the most feasible ways to counteract the economic problems currently being experienced in Zimbabwe. This research thus looks at ecotourism as a subsector of mainstream tourism.

Ecotourism is seen as a simple business to begin because little infrastructure is needed. Photograph 1 below, showing natural and beautiful scenery, is representative of an ecotourism destination, confirming the statement of Munyeza (2009) that ecotourism features are natural and cost nothing to exist, but need to be preserved.



Photograph 1: Ecotourism site

Source: Active adventures in South America, n.d.

Unlike other economic sectors, ecotourism is highly dependent upon natural capital such as wildlife, scenery and culture. Ecotourism can be built from the assets of local people, such as their traditions, festivals, their land, and natural and built heritage (Samvura, 2014). This author further notes that most economic sectors are subject to crippling export trade tariffs, but the tourism sector is not because the consumer (tourist) travels to the product (the tourist destination). Jonga (2014) mentions that today's tourist is looking beyond having the conventional holiday, seeking a more enriching experience, and Zimbabwean communities are strategically located to provide what ecotourists desire. The country offers a variety of landscapes and a rich cultural heritage, complemented by the locals' unequalled hospitality. Therefore, studying ecotourism in Zimbabwe would be beneficial to the country – it is naturally ready for ecotourism practices but, according to the UNWTO, is unfortunately not performing maximally (The Herald, 17/01/2013).

Yet another reason for studying organisational culture within the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe is that concern for the global environment is growing rapidly, and increased pressure is being placed on responsible travel and holiday-making; therefore, the ecotourism industry is at its peak, and the country needs a workable organisational culture framework in order to strategically position itself to reap the benefits of tourism.

Scholars, such as Erdogan and Tosun (2009, p. 417), "equate poor ecotourism performance with the lack of a good organisational culture within and among the ecotourism service providers", and this research takes off from this premise.

3.3 TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT THEORIES (IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES)

According to Chan and Bhatta (2013, p. 71), “many developing countries, in line with the millennium development goals have adopted sustainable tourism or ecotourism as a strategy to cope with the problems of poverty and underdevelopment along with resource protection”.

The above statement indicates that tourism is being considered as an effective tool to promote development. In support of this idea, Telfer and Sharpley (2008) mention that the most common justification for the promotion of tourism is its potential contribution to development. Considering that tourism and development are closely linked, this section takes a look at the development theories that inform tourism generally and ecotourism specifically.

Chan and Bhatta (2013) note that the available literature presents the relationship between tourism and development theories in an evolutionary order, with reference to four well-known theories of development, namely, modernisation, dependency, neo-liberalism, and sustainable development, and these will be elaborated on below.

3.3.1 Modernisation

According to the modernisation theory, modern societies are more productive, children are better educated, and the needy receive more welfare. Modernisation is a progressive process which in the long run is not only inevitable but desirable.

3.3.1.1 Influence of modernisation theory on tourism development

During the 1960s, the tourism system was equated with economic growth and development, which can be viewed as a part of the modernisation paradigm. The core premise of this paradigm is economic growth that enables societies to advance through stages from traditional to an age of mass consumption (Rostow, 1960 cited in Sharpley, 2000). Opperman and Chon (1997), Scheyvens (2002), and Sharpley (2002) chronicle

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this advancement and indicate that developing countries promoted tourism growth in order to maximise foreign currency earning, internationalise their economies, and achieve national development goals. Sharpley (2000) comments that the perceived developmental contribution of tourism (through foreign exchange earnings, the multiplier concept and backward linkages throughout the economy) is a notion that is firmly embedded in modernisation theory.

3.3.2 Dependency

The dependency theory states that:

dependency is an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies ... a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected.

(Dos Santos, 1971)

3.3.2.1 Influence of dependency theory on tourism development

The dependency paradigm gained prominence in the 1960s as a critique of modernisation. Many scholars discussed the relationship between dependency and tourism, and subsequently highlighted the argument that developed countries, multi-national agencies or greater capitalistic firms control tourism development as well as businesses in less developed countries (Telfer, 2002; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Lea (1988) strongly supports this argument, saying that the dependency theory of tourism reflects historical patterns of colonialism and dependency. Lea (1988) comments that it is, therefore, not surprising that the dominance of developed countries and large companies over poor countries in terms of tourism investment, technology, goods and services further reinforce the dependency and vulnerability of developing country destinations.

3.3.3 Neo-liberalism

Seifert (2011, p. 4) states that “neoliberalism advocates for the liberalisation of trade, finance and lets the market forces set the price of goods and services on the

trade market". According to this author, the market is seen as the best allocator of resources.

3.3.3.1 Influence of neo-liberal theory on tourism development

Scheyvens (2002) indicates that, according to the theory of neo-liberalism, fewer developed countries promote their tourism products through open-market systems specifically by attracting foreign and local companies, enterprises and tour management agencies. There is, therefore, always the possibility of competition, politics and power-play between and within local and foreign companies. However, the neo-liberal paradigm is criticised for not addressing the issue of local-global competition, and failing to recognise the power relations at play. Chan and Bhatta (2013) comment that the irony of it is that community-based initiatives or small companies are not usually able to receive much benefit from tourism due to the dominance of large foreign companies as well as local elites in the tourism market.

3.3.4 Criticism of the theories of development

Telfer and Sharpley (2008), together with Mowforth and Munt (2009), comment that the theories of development, namely, modernisation, dependency, and neo-liberalism, have been criticised for having failed to deliver socio-economic benefits and improve the quality of life of the poor, and for their lack of recognition of environmental and cultural sustainability in the development process. Chan and Bhatta (2013) are of the opinion that the issues that were not effectively addressed in the above-mentioned development theories led to the rise of an idealistic concept known as the alternative paradigm, which advocates the long-term well-being of local communities, such as socio-economic progress and conservation of cultural and natural resources. They indicate that the concept of sustainable development was proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, and that the tourism system subsequently incorporated it in the form of sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

3.4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ALTERNATIVE PARADIGM)

According to Ene, Gheorghiu and Gheorghiu, (2011, p. 261),

Sustainable development is neither a doctrine nor a theory, much less a synthesis between economics and ecology. It is a pragmatic approach to implement economic tools for planet management. Sustainable development is a new term for an old idea: there is no viable economy without natural resources and no resources management without economic rationale.

Sustainable development is an alternative approach to tourism development which appears to be highly favoured by scholars as, contrary to the above-mentioned development theories, it responds to the negative impacts of mass tourism. Chan and Bhatta (2013) mention that mass tourism is non-local-orientated, destructive and have high leakages, while alternative tourism is community-orientated and protective, and has a strong linkage with the local economy.

Welford, Ytterhus, and Eligh (1999) mention that it is essential to know that the theoretical evolution of ecotourism or sustainable tourism had its origin in the concept of sustainable development. According to Liburd (2010), because sustainable development is considered to be a good idea, it is enthusiastically supported by governments, non-governmental organisations and academics. Commenting on the Rio Earth Summit held in 1992, Cater (1994, in Chan and Bhatta, 2013, p. 75) points out that sustainable development is more than about protecting the environment and living within the carrying capacity of environment; rather it is about

the quality of life, intra- and intergenerational equity and social justice, and should be viewed as a balanced interplay among three components: economic, environmental and social sustainability and its essence is in the harmonious integration of sound and viable economy, responsible governance, social cohesion, and ecological integrity to ensure that development is a life-enhancing process.

The need for sustainability in mainstream tourism gave rise to what is now known as ecotourism. Ecotourism is the fastest growing subsector of mainstream tourism (Agrawal & Baranwal, 2012). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2006) records that the ecotourism market has been growing since the 1990s at a rate of

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between 20% to 34% every year, depending on the destination, and this is more than three times the growth rate of worldwide tourism as a whole.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

According to Bien (2006, p. 4), a sustainable activity means that “an activity can be done in the same or similar manner for the indefinite future,” and is sustainable in three main aspects:

- *Environmentally*: The activity minimises any damage to the environment (for instance, flora, fauna, water, and soil, or involving energy use and contamination) and tries to benefit the environment in a positive way through protection and conservation.
- *Socially and culturally*: The activity does not harm, and may revitalise, the social structure or culture of the community where it is located.
- *Economic*: The activity does not simply begin and then rapidly die because of bad business practices; it continues to contribute to the economic well-being of the local community. A sustainable business activity should benefit its owners, its employees and its neighbours.

Gisolf (2010) chronicles the origins of sustainability in tourism, and mentions that many things in the world have been going wrong in Western societies, such as diminishing biodiversity, a thinning ozone layer, noticeable greenhouse effects, and discrimination against large populations. The principles of sustainability have, therefore, been developed in response to these problems, and ecotourism came into existence.

Global interest in ecotourism officially started in 2002 when the World Ecotourism Summit was held in Quebec City, Canada to mark 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism (UNWTO, 2012a). According to Eriksson and Lidström (2013), this was a year during which official, non-governmental and international organisations, academics, community representatives, and individuals that had an interest in ecotourism were brought together. The aim of this summit, as outlined by its initiators (UNWTO and UNEP), was to “identify some agreed principles and priorities for the future development and management of ecotourism”.

3.6 LITERARY ORIGINS OF ECOTOURISM

According to Tsung-Wei Lai (n.d. in Hundloe, 2002), the concept of ecotourism was developed in the early 1980s by conservationists, such as Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, who started to use the term “ecotourism” while lobbying to conserve wetlands in northern Yucatan as a breeding ground for the American flamingo. Ecotourism, upon its inception, was regarded as a way of giving nature value so that conservation could be achieved without sacrificing economic growth.

Cole (2006, p. 629) and Donohoe and Needham (2006, p. 203-204) mention that *“ecotourism is a niche market that emerged because of increased market demands for sustainable tourism practices”*. Over the last decade, market interest in ecotourism has come about largely because an awareness of the environment in which we live, concern for the fragility of the planet, and appreciation of traditional cultures have spread from the initial concern of a few to a preoccupation among many educated travellers. According to Sharpley (2006), ecotourism came about as an antithesis of mainstream mass-tourism and in opposition to the negative effects of international travel flows. Although it is still a fraction of the mainstream tourism revenue, consumer demand for ecotourism has been estimated as rising three to four times faster than for mass tourism, and the UNWTO (2012b) has declared that it is one of the fastest growing niches of the tourism sector. These developments have prompted Crawford and Mulvey (2009, p. 15) to say that “ecotourism is, out of necessity and through consumer demand, taking a worldwide move from niche to norm”. The development of ecotourism, as understood by Eriksson and Lidström (2013), includes the provision of tourism products and services while taking into consideration the economic, social and environmental aspects of society. Kuuder, Bagson and Aalangdong (2013) mention that tourism, and particularly ecotourism, has become increasingly important to the economies of many African countries mainly because many of these ecotourism projects are located in poorer rural parts of the continent and may be the only main economic activity or livelihood strategy they have. Furthermore, ecotourism has no entry barriers, unlike mass tourism whose development requires costly infrastructural inputs, which are already scarcely available to poor countries. In the case of mass tourism, host countries are told by tour operators and government, that visitors from developed countries require certain types of tourist infrastructure in terms of accommodation and facilities, that is, resort hotels, golf courses, health services and so on, and also have

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political and social expectations ... of the country to be visited.

(Lea, 1988; Richter, 1989)

Schultz (2013) mentions that ecotourism is an emerging sector that seems to be in increasingly high demand in the international tourism industry, being propelled by the desire of affluent consumers to experience pristine environments and exotic cultural encounters, and the wish of communities, governments, and travel companies to meet this desire. Conservation International (2008) has recorded the statistic that 700 million people travel each year to the more than 33 000 protected areas worldwide.

Davidson (2005) states that previously, tourism (and its subsidiaries) was not taken seriously by economists, economic developers, or even governments as it was seen as fun and games, recreation, leisure, and, in fact, an unproductive pastime. Tourism was taken to be just the opposite of the traditional work ethic. Now, ecotourism presents tourism with an opportunity to demonstrate that it can play an equally responsible role in any country's economy.

3.6.1 Defining Ecotourism

Beaumont (2011), and Fennel and Nowaczek (2010) state that ecotourism, since its emergence in the 1980s, has been defined differently by numerous authors. In fact, Crawford and Mulvey (2009) mention that to date, the definition of ecotourism is still evolving, and there is still no clear definition of the concept. This points to the possibility that reaching consensus on an exact definition of ecotourism may not happen in the near future. Buckley (2003, p. 76) explains that this is because "ecotourism is a complex concept". In addition, the term ecotourism has multiple synonyms and/or similar expressions (Eriksson & Lidström, 2013). Generally, these multiple synonyms and/or similar expressions share common traits and concepts that are interwoven, for instance, the aim of benefiting locals economically and promoting conservation, yet their focus is directed differently (Binns & Nel, 2002). According to Williams (2009), these factors contribute to the complexity of defining the concept of ecotourism and to causing confusion.

Table 4 below is adapted from a compilation by Eriksson and Lidström (2013, p. 31) of the several definitions of ecotourism that have been offered by researchers,

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organisations and public institutions within the fields of tourism and ecotourism specifically.

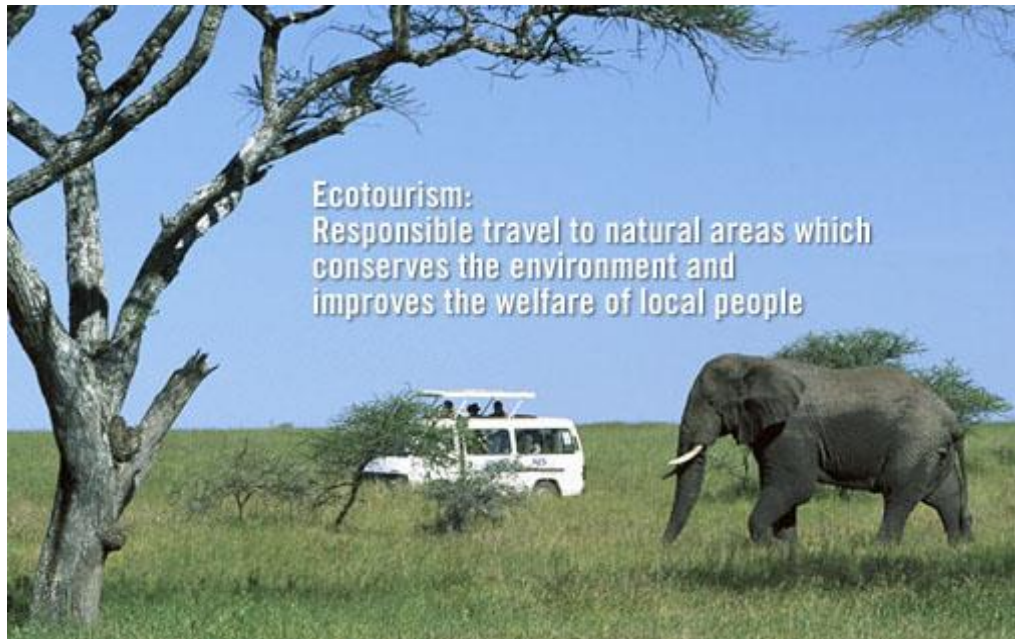
Table 4: Definitions of ecotourism

Author(s)	Ecotourism definition
TIES (1990)	'Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people'
Wallace and Pierce (1996, p. 848)	'Travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas for study, enjoyment, or volunteer assistance. It is travel that concerns itself with flora, fauna, geology, and ecosystems of an area, as well as the people (caretakers) who live nearby, their needs, their culture, and their relationship to the land '
Global Development Research Centre (2002, p. 1-2)	'[It] contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation, and contributing to their well-being, interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitors, lends itself better to independent travelers as well as to organized tours for small size groups.'
Hall and Page (2006, p. 284)	'Any form of tourism development which is regarded as environmentally friendly and has the capacity to act as a branding mechanism for some forms of tourist products'; "Green' or 'nature-based' tourism which is essentially a form of special interest tourism and refers to a specific market segment and the products [that] are generated for that segment' 'A form of nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically and culturally sustainable'
Honey (2008, p. 32–33)	'Ecotourism is to travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to

Author(s)	Ecotourism definition
	be low impact and (often) small scale. It helps educate the traveler, provides funds for conservation, directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights.'
Cammorata (2013, p. 200)	'Traveling to a remote area to enjoy, protect, and bring awareness to endangered wildlife [...] [It] is about having low impact on the environment – a “leave-no-trace” mindset – while also promoting conservation for the area.'
Ceballos-Lascurain (1993)	'Travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery, wildlife and any existing cultural manifestations'

Source: Adapted from Eriksson and Lidström (2013, p. 31)

Among the many conceptualisations of ecotourism, the one by Ceballos-Lascurain (1993) stands out as the most popular as it puts more emphasis than others on the importance of natural areas. UNESCO (2010) describes ecotourism as a form of tourism to relatively undisturbed natural areas for the main purposes of admiring them and learning more about the associated habitats.



Source: www.eco-tour.org (10/11/2013)

In this thesis the definition provided by Ceballos-Lascurain (1993) (see Table 4) will be adopted because, as observed by Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011), it captures the essence of ecotourism, and in this case particularly in Zimbabwe.

The idea that appears to be common to all the definitions (see Table 4) is that ecotourism should offer benefits, and not incur costs for or be a burden on host communities and the natural environment (Mawere & Mubaya, 2012). Honey and Gilpin (2009) comment that all the definitions reflect the desire of many holidaymakers to give something back to the places they visit, or at the very least, avoid doing them harm.

3.6.2 The Mandate of Ecotourism

An important ecotourism organisation, The International Ecotourism Society, defines ecotourism as “the responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (TIES, 1990, p. 2006). Honey (2008, p. 29-31) has revised this definition, arguing that ecotourism should encompass the following seven characteristics:

- Travelling to natural destinations
- Building environmental awareness
- Minimising the negative impact on host local communities and the environment

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- Providing direct financial benefit for conservation of biological and cultural diversity
- Providing benefit and empowerment for the local people by providing them with jobs and quotas
- Respecting local cultures
- Supporting human rights and democratic movements

Mawere and Mubaya (2012) express the opinion that the approach of Honey (2008) to ecotourism should be adopted as it is one of the most comprehensive and all-encompassing descriptions available and offers a standard understanding of good-practice ecotourism. Based on a statement by Mawere and Mubaya (2012) that Honey's concept of ecotourism has fast gained prominence over others, this concept will be cited frequently in this research.

In a document produced by TIES (1990 Edition) it is stated that:

Since 1990, when TIES first created the principles, we now know much more about the tourism industry through scientific and design related research, and we are also better informed about environmental degradation and impacts on local cultures and non-human species.

Based on the above statement, the definition of ecotourism has been updated to: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015, p. 1). The education that is referred to in this instance is meant to include both staff and visitors. The previous TIES definition formulated in 1990 (TIES, 1990) included only two of the three pillars of ecotourism, namely conservation and local communities. In the revised principles and definition small changes and additions (the addition of the concepts of *interpretation and education*) were implemented to provide more clarity and eliminate ambiguity TIES (2015). Due to this recent development, which came about when this research was well underway, ecotourism principles will henceforth be seen to encompass education as the third pillar of ecotourism. In a statement issued by TIES (2015) it is said that well-trained, multilingual naturalist guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication are essential to good ecotourism. Therefore, education is of paramount importance.

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The tenets put forward by Honey (2008) still hold water, but the incorporation of education and interpretation into the approach is necessary. The need for such incorporation is underlined by Kellert (1996) who states that “the higher a person’s education, the more likely that person is to express greater concern, affection, interest, and knowledge, and less likely to express exploitive and authoritarian attitudes towards wildlife and nature”.

3.6.3 The Unique Nature of Ecotourism

Ecotourism occupies a specialist niche within tourism (Crawford & Mulvey, 2009). In a document published by Tourism Western Australia (2006, p. 3) it is stated that ecotourism’s emphasis on ecological sustainability “places it at the leading edge of the overall ‘greening’ of tourism in which environmental aspects are a high priority”. This document also contains the explanation that the ecotourism industry has been developed to cater for tourists with an interest in the environment, with a desire to learn, to appreciate, to understand and to conserve. Accordingly, the focus of ecotourism is on the experience rather than the destination. One of the principles of ecotourism is that tourists get to see nature unpolluted, while the community (the stewards of their source of enjoyment) also benefit in return.

According to the strategy of Botswana National Ecotourism (2002, p. 21), ecotourism must, for pragmatic as well as ethical reasons, contribute to local economic development. If host communities are benefiting directly from the presence of tourists, they will have a vested interest in curbing unsustainable activities and in conserving the natural area and its resources upon which the tourism industry depends.

This element of reciprocity sets ecotourism apart from other forms of tourism. Furthermore, the participation of local communities and the subsequent flow of benefits to these communities, as well as the emphasis on conservation, differentiate ecotourist ventures from other tourist segments.

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Worldwide, tourists are moving towards experiencing nature for pleasure. In the White Paper on the Development of Tourism in Barbados (Strategic Solutions Inc., 2012, p. 12) modern-day tourists are described as being different from [tourists of] any other time in the history of tourism. They are more sophisticated, informed, educated, individualistic, discriminating and demanding than their predecessors and have more choices than in times past. They are more flexible, independent, quality conscious and harder to please, with specific needs that influence their choice of destination. They are also more environmentally and socially conscious, and more aware about the necessity to respect the environment, culture and social life of host communities. They are looking to experience and learn rather than merely stand back and gaze, hence, the increase in tourism types such as ecotourism. They are also less likely to be satisfied with sun, sea and sand alone, they are looking for more unique and authentic experiences while on vacation and especially desire to get to know the local culture, the people, to eat local food and are increasingly more prone to stay in locally owned accommodations. They are more price-sensitive and increasingly require greater value and a heightened level of experience, with the pursuit of 'good value for money' being the primary motivator.

It is logical to predict that tourism will, in future, ultimately rely on the availability and quality of natural areas (in other words, ecotourism areas) (Ross & Wall, 1999).

3.6.4 Benefits of Ecotourism

Several governments, whether developed or still developing, realise the benefits of practising ecotourism. Of special note are the countries Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Kenya that are often cited in ecotourism literature as models of successful ecotourism (Eagles, Jennifer & David, 1999). According to these authors, these destinations possess unique environments and a wide variety of wildlife, and can earn much needed foreign currency through practising ecotourism. Apart from foreign currency earnings, Kusler (2000) cites other benefits of ecotourism:

- Visitors get to stay at local-style hotels, bed and breakfasts, or in villages; they get to eat locally produced and prepared food, and can participate in local activities.
- Local residents create and manage their own businesses, such as making handicrafts, hosting visitors, and earning money in the process. They also get to share their culture with tourists.

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- Owing to the fact that ecotourists do not require luxury, but want to experience the local conditions, culture and food, practising ecotourism can help in the efforts to protect the natural and cultural values existent in an area by attracting visitors who are respectful and appreciative of the particular area.
- The fees and taxes that are levied as entry fees to certain protected areas can be used to financially support the preservation of culture and arts in the area. It can also be used for guarding against over-exploitation and other detrimental activities.
- Ecotourism helps to educate individuals throughout society about the importance of preserving the environment and culture. Through the practice of ecotourism, detrimental and unviable traditions and cultural norms can be discouraged as communities are given a reason for preserving desirable traditional lifestyles.
- Ecotourism offers educational and scientific research opportunities. Kusler (2000) stresses that a successful ecotour must have well-trained guides who preferably have graduate or undergraduate degrees in the natural or social sciences.

Morgan (1999) explains that the kind of education and interpretation that ecotourism is supposed to provide must be more than just a one-way transfer of information; it should be about explanation, stimulation, provocation, revelation, and understanding in a manner that personally involves the ecotourists in an interesting and enjoyable fashion.

Much of what has been discussed concerns the international conceptualisation of ecotourism. It has been said that good research should be globally competitive, yet locally responsive. Therefore, the way that ecotourism has been conceptualised and implemented in Zimbabwe will be discussed by analysing its historical development. Included in this discussion will be how Zimbabwe (from the Government to small-scale operators) has interpreted the international concept of ecotourism suggested by Ceballos-Lascurain (1993) to fit the national context, in other words how the theory of ecotourism translates into practice in a Zimbabwean context. Following that, attention will be given to the need to develop an ecotourism organisational culture to enhance the performance of ecotourism in Zimbabwe to match international standards.

3.7 BACKGROUND TO ECOTOURISM IN ZIMBABWE

Mawere and Mubaya (2012) mention that it is unwise to attempt to have an appreciation of the evolution of ecotourism in Zimbabwe before revisiting the status of tourism per se as it is the latter that gave birth to the former.

According to Mushawevato (2012), tourism is Zimbabwe's second largest foreign currency earner after mining, and in 2011 tourism contributed 10,3% to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. Regionally, it is a significant contributor to the socio-economic development of Africa south of the Sahara.

Epstein (2005) mentions that some of the ecotourism initiatives worldwide that are cited most frequently are the ACAP in Nepal, ULURU / Ayers Rock in Australia, and CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe. This lends international stature to this Zimbabwean ecotourism project.

CAMPFIRE was originally set up to spearhead the ecotourism industry of the nation, but because it has failed to function as originally intended, ecotourism in Zimbabwe is not performing as well as it should. As the CAMPFIRE project is currently undergoing structural changes, and not much information that could inform this research could be divulged, this project was not included in this research, and other departments were considered instead. Nevertheless, this research still makes reference to CAMPFIRE, although not in great detail.

As chronicled by Bond and Frost (2005), CAMPFIRE started in the late 1980s as a programme that developed largely around the concept of managing wildlife and wildlife habitats in the communal lands of Zimbabwe for the benefit of the people living in these areas. This development was in response to the realisation that people living adjacent to or in wildlife habitats should come to realise the value of wildlife, such as the elephant, buffalo, lion, and leopard. Instead of leaving people to simply put up with the threats to life and property that living in close proximity with wildlife entailed, CAMPFIRE intended to give these people the opportunity to benefit from their situation much more directly and substantially. Odero and Huchu (1998) reiterate the major aim of CAMPFIRE as set out in the 1999-2000 Annual Report of the CAMPFIRE Association as being the development of ecotourism mainly to provide income to the surrounding

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local communities and promote the conservation of natural resources through wildlife management. It should be noted here that this aim is in accordance with the international conceptualisation of ecotourism proffered by Honey (2008).

CAMPFIRE, being an ecotourism initiative, focused on four major natural resources: wildlife, woodlands, water, and grazing. In practice, however, the use of wildlife was prioritised since its realisable value is far greater (Bond & Frost, 2005).

Siamachira (2011) mentions that ecotourism in Zimbabwe is a fairly young and emerging industry that enjoyed the enthusiastic support of communities, the government, private sector and donors during the 1990s and in early 2000, but since then meaningful support has decreased, leading to the industry's deterioration and its current poor performance (which is the point of concern in this research). In general, the success stories of CAMPFIRE projects (Bond, 2001; Murombedzi, 2001; Taylor, 2001) are no longer evident. Mudzengi and Chiutsi (2014) advise that the factors that are making Zimbabwe a less competitive ecotourism destination be addressed positively and urgently so as to revive ventures across the country. Politics could be one of these factors: an analysis by Muzvidziwa (2013) of the country's political events in the post-2000 period confirms that tourism (and its subsectors) is very susceptible to the political and social developments being experienced in the destination area. During the dark era in Zimbabwe's history (1999-2005), the country lost its position as one of the largest tourist destinations in Southern Africa. Muzvidziwa (2013) notes that that is precisely the period when the country began to experience low levels in terms of market demand for ecotourism products. Visitor arrivals to protected areas, natural parks and other adventure destinations began to decline in comparison with those received by neighbouring competitive destinations and yet, when assessing Zimbabwe's products against those of other competitive regional destinations, there is hardly much difference as they share the trans-frontier parks where most of the ecotourism activities take place.

Among so many other reasons for the deterioration of CAMPFIRE's ecotourism activities in Zimbabwe, "such as technical support, business marketing and promotion assistance from established tourism enterprises", (Mudzengi & Chiutsi, 2014, p. 311), Erdogan and Tosun (2009, p. 417) add that the poor ecotourism performance can be equated with "the lack of a good organisational culture within and among the ecotourism service providers". The purpose of this thesis is to contribute towards the future success

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of Zimbabwean ecotourism through the development of an organisational culture framework for the ecotourism sector.

In a speech given by former Zimbabwean Vice-President Mujuru (2014) he says: “Zimbabwe is blessed with a distinct culture, and history, unique shrines and tourist attractions, some of which are on the UNESCO heritage list. In addition, the country boasts of an abundant and diverse flora and fauna.”

The attractions mentioned above constitute the nature of ecotourism experiences, therefore, Zimbabwe has potentially exciting ecotourism destinations as it is endowed with unique natural, cultural and historical sites (Muzvidziwa, 2013). One of these is the Great Zimbabwe Ruins, which is a unique historical site (see Photo 3).



Photograph 3: Cultural Heritage: The Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

Source: Wall hanging in an office at the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality

Wildlife offers the greatest potential for Zimbabwean ecotourism, therefore, the country is well placed to experience a healthy growth in international visitors to ecotourism destinations, and the country has to make sure that its capability of offering high levels of satisfaction to ecotourists is enhanced.

3.7.1 Ecotourism as a Zimbabwean Concept

Due to the many variations in the approaches to the ecotourism concept as shown by the many definitions given earlier on in the research (cf. par. 3.6.1), it is difficult to arrive at a single definition, more so as each ecotourism area is unique. According to Blangy and Hanneberg (1995), preliminary studies have shown that there are substantial differences in the meanings that North American and European tour operators, as well as European countries in general, attach to ecotourism, and Bonner (1993) has highlighted the contrasting views of nature held in African and non-African countries. For instance, Lepik (2012) reports that dog-sledging in Northern Finland or Northern Sweden is regarded as traditional (in other words as an ecotourism activity), but the same activity cannot be classified as part of ecotourism in Zimbabwe. According to Moinuddin and Begum (2004), the definitions of ecotourism in the literature are contextual in that they are framed with respect to a particular context or a community's eco-resource base. Therefore, a definition of ecotourism in Africa, a region which is particularly well suited for ecotourism development, would be based on the continent's many nature-based attractions. Furthermore, if definitions of ecotourism are contextual in nature, it is essential to spell out what is meant by the term ecotourism in the Zimbabwean context. The term ecotourism when used in Zimbabwe has come to be equated with the type of tourism that focuses on community involvement and development, as evidenced by the input of the local researchers referred to below.

Muzvidziwa (2013) regards ecotourism as the type of tourism that puts an emphasis on conservation through utilisation instead of through preservation only. Ecotourism in Zimbabwe is, therefore, seen as incorporating both consumptive and non-consumptive aspects, stressing community participation in decision-making processes related to ecotourism ventures and their subsequent benefits to local communities. This is contrary to the definition offered by Fennel (2008, p. 24) which states that ecotourism is "a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, **non-consumptive**, and locally oriented".

As recently as 2015, TIES (2015) considered non-consumptive and non-extractive use of resources for and by tourists, and minimised impact to the environment and people as major characteristics of authentic ecotourism. This view is contrary to the views of a number of writers. According to Mawere and Mubaya (2012 p. 116),

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ecotourism is the type of tourism “that seeks to benefit the local host communities by empowering them economically, socially, politically and psychologically while at the same time conserve the natural environment for now and for posterity”.

In the region south of the Sahara, the understanding of ecotourism is almost the same as explained by Mawere and Mubaya (2012) in that the focus is on community involvement and development, as well as on natural conservation, however, differing in regard to the consumptive/non-consumptive nature of ecotourism. In South Africa, for example, the key principles of ecotourism include the fostering of a genuine interest in nature; contribution to conservation; respect and conservation of the local culture; **non-consumptive** use of natural resources; ensuring that benefits accrue to the local community; and creation of tourist awareness of conservation and local community issues (De Witt, Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2011).

Zimbabwean ecotourism activities include fishing, boating, game-viewing, bird-watching, camping or staying in traditional huts, eating with villagers and being entertained through storytelling and traditional dancing. Trophy-hunting and sport-hunting, photographic safaris, birding safaris, rock-climbing, walking trails, village cultural tours, viewing of bushmen paintings and many other downstream activities that entertain the ecotourist during communal tours are available (Chiutsi *et al.*, 2011). The benefits that locals derived from ecotourism when it was still vibrant included the building of schools, clinics, and grinding mills, the sinking of boreholes, road improvements, electrification of households, telephone connections, water reticulation and general infrastructural development.

The Government of South Africa, through its White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (1996), acknowledges the attractiveness of the Southern African region (inclusive of Zimbabwe) based on its relatively accessible wildlife, beautiful scenery, unspoilt nature, diverse traditional and township cultures, and pleasant climate.

Ecotourism embraces attractions and eco-experiences based on culture and nature (Muzvidziwa, 2013). With reference to Zimbabwean ecotourism that is inclusive of hunting, Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011) explain that not all hunting safari operations can be termed ecotourism activities, but only those whose benefits flow back to host

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communities, which are sustainable, controlled and ethical in nature. Some authors agree that hunting in general may not be seen to be in harmony with the tenets of ecotourism (De Witt *et al.*, 2011), but Muzvidziwa (2013) defends controlled hunting as an ecotourism activity as it is a key incentive to conserve and use wildlife resources in a sustainable manner. According to the opinion expressed by one respondent (P1) during the fieldwork, “our habitats must be managed properly”. This participant commented that Zimbabwe had a carrying capacity of a herd of 45 000 elephants but that, at the time of this research, the country had almost 83 000 elephants. If this excess is taken into account, then controlled hunting could be used to relieve the burden on the environment. Based on the discussion above, it is clear that the specificities of regions determine approaches to ecotourism.

3.7.2 Competitiveness of Zimbabwean Ecotourism

Available literature indicates that Europe is the most popular for ecotourism development, but it can be argued that ecotourism in Africa is even richer as the continent has a wide variety of abundant wildlife. Okech (2010) further notes that, with its hugely diverse and rich supply of natural resources and wildlife, and its cultural heritage, Africa is one of the main destinations for international tourism in the world. According to Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011), Zimbabwe is one of the Southern African countries that possess prime ecotourism destinations because of its abundant wildlife, and in a document published by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2013) it is stated that ecotourism in Zimbabwe is a high-potential area that is yet to be fully commercialised. The country has a natural competitive advantage in providing visitors with high-quality ecotourism experiences, in particular because of its world-class national parks. Demand for nature-based tourism in Southern Africa is growing rapidly, and so too is the competition within the region. Stevens and Jansen (2002) note that visitors are becoming more sophisticated and selective in their choices of travel destinations, and, therefore, ecotourism employees should be trained in order to provide visitors with a wide variety of ecotourism experiences.

It is recommended that effective market research as well as aggressive marketing be done by the Zimbabwean Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality (the authority responsible for tourism development) if the country is to raise its profile as an

ecotourism destination of note, be regarded as credible by potential consumers, and stand a chance of increasing its visitorship as well as the length of stay of its visitors.

3.7.3 Role of Government in promoting Ecotourism Development

The Government of Zimbabwe is cognisant of the numerous socio-economic benefits that the country continues to derive from ecotourism, such as the generation of foreign currency, creation of local employment as well as raising of environmental awareness. In order for such benefits to continue to be sustainable, the Government must make an effort to play a significant role, such as setting the policy governing ecotourism. Anderson (2011) states that policy refers to the behaviour of some actor or actors (such as government) in an area of activity, or it can also be taken to mean whatever governments choose to do or not to do. According to Moinuddin and Begum (2004, p. 11), the role of government in promoting ecotourism is to:

- provide the society with a leadership;
- involve key parties in the decision-making process;
- ensure a sound macroeconomic environment;
- guarantee law and order, and the just settlement of disputes;
- ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure; and
- ensure the development of human resources.

The fieldwork in this research will verify whether the Government of Zimbabwe fulfils any or all of the above stated roles.

3.8 THE DESIRED ECOTOURISM ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

According to a declaration by Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011), Zimbabwe is one of the Southern African countries that possess prime ecotourism destinations because of its abundant wildlife, and developing an organisational culture to manage its ecotourism will be advantageous.

Every organisation has its own complex and unique culture (Kaviris, 2012), but Kallarakal *et al.*, (2011), Yusof *et al.*, (2012) as well as Yusof and Jamil (2013) indicate that information related specifically to the organisational culture of an ecotourism business has not been thoroughly studied, and little has been done to analyse how

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organisational culture affects the performance of such an organisation, in spite of the growing number of studies on ecotourism. They further mention that previous research on ecotourism has primarily focused on the definitions, concepts and principles of ecotourism and the characteristics of ecotourism resorts. Since very little attention has been given to the impact of an organisational culture on the performance of the ecotourism sector, this particular study addresses this deficiency in research by exploring the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe.

When it comes to developing an organisational culture that is supportive of ecotourism, Koeman (2011) states that there is a need to have an idea of the ethics and underlying codes of conduct and behaviours (for instance, environmental, social, and cultural) that are key components of ecotourism activities. According to a statement made by the UNWTO (2004), an organisational culture that supports ecotourism should ensure quality service, satisfaction, and a meaningful experience to tourists (always guided by the elements of an ecotourism organisational culture). Ecotourism consumers are seeking an authentic, quality and ethical experience and they choose their holidays based on lifestyle principles and choices (Crawford & Mulvey, 2009); therefore, the hosts must be able to provide innovative ecotourism experiences. In addition, the organisational performance should be of a high standard to ensure organisational success, and should be designed in such a way as to encourage and support responsible environmental, social and cultural behaviour by the ecotourism employees in providing quality products to consumers.

With reference to the observations made by Koeman (2011) and the statement made by the UNWTO (2004), it can be deduced that a desirable organisational culture hinges on implementing the correct employee practices, people-orientated skills and styles as these will affect how employees carry out their duties. In the final analysis, employees are the ones who are responsible for the product delivered (Uysal & Magnini, 2011).

3.8.1 Value of Organisational Culture to Ecotourism Performance

According to Crawford and Mulvey (2009), if an ecotourism organisational culture is embraced fully the potential of creating unique tourism experiences is high, enticing many visitors to pay well for these unique experiences. There is a general trend towards

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quality throughout the tourism industry as markets become more demanding, sophisticated and experienced. The tourist of today is prepared to pay for value-enhanced products, but in the process expects value for money and quality services across a wide range of tourism products. These expectations of tourists are important to take into account when creating the desired ecotourism organisational culture.

3.8.2 Amalgamation of the Elements of Organisational Culture and Ecotourism

In order to achieve the objective of this particular research (which is to develop an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism), an integration of the elements of organisational culture and ecotourism is required as a theoretical base. The resultant organisational culture is expected to both showcase and preserve the country's unique natural landscapes and wildlife. This amalgamation of organisational culture and ecotourism elements represents an effort to bring about a new understanding of issues that already exist, and are well known in the business world.

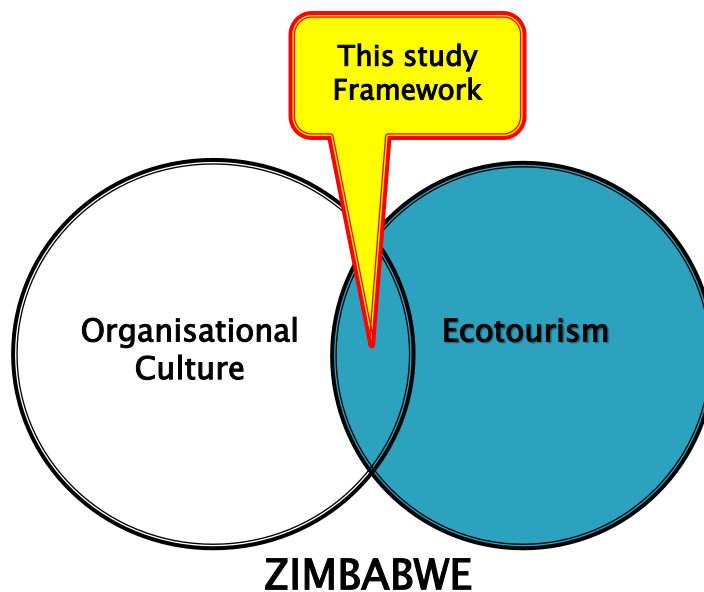


Figure 6: Amalgamation of the elements of organisational culture and ecotourism

3.8.2.1 Elements of organisational culture

Chegini (2010) (cf. par. 1.2) considers the elements of organisational culture, namely *beliefs*, *values* and *practices*, to characterise an organisation and to have a significant influence on the performance and long-term effectiveness of the organisation. Schimmoeller (2010, p. 126) (cf. par. 1.2) describes organisational culture as “a common set of values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation which influences how people perceive, think, and act”, while Schein (1992) describes these *values*, *beliefs* and *assumptions* as underlying, often unconscious determinants of an organisation’s attitudes, thought processes, and actions.

3.8.2.2 Elements of ecotourism

Honey (2008, p. 29-31) argues that ecotourism should encompass seven characteristics/principles that should be observed by all who implement and participate in ecotourism activities:

- Travelling to natural destinations
- Building environmental awareness
- Minimising the negative impact on local host communities and the environment
- Providing direct financial benefit for conservation of biological and cultural diversity
- Providing benefit and empowerment for the local people by providing them with jobs and quotas
- Respecting local cultures
- Supporting human rights and democratic movements

The elements of ecotourism as outlined above guide the ecotourism sector and ensure its existence as an industry. A good ecotourism business will embrace some, if not all, of these principles (Crawford & Mulvey, 2009). Coming up with an ecotourism organisational culture entails bringing together the elements of organisational culture and the elements of ecotourism, a visual depiction of which is given in Figure 6. The point of intersection of these elements forms the essence of this particular research.

3.8.2.3 The resultant ecotourism organisational culture

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) mention that:

values are the things an organisation considers most important with respect to its operations, its employees and its customers and that these are the things an organisation holds most dear – the things for which it strives and the things it wants to protect at all costs. Beliefs are taken as assumptions that individuals hold about themselves, their customers, and their organisation, while norms are unwritten rules of behavior that address such issues as how employees dress and interact.

Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) further state that norms help to “operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs”.

Kyriakidou and Gore (2005) state that shared values, norms and beliefs are expressed in terms of the practices or behaviours that organisational members display in doing their work. In the context of the Zimbabwean ecotourism sector, these shared values, norms and beliefs are portrayed through management policies, (as will be seen in the proposed framework), processes of marketing and advertising, the quality of services rendered, and the training and development of employees. In short, these values, norms and beliefs reflect the mindset of top management, which spirals downwards.

Organisational culture, “through its assumptions, values, norms and symbols, determines the way in which members of an organisation perceive and interpret the reality within and around their organisation, as well as the way they behave in that reality” Jančićević (2012, p. 25). Therefore, in ecotourism, the values, norms and beliefs (organisational culture) should guide the leadership in the execution of the ecotourism sector’s mandate. According to a document produced by The Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (2013), ecotourism culture means that environmental values are protected and preserved while being enjoyed. By implication the activities of all the stakeholders in ecotourism are directed by the organisational norms, values and beliefs of the practice of ecotourism.

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As a checklist, Brebbia and Pineda (2010) raise some issues concerning an existing ecotourism organisational culture; namely, when enforcing ecological sustainability, when focusing on the natural environment, when prioritising education and interpretation, and when advocating local and regional benefits, the following questions should be asked: Do the employees (stakeholders, in this particular research) follow an ecologically friendly approach? Do they have environmentally friendly or environmentally sensitive values? Do they implement practices to save the environment? Do they emphasise knowledge sharing about the need for environmental protection in dealing with those they do business with? When it comes to employing or recruiting, is priority given to locals? Are the employees trained to know and act ecologically? In the execution of duty, are ecological guidelines followed or neglected? These questions emphasise the need for the desirable ecotourism organisational culture to ensure that environmental principles are applied to all areas of ecotourism business practices. It can be deduced from the available literature that if the Zimbabwean ecotourism sector wants to succeed, it must act in a way that instils some of these ecotourism practices in its day-to-day business execution. Crawford and Mulvey (2009) mention that by fully embracing an ecotourism organisational culture in business, there is a very high potential of creating unique tourism experiences, leading to enhanced business performance.

According to Koeman (2011), tourism depends for its very existence on quality natural environments, human environments, resources and cultures. Of particular relevance at this juncture is the human environment factor – the stakeholders in ecotourism whose involvement has a great impact on the success or failure of ecotourism.

3.9 THE STAKEHOLDERS IN ZIMBABWEAN ECOTOURISM

The ecotourism sector is classified as being in the service industry, which involves direct contact with customers; therefore, there is a need for the development of a strong positive culture among all those providing the ecotourism service. Stewart (2010) points out that an organisation's norms and values, though invisible, have a strong effect on all those who are attached to the organisation, and if organisations want to improve the performance of their employees as well as their profitability, norms should be their point of departure. Kallarakal *et al.*, (2011) mention that if an

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organisational culture is widely shared by the employees (stakeholders), they can associate themselves with the organisation, feel part of it and even be proud of it. Yusof and Jamil (2013, p. 5) comment that “one of the difficulties experienced by ecotourism employees (stakeholders) is that they are expected to dance to the tune of an industry where little is known at the technical or knowledge level”. Therefore, there is a need to incorporate all the stakeholders in all the activities concerning ecotourism so as to ensure oneness of purpose.

In order to successfully achieve the above (in terms of this research), it will be necessary to go out into the field, carry out interviews (with concerned stakeholders), and produce knowledge about exactly what constitutes practices that are conducive to the formation of an ecotourism organisational culture. According to Selvakumar (2009), one of the reasons for carrying out a literature review is to determine if there is already a solution to the problem, and if the literature review yields no solution, then additional research activities are justified. Having established this, the researcher can proceed to prepare for gathering data relating to the research problem.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has answered the research question related to establishing what constitutes ecotourism, and what its defining elements are with a view to formulating an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism.

Chapter 4 will give attention to the philosophical assumptions guiding the research, the methodology and methods used, the data collection techniques as well as the proposed methods of data analysis.

4 CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHOD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology and methods, which include the research design, the research paradigms and philosophy, research methods used to collect and analyse data, and ethical considerations. Based on the fact that research is the cornerstone for transforming sound theory into effective organisational practice, Kim (2003, p. 16) stresses that “it is important that the methodological foundation on which the research is based be both sound and rigorous”. The role of researchers in advancing knowledge and contributing to the general business community is important; there is an integrated relationship between scientific research and organisational practice, and this chapter serves to outline this relationship.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Noorderhaven (2004, p. 91) states that “methodology is a system of ontological and epistemological assumptions on which research is to be based”. These underpinnings or assumptions are what, according to Myers (2009), provide the foundation for everything that follows in any research process. Methodology is concerned with why, what, from where, when, and how data is collected and analysed (Scotland, 2012). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108) explain methodology by stating that it seeks to answer the methodological question: “How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?” A researcher’s decision to settle for a specific methodology instead of any other should be based on its suitability to answer the research questions of the researcher’s specific study.

4.2.1 The Research Process

Researchers have failed to agree on how a research process should be followed as there are a number of research approaches. By way of example, Kotler, Armstrong and Wong (2008) suggest a straightforward four-step research process, while Collis and Hussey (2009) and Malhotra and Birks (2007) propose a more complex six-step research approach. For the purpose of this study, the research process will be structured as a set of layers as shown in the “research process onion” (see Figure 7)

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proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p. 128). These layers will be described further and applied to this study.

According to Saunders *et al.*, (2012), research activity can be compared to the process of peeling the layers of an onion until one arrives at the centre. The important issue is how to do the peeling, in other words, how to collect the pertinent data that will answer the research questions and meet the objectives of the study. Before one can arrive at the relevant central issue, several issues must first be addressed. Saunders *et al.*, (2012) clarify that the first layer (outer layer) raises the question of the research philosophy to be adopted, the second layer considers the subject of research approach that flows from the research philosophy, the third examines the research strategy most applicable, the fourth layer refers to the time horizon a researcher applies to his or her research, and the fifth layer represents the data collection methods to be used.

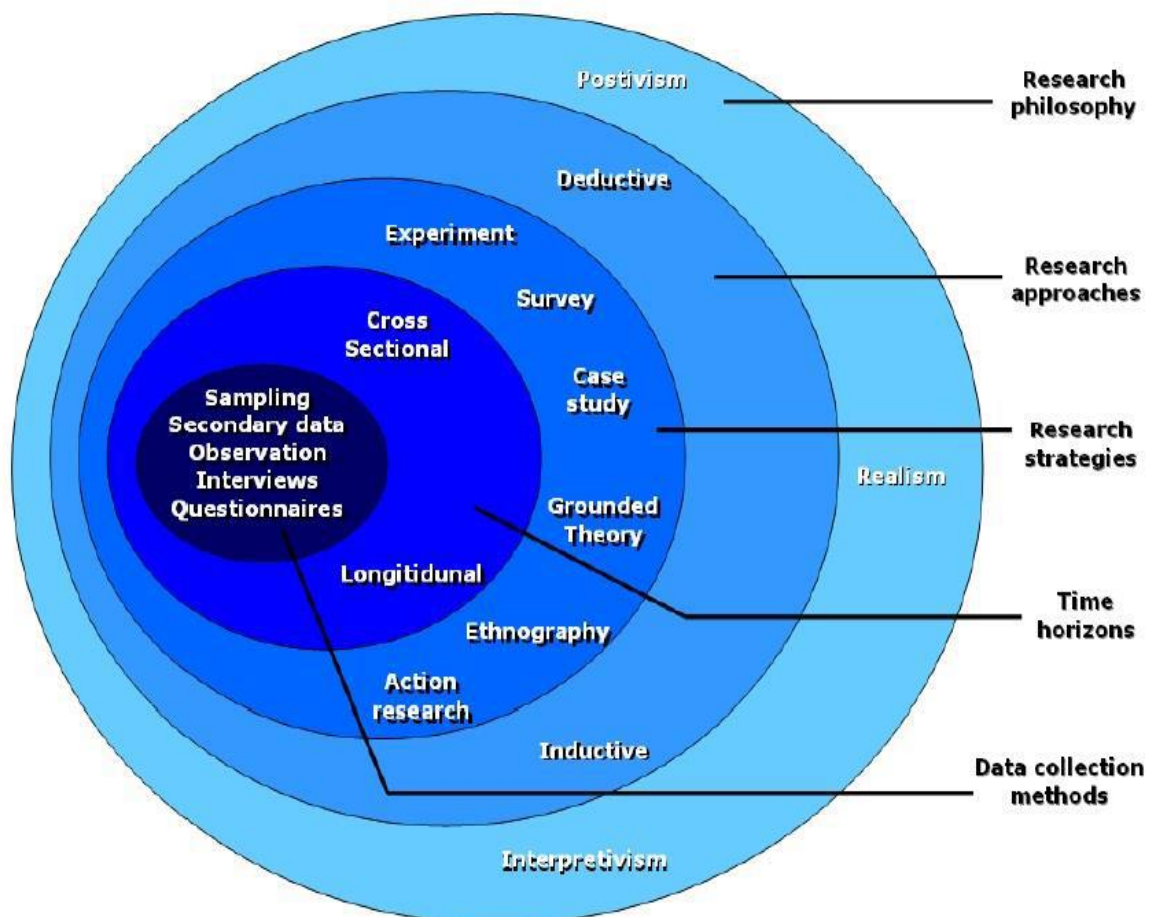


Figure 7: The research onion

Source: Saunders *et al.*, (2012, p. 128)

4.2.2 Research Paradigm (or Philosophy)

Myers (2009, p. 23) states that “every research study is based on some philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world and how knowledge about the world can be obtained”. Philosophical assumptions or a theoretical paradigm about the nature of reality are crucial to understanding the overall perspective from which the study is designed and carried out (Krauss, 2005). Myers (2009, p. 23) advises that “these assumptions must be made explicit” even before the study unfolds so that the researcher’s position is made known to the readers.

According to Thomas (2010), the term paradigm comes from the Greek word *paradeigma* which means *pattern*, and was first used by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 to mean a conceptual framework shared by a community of scientists, which provided them with a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions. Kuhn (1977) further explains that “paradigm” refers to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers have in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. More recently, Johnson and Christensen (2008) define a paradigm as a perspective about research held by a community of scholars or researchers that is based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values and practices, while Mertens (2005, p. 7) describes a paradigm as “a way of looking at the world, and which is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action”. A paradigm shapes the way in which the researcher perceives the world, and the beliefs held are reflected in the way the research is designed, how data is collected and analysed, and how results are presented. A paradigm is, therefore, made up of philosophy, ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Research authorities have identified three key philosophical perspectives or paradigms (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Myers, 2009) that guide the research process, namely, **positivist**, **interpretive**, and **critical post-modernism** perspectives. These three paradigms are prevalent in management research, and according to Flowers (2009), they effectively form the “poles” from which other paradigms are developed or derived. These three approaches assume distinctively different epistemological positions regarding their theoretical foundations, assumptions, and purposes while producing different modes of inquiry (Kim, 2003).

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Each of these philosophical perspectives will be explained in terms of how they originated and developed, and how each influences research. As interpretivism is the selected approach for this research (being the specific philosophical perspective that will inform this particular thesis) the discussion will concentrate on interpretivism. It is acknowledged that none of these worldviews is considered to be more superior to the other, in fact, “each may be appropriate for some purposes but insufficient or overly complex for another purpose” (Thomas, 2010, p. 293).

The current research study presents itself through its research questions as a qualitative study. Figure 8 portrays the underlying worldviews in qualitative research, which, according to Thomas (2010), are the popular paradigms in contemporary social, organisational, and management research.

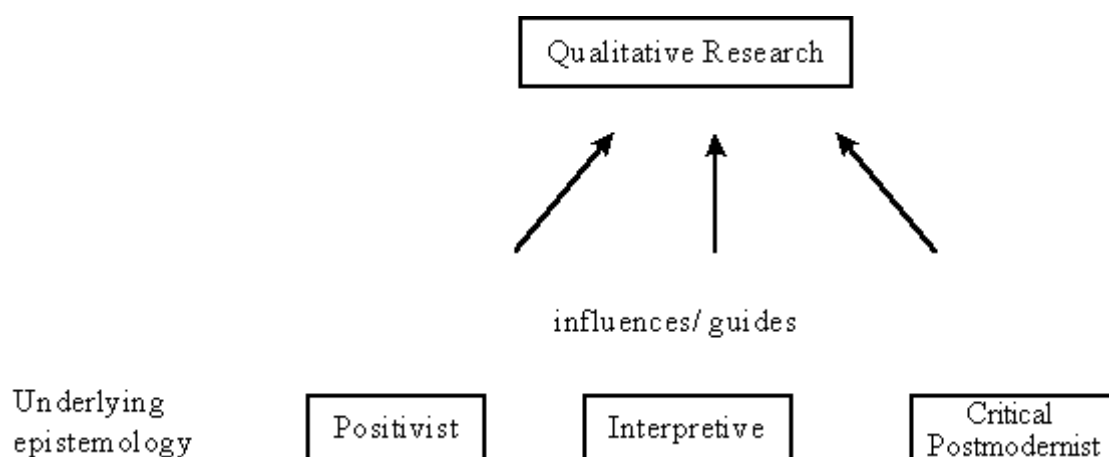


Figure 8: Underlying philosophical assumptions

Source: Thomas (2010, p. 293)

4.2.3 Positivist Perspective

Sekaran and Bougie (2013, p. 29) maintain that positivists consider science as “the way to get the truth”, while Tuli (2010, p. 103) states that “positivism is based on the assumption that there are universal laws that govern social events, and uncovering these laws enables researchers to describe, predict, and control social phenomena”.

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The basic assumptions of positivists are:

- The physical world and social events are analogous in that researchers can study social phenomena as they do physical phenomena (Wardlow, 1989, p. 3).
- In examining social events, researchers adhere to subject-object dualism in that they stand apart from their research subjects and treat them as having an independent existence (Wardlow, 1989, p. 3).
- There is a need to formalise knowledge using theories and variables that are operationally distinct from each other and defined accordingly. Phillips and Burbles (2000 in Creswell, 2007) add that data, evidence and rational considerations shape knowledge, and thus a positivist researcher collects information on instruments based on measures completed by participants or by observations recorded by the researcher. The founder of positivism believed that reality could be observed (Mack, 2010, p. 6).
- Hypotheses about principles of theories are tested by the quantification of observations and by the use of statistical analyses. Being objective is an essential aspect of competent inquiry: researchers must explain methods and conclusions so they may dispel bias from the whole research process (Phillips and Burbles (2000 in Creswell, 2007).

The ontological position of positivism is one of realism (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) while that of positivist epistemology is objectivism (Crotty, 1998). Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), when relating this positivist objective to the context of a study within a business organisation, state that positivists assume that what truly happens in organisations can only be discovered through categorisation and scientific measurement of the behaviour of people and systems, and that language is truly representative of the reality. This assumption is different from the researcher's viewpoint on how best to deal with the research requirements of this particular research.

4.2.4 Critical/Post-modernist Perspective

The main philosophical idea of the proponents of this school of thought was a critique of that which society saw as socially accepted; they sought not only to criticise and challenge the status quo, but also sought ways to change it. Post-modernism developed out of a belief that the world is not accurately described and interpreted by the modernist paradigm, and it specifically criticises the modernist's view that there is a

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universal truth, and that this truth can be discovered by scientific methods and applied in all situations. (Boje, Gephart & Thatchenkery, 1996 ; Hollinger, 1994).

The assumptions of the followers of the critical/post-modernist perspective are as follows: Critical researchers assume that social reality is historically constituted and that it is produced and reproduced by people (Myers, 2009). Thus, the ontological position of the critical paradigm is historical realism. Under the critical/post-modernist paradigm, organisational culture needs to be seen as contested, changing and emergent, and meanings as being created and recreated in organisations (Avison & Myers, 1995; Crotty, 1998.) In accordance with this theory, says Gephart (1996), each organisation may develop its own commitments, interests, linguistic codes, and values and culture. Critical epistemology is that of subjectivism (Scotland, 2012). Inquirers who subscribe to critical theory as a research methodology affirm that its main aim is social transformation to displace the existing structures of power and domination by opening opportunities for social participation among persons previously excluded and dominated. Although this is one of the popular paradigms in informing contemporary social, organisational, and management research, its theoretical foundations fall short in addressing the requirements of this particular research.

4.2.5 Interpretivism/Constructivism

According to Thomas (2010, p. 301), “interpretivism is closely related to constructivism in that it emphasises the ability of the individual to construct meaning”. This author further explains that while interpretivism addresses essential features of shared meaning and understanding, constructivism extends this concern with knowledge as produced and interpreted. “Interpretivism is referred to as ‘anti positivist’ because it was developed as a reaction to positivism” (Mack, 2010, p. 7). In contrast with interpretivism/constructivism, positivism regards human behaviour as passive, controlled and determined by the external environment (Thomas, 2010).

According to Crofts, Hungria, Monfries and Wood (2011), interpretivism is based on the observation that there are fundamental differences between the natural world and the social world, and because of this, the logic and methods of the natural sciences are not applicable to the study of societies. Crofts *et al.*, (2011) further explain that the main difference between positivism and interpretivism is that, with interpretivism, unlike

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in the natural world, where a particular action consistently produces a given result, social actors do not uniformly react to stimuli. Rather, they actively interpret the situations in which they find themselves and act on the basis of these interpretations. According to Scotland (2012, p. 11), “the ontological position of interpretivism is relativism; reality is subjective and differs from person to person”. This is in agreement with Kvale (1996) who asserts that the interpretivist paradigm aims to grasp the diversity of subjects’ experiences. In this research, organisational members construct their own knowledge of what constitutes an ecotourism organisational culture, and in so doing, they are influenced by their prior knowledge and understanding of their day-to-day activities within the organisation.

The basic assumptions of interpretivist researchers are as follows:

- Interpretive research seeks to understand values, beliefs, and meanings of social phenomena as knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the phenomena studied (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).
- Researchers interact with the subjects of study to obtain data; inquiry changes both researcher and subject; and knowledge is context and time dependent (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Cousins, 2002).
- The interpretive paradigm is underpinned by observation and interpretation, thus to observe is to collect information about events, while to interpret is to make meaning of that information by drawing inferences or by judging the match between the information and some abstract pattern (Aikenhead, 1997).
- Interpretivism is concerned with understanding the world as it is from the subjective experiences of individuals.
- Interpretivists use meaning-orientated (versus measurement-orientated) methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects.
- Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994); it aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action.
- The subjects that interpretivism studies are located within particular linguistic, historical and value standpoints.

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Myers (2009, p. 38) states that “interpretive researches assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructs such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments”. Janićijević (2011, p. 73) links this with the context of organisational culture when mentioning that:

the character of organisational culture is important for the methodology of its research. An important characteristic of culture is that it is a social category, meaning that it exists only within the boundaries of social communities, such as groups, organisations, social layers, professions, and nations, but it does not exist at the level of the individual person.

This explains why, when preparing to do the fieldwork, interviewees who belonged to the “society” of those practising ecotourism were selected, and not just any ordinary person.

4.2.6 Approach of this study

Pansiri (2008) states that research in management and tourism studies has revealed the domination of two major social science paradigms (the positivist/functional approach and the interpretive approach), which have given rise to claims regarding their superiority. The researcher of this research study is convinced that organisational culture is best served by being seen through the philosophical lens of the interpretivist/constructivist framework of qualitative research because it seeks to interpret the social construct of an ecotourism organisational culture within the context of Zimbabwe from the point of view of participants. To further validate the choice of interpretivism, reference is made to the statement of Janićijević (2011, p. 75) that:

Organisational culture cannot be positively identified and measured, but only interpreted. People keep the content of the culture in their minds and the culture does not exist outside of them. Researchers cannot know what is in people’s minds, but can only interpret the products of the culture – symbols, behavioral patterns, and so forth. Culture is explored by understanding, and not by measurement.

Moreover, Thomas (2010) mentions that this interpretive paradigm is also the appropriate means for advancing studies in organisational culture, thereby developing

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effective and practical business practices that could greatly improve organisational effectiveness.

4.2.6.1 Ontology

Mack (2010) mentions that ontology is the starting point of all research, after which a consideration of epistemology and methodology follows. Maxwell (n.d.) states that ontology is what exists; the nature of reality. Blaikie (as cited in Grix, 2004, p. 59) defines ontology as the study of “claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other”. In simpler terms, if someone studies ontology they study what we mean when we say something exists. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108), in explaining ontology, pose a question that is known as the ontological question: “What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?”

4.2.6.2 Ontological assumptions of interpretivism

“The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism, and this is the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). The main ontological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm, according to Mack (2010), are the following:

- Reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective.
- People interpret and make their own meaning of events.
- Events are more distinctive and cannot be generalised.
- There are multiple perspectives of one incident.
- Causation in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols.

These ontological assumptions inform the current researcher’s epistemological assumptions, which in turn inform the methodology, and all these inform the methods employed to collect data. The researcher will thus opt for data collection methods and instruments that capture individual interpretations of reality, meanings attached to events, and the multiple perspectives of an incident, allowing the researcher to capture language and behaviour. These methods are interviews, observations, and the review

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of documents (Creswell, 2009; Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2010). In this particular research, observations were not used.

4.2.6.3 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to how we know, and the relationship between the knower and the known (Maxwell, n.d.). According to Whitehead and McNiff (2009, p. 22), “epistemology refers to a theory of knowledge which involves two parts ... a theory of knowledge (what is known) and ... a theory of knowledge acquisition (how it comes to be known)”. Thus, it leads to the understanding that knowledge is created through social interaction between an investigator and respondents and the “results” or “findings” are literally created as the investigation proceeds (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

4.2.6.4 Epistemological assumptions of interpretivism

Interpretivism is an epistemology of subjectivism that is based on real world phenomena (Scotland, 2012). Cohen *et al.*, (2007, p. 19) explain that “Interpretivism’s main tenet is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside, rather it must be observed from inside through the direct experience of the people”. Thus, according to Cohen *et al.*, (2007, p. 21), the role of the researcher in this paradigm is to “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants”. The main epistemological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm, according to Mack (2010), are as follows:

- Knowledge is gained through a strategy that “respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman in Grix, 2004, p. 64).
- Knowledge is gained inductively to create a theory.
- Knowledge arises from particular situations and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation.
- Knowledge is gained through personal experience.

The ontological and epistemological questions encompass what is commonly referred to as a person’s worldview. According to Grix (2001, p. 189), “It is these ontological and epistemological positions that shape the very questions we may ask in the first place, how we pose them and how we set about answering them”. In answering

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the research questions posed in this thesis, the researcher is guided by the interpretivist/constructivist worldview as described by Carroll and Swatman, (2000, p 118-119) when they say that:

All researchers interpret the world through some sort of conceptual lens formed by their beliefs, previous experiences, existing knowledge, and assumptions about the world and theories about knowledge and how it is accrued. The researcher's conceptual lens acts as a filter: the importance placed on the huge range of observations made in the field (choosing to record or note some observations and not others, for example) is partly determined by this filter.

4.3 HUMANISM

Any research that has human subjects needs to make reference to the philosophy of humanism.

The tenets of the humanism philosophy are as follows:

- Humanism takes on the human individual as its starting point and emphasises the human capacity of reasoning.
- Humanism views the individual as a relational man or woman, who materialises freedom through value-based social interactions. People he or she engages with are a means but also an end in themselves.
- Human beings in the humanistic view are guided by universally applicable principles and aim at long-term relationships. They are intrinsically motivated to self-actualise and serve humanity through what they do; their interests, needs and wants take shape through discourse and continuous exchange with the outside world. As such, human beings do not maximise their own utility, but balance their interests as well as those of the people around them in accordance with general moral principles (Dierksmer & Pirson, 2008).
- Humanism assumes that human nature is not entirely a given, and that it can be refined through education and learning.
- The ethical component remains a cornerstone in humanism in that it attributes unalienable rights and dignity to everybody, independent from ethnicity, nationality, social status or gender. Humanism addresses everybody and is universal in its outreach.

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According to Ghoshal (2005), in business, the current management theory and ensuing business strategies and organisational designs are to a great extent informed by the field of economics and economic assumptions, and are, therefore, heavily biased by the neoclassical theories of human beings. According to these theories, (as chronicled by Ghoshal, 2005, p. 77),

humans are materialistic utility maximisers that value individual benefit over group and societal benefit. The human being engages with others only in a transactional manner to fulfill his or her interests. He/she is amoral; values short-term gratification and often acts opportunistically to further personal gain.

This view has been criticised by several scholars who argue that management theory needs to be rethought based on psychological insights rather than theoretical assumptions as they have found overwhelming evidence to the contrary (Ghoshal, 2005; Tyler, 2006).

According to Ghoshal (2005), proponents of humanism seek to change this dark side of business and management that currently exists, and instead, seek to create an alternative human-centred narrative of business so as to create and tell different stories about business. These proponents, as quoted by Ghoshal (2005, p. 77), declare:

We need to question the understanding of how we view ourselves as human beings, and how we build organisations based upon that understanding. How do we manage people in such organisations? Many of the structural set ups are a consequence of the current paradigm and we need to be able to propose superior alternatives.

In discussing the findings of the research, reference to humanism will be made, as the subjects under study are human beings who are in the ecotourism business, and who behave exactly as stated by the humanism philosophy.

4.4 AN INTERPRETIVIST/CONSTRUCTIVIST WORLDVIEW IN RELATION TO AN ORGANISATION

According to Schwandt (1994, p. 125), “what constitutes a constructivist or interpretivist worldview is shaped by the use and users of the term (people within an organisation)”.

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In order to better explain constructivism/interpretivism in organisations, Gjersvik (1993) developed the original ideas of Berger and Luckmann (1966) and came up with a model of the social construction of reality in an organisation, the main elements of which are depicted in Figure 9.

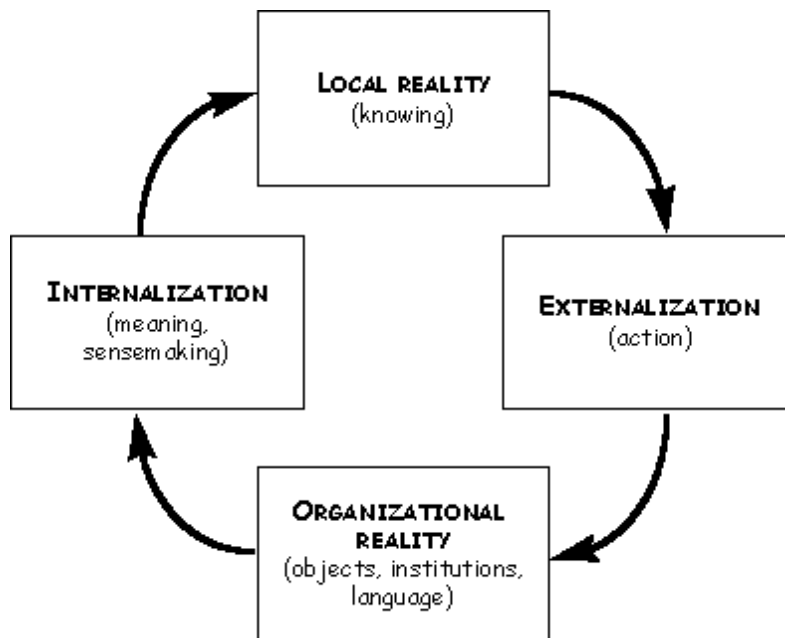


Figure 9: The social construction of reality in organisations

Source: Gjersvik (1993, p. 37)

With reference to the aspect of local reality (see Figure 9), Gjersvik (1993) explains that members in an organisation have their own local realities, that is, subjective beliefs, views and values. Local realities are systems of meaning that are perceived by the member to be valid – they are reality. Members make their local realities accessible to other members through a process of externalisation, which involves enacting their local reality. Members communicate through their actions and act through their communication (speaking is also acting). Gjersvik (1993, p. 47) considers the most common ways to externalise local realities “as through construction of language, objects and artefacts”. Externalisation (see Figure 9) implies construction of an organisational reality through objectivities. The organisational reality (see Figure 9) is inter-subjective and may include elements like roles, language, knowledge, objects, routines, technology, commitments and history (Gjersvik, 1993, p. 51). This organisational reality structures and restricts human action and thereby makes actions predictable and to some degree also controllable. Organisational reality is interpreted by

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individual members and made sense of through a process of internalisation. Internalisation (see Figure 9) is the interpretation of elements of organisational reality (constructions) in terms of the member's local reality. Externalisation and internalisation of realities occur both continuously and simultaneously, despite their coming one after the other as presented in the diagram. The process is an ongoing part of all human activity.

The above model of the social construction of reality in an organisation can be applied in the context of the ecotourism organisation in Zimbabwe, and be taken as a portrayal of how members of the organisation or within the industry understand the construct of the existent culture in their organisation or industry.

4.5 RESEARCH METHOD

A research method is described by Johnson and Christensen (2008) as being a description of the research participants, any apparatus or instruments that are used in data collection, and the procedure followed in collecting data. Tuli (2010) mentions that researchers in the social sciences can use a variety of research methodologies. The two basic types of method that are used when exploring organisational culture are quantitative and qualitative (Creswell, 2009). Tuli (2010) explains that the research methodologies in social science are related in the sense that they are both means of soliciting information about human nature from human participants. There are compelling reasons why this particular research makes use of the qualitative instead of the quantitative method.

4.5.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an approach entailing how to do and carry out the research process. Creswell (1994) defines a qualitative study as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex and holistic picture formed with words and reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, p. 80):

qualitative research is grounded in an essentially constructivist philosophical position, in the sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the

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socio-cultural world are experienced, interpreted, and understood in a particular context and at a particular point in time.

Writers such as Schram (2003) and Maxwell (2005) mention that the objective of qualitative research is to examine a social situation or interaction by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and attempting to achieve a holistic rather than a reductionist understanding of reality.

According to Mack *et al.*, (2005, p. 1), qualitative research is a type of scientific research which, in general terms, consists of an investigation that:

- seeks answers to a question;
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question;
- collects evidence;
- produces findings that were not determined in advance;
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study; and
- seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves.

In this research, which is about the development of an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism, the qualitative research method is used because, according to Mack *et al.*, (2005), it is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of a particular population (organisation); it provides valuable insights into the local perspectives of the organisational members. Bernstein, Sampson and Østerlie (2004) add an interesting viewpoint, namely that research is not considered interpretive just because the type of data collected is qualitative: there are ways of using numerical data in interpretive research, just as there are ways within traditional research of using non-quantitative data. Krauss (2005) mentions that the most important distinction of interpretive research is the underlying philosophical rather than the methodological assumptions.

4.5.2 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research

“Organisational culture, by its nature, has many facets, some of which are better explored by qualitative and others by quantitative methods” (Janićijević, 2011, p. 71).

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The basic differences between the qualitative method and the quantitative method are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Qualitative research versus quantitative research

Criteria	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Purpose	To understand and interpret social interactions	To test hypotheses, look at cause and effect and make predictions
Group studied	Smaller and not randomly selected	Larger and randomly selected
Variables	Study of the whole, not variables	Study of specific variables
Type of data collected	Words, images or objects	Numbers and statistics
Form of data collected	Qualitative data such as open-ended responses, interviews, participant observations, field notes	Quantitative data based on precise measurements using structural and validated data-collection instruments
Type of data analysis	Identifies patterns, features, themes	Identifies statistical relationships
Objectivity and subjectivity	Subjectivity is expected.	Objectivity is critical.
Role of researcher	Researchers and their biases may be known to participants in the study, and participant characteristics may be known to the researcher.	Researchers and their biases are not known to participants in the study. Participant characteristics are deliberately hidden from the researcher (double-blind studies).
Results	Particular or specialised findings that are less generalisable	Generalisable findings that can be applied to other populations
Scientific method	Exploratory or bottom-up: the researcher generates a new	Confirmatory or top-down: the researcher tests the

Criteria	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
	hypothesis and theory from the data collected.	hypothesis and theory with the data.
View of dynamic behaviour	Dynamic, situational, social and personal	Regular and predictable
Most common research objectives	Explores, discovers and constructs	Describes, explains and predicts
Focus	Wide-angle lens: examines the breadth and depth of phenomena	Narrow-angle lens: tests a specific hypothesis
Nature of observation	Studies behaviour in a natural environment	Studies behaviour under controlled conditions; isolates causal effects
Final report	Narrative report with contextual description and direct quotations from research participants	Statistical report with correlation comparisons of means and statistical significance of findings

Source: Adapted from Johnson and Christensen (2008) and Lichtman (2006)

4.5.3 Justification of Qualitative Research

Schulze (2003) mentions that there are varieties of research methodologies, each with its own relative weaknesses and strengths, with no single accepted research methodology being applicable to all research problems.

Myers (2009) argues that qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Therefore, the qualitative methodology suits this particular research as it seeks to understand, from the participants, exactly what constitutes an ecotourism organisational culture. With respect to studies in organisational culture, Hofstede, Neuijen and Sanders (1990) list the advantages of the qualitative research method for such studies as allowing for:

- a high degree of flexibility, since feedback information regarding the adequacy of certain questions is easily and quickly obtained, and, therefore, the questions can be easily adjusted and changed;
- extensiveness and diversity of the data gathered;

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- scope and depth of exploration – it encompasses very different elements of a culture in all its layers (assumptions, values and artefacts);
- the possibility of performing a historical analysis, which is very important in the exploration of a culture; and
- a picture of a culture that is based on interpretations by members of the organisation.

Martin (2002), having analysed the advantages listed above, concludes that the main advantage of qualitative research is the depth and breadth of analysis, and that the key difference between quantitative and qualitative methods lies in their flexibility. Mack *et al.*, (2005) state that generally, quantitative methods are inflexible, and the response categories from which participants may choose are closed-ended or fixed, while qualitative methods are more flexible in that they allow greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participant, and the questions asked are mostly open-ended. Qualitative research seeks to explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, since little is known about the problem. It uses “*soft data and gets rich data*” (Domegan & Fleming, 2007, p. 24).

4.5.4 Weaknesses of the qualitative research method

Janićijević (2011, p. 83) lists some of the weaknesses of qualitative research methods:

- They are time consuming.
- Researchers are always subjective and can seriously affect the results.
- Participants are subjective, and qualitative methods are sensitive to false statements, whether given consciously or unconsciously.
- The choice of participants is often limited to those who are available or those preferred by the researchers (because they are somehow alike).
- Qualitative research is an intervention that changes precisely what it examines.
- Possibilities for generalisation of conclusions and comparison, and use of the results in other organisations are limited.
- There is no quantification of the conclusions.
- A capacity for self-reflection and a high level of social skills (listening, communicative skills) are required in the researcher.

RESEARCH APPLICATION

4.6 POPULATION

In a research study, the population can be viewed as the unit of analysis. It may involve institutions, buildings, or groups of professionals. According to Creswell (2007, p. 151), “a population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics”, for example, all employees in the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality would make up a population within the Ministry. This population is quite sizeable and made up of different variables. The obvious characteristics of this population are that it is comprised of employees with varied levels of job positions and decision-making powers in the employment hierarchy, as well as years of experience in the ecotourism industry.

4.7 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In general, sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from a population in order to represent the characteristics or properties of that population. Khothari (2008) defines sampling as the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only part of it.

This research made use of a non-probability sampling method known as purposive sampling or judgemental sampling, which is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Creswell (2007) and Silverman (2010) define purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which particular settings, persons or events are deliberately selected based on the important information they can provide compared to any other group. When selecting a sampling technique, the appropriate sampling strategy is determined by what exactly the researcher needs to know and accomplish. In this particular research, the researcher opted to use the method of expert sampling, which, according to Given (2008) and Grinnell and Unrau (2008), is the selection by the researcher of individuals who possess particular expertise that is most likely to advance the researcher’s interests and open new doors for further development in the particular area of research. The choice of participants is influenced by their perceived ability to inform the research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013) as each of those selected should be in a position to report first-hand on their experiences while in the workplace. The researcher also made use of snowball sampling or chain referral sampling, which, according to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), Katz (2006), and Handcock and Gile (2011), is a method

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that produces a study sample through referrals made among people who share knowledge of, or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest. The method is particularly useful when studying a sensitive issue or when the study populations are difficult for researchers to access, in which case the knowledge of insiders is required to locate people for the study. In this particular research, the researcher was referred to a “gate-keeper” who asked several questions about the kind of information needed and then referred the researcher to certain individuals who could assist in the study.

4.7.1 Sample Size

According to Patton (2002, p. 244):

“there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry, but the size depends on what we want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with the available time and resources.”

Sarantakos (2000, p. 156) adds that “the principle of theoretical saturation, which is the point at which no new concepts emerge, determines the size of the sample”. The researcher, motivated by the observations of Ritchie and Lewis (2004), arrived at saturation point at a maximum of ten participants. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2004), qualitative samples are usually small in size because the type of information that qualitative studies yield is rich in detail. Creswell (2007) suggests a number range of between one and 40 people. One of the disadvantages of collecting qualitative data and analysing it is that it takes a considerable amount of time; a huge number of participants in the sample will lengthen the time to complete the research, which could be a problem as researchers often have limited time available in which to complete a research. Creswell (2007) adds that the intent in qualitative research is not to generalise information but to elucidate the particular or the specific. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) concur by adding that sample sizes in qualitative research should not be too large as that would make the extraction of thick, rich data difficult, and neither should it be too small as that would cause informational redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The number of participants should be such that it enables the collection of sufficient information. For purposes of this study, the researcher will work with the numbers as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Sample size

Research participants drawn from	Number of participants
Expert level: Academic experts	3
Strategic level: Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality	3
Operational level: Participants from CAMPFIRE, ZTA*, Ministry of Parks and Wildlife, as well as a Tourism board member)	4
n (total sample)	10

(Researcher's own compilation)

*The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) is a parastatal organisation established in terms of Zimbabwe's Tourism Act, 1996 (Act , Chapter 14:20 of 1996), and has the mandate of developing, managing, promoting and marketing Zimbabwe as a tourist destination in both local and international markets.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION

People's words and actions represent the data, and collecting this data requires qualitative and interactive methods that allow the researcher to capture language and behaviour reflecting cultural material that is normally unattainable in everyday operations. Since every organisation has its own special culture, non-standardised research methods are needed for measuring dimensions not defined in advance (Reiman & Oedewald, 2002). The most common data collection methods in qualitative research are in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document reviews (Creswell, 2009; Locke *et al.*, 2010), while Patton (1990) includes observation as a common data collection method. However, this research only used the methods of in-depth interviews and document reviews due to the practical impossibility of organising focus groups in the "originally" selected organisations. Qualitative research seeks to answer "how" and "what" questions. In this particular research, use was made of three sample groupings. In Table 7, the type of research questions (informing the methodology) to be put to each sample grouping is given.

Table 7: Type of data to be collected from each sample grouping

Sample grouping	Type of questions asked
Expert level: Academic experts	What
Operational level: Participants from CAMPFIRE, ZTA, Parks & Wildlife, Tourism Board member)	What
Strategic level: Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality	How

(Researcher's own compilation)

Each method of data gathering is particularly suited to obtaining specific type of data (Mack *et al.*, 2005). The operational level participants (see Table 7) may not be able to answer the “how” questions because they are not policy makers (such as those on the strategic level); they are people with hands-on experience who can answer “what” questions better.

4.8.1 In-depth Interviews

Diaries, letters, autobiographies and filed notes have often been used as sources of data by narrative researchers, but in-depth interviews continue to be the most common source of narrative data used (Bell, 2009; Hammersley, 2008; Riessman, 2008). Janićijević (2011) describes an in-depth interview as a conversation between a researcher and a member of an organisation, and explains further that it is a technique suitable for gathering data on organisational culture. In-depth interviews clarify cultural meanings (Reiman & Oedewald, 2002). It is a very complex and sensitive technique that demands high capabilities and skills in the researcher, such as social skills, communication skills, and self-reflection skills. As advised by Thomas, Nelson and Silverman (2011), the researcher first established rapport with the respondents so as to gain their trust and get them to open up and describe their true feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Once this had been done, it became easier to alleviate fear of reprisals because of possible negative statements.

Skilful interviewing is required, and the advice of Sackmann (1991) to use open-ended and broad questions was followed so as to give interviewees the opportunity to answer these from the perspectives of their own cultures. Interview guides were used

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(see Addendums 1, 2 and 3) to keep the researcher on track. Researchers such as Travers (2001) and Patton (1987) prefer this approach to interviewing because of its power to produce rich and original data. In this research, the questions were formulated in such a manner as to elicit information about an ecotourism organisational culture.

The responses were captured on a voice recorder. The researcher was alert to both verbal and nonverbal messages, and, therefore, some notes had to be made during the interviews. While interviewing, the researcher used language that was clear and meaningful to the respondents.

Thomas *et al.*, (2011) assert that the interview can be very productive if the researcher is able to pursue pertinent issues that may arise but are not quite clear. In-depth interviews allow for the exploration of individual experiences and perceptions in great detail, and Merriam (2009) recommends this method as it uses direct quotations to report on people's experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge as well as detailed descriptions of their activities, behaviours, and actions. Writers such as Yin (2008) and Padgett (2008) have also acknowledged this data collection method as a powerful tool.

Qualitative research focuses on studying individuals in their "natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3); therefore, research participants were visited and interviewed at their workplaces.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with academic experts in ecotourism, operational experts, as well as policy makers in the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality. These groups comprised individuals who, according to Given (2008), had particular expertise that was most likely to advance the researcher's interests and potentially open new doors for further development in the area of research.

4.8.2 Document Reviews

There is a wide variety of written materials which, according to Prior (2008, p. 230), "serve as a key and valuable source of scientific data in qualitative research". These include organisational strategies, value statements, institutional documents, public documents (both local and international), and relevant government publications.

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This research made use of documents such as statutory instruments, government gazettes, and manuals containing information on tourism, ecotourism and organisational culture. Data gleaned from these documents were used to enhance the literature review and will also be used during data gathering as points of reference.

According to Creswell (2007), documents represent a good source of text data for a qualitative study, with the advantage that they are always in the language and in the words of the participants. Merriam (2009) expresses appreciation of the use of document review as a data collection method because it does not intrude upon or alter a setting in the way that the presence of an investigator does. In addition, Myers (2009) states that documents are relatively cheap and quick to access, they make things visible, and are traceable. In this particular research, the researcher had access to Zimbabwe's recently launched National Tourism Policy document (2014), as well as a DVD of the Minister's preamble speech in launching the National Tourism Policy, both of which were analysed in order to richly inform the research.

4.8.3 Piloting the Data Collection Method

Gulati (2011) points out that pilot testing is considered one of the most critical elements in a qualitative research. Bless and Higson-Smith (in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005) describes a pilot study as a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling and instruments are adequate and appropriate. Therefore, it can be concluded that the purpose of carrying out a pilot study is to improve the effectiveness of the main study. As stated by Yin (2011), pilot studies help to test and refine one or more aspects of the study, such as its design, fieldwork procedures, data collection or analysis plans. In this particular research, having constructed the interview schedules, and on the recommendation of the research supervisor (who is not an ecotourism specialist), the researcher sought the help of an academic expert in the field of ecotourism in order to assess the validity, reliability and relevance of the interview questions. In accordance with the observations made by Cohen *et al.*, (2007) and Haralambos and Holborn (1995), following these procedures helped the researcher to:

- check the clarity of the wording of the questions;
- assess the suitability of the research instruments;
- eliminate ambiguity in the questions;

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- check the time taken to go through the interview; and
- identify redundant and commonly misunderstood questions.

Pilot testing the interview guides thus promoted the content validity and credibility of the interview schedules prior to using them to interview the targeted population.

4.8.4 Recording of Data

The data obtained from the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. The use of such a recorder is the most common method of recording interview data because, according to Thomas *et al.*, (2011), it has the obvious advantage of preserving entire verbal exchanges during the interviews for later analysis. To counter the only drawback, being the malfunctioning of equipment, the researcher carried along fresh batteries and checked that the recorder was working properly before each interview.

The researcher also recorded data by capturing in writing participants' behaviours and/or emotions that could not be captured by the voice recorder, and these were later expanded on. All the information that had been recorded had to be transcribed verbatim (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009). As indicated by Riviera (2010), time is one of the costly consequences encountered when transcribing information.

4.8.5 Qualitative Data Analysis Process

The process of qualitative data analysis (QDA), as described by Babbie (2007, p. 378), is the “non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships”. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2003), it brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data, while McMillan and Schumacher (2006) mention that data analysis is an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns or relationships among these categories. Figure 10 below shows the process of qualitative data analysis (QDA). As the diagram suggests, the QDA process is not linear and has certain characteristics.

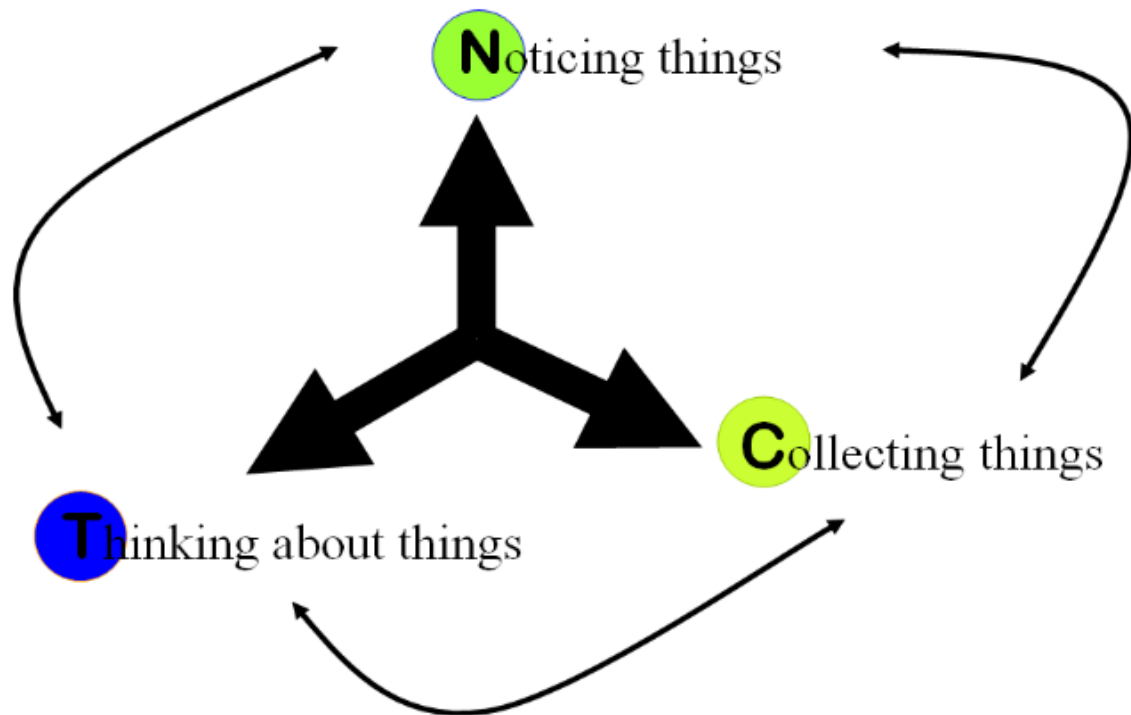


Figure 10: Qualitative data analysis process

Source: Seidel (1998, p. 2)

According to Seidel (1998), the QDA process is:

- iterative and progressive: It is cyclical in that the process keeps repeating. For example, Seidel (1998, p. 2) states that “when you are thinking about things, you also start noticing new things in the data. You then collect and think about these new things. In principle the process is an infinite spiral”;
- recursive, in the sense that the researcher may have to go back to a previous part that was already dealt with. For example, Seidel (1998, p. 2) explains that “while you are busy collecting things you might simultaneously start noticing new things to collect”;
- holographic, in that each step in the QDA process contains the entire process. “When you first notice things, you are already mentally collecting and thinking about those things” (Seidel, 1998, p. 2).

Although there is no one particular approach to data analysis, Kodish and Gittelsohn (2011) state that there are similarities among the methodological approaches, and the data analysis process can be represented by a “spiral” (Creswell, (2007) (see Figure 11).

Commenting on the data analysis spiral developed by Creswell (2007), Kodish and Gittelsohn (2011) as well as Saldana (2008) explain that data analysis begins during the data collection stage (shown at the bottom of the diagram) and spirals upward through the various stages until finally a written account is developed that presents the findings. One of the many observations made by Kodish and Gittelsohn (2011, p. 52) is that “the spiral image highlights the non-linear, iterative nature of QDA and offers both procedures and examples throughout each stage of the process, from initial data management to representation of findings”. This description can also be applied to the model of qualitative research analysis (Seidel, 1998) (see Figure 10).

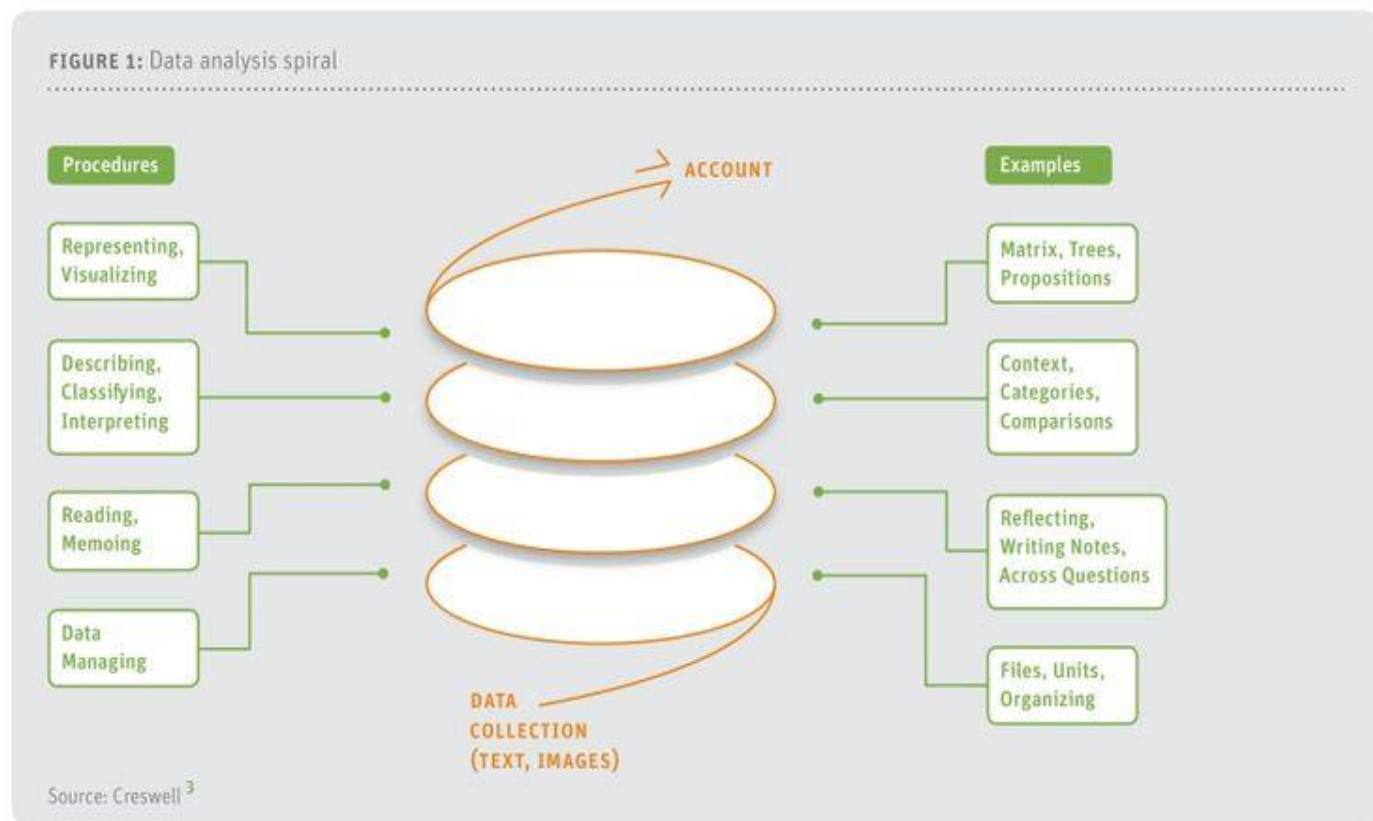


Figure 11: Data analysis spiral

Source: Creswell (2011, p. 183)

This iterative and systematic approach to data analysis can be helpful in ensuring credible findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.9 RESEARCH QUALITY AND RIGOUR

As alternative paradigms in research gained prominence, there was initial resistance in accepting the qualitative methodology as a credible or trustworthy method of research. Scientific objectivity (positivism) was accepted as the only way. Proponents of the qualitative methodology sought to establish its merits and to make it more acceptable on the research methodology landscape, and the resultant work of various scholars, such as Lincoln (1995), Rogers and Shirley (2000), Silverman (2000), and Fenton and Mazulewicz (2008) finally enabled its acceptance by demonstrating how qualitative researchers could incorporate the measures advanced by a positivist researcher. The current researcher, in order to ensure trustworthiness of the data collected, acted on the assertion by Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) that

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trustworthiness involves establishing constructs that correspond to the criteria employed by the interpretivist investigator. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002, p. 11) mention that “without the elements of trustworthiness, research is worthless, becomes fiction and loses its utility”. Therefore, due attention was paid to the elements mentioned to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected.

4.9.1 Credibility

According to Trochim (2006b), credibility involves establishing that the results are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research. This can be achieved by ensuring that information-rich participants are identified and interviewed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose a number of activities to enhance credibility, among which are triangulation and member checking, which will be discussed below.

4.9.1.1 Strategies used to ensure credibility

The summary of participants (see Table 8) shows that the research was credible in terms of the way the participants were chosen for the study. Participants chosen had spent different lengths of time working in the tourism service industry (and, therefore, had different perspectives on the practice of ecotourism) and in different areas of expertise, ranging from strategic and expert to operational levels (which increased participants' capacity to shed adequate light on the research question from various perspectives (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In particular, account was taken of the statement made by Polkinghorne (2007, p. 479) that “the researcher's primary aim is not to discover whether narrators' accounts are accurate reflections of actual events, but to understand the meanings people attach to those events”.

The length of time that it took to interview each participant was reasonably lengthy (see Table 8), showing that rich information was solicited by the researcher.

To ensure the authenticity of the findings in this study, *triangulation* (interviews and document study) of data was carried out. Triangulation is defined by Silverman (2010, p. 277) as the “attempt to get a true fix on a situation or phenomena by combining different ways of looking at it”. In this research, triangulation of methods

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(interviews with all participant groups), along with the use of information gleaned from scanned literature, was used.

In this study, the researcher used *data triangulation* to corroborate or confirm the results produced by the use of the different methods (the interviews as well as the document study). Barbour (2009, p. 46), as well as Silverman (2010, p. 133), state that data triangulation is done so as to produce authentic, trustworthy findings. Data triangulation is achieved by examining where the different data intersect. As mentioned by Barbour (2009, p. 47), “qualitative research thrives on analytically examining these differences and discrepancies to authenticate its data”.

In addition, the researcher used *peer examination* to ensure the validity of data. Krefting (1991) mentions that peer examination is similar to member checking, but that it involves the researcher’s discussing the research process and findings with impartial colleagues who have experience with qualitative methods. The researcher discussed the findings at length with a fellow doctoral student, who occasionally provided some positive criticisms as well as new insights. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that this is one way of keeping the researcher honest. Colleagues can increase credibility by checking and pointing out any noticeable inconsistencies. In this research, the researcher had the research process verified by an expert (senior lecturer in the field of ecotourism) to check on relevance prior to going out in the field and collecting the data.

Another way to ensure credibility is in the processing of the data (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004), namely, the selection of the most suitable meaning unit. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) mention that meaning can be lost during the condensation and abstraction processes. To minimise this loss of meaning and ensure credibility:

- participants’ responses were quoted verbatim;
- the themes and categories emerged from the data that was gathered and were not the researcher’s own thoughts; and
- agreement was sought between the data obtained from the respondents and the data obtained from available literature by discussing and presenting the data.

Yet another criterion for establishing the credibility of this study was through prolonged and varied field experience. This entailed engagement with the participants by collecting data from December 2014 through to March 2015 (four months), enabling

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the researcher to reach an understanding of the organisational culture existing in the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe.

4.9.2 Transferability

Research findings are said to be transferable “only if the provided data sets and descriptions are rich enough so that other researchers are able to make judgments about the findings’ transferability to different settings or contexts” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is concerned with the generalisability of the findings and results of the study to other settings, situations, populations, and circumstances.

4.9.2.1 Strategies used to ensure transferability

According to Trochim (2006a), the qualitative researcher can also enhance transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. This means describing in great detail the sampling of the population of the study, data gathering methods, interview techniques, the research instrument (was it pre-tested and why?), how the captured data was stored, and how the data was interpreted. The person who wishes to “transfer” the results to a different context is then responsible for judging how sensible the transfer is.

In this research, parallels were drawn with other countries also engaged in the practice of ecotourism, and with different economic, social and political environments. Of note is the assertion by Trochim (2006a) that the transferability perspective is the primary responsibility of the one doing the generalising (reading the research document).

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability has to do with the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar subjects in a similar context, and how the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Guba, 1981). According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) as well as Fenton and Mazulewicz (2008), dependability is whereby the

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researcher queries whether the data collection, data analysis, and theory generation is logically presented and easily understandable.

4.9.3.1 Strategies used to ensure dependability

The dependability criterion is applied by checking the internal coherence of the research product (the data, the findings and the interpretations) that was arrived at in the study (Fenton & Mazulewicz, 2008). The exact methods of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation in qualitative research must be described “densely” as this description provides information as to how repeatable the study might be (Kielhofner, 1982)

In this particular research, each research method used was described in detail. When doing the data analysis, the dependability criterion was applied by taking an excerpt of the data gathered, and the way analysis was done was physically demonstrated by following the coding process in inductive analysis (see Table 9) (Creswell, 2002).

Triangulation was also used to establish dependability. Triangulation, according to Silverman (2010, p. 133), “is done so as to get a true fix on a situation or phenomena by combining different ways of looking at it (method triangulation), or different findings (data triangulation)”. Method triangulation was achieved by using interviews and studying documents, and doing subsequent analyses. Data triangulation was used to confirm the results produced by the different methods of eliciting information (interviews and data analysis). Barbour (2009) states that qualitative research thrives on such comparisons in order to authenticate data.

4.9.4 Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that confirmability refers to a measure of how well the inquiry’s findings are supported by the data collected. According to Bradley (1993), confirmability is the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants’ responses and not the bias of the researcher. It also refers to the degree to which the research results can be corroborated or confirmed by other researchers who read or review the research results.

4.9.4.1 Strategies used to ensure confirmability

In this study, confirmability was achieved by checking and re-checking the data throughout the study (Trochim, 2006a). The researcher acted on the advice of Shenton (2004, p. 63) to “demonstrate that the findings emerge from the data, and are not of the researcher’s own predispositions” by including verbatim quotes from data to ensure internal coherence of the research product (the data and the findings).

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In research where human subjects are involved, the researcher is compelled to adhere to all the ethical requirements that are specified. The ethical considerations applicable to this particular research are discussed below:

Access: The departments involved in the ecotourism business in Zimbabwe were approached and asked to participate in the study. Access was granted, and some individuals were specifically assigned to participate.

Informed consent: Individual respondents read and then signed the informed consent forms prior to their involvement in the study.

Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity: The confidentiality of participants was maintained by using a participant code so as to protect the privacy of informants. Divulging of organisational information is a very sensitive issue in Zimbabwe.

4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented a blueprint for the methodology and methods that guided the various steps of this study’s research process. The main paradigms were summed up, while a detailed explanation of the main paradigm guiding this particular research was given. Qualitative research and quantitative research were juxtaposed, and issues such as the research sample, sampling technique and sample size for the study, as well as the data collection methods, were discussed. Strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the research were analysed, and the chapter ended with a discussion of the ethical considerations applicable to this particular research. Chapter 5 will focus on the actual process of data collection and analysis.

5 CHAPTER 5: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, the collection and analysis of the research data are discussed. The main aim of the chapter is to report on the data collection and analysis processes in order to answer the research and sub-research questions of this study.

The main research question is: What are the defining elements in an operational organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe?

The sub-questions are:

1. What constitutes organisational culture and ecotourism?
2. How do members in Zimbabwe's ecotourism industry view and describe the elements of an ecotourism culture, and do they comply with this culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe?
3. How can the ecotourism industry and its members develop an organisational culture that supports the dimensions of sustainable ecotourism development in Zimbabwe?
4. How will the development of a supportive organisational culture in ecotourism enhance the economic performance of the ecotourism industry?
5. What strategies can be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture in support of establishing and institutionalising an operational ecotourism culture?

These research sub-questions are cited again in this chapter because, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), as well as Krathwohl (1998), when trying to discern what meaningful data is, the researcher should always refer back to the research questions as they should be used in the formulation of the results.

Bazeley (2009) advises that a researcher must provide details about sources of data, such as the demographic features of the sample and the interrelationships between these features. In heeding this advice, a summary of the participants used in this particular research is provided in Table 8.

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Table 8: Summary of participants

Group type	Designation	Qualification	Number of years in service	Duration of interview	Participant identifier code
					P1, P2, P3 etc
Strategic level	Minister	(Currently studying towards a PhD)	-	42 minutes	P1
	Research and development	PhD	-	25 minutes	P2
	Domestic tourism official	Master's qualification	5 years	57 minutes	P3
Expert level	Lecturer	PhD	13 years	20 minutes	P4
	Lecturer	Master's degree	-	25 minutes	P5
	Lecturer	-	-	30 minutes	P6
Operational level	Senior board member of tourism department in Zimbabwe	-	30 years	30 minutes	P7
	Senior manager (Department of Parks & Wildlife)	Master's level	8 years	53 minutes	P8
	Manager, Tourism department	-	Several	25 minutes	P9
	ZTA	Master's level	Several	20 minutes	P10

The above participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique as well as the snowball technique as described in paragraph 4.7



Photograph 4: The researcher (left), and Supervisor (right)

In this qualitative research, I, as the researcher (depicted in Photo 4), had to understand my own intent and possible biases in the data collection and analysis processes within a social constructivist/interpretivist paradigm. I will proceed to describe the data collection and analysis processes in order to show the research rigour that is necessary in qualitative research and to provide the evidence for data trustworthiness and credibility. Owing to the fact that I am using a qualitative approach instead of a quantitative one, I am the instrument in this study.

5.2 ACCESSING PARTICIPANTS FOR INTERVIEWS

On arrival at each interview site in Harare, Zimbabwe I acted on the advice of Field and Morse (1985) by contacting the people who could refer me to possible participants I could interview for my study based on the information I needed. These

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were people who knew the possible participants fitting the criteria of the study's purposive sample more intimately than I did.

The individuals selected to comprise the purposive sample were chosen on the basis of their experience in ecotourism activities and their probable possession of the necessary information to provide answers to the research questions.

Reflection Box 1: Gaining access to the participants

Gaining access to the selected sample presented a “mixed bag” of events for me. As soon as I had established contact with one participant (P3), he expressed a willingness to participate almost instantly, only asking that he be given at least one day to schedule the interview in his diary. All three the academic participants (P4, P5 and P6), as well as P2, were ready to grant an interview immediately, and seeing that I was already at their premises, they felt there was nothing further to wait for. I then had to schedule the interviews over two days in order not to cram too much into one day. This immediate willingness to participate provided a welcome relief since that arrangement effectively reduced travelling expenses. (I was based 264 km from the capital, where all the participants were located). One participant (P9), in spite of having agreed to participate in the interviews and having been assured of all the researcher obligations of ensuring privacy and anonymity, at first showed reluctance, but matters “thawed” as the interview progressed painfully. It should be noted that in Zimbabwe, there is a marked reluctance to speak out (especially in instances when people know something is not right) for fear of victimisation. The operational level participants, in particular, prolonged the research time in the field by continuously postponing the interviews and then showing a sudden unwillingness to participate. So much so that I had to abandon my original plan to use the purposive selection method to obtain participants and resort to the snowball technique instead. In so doing, I was taking into account the ethical considerations in carrying out research as recommended by Creswell (2003), who states that the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants. In this instance, therefore, I respected participants' rights to withdraw, and looked for other participants. This meant starting all over again to establish contact with new prospective participants and to get them to agree to participate in the study. When this had been done, one participant of the operational level group (P8) (also a research student elsewhere) insisted on giving the interview behind a locked door (for fear of

victimisation if found out). This was arranged, and the interview turned out to be very informative.

The remaining participants were not flexible with their time, and stuck to their busy schedules until my allocated time, resulting in the fieldwork being completed in four months (from November 2014 to March 2015).

Figure 12 below illustrates the data collection and analysis process that was used in this research. As indicated earlier, the research questions were presented again in the introductory section of this chapter for ease of reference. Data collection will be discussed next, and the remainder of the process will receive attention in the order shown in the flow diagram (Figure 12).

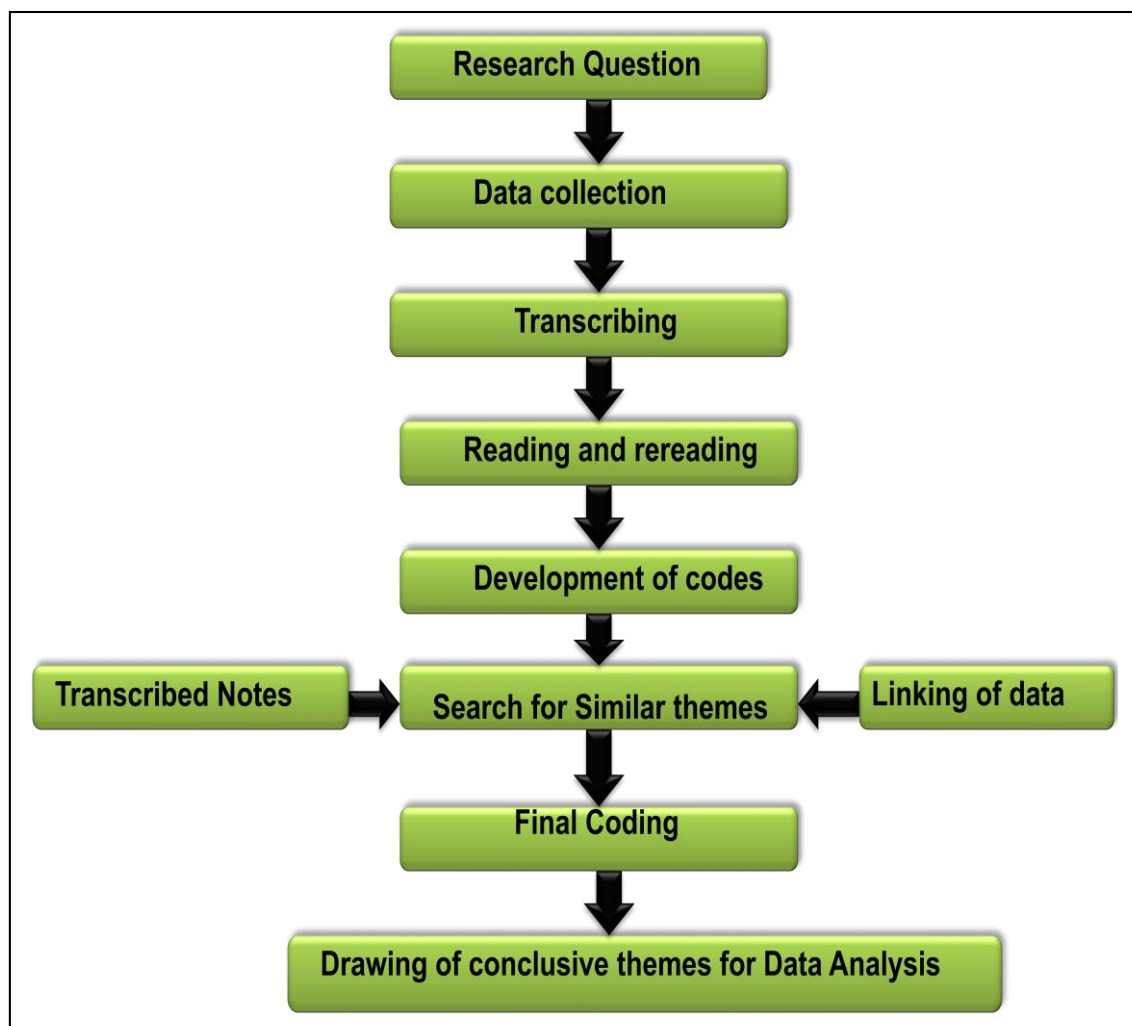


Figure 12: Data collection and analysis process

5.2.1 Data Collection: Conducting the Interviews

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3), qualitative research focuses on studying individuals in their “natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. In order to carry out the interviews, physical visits were paid to the research participants’ workplaces, and the interviews were conducted there. Since this particular research is concerned with the development of an organisational culture, the following statement by Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 20) suffices in supporting the decision to pay physical visits to participants’ workplaces:

Culture is about how people interpret the world around them by developing shared understandings. People learn collectively how to interpret what is important and unimportant and how to behave in specific circumstances. Culture provides people with rules about how to operate in the world in which they live and work.

Reflection Box 2: Interviewing an “elite” participant

One of my selected participants (P1), being the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality, is considered to be “an elite”. For the purposes of this research, he did not ask to be anonymous, but to be quoted and referred to as the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality. Interviewing the Minister presented a real challenge to me. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), such individuals are considered to be influential, prominent and very well informed. Moreover, Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 110) state that “such people are very difficult to gain access to because they are busy people, operating under demanding time constraints. [A] researcher has to rely on other people, their recommendations ... for introduction ... and to make appointments with elite individuals”. This proved to be very true. The particular “gate keeper” for the Minister was very unwilling to allow access, and had it not been for the intervention of another participant whom I had interviewed earlier on, (and who had recently completed his PhD, and was therefore sympathetic), the interview would not have materialised.

All ethical procedures relevant to this research were followed. Prior to the commencement of each interview, permission to record the interview using a digital voice recorder was sought, and of the ten participants nine agreed. Data gleaned from

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the participant who had refused to have the interview recorded on the digital voice recorder had to be handwritten by the researcher as the interview progressed (called real-time documentation). This was a truly difficult interview and the researcher had to rely on the advice of Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2010) to use shorthand codes/symbols to minimise the time spent writing and also the distraction it might cause.

5.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

In accordance with the description of the qualitative data analysis process in paragraph 4.5.1, I used inductive reasoning to organise the information gathered from the interviews into the different levels of codes, from which conclusive themes could be extracted for use in the data analysis.

5.3.1 The Inductive Analysis of Data

In analysing the data, the researcher used inductive instead of deductive reasoning because, according to Holloway (1997), inductive reasoning generally uses data to generate ideas (hypothesis generating), whereas deductive reasoning begins with the idea and uses the data to confirm or negate the idea (hypothesis testing). In this particular research, hypothesis generation instead of hypothesis testing is involved. Further to that, Thomas (2006, p. 238) states that “inductive analysis refers to approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by a researcher”. This is consistent with the explanation of Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 12) that “the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data”.

Burnard, Gill, Steward, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) agree with the above statements when they mention that with the inductive analysis approach, codes emerge from the data, and there is little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework to refer to. Several methods of qualitative data analysis are documented in literature, such as grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherall, 1994), and narrative analysis (Leiblich, 1998). The analysis in this particular research is inductive, and the grounded theory approach is used with the aim of formulating a framework for the development of an ecotourism organisational culture. The researcher was persuaded to use the inductive approach as a method of data analysis by the

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statement of Thomas (2006, p. 237) that the purposes of using an inductive approach are to:

- condense raw textual data into a brief summary format;
- establish clear links between the ... research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and
- develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data.

5.3.2 Grounded Theory

According to Charmaz (2003), grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research aimed at theory development. Glaser (2010) describes the ideology of grounded theory as a concept, while Bound (2011) states that grounded theory does not prescribe a specific methodology for conducting research. The method for gathering the data is open; it is only in the examination of the data that grounded theory shows a substantive, defined process. The theory is created while analysing the data and the validity of that theory is “grounded” as the data supporting it increases (Campbell, 2011).

5.4 CODING AND CODES

Coding is a process of identifying themes in the text, and it is one of the key elements in qualitative data analysis (QDA) (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Charmaz (1983), together with MacQueen, McLellan, Kay and Milstein (1999), describe coding as the process of categorising and sorting data, with the codes being the identifiers of themes in the coding process, serving to summarise, synthesise, and sort many observations made from the data, and to be the building blocks for theory or model building, and the foundation on which project findings most often rest.

Normally, as stated by Riviera (2010, p. 1302), “coding is associated with numbers and symbols, and is most familiar in quantitative research and literature”. This author further explains that while coding in quantitative research reduces the data (a data reduction strategy), in qualitative research the goal is to retain data since it allows the researcher to break down a topic into a sub-topic and to review them as needed.

According to Punch (1998, p. 199), “there is no single way to do qualitative data analysis – no single methodological framework”. As such, coding practices differ across the traditions of qualitative data analysis available (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2006). De Vos *et al.*, (2011, p. 412) add that “all the levels of coding are not expected in all the different qualitative traditions”.

5.4.1 The Guiding Principles of Grounded Theory

In doing the data analysis and specifically in applying grounded theory, the researcher had to be cognisant of the following guidelines:

- Theory emergence from data

There is an intimate relationship between the researcher and the analysis of the data (Ng & Hase, 2008); therefore, the principle is to let the theory emerge from the data as part of the research process, rather than to preconceive the theory or force it on the data. Grounded theory is not a preconceived or an a priori theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) mention that it is theory grounded in data that is methodically acquired during the course of the research.

- The need to avoid preconceptions

Grounded theory requires a researcher to approach the problem situation with an open mind and allow the evidence accumulated to dictate the “emerging” theoretical agenda (Ng and Hase, 2008). Since theory is to be discovered from the data, the main point is to avoid preconceived ideas, and, in support of that, Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 45) stress that with grounded theory “initial decisions are not based on a preconceived theoretical framework”.

As mentioned earlier, this particular research uses the inductive analysis approach of grounded theory. In accordance with this approach, and as opposed to the deductive approach, the process of coding begins with the verbatim transcription of the tape recorded interviews. The researcher personally transcribed the interviews, and this had the advantage of getting to know the data more intimately. This is an intensive and time-consuming process, and the observation by Plummer (2001) is indeed true, that:

a first major task after interviewing for most researchers is transcription (and possibly editing too). This is a hugely time consuming – and often boring – process. For every hour of tape, it can take up to ten hours to transcribe – especially if you are to engage in analysis at the same time.

According to Thomas (2003), the next step after transcribing is reading the text closely and repeatedly until the researcher is familiar with the content and has a thorough understanding of the themes that are covered in the text. The researcher read through the entire text at least three times before coming up with a clue as to how to properly analyse such a lengthy text. After that, the third stage was to create categories. This, according to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), forms the comparison part of the analysis.

Table 9 below shows the coding process that was followed in inductive analysis.

Table 9: The coding process in inductive analysis

Initial reading of text data	Identify specific text segments related to objectives.	Label segments to text to create categories.	the of and redundancy among the categories.	Reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories.	Create a model incorporating most important categories.
Many pages of text	Many segments of text	Several categories	Several categories	A few key categories	

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2002, p. 266)

5.5 TYPES OF CODING

Coding, according to Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 106), “is a constellation of words and/or statements that relate to the same central meaning, in other words, ‘codes are tools’ to think with”. In order for the researcher to come up with these “tools to think with”, grounded theory seemed to offer the solution. Grounded theory provides three types of coding that are relevant to this particular study, namely, open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Open coding in the process of analysis refers specifically to the naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of interview transcriptions (Campbell, 2001; De Vos *et al.*, 2011; McEachern, 2007). De Vos *et al.*, (2011), as well as Gibbs (2010b), describe the process as involving the breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising of data.

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The role of the researcher is to closely examine the transcribed data, and ask at each paragraph “what is the main idea being brought out here?” Ryan and Bernard (2003) explain that the act of discovering themes is what grounded theorists call open coding. In this particular research, many segments of text came up, and in each case the main idea was assigned a meaning that briefly described the relevant phenomena.

In the particular fragment of an interview transcript given below, to demonstrate the use of open coding, the interviewee was male, and had been with the organisation for a period of six years.

Evidence showing open coding from the transcription of part of the interview conducted with Participant 3 (P3):

Q: In your view, what constitutes organisational culture?

A: Basically, when we are talking about organisational culture, we are talking about **the way an organisation does its things**, and we are looking at **the values, the behaviours, the contribution of its members in the psychological environment in which an organisation is operating**. And we also look at things like the **organisation's expectations ... the experiences, the philosophies and the values of the organisation**.

(Understanding of organisational culture = coloured in yellow)

In the above transcript the participant gives his main understanding of organisational culture, and the words he used to describe his understanding were coloured in yellow.

Axial coding is the second stage of analysing data (McEachern, 2007), and according to De Vos *et al.*, (2011), as well as Urquhart (2001) and Gibbs (2010a), it is a set of procedures whereby data is put back together in new ways after doing open coding by making connections between categories and subcategories. This is the stage where categories and relationships between categories are supposed to emerge. Strauss and Corbin (1990) add that the intention here is to develop a main category (or theme). The researcher also followed this procedure, and several categories still came up (see the evidence marked in green in the block below).

Evidence showing axial coding from a transcription of the interview with Participant 3 (P3):

Q: In your view, what constitutes organisational culture?

A: Basically, when we are talking about organisational culture, we are talking about **the way an organisation does its things (norms)**, and we are looking at **the values, the behaviours, the contribution of its members in the psychological environment in which an organisation is operating (values)**. And we also look at things like the **organisation's expectations...the experiences, the philosophies and the values of the organisation (beliefs)**.

As evident from the literature presented earlier, organisational culture is made up of norms, values and beliefs. Accordingly, P3's response was re-examined, and those attributes that constitute an organisational culture were observed in the words used, such as "the way an organisation does its things" (which denoted norms); "the values, behaviours, the contributions of its members" (which denoted organisational values); and "the philosophy of the organisation" (which denoted organisational beliefs). The main theme that this type of coding revealed was the components of an organisational culture.

Selective coding is the third stage of data analysis, and it involves the process of scanning data and previous codes (McEachern, 2007; Gibbs 2010c) with the aim of selecting the core category, and systematically relating it to other categories (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). According to Bound (2011), selective coding is the final step in the coding process, and this step drives what the research is all about. Relating the core categories to other categories is done to look for evidence to support the themes that are developed as a result. The core categories then become the main themes that will be presented as having arisen from the data gathering. Following these types of coding to the letter helped the researcher to successfully manage the data, for it can become very confusing, even more so as the lines between one type of coding and the next are artificial (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and the different types do not necessarily take place in sequence. In the current research, each transcript was coded and completed before moving on to the next step in order to minimise confusion.

Data was scanned in accordance with the recommendation of McEachern (2007) and Gibbs (2010c) to look for evidence to support the theme that was developed under axial coding. Having found the evidence, that core category then became one of the

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main themes that were then presented as having arisen from gathering data on the perception of organisational culture.

The same process was followed for each interview until all ten of them had been completed. Through this process, six major themes were identified and conceptualised, and these formed the basis of the framework of an organisational culture in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe. Thus, the indication by Jain and Ogden (1999), Thomas, (2003) and Campbell, Pound, Pope, Britten, Pill, Morgan and Donovan (2003) that most inductive studies report a model that has between three and eight main themes in the findings, was supported.

5.5.1 Application of the Three Types of Coding to this Research

This study aimed to establish whether or not an operational organisational culture existed in the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this study can be classified as a grounded theory study. According to De Vos *et al.*, (2011, p. 414), in a grounded theory study “the researcher’s interpretations and findings have to be grounded in the participants’ social reality in order to present a valid reflection” of the phenomenon at hand.

Constant comparison analysis of thematic content (coding) as introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is the most common method of analysing qualitative data, and was used in this particular research to generate and analyse data. Human service professionals are said to be interested in qualitative research methods (Shimura, 2005), and grounded theory is therefore very popular in researches such as this particular one. In fact, Glaser (2001) states that grounded theory is a well-established, widely recognised, credible and rigorous methodology used in business research. Similarly, Locke (2001, p. 95) adds that grounded theory is “particularly appropriate to researching managerial ... behavior as it captures the complexity of the managerial process”. It follows that thematic analysis, which is the grouping of data into themes (The Pell Institute, 2013) will help answer the research questions posed by the research.

In this research, following the method of constant comparison analysis, the interviews were transcribed, and after reading through the data (line by line), phrases of data were colour coded. In adherence to the proposal made by Leech and

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Onwuegbuzie (2007), earlier codes (in other transcripts) were checked before applying each code to see if there was an existing similar code. This, according to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), forms the comparison part of the analysis.

5.5.2 Themes or Categories

Themes are described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 780) as being “abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs that investigators identify before, during and after data collection”, adding that there is more than one way to identify themes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) mention that themes come from both the data (inductive approach) and from the researcher’s own prior theoretical understanding of the phenomena being studied (an a priori approach). Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 780) observe that “grounded theorists suggest a careful, line-by-line reading of the text while looking for processes, actions, assumptions and consequences”. In this study, the researcher organised the data and made sense of the participants’ understanding of the questions posed by reading through the interview transcripts several times (and line-by-line) so as to be able to interpret the data and present it logically. This line-by-line analysis, according to Ryan and Bernard (2003), is labour intensive, and so far, it is only human beings who can do this – the computer cannot assist.

5.6 THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA

In terms of this research, a theme is the word (or words) that capture(s) the core message conveyed by the participants. From the data collected, a total of six major themes in relation to the research sub-questions arose (see Table 10). With reference to the aim of this research to gather data for the development of an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism, attention needs to be drawn to descriptions of organisational culture in the literature reviewed that organisational culture is “among one of the most important variables determining a company’s success or failure, and highly successful companies have capitalized on the value that resides in developing and managing a unique organisational culture” (Azanzaa *et al.*, 2013, p. 45). From the data gathered from the interviews, as well as from the literature, the current research seeks to develop an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism that will enable the delivery of a competitive product in an extremely competitive industry (Cloete, 2001, cited in De Witt *et al.*, 2011).

Table 10: Major themes from data analysis

Main theme	Summary of codes	When to use the theme
Perception of organisational culture	Organisational culture	To establish what constitutes an organisational culture
Perception of ecotourism and of an ecotourism culture	Ecotourism culture	To explore and identify what constitutes ecotourism, and subsequently, an ecotourism culture. Does Zimbabwe comply?
The practice and context of ecotourism in Zimbabwe	How ecotourism is viewed in Zimbabwe by those in management and by other stakeholders	To outline how ecotourism is practised in the Zimbabwean context, as well as to ascertain the relevance of the practice of ecotourism to the Zimbabwean situation
Ecotourism organisational culture	Elements that comprise an ecotourism organisational culture (business and employee practices)	To identify elements/practices that constitute an ecotourism organisational culture so that they can be developed in order to promote business competitive advantage as well as increase performance in ecotourism
Benefits of establishing an organisational culture in the practice of ecotourism	Identify the benefits of having an organisational culture in the practice of ecotourism	To acknowledge the benefits of an ecotourism organisational culture, as well as to identify the disadvantages of not

Main theme	Summary of codes	When to use the theme
		implementing it
Strategies to build an ecotourism organisational culture	Proposed methods through which an ecotourism organisational culture can be established	To identify strategies that can be adopted to enable the implementation of an operational ecotourism organisational culture

Interview schedules containing very similar questions were used for different participants so as to expose them all to the same set of questions and “so that their views and perceptions could be measured against the same instrument” (Seakamela, 2011, p. 250).

As mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994), as well as by Krathwohl (1998), when trying to discern what meaningful data is, the researcher should always refer back to the research questions. The method followed by the researcher was to group the data question by question, making it easier to analyse the data (May, 2007). Each research question is outlined below, and the observations of the participants are quoted verbatim—accompanied by an indication of which participant (P1 being the first participant, P2 the second participant, and so on) the response belongs to. The first theme to emerge was that of the perception of organisational culture, and the question to the participants (to determine what they understood by organisational culture) was: According to you, what does organisational culture constitute?

In the literature review, various definitions of organisational culture were given, and in the fieldwork carried out for this study, the participants gave their own understanding of this concept. Below (see Table 11) is a juxtaposition between the approach in the literature and the understanding of the respondents. In each instance the code, as well as the major theme arising, is included.

5.6.1 Perception of Organisational Culture

Table 11: Perception of organisational culture

Code	Responses from participants	Available literature	Major theme arising
Organisational culture	- Values, beliefs and contributions of members of an organisation (P3) - A way of doing things (P3, P4 &P5) - Values of an organisation, its reason for existence (P2) - The behaviour of people within an organisation (P1) - Aims and objectives in an organisation (P6) - The way an organisation does its business, the philosophy, how it defines the way the organisation conducts itself in dealing with its customers and wildlife ... the way an organisation is supposed to do business (P8)	Chegini (2010): A belief, values and practices which form the characteristics of an organisation, and which have a significant influence on the performance and long-term effectiveness of organisations Schimmoeller (2010, p. 126): “a common set of values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation which influences how people perceive, think, and act” Tsai (2011): The beliefs and values that have existed in an organisation for a long time, and the	Perception of organisational culture

Code	Responses from participants	Available literature	Major theme arising
	- The way you do things, emanating from your core values, in line with your vision (P10)	beliefs of the staff and the expected value of their work that will influence their attitudes and behaviour.	

The citations from the participants indicated that they were aware of the special components that made up an organisational culture as described in the available literature. The following are summaries of their understanding of organisational culture:

P3: the values, beliefs and contributions of members

P2: the values of an organisation; its reason for existence

P10: the way of doing things, emanating from your core values, in line with your vision

These responses were quite spontaneous and given with little hesitation, showing that the participants had a good knowledge of what organisational culture is.

5.6.2 Perception of Ecotourism, and of an Ecotourism Culture

Having indicated their understanding of organisational culture, the respondents were in a position to relate it to what an ecotourism culture was. The next question that needed to be answered was: What constitutes ecotourism, and subsequently, ecotourism culture?

The responses of participants are tabulated in Table 12, each part of this two-fold question being treated separately.

Table 12: Perception of ecotourism, and of an ecotourism culture

Code	Responses from participants	Literature	Major theme arising
Ecotourism	- The beliefs, behaviours and actions that preserve the environment for future generations (P5) - Sustainability (P8) - "Ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as low impact, and often small scale, alternative to standard, commercial or mass tourism. Its purpose may be to educate the traveller, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities,	Ceballos-Lascurain (1993): "Travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery, wildlife and any existing cultural manifestations" TIES (1990): "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" Hall and Page (2006): "A form of nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be	Perception of ecotourism
Ecotourism organisational culture			Understanding of an ecotourism culture

Code	Responses from participants	Literature	Major theme arising
	or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights” (Honey, 2008 as quoted by P3). - Actions, practices that support sustainability (P3) - Adherence to sustainable tourism development (P2) - Environmentally friendly tourism (P1) - A culture that respects the principles of ecotourism behaviour and attitudes (P4)	ecologically and culturally sustainable” The Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, (2013): “Activities of the employees are directed by the organisational values of the ecotourism sector; every employee should perform their work, directed by the same eco-principles and values” Brebbia & Pineda (2010): “When executing their duties, employees: - do the job in an ecologically friendly approach - have environmentally friendly or environmentally sensitive values - implement	

Code	Responses from participants	Literature	Major theme arising
		environmental-saving practices - emphasise knowledge sharing and the need for environmental protection when communicating with other employees and customers - are trained to know and act ecologically - follow ecological guidelines”	

The respondents’ understanding of ecotourism is encapsulated in the observation of P5, namely that it is the beliefs, behaviours and actions that preserve the environment for future generations. As summarised in the following responses, an ecotourism culture has to do with issues of sustainability:

P3: actions/practices that support sustainability

P2, P5: adherence to sustainable tourism development

P8: sustainability

The general perception expressed was that it was impossible to talk about an ecotourism culture without mentioning the issue of sustainability. By implication, the respondents regarded ecotourism as the same as sustainable tourism. This is in agreement with what is documented in the available literature, as tabulated in Table 12.

5.6.3 The Zimbabwean Context and Practice of Ecotourism (emergent theme)

The theme of the Zimbabwean context and practice of ecotourism is an emergent theme, meaning that it was not in the schedule of interview questions, but arose based

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on the comments of several respondents on the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe and on its relevance to the country. The participants' comments are given in Table 13.

Table 13: Context and practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe

Code	Responses	Literature (Zimbabwean concept of ecotourism)	Literature (international concept of ecotourism)	Major theme
The practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe (versus the international concept)	- Tourism in Zimbabwe is nature-based (P3) - Zimbabweans are naturally cultured to respect life and nature (P5) - Africans have never poached (P1) (they hunt sustainably) - Zimbabweans are known to want to do the right thing, depending on whether they understand what ecotourism is (P4) - Ecotourism is not a profitable thing for Zimbabwe (P9)	Bond and Frost, (2005): Started in the late 1980s and was developed largely around the concept of managing wildlife and wildlife habitats in the communal lands of Zimbabwe for the benefit of the people living in these areas. Concept developed in response to the realisation that people living adjacent to or within wildlife habitats should realise the value of wildlife, such as elephant, buffalo, lions,	Beaumont (2011): Began in the early 1980s. Honey (2008) - Travelling to natural destinations - Building of environmental awareness - Minimising the negative impact on host local communities and the environment - Providing direct financial benefit for conservation of biological and cultural diversity - Providing benefit and empowerment for the local people by providing them	The Zimbabwean context of ecotourism The relevance of the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe

Code	Responses	Literature (Zimbabwean concept of ecotourism)	Literature (international concept of ecotourism)	Major theme
	- It's not yet practical; we are far from getting there (P1) - It's not practical; the Ministry [of Tourism] does not own anything, any assets, so ownership of ecotourism is fragmented (P3) - Not practical; policies are not formulated together with all interested parties, implementation is therefore not possible (P3) - It's not practical; there are bread-and-butter issues to attend to first (P7) - Image of the country is not	leopards. Muzvidziwa (2013): Ecotourism is the type of tourism that puts an emphasis on conservation through utilisation, instead of an emphasis on preservation only. Mawere and Mubaya (2012): Tourism that seeks to benefit the local host communities by empowering them economically, socially, politically and psychologically while at the same time conserving the	with jobs and quotas - Respecting local cultures - Supporting human rights and democratic movements	

Code	Responses	Literature (Zimbabwean concept of ecotourism)	Literature (international concept of ecotourism)	Major theme
	conductive (P7) - A waste of time (P8) - Not beneficial to anyone, no money is coming to the community, animals are destroying crops, and lives are being lost (P7, P8)	natural environment for now and for posterity.		

During the discussions, participants willingly responded to questions related to the Zimbabwean context of ecotourism, but most of them simultaneously hastened to comment on the application or the relevance of ecotourism in present-day Zimbabwe.

Commenting on the Zimbabwean context of ecotourism, P4 mentioned that the people were willing to behave according to the dictates of ecotourism once they knew what was expected of them. P4 stated that “*Zimbabweans are known to want to do the right thing depending on whether they understand what ecotourism is,*” while P5 mentioned that “*Zimbabweans are naturally cultured to respect life and nature*”.

With reference to the practice of Zimbabwean ecotourism, P1 mentioned that Africans had never poached, but that they hunted sustainably, which was what worked for the country. Literature concerning the Zimbabwean context (see Table 13) also supports this view, for instance, Muzvidziwa (2013) emphasises that ecotourism is a type of tourism that focuses on “*conservation through utilization, instead of an emphasis on preservation only*”, and Mawere and Mubaya (2012) refer to “conservation of the natural environment”.

Commenting on the application or the relevance of ecotourism in present-day Zimbabwe, some respondents felt that its practice was feasible:

P1: "It is practical ... already as a country; we are resorting to renewable energy (green concepts)."

P2: "It is practical ... if we enforce compliance of stakeholders before certification."

P3: "It is practical in that tourism in Zimbabwe is nature-based." (The country is naturally ready to practice ecotourism.)

P4: "It is practical; Zimbabweans are known to want to do the right things, depending on whether they understand what ecotourism is." (natural inclination to want to practise that which is right)

P5: "It could be practical, because Zimbabweans are naturally cultured to respect life and nature."

Some of the respondents felt ecotourism was not at all practical, be it in the Zimbabwean context or in an international context as presented in the available literature shown in Table 13. Their comments were:

P1: "It's not yet practical; we are far from getting there."

P3: "It's not practical; the Ministry [of Tourism] does not own anything, any assets, so ownership of ecotourism is fragmented."

P7: "It's not practical; there are bread and butter issues to attend to first."

P9: "Let me say ... ecotourism is not a profitable thing for Zimbabwe; it is a far-flung subject."

The researcher was of the opinion that the response of P9 stood out in particular. It emerged that there was some indecision when it came to answering this question; there were those who, while affirming that the practice of ecotourism was feasible in the Zimbabwean context, they denied that the practice was indeed practical (P1, P2 and P3). Shockingly, these respondents are the tourism policy makers. In fact, before responding, P1, P3, P4 and P5 hesitated before giving their opinion, and then openly said that they were not sure. In contrast, the responses from the operational participants (P7, P8, P9 and P10) were indisputably negative and were given without hesitation. The responses of the policy makers made the researcher wonder whether they were practising what they were preaching, and if they were saying that ecotourism was not

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possible. The researcher also contemplated the reason why they were occupying positions of leadership.

Note was also taken of the response of P10; who did not waste time in answering the question as follows:

P10: “Why try to grow a niche when the mainstream tourism is not performing as well as it should? How can ecotourism do well?”

5.6.4 Defining Elements of an Ecotourism Culture

Another sub-question was: How do members in Zimbabwe’s ecotourism industry view and describe the elements of an ecotourism culture, and do they comply with this culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe?

In order to come up with an answer to this question, the researcher had to refer back to the responses given to the first and second sub-questions, and gather from there what the defining elements of an ecotourism culture were. For further clarification, it is important to reiterate here that culture in an organisation refers to the norms, values and beliefs of that organisation (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012a). Norms are the way an organisation runs its business, and, according to Flamholtz and Randle (2012a, p. 77) “norms help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs”. Values are considered most important in the ecotourism business, while the beliefs are the belief systems in the practice of ecotourism.

Table 14 reflects participants’ perceptions provided during the fieldwork of the norms, values and beliefs followed in the practice of ecotourism in the Zimbabwean context.

Table 14: Norms, values and beliefs followed in the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism

	Norms (artefacts; the things here)	Values (what is important)	Beliefs (basic assumptions; how things work in organisations)
Environmental	P1; P8: Ecotourism seen as	P5, P9: Preserving the environment	P1, P6: Resorting to alternative sources of

	Norms (artefacts; the things here)	Values (what is important)	Beliefs (basic assumptions; how things work in organisations)
	environmentally friendly tourism/tourism that respects the sanctity of the environment (even building materials advocated for use conform to that) P8: Game drives, the behaviour expected while in a national park should conform to the principle of “friendliness” towards nature (noisy trucks and other noises are not permitted.)	P1, P2: Sustainably managing the environment for the sake of posterity P2: Incorporating green concepts into the development of tourism P3: Carrying out activities that maintain our tourism environment in its best state for future use P3: Protecting our nature, flora and fauna P8: Sustainably utilising nature (all people)	energy P1, P2, P4: Believing in “green tourism” precepts P1: Reverting to our own local laws in sustainably managing our excess wildlife
Social	P2: Whatever is done in tourism, should comply with green concepts.	P9: Ensuring central involvement of the local people in ecotourism issues P3: Economically empowering communities through community-based tourism projects	P4, P5: Ensuring viability of our natural heritage for future generations through responsible behaviour P9: Incentivising local people to look after the natural resources in their area P3: Running

	Norms (artefacts; the things here)	Values (what is important)	Beliefs (basic assumptions; how things work in organisations)
			promotional awareness campaigns on importance of preservation of ecotourism products for future generations as well as for the current benefit of the community
Cultural	P9: Preservation of and respect for a community's way of life (e.g. their mountain, their paintings, and rainmaking ceremonies), hence the respect afforded the local chiefs) P3: Preservation of our culture in a uniquely Zimbabwean way, different from any other; so the wall hangings in the offices, the dress code, behaviour of employees portrays that.	P5: Following our communal traditions/values, or our old ways of promoting ecotourism	P4, P5: Involving our traditional leadership in harnessing traditional ways of conservation (prune a tree, not cut it down entirely; engage in communal hunting and farming at regulated intervals) P1: Africans have never poached but hunt for subsistence. P4: Ecotourism has always been around as a way of life for most communities, even before their being educated about it.

	Norms (artefacts; the things here)	Values (what is important)	Beliefs (basic assumptions; how things work in organisations)
	P3: Promotion of the national brand of tourism: Our seven wonders of Zimbabwe (Our Victoria Falls; Our Great Zimbabwe; Our mystic Eastern Highlands; Our Kariba; Our rich culture and heritage; Our Wonderful people.		
Business education /	P5: Involving employees in decision-making P5: Training and exposing employees to ecotourism issues so they can be efficient in execution of duty P3: Selling of the ecotourism idea to the nation at large	P6: Being honest in ploughing back ecotourism profits into the community P4: Striving for sustainability in all business transactions P1: Lobbying for fiscal budgets to make a success of sustainable tourism P4, P5 and P6: Educating/making local people conscious of and sensitive towards ecotourism issues P4, P8: Effectively implementing The	P5: Fostering by management of employee involvement in decision-making and problem-solving P9: Marketing at various levels, while articulating ecotourism products P4: Strategically planning around the resources that we already have P3, P5: Strategically positioning the country, removing stigma

	Norms (artefacts; the things here)	Values (what is important)	Beliefs (basic assumptions; how things work in organisations)
		National Tourism Policy P1, P2: Providing leadership in the practice of ecotourism	P5: Educating the people, getting them informed P5: Training employees P5: Implementing employee values and ideas P2, P3: Providing leadership

Tabled above are the norms, values and beliefs that guide the thinking and behaviour in Zimbabwean ecotourism as described by participants in this study. The information provided in this table (Table 14) served to answer the following sub-question: How can the ecotourism industry and its members develop an organisational culture that supports the dimensions of sustainable ecotourism development in Zimbabwe? According to the participants, by adhering to the norms, values and beliefs mentioned, an ecotourism organisational culture could be developed.

5.6.5 Benefits of Establishing an Ecotourism Organisational Culture

Another sub-question that was asked was: How will the development of an organisational culture in ecotourism enhance the economic performance of the ecotourism industry? In Table 15 below a juxtaposition between the responses of the participants and the statements obtained from the available literature is provided.

Table 15: Reasons for the need to develop an organisational culture

Benefits according to the literature	Benefits according to the respondents	Major theme arising
Buchanan and Huczynski,		Economic benefits of

Benefits according to the literature	Benefits according to the respondents	Major theme arising
(2004); Shani and Lau (2005): Organisational culture positively affects such outcomes as productivity, performance, commitment, self-confidence, and ethical behaviour (of employees). Crawford and Mulvey (2009): A very high potential of creating unique tourism experiences leading to enhanced business performance. Bustam and Stein (2013); Kusler (2000): Leads to quality delivery of ecotourism services (highly qualified guides, low guest-to-guide ratio, diverse lodging and food service amenities), customer satisfaction, loyalty for repeat business, and long-term profitability. Flamholtz and Randle (2012): It provides competitive advantage, which is what sets an organisation apart from others. Flamholtz and Randle (2012b): It generates the	- Economic benefits (P3) - Highly experienced tour guides (P8) - Increased hotel and airline bookings (P1 in a speech on the launch of the National Tourism Policy) (National Tourism Policy Booklet, 2014)	establishing an ecotourism organisational culture (a) To the organisation (b) To the community

Benefits according to the literature	Benefits according to the respondents	Major theme arising
ability to attract, motivate and retain employees, and enables a company to attract the best and the brightest talent. Ojo (2010): Helps its members to know what is acceptable/unacceptable within the organisation. Honey (2008); Kusler (2000): Providing direct financial benefit for conservation of biological and cultural diversity Honey (2008); Kusler (2000): Benefits and empowers local people by providing them with jobs and quotas. Chiutsi <i>et al.</i>, (2011): Benefited locals during the period when ecotourism was vibrant with the building of schools, clinics, and grinding mills, sinking of boreholes, improving roads, electrifying households, connecting telephone lines, doing water reticulation and general infrastructural development.	- Job creation (P3) - Foreign currency (P3) - Infrastructural development (P3, P2) - Downstream activities (P9) - Selling of artefacts (basket-making) (P10) - Little benefit to community since inflow of tourists is minimal (P9, P8, P7) - Meaningful contribution was only up until 2001 (P9, P8, P7) - Nothing is filtering down to the community because of the RDCs (P8)	

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In Table 15 above, reference is made to statements in the literature regarding the economic (and social) benefits that can accrue to an organisation that embraces a supportive organisational culture, as well as the social benefits that can accrue to members of the community.

5.6.6 Strategies to Build an Ecotourism Organisational Culture

The last sub-question in this research study was: What strategies can be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture in support of establishing and institutionalizing an operational ecotourism culture? Therefore, when each interview was concluded, respondents were asked to propose strategies that could be adopted to enable the implementation of an operational ecotourism organisational culture.

The strategies the participants suggested were organised into three groups according to operators on a strategic level, on an operational level, and on an academic level (see Table 16).

Table 16: Strategies to develop an ecotourism organisational culture

Strategic level	Operational level	Academic level
- Develop a national policy on ecotourism, and implement it (P4) - Make a policy to incentivise school-going children to visit nature, as opposed to visiting remoteness (P1, P3) - Strategically position the country, remove stigma (P3, P5) - Strategically plan around the resources that we already have (P4) - Revisit our traditional	- Management to put in place measures to conscientise the community about ecotourism (P3) - Incentivising the community to preserve the environment (P9) - Stimulating increased local visitorship to ecotourism centres (P3) - Marketing at various levels, while articulating ecotourism products (P9) - Management to foster	- Develop a culture of appreciating nature, starting with school-going children (P3) - Make our culture marketable; conscientise our youth to the traditional ways of preserving our ecosystem (P3, P7) - Get everybody involved in promoting ecotourism (P4) - Educate and conscientise people to appreciate the value of the environment (P5, P6)

Strategic level	Operational level	Academic level
ways of sustaining resources (P4) - Increase resource allocation to ecotourism (P1, P4, P5) - Deal with structural challenges; tourism to be housed in one Ministry so as to harmonise easily (P3) - The Government should rope in traditional leadership in reconstituting the people about ecotourism (P5) - Support our local ecotourism operators (P5) - Demonstrate a high level of commitment (P1) - Appoint knowledgeable ministers and avoid political appointees (P6)	employee involvement in decision-making and problem-solving (P5)	

Responses hinged around matters concerning the government, suggesting ways it is supposed to take a leading role in building an ecotourism organisational culture. According to one respondent (P6), building an ecotourism organisational culture is *“... só influenced by the government! You can work yourself blind, but if the government, I mean at local level, national, regional, international; does not pull their weight ... it comes to naught”*.

Respondent P6 stressed the influence of the government, and reference can be made here to current restrictive and detrimental visa regimes and policies that apply to visitors. According to UNEP, (1998), on an international scale, the vast majority of international ecotourism consumers are North American, European and Japanese, and ecotourists are wealthier, better educated, more mature and more environmentally

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focused in comparison with other tourists. They take longer trips and spend more money per day than travellers with less interest in nature. These are the people that Zimbabwean policies and regimes should but is not currently taking into account. P1 addresses a senior government official during the preamble speech for launching the National Tourism Policy (2014) by stating that, in order to reverse this kind of relationship *“all that is needed is a change of policy”*.

What has been presented above are the responses gathered from the fieldwork, and these, based on the comment of Bazeley (2009, p. 10) *“provide the necessary background against which further analyses will be read, as well as providing a basis for comparative study”*.

5.7 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE QUALITY DATA

In this particular research, strategies that were employed in order to attain good research quality and rigour have been described under section 4.9

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter 5, the process of qualitative data analysis was described, and attention was given to the analysis of the actual data obtained from the fieldwork. The findings of the research were presented in accordance with prescriptions based on the literature review. Chapter 6 will focus on a discussion of these findings.

6 CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter an in-depth discussion of the findings and their contribution to answering the research questions will be presented. The main aim of this research was to find ways of improving ecotourism organisational performance through the development of a supportive organisational culture. The discussion of the findings will also highlight the current underlying challenges to the success of Zimbabwean ecotourism as seen by the participants. This discussion will serve to guide the envisaged formulation of an organisational culture framework that is supportive of ecotourism. According to Bazeley (2009, p. 17), a chapter on the discussion of findings is a:

“time to extract relevant data and explain how phenomena have come about; to place your work in a broader context, and to present new information and a point of view on your subject matter that is supported by your data, in a way that will convince your various audiences.”

To discuss the findings, the researcher opted for a narrative framework according to which the identified codes formed part of the explanation of the dialogues. In this chapter, the questions asked during the fieldwork are presented, and excerpts from the participants' responses (quoted verbatim) are used to illustrate relevant concepts.

The forthcoming sections present the significant themes that emerged from the interviews. Interviews were conducted in English, and the researcher used the participants' words verbatim; no changes were made to correct the language usage.

Thomas (2003) advises that when reporting the findings from an inductive analysis, the summarised or top-level categories are often used as main headings in the findings, and that it is good practice to include suitable quotes in the text to illustrate the meanings of categories.

In accordance with the epistemological and ontological assumptions adopted for this particular research (interpretivism/constructivism), the findings revealed that the participants were capable of constructing meaning (Thomas, 2010) (cf. par. 4.2.5). The fact that different responses were received to the same question is in agreement with

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the statement of Scotland (2012) (cf. par. 4.2.5) that the ontological position of interpretivism is relativism, meaning that reality is subjective and differs from person to person. This is as expected, since Kvale (1996) (cf. par.4.2.5) asserts that the interpretivist paradigm aims to grasp the diversity of subjects' experiences.

The first theme to arise from the interviews was that of the perception of organisational culture.

6.2 PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

According to the participants (strategic level, expert level and operational level), organisational culture is:

“the values, beliefs and contributions of members” (P3); “the values of an organisation; its reason for existence” (P2); “the way of doing things, emanating from your core values, in line with your vision” (P10); “a way of doing things” (P5, P4, P3); “organisation’s expectations, experiences, philosophies and values” (P3); “the behaviours of people within an organisation” (P1); “what guides the organisation in everything it does” (P5); “written/unwritten guidelines that guide members in an organisation” (P4); “what distinguishes people of one organisation from another” (P4); “the way an organisation does its business, the philosophy, how it defines the way the organisation conducts itself in dealing with its customers and wildlife ... the ways an organisation is supposed to do business” (P8).

The statement by Stoyko (2009) (cf. par. 2.2) that the term organisational culture is elusive is corroborated by the variety of interpretations presented above. Many definitions of organisational culture are known to exist, with the most commonly known one being *“the way we do things around here”* (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Lundy & Cowling, 1996) (cf. par. 2.2). A close scrutiny of the given responses reveals that almost all of them can be summarised by the definition of Deal and Kennedy (1982), as well as by the one of Lundy and Cowling (1996). The extent to which the responses of the respondents relating to the meaning of organisational culture are in agreement with descriptions in the available literature reveal that they seemed to know the theoretical definitions of this concept.

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The theme of the “*perception of organisational culture*” was probed further by asking the respondents of the different levels to respond to the question: Would you say that, in the practice of ecotourism, there is a strong organisational culture? The academic experts (P4, P5 and P6) assumed the role of “observers” as far as the running of the ecotourism business was concerned. They have the theoretical knowledge of how it should be run, and, therefore, have the privileged advantage of standing back and being able to pinpoint where and when the practice is not being managed accordingly. Below are the responses of the academic experts:

P4: “H’m, that’s a tricky question.”

Researcher’s observation: P4 meant tricky in the sense that the correct response depended on other factors. P4 hesitated before admitting that this was a tricky question. First of all, P4 asked if people were aware of what ecotourism was all about. According to him, if people were aware, then they would support it, which would bring about a *strong organisational culture*.

P5: “I am not very sure about that one.”

Researcher’s observation: P5 laughed scornfully before answering the question, and added that generally, “Zimbabweans are naturally cultured to respect life, and even nature, so to a certain extent, there is a culture in Zimbabwe.” After laughing once more, P5 added that “... so in a way, there is a culture in Zimbabwe.”

P6: “I wouldn’t say yes to that ... it’s generally a rather weak organisational culture ... government initiative in portraying an organisational culture is rather invisible.”

These responses (verbal and non-verbal) by the academic experts show that the organisational culture currently portrayed by Zimbabwean ecotourism is not at all a strong one. Organisations have been known to survive in tough environments because of their strong organisational cultures, and note should be taken of the point made by Schein (2004, p. 7) that “the stronger the organisational culture, the more effective the organization”.

Participants from the strategic level (P1, P2, and P3) were asked the same question: “Would you say that, in the practice of ecotourism, there is a strong organisational culture?”, and interestingly, they responded in the affirmative as follows:

P1: “... as a country, we have been participating at various international fora ... we are very active in ecotourism issues.”

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P2: "... the whole country right now, from a policy point of view, is being regarded as a tourism development zone."

P3: "... there are formalised measures to put in place everything ... there are formalised structures [in the running of ecotourism]."

Participants from this, the strategic, level insisted that there was a strong organisational culture in the practice of ecotourism judging from the way they ran the business.

Respondents P7, P8, P9 and P10 from the operational level answered in the negative when asked the same question (Would you say that, in the practice of ecotourism, there is a strong organisational culture?) Apart from observing that there was no organisational culture to talk about, they expressed the following opinions:

P7: "... as long as there is no money coming, there is no liking for ecotourism."

P8: "... no; right now the community thinks it's a waste of time."

P9: "... not really; the locals actually need to be incentivised to look after the natural resources in their area, otherwise they will not look after them with preservation in mind."

P10: "... the mainstream tourism is not performing as well as it should ... how can we talk of ecotourism?"

These varied responses to the same question indicated that the prevailing organisational culture is not uniformly understood by the players (strategic, operational and academic) in Zimbabwean ecotourism. The operational people's observations were based on what they saw and experienced on the ground, namely that there was no organisational culture to speak of. The strategic level participants responded based on what they would like to see on the ground, namely the ideal and not the real situation. The academic level participants scoffed at the disparity between the ideal and the real situation, seemingly as their input was often disregarded. To bridge this gap between the real and the ideal P4 suggested that:

... if they could involve the training institutions in some way, that could help ... if they go out there, and we are not represented, we are not involved ... some of those good ideas that they come across are just kept in their offices and they never come down to people like us who are in contact with the youth, who are leaders of tomorrow.

Judging from the literature reviewed, there should be a common understanding among members. Schimmoeller (2010, p. 126) (cf. par. 1.1) states that organisational culture is “a common set of values and beliefs that are **shared** by members of an organisation which influences how people perceive, think, and act”, while the company New Horizons (2009, p. 1) (cf. par. 2.3.3) states in a document that “these beliefs and values, **shared** by members of an organisation, become visible in the way work gets done on a day-to-day basis”.

The given responses seem to indicate conclusively why the performance of Zimbabwean ecotourism is not up to standard – there is no consensus on the prevailing situation in ecotourism. In this instance, one is reminded of the iceberg metaphor: an iceberg grows from underneath – as the water at the bottom gets colder, ice forms and hardens. If, in the daily running of the ecotourism business, there is a fragmented vision or perception of what an organisational culture should entail, then there is no way it can “harden” and form “an iceberg” (in other words, an organisational culture cannot get strong). Nelson *et al.*, (2012) (cf. par. 2.2.2) mention that when a strong organisational culture exists, one characterised by a consensus on the values that drive the company and an intensity that is recognisable even to outsiders, then employees become committed and compelled to expend the best of their abilities towards the achievement of organisational values. It can be said that these employees have achieved organisational buy-in. Mohant and Rath (2012, p. 76) (cf. par. 2.2.2) describe this state where organisational members’ behaviours exceed their basic job requirements as a state in which members’ behaviours demonstrate that these members “go above and beyond the call of duty”. The fact that the organisational culture exhibited is not a strong one implies that the employees do not “go above and beyond the call of duty” as suggested by these authors.

Therefore, in developing the intended framework, due attention should be given to the development of a uniform understanding (at policy formulation level) of the prevailing organisational culture among the stakeholders of Zimbabwean ecotourism, so that they can direct their efforts towards the achievement of one common cause.

6.3 PERCEPTION OF ECOTOURISM, AND OF AN ECOTOURISM CULTURE

The respondents in this study were selected because of their constant involvement in ecotourism issues; therefore, they are already aware of what ecotourism is. The value of interviewing these respondents was to hear first-hand their own understanding of the term, and in their own words. Quoting Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.1), P3 defined it as follows:

P3: “Ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as low-impact, and often small-scale, alternatives to standard, commercial or mass tourism. Its purpose may be to educate the traveller, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights.”

P1 defined it as “... just environmentally friendly tourism, or tourism that respects the sanctity of the environment.”

P1 and P3 gave their definitions of ecotourism based on the stratum (strategic level) they belonged to, and these can be regarded as indicative of the school of thought prevailing at that level. According to them, ecotourism was practised in a natural area, where the environment and the natural surroundings were the major determinants of the practice of ecotourism. Their observations were indicative of the aspirations of strategists to conserve the environment. Therefore, to this group of respondents, ecotourism concerned primarily the natural environment. In contrast, the understanding of the term ecotourism to the operational respondent (P8) was premised on the basis that it had to do with a park, and that when it was practised anywhere else, it became highly debatable. His response was as follows:

P8: “... ecotourism ... as practised by National Parks, because National Parks are supposed to define how ecotourism is practised in Zimbabwe, because you find that much of the ecotourism that is practised in Zimbabwe happens in the Park’s estate, or National Parks. Some would say that tourism also happens, like, in the rural areas; they say it is also ecotourism; which is very debatable.”

P9 and P10 belonged to the same group of respondents, namely the operational group, whose responses can be said to be greatly influenced by their professional backgrounds. They work with people and communities, and their aspirations are

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reflected in the ways they carry out their mandate of ecotourism. P9 talked about the relationship between the people and the environment:

P9: "... it is preservation of the environment ... it supports the livelihoods of persons; mostly grazing, water, sand extraction ... and hunting mostly. It is a community ... with their way of life ... they may have a mountain ... maybe their paintings, their graves, their ceremonies (such as rain-making ceremonies) ... these have a bearing on their livelihoods."

According to P10, ecotourism involved the relationship between the people and the environment; how people could benefit from the environment they lived in (community based ecotourism). By way of example, P10 stated:

P10: "... we try to show how communities can benefit sustainably from the very environment they are living in. For example, we can talk of sustainable basket making."

From the above-mentioned perceptions of ecotourism, it was evident that there was a common understanding of what the practice entailed. This result was expected, since all the respondents had been selected based on their occupations, which revolved around ecotourism. What differed was their point of emphasis. Some respondents emphasised the environment above all else, while others prioritised the community. The strategy level respondents emphasised the environment, which suggested that the strategies they formulated focused on saving the environment, resulting in communities being regarded as secondary beneficiaries (during policy formulation). Crofts *et al.*, (2011) (cf. par. 4.2.5) mention that social actors actively interpret the situations in which they find themselves and act on the basis of these interpretations. The perceptions of ecotourism and of an ecotourism culture are different because they reflect that which is important to each group. In terms of the cultural iceberg idea, these perceptions would reflect their *values*. According to Nowaczek (2009) (cf. par. 2.3.1), values are believed to be instrumental in influencing behaviour, and these values need to be understood, because they presumably lead to certain behaviours that are consistent or possibly inconsistent with the basic tenets of ecotourism. According to a document produced by TIES (2015), the environment, together with the community, form two of the three pillars of ecotourism, meaning that they are of equal importance.

Having obtained participants' definitions of ecotourism, the next major step was to establish respondents' perceptions of an ecotourism culture. Most respondents linked

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ecotourism culture and sustainability, that is, using environmental products in a sustainable manner so that they did not get depleted, and could be used by future generations. According to Bien (2006, p. 4) (cf. par. 3.5), a sustainable activity means that “an activity can be done in the same or similar manner for the indefinite future” and is sustainable in three main aspects (environmentally, socially and culturally, and economically).

According to the following respondents, an ecotourism culture is:

P2: “... tourism whereby the tourism operators conform to issues related to sustainability as they develop and design their products.”

P3: “... [the] use of resources in a sustainable manner.”

P5: “... [conformance to the] beliefs, behaviours and actions that preserve the environment for future generations.”

P8: “... sustainable utilisation of nature by the people.”

Each level of operation, namely, strategic (P2, P3), academic (P5), and operational (P8) is represented in these responses, and all the participants mentioned the sustainable use of natural resources, demonstrating that there was consensus on the meaning of an ecotourism culture among the respondent groups, and confirming the statement made by Bien (2006) above.

Having defined what an ecotourism culture was, respondents then commented on the aspect of adopting it in their daily activities and complying with it. According to Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2), ecotourism should benefit and empower the local people by providing them with jobs and quotas. Deducing from the fieldwork, this does not seem to be the case in Zimbabwean ecotourism practice. Those mandated with the practice of ecotourism showed that they understood the mandate of ecotourism and the benefits as outlined in available literature. The respondents, commenting on the prevailing mindset of the community they worked with, expressed the idea that following an ecotourism culture “benefited nobody”, that it was actually detrimental and should be abandoned. This idea was underlined in the remark by P3:

P3: “... for example, if a lion goes astray, and kills someone’s cattle, no one is there to compensate ... if the elephant goes astray and destroys someone’s maize, no one is there to compensate. But if it happens vis-à-vis that a community person kills a lion or an elephant ... he is imprisoned. So this conflict is, say anything, like leading information unto the arrest of the concerned.”

Based on the remarks of the participants it seemed that the execution of successful ecotourism was failing because the community was not benefiting as intended (Honey, 2008, cf. par. 3.6.2), and was losing out instead. For example, P3 indicated that, according to the members of the community, the policies in place did not promote the practice of ecotourism (community members were imprisoned when they acted as the situation demanded, such as killing a "troublesome" animal). What they needed was to see the value of putting up with wild animals that caused destruction.

Another sub-question that was asked was: How can the tourism industry and its members develop the desired organisational culture that supports the dimensions of sustainable ecotourism development in Zimbabwe?

In answer to this question, most participants suggested sensitisation or conscientisation (amongst other methods) of the people about the intended ecotourism organisational culture as one of the most guaranteed ways of ensuring the development of an ecotourism organisational culture (see Table 16), and, furthermore, pointing out to them the benefits of embracing a culture that was supportive of ecotourism. Their suggestions were expressed as follows:

P4: "..., h'm, the first port of call would be, h'm, sensitisation, to sensitise people and make them aware of the benefits ... and how they could participate in the process."

P3: "... this entails reaching out to communities, telling them of the importance of the various facets of tourism that they have ... and broadening their scope ... on how ecotourism can positively impact their lives."

This conscientisation or sensitisation should be done to raise awareness of an ecotourism culture among the community members, since they are the custodians of the natural resources that they need to guard and protect jealously. One respondent gave the example of the time when it had been explained to tobacco farmers that they needed to replant the trees they had chopped down to use as firewood in curing their tobacco.

P10: "... tobacco farmers, as they collect firewood to cure their tobacco – they seem not to be replanting the trees that they are cutting down, at a pace fast enough to ensure sustainability – it takes a long time for a tree to mature."

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This act of asking the community members to jealously protect the available resources was one way of showing them how they fitted into the bigger picture (as mentioned by P4 above), and of showing them that ecotourism was not just another “government initiative”, but that the success of ecotourism truly needed their participation.

6.4 THE PRACTICE AND CONTEXT OF ECOTOURISM IN ZIMBABWE

Originally, in the framing of the interview guides, one of the questions was: “Would you like to explain the concept of an ecotourism culture as practiced in Zimbabwe? Respondents spoke at length about this question, as well as about the practical aspects of practising ecotourism in a country such as Zimbabwe. This question gave rise to an “emergent theme” in the study.

At this point there is a need to explain that in the practice of Zimbabwean ecotourism, ownership is fragmented (each department independently owns or controls certain aspects of ecotourism). This was stated by P1, P2 and P3 as follows:

P1: “The challenge we face ... is obviously structural It would be ideal, structurally, if [the Ministry of] Tourism and [the Ministry of] Environment ... were housed in one Ministry ... that would harmonise easily.”

P2: “Government in this country does not own tourism infrastructure, and we only deal with policy matters.”

P3: “One challenge that we have is that tourism is an enabler-driven ministry ... we do not own anything.”

The strategic level (Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality) sets the policy governing the practice of ecotourism, and, as P2 commented, “as an administration, they have no control” over issues of ecotourism, but they simply set the policy governing the running of ecotourism. A different department altogether (namely Department of National Parks and Wildlife) is responsible for the implementation of these policies, while yet another (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority) is responsible for the marketing of ecotourism products. The academic experts, who have the theoretical know-how of the practice of ecotourism are apparently excluded from the daily running of the ecotourism business and confined to the lecture rooms of their respective institutions of learning. The sectors overseeing ecotourism are managed differently, only coming together and complementing each

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other when there is a need to implement a certain piece of legislation, and this does not happen as easily as it would have if these stakeholders fell under a single jurisdiction. P3 commented on how difficult this was:

P3: “One challenge that we have is that tourism is an enabler-driven Ministry ... we do not own anything. We are managing things that are custodian in other ministries ... like if you notice the issue of the nature and wildlife, its more on the National Parks side, which is resident in the Ministry of Environment. So, at times, our policies have to be managed through them. So in other words, in as much as we want to pursue our agenda, we can only take it to a certain level, because if we want to go further than that, these guys will then say ‘you are encroaching our territory’.”

As indicated in the literature review, Barna *et al.*, (2011), Honey and Gilpin (2009), and TIES (2006) (cf. par. 1.2.5) outline the key elements of ecotourism, which distinguish it from other tourism operations (such as geotourism, pro-poor tourism, and responsible tourism). Any organisation that is in the ecotourism business has to adhere to these key elements in order to provide the standard of services and the degree of compliance required.

Moinuddin and Begum (2004) (cf. par. 3.7.1) state that the definitions of ecotourism presented in literature are contextual in that they are framed with respect to a particular context or community’s eco-resource base. The question put to respondents regarding the concept of an ecotourism culture as practised in Zimbabwe was meant to contextualise ecotourism according to Zimbabwe’s eco-resource base. Only two respondents briefly explained how ecotourism was practised in Zimbabwe, whereas the rest of the respondents wanted to say more about the practical aspect of pursuing ecotourism in a country like Zimbabwe.

In answer to the question about the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe, P9 responded as follows:

P9: “Here in Zimbabwe, it is only the preservation of the environment; it is not the European way as you find it in literature. Here, it supports the livelihoods of persons.”

Also in answer to the same question P1 responded, “... not quite. In fact, it’s a journey”. According to him, the practice was not as it should be, and that Zimbabwe still fell far short of meeting the stated objectives of ecotourism.

The responses of both P1 and P9 proved that the practice of ecotourism is context based. On the one hand, there is the concept of ecotourism in an international context (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993) (cf. par. 3.6.1), and on the other hand there is the concept of ecotourism in the national context of Zimbabwe; that is, the translation of the theoretical concept of ecotourism into practice. This variance is also highlighted by Blangy and Hanneberg (1995) (cf. par. 3.7.1) who mention that their preliminary work shows that there are substantial differences in the meaning of ecotourism among North American and European tour operators, as well as in general in European countries, while Bonner (1993) (cf. par. 3.7.1) also highlights the contrasts between African and non-African views on nature.

Conflicting views were expressed concerning the understanding of the term "sustainable use" of wildlife in ecotourism. According to Bien (2006, p. 4) (cf. par. 3.5), a sustainable activity means that "an activity can be done in the same or similar manner for the indefinite future", and that it is sustainable in three main aspects: environmentally, socially and culturally, and economically. Of special note in this particular context is the environmental aspect. In regard to environmental sustainability Bien (2006) explains that a sustainable activity minimises any damage to the environment (for instance, flora, fauna, water, and soil, and in terms of energy use and contamination) and tries to benefit the environment in a positive way through protection and conservation. Fennel (2008, p. 24) (cf. par. 3.7.1) states that ecotourism is "a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, **non-consumptive**, and locally oriented".

Zimbabwe's ecotourism is premised on wildlife and nature. Hunting forms the basis of ecotourism; it is from the proceeds of hunting animals such as lion, buffalo, and elephant that the communities survive. They would rather hunt the wild animals with which they live in close proximity than to put up with threats to their lives and properties (Bond & Frost, 2005) (cf. par. 3.7). According to the definition by Bien (2006), as well as by Fennel (2008), hunting is not an ecotourism product. P7 was in agreement with that approach, stating that "*my definition of ecotourism is non extractive*", while P8 expressed the different view that there was nothing wrong with "killing sustainably". This is a point on which the international concept of ecotourism and that of Zimbabwe differs.

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In Zimbabwe the killing (culling) of elephants is a form of ecotourism in that the community benefits from these wildlife resources (which is one of the tenets of ecotourism). P1, in agreement with P8, said as follows:

P1: “We must manage our elephants sustainably ... because an over-population may also lead to land degradation, then they also destroy the habitat, then there is nothing to feed from ... and the whole chain triggers in. ... So it’s really sustainable, eco-friendly management, making sure you strike the right balances ... all the time.”

P1 continued by providing the statistics that Zimbabwe had an elephant carrying capacity of a national herd of 45 000, but at the time of this research, the country housed a herd of about 83 000. The researcher is in complete agreement with Moinuddin and Begum (2004) (cf. par. 3.7.1) who state that the definitions presented in the literature are contextual in that they are framed with respect to a particular context or to a community’s eco-resource base. Owing to the abundance of wildlife in Zimbabwe, says Muzvidziwa (2013) (cf. par. 3.7.1), ecotourism in that country is a type of tourism that puts the emphasis on conservation through utilisation instead of on preservation only. As such, ecotourism in Zimbabwe is seen as incorporating both consumptive and non-consumptive aspects, and this is one of the areas in which the Zimbabwean concept of ecotourism differs from that of some major writers on ecotourism, such as Bien (2006) and Fennel (2008), as well as TIES (2015), the world’s oldest and largest international ecotourism association. To justify Zimbabwe’s practice of ecotourism, Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011) (cf. par. 3.7.1) meticulously explain that although Zimbabwean ecotourism is inclusive of hunting, not all hunting safari operations can be termed ecotourist activities; only those whose benefits flow back to host communities, and those that are sustainable, controlled and ethical in nature are considered ecotourist activities. Hunting in general may not be seen to be in harmony with the documented tenets of ecotourism, but Muzvidziwa (2013) (cf. par. 3.7.1) defends this practice by mentioning that controlled hunting is actually a key incentive to conserve and use wildlife resources in a sustainable manner.

Participants then aired their views about the practicality or impracticality of practising ecotourism in Zimbabwe, and considered whether the country was ready or prepared to successfully engage in the practice of ecotourism. The responses varied from indicating high possibility (strategy level participants P1, P2, and P3) to uncertainty (P4 and P5) and to absolute impossibility (P6, P7 and P9).

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P1: “It is practical to a certain extent: Africans have never poached.” (They hunt sustainably.)

P2: “It is practical; we can enforce compliance of stakeholders before certification.”

P3: “It is practical – our tourism is mostly premised on wildlife, with a bit of nature.”

According to these participants, it is quite possible for Zimbabwe to practise ecotourism as the country is naturally ready for that. Two of the academic level group expressed uncertainty about the viability of practising ecotourism.

P4 (hesitated and said it was a tricky question): “It could be practical; Zimbabweans are known to want to do the right things, depending on whether they understand what ecotourism is.”

P5 (stammered and expressed uncertainty): “It could be practical, because Zimbabweans are naturally cultured to respect life and nature.”

Participants P6, P7 and P9 expressed the opinion that it was absolutely impossible for Zimbabwe to practise ecotourism.

P6: (Uttered an emphatic NO!): “It’s not practical; already there is no visible culture to talk about!”

P7: “It’s not practical – there are bread-and-butter issues to attend to first.”

P9: “Let me say, h’m, ecotourism is not a profitable thing for Zimbabwe; it is a far-flung subject.”

These responses show that oneness of purpose in the execution of the ecotourism business in Zimbabwe is seriously lacking. The respondents who were policy makers were very optimistic that the country could perform quite well in ecotourism, and yet there were some who thought otherwise. This scenario had been depicted by P1 in his preamble speech for launching the National Tourism Policy (on Tourism Policy DVD), saying that “there are those who are pessimistic in our midst [about tourism being a success], just as the Biblical characters Tobiah, Sanballat and Geshem (in Nehemiah 2, Verse 19), but guess what, with a trowel in one hand, and a spear in the other the task was completed in a record 56 days (instead of within 60 days). In the same vein, in spite of much criticism in the turning around of the tourism performance, a breakthrough will come about...” If the determination shown by the Minister responsible for tourism is a shared frame of mind, then ecotourism will certainly succeed.

6.5 ECOTOURISM ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

With respect to the theme of ecotourism organisational culture, the main aim was to explore and determine by means of questioning the respondents the elements/practices that constituted an ecotourism organisational culture so that these could be developed with a view to building a framework that would promote business competitive advantage and improve the performance in the ecotourism sector. In Table 14 a comprehensive list of the norms, values and beliefs (key components) of ecotourism activities as stated by respondents was provided. Organisational culture is described in the literature by Schein (1980) (cf. par. 2.5.2.2) who compares it to the formation of an iceberg. This iceberg is depicted in Figure 13 below, showing the top part that is above the water and clearly visible, representing the norms (artefacts) of an organisation. Stupak (n.d.) (cf. par. 2.3.1) adds that this surface level is comprised of the physical environment and the symbols, language, and visible products created by the organisation.

Schein (1985) states that culture is expressed at three core levels, namely, norms, values, and beliefs. According to McShane (2011) (cf. par. 2.3.1), norms or artefacts are things that are noticed the most upon entering an organisation, while Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) (cf. par. 3.8.2.3) deduce that “norms help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs”. Norms (top visible part of the iceberg) represent the way things are *done* in an organisation. According to Asong (2014) (cf. par. 2.3.1), it takes months and years to grasp “how things are done” in an organisation; however, symbolic objects and activities can yield clues to a firm’s culture.



Figure 13: The cultural iceberg

Source: Asong (2014)

Submerged under the water are the values and basic assumptions, and these are not easily visible. Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) (cf. par. 2.3.1) define values as follows:

*Values are **things** which are important to organisations and underpin decisions and behavior. Values are the things an organisation considers most important with respect to its operations, its employees and its customers and these are the things an organisation holds most dear – the things for which it strives and the things it wants to protect at all costs.*

Stupak (n.d., p. 113) describes the level of espoused values as “the level which shows the values of the leadership in relation to goals and strategies”.

“*Beliefs* are taken to mean assumptions that individuals hold about themselves, their customers, and their organisation” (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012b) (cf. par. 1.1.1). Under the level of basic assumptions there is the “level where the beliefs, perceptions,

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and thoughts that are conscious and unconscious but are integral to the way the organization functions are to be found” Stupak (n.d. p. 113).

Koeman (2011) (cf. par. 3.8) states that in developing an organisational culture that is supportive of ecotourism, there is a need to have an idea of the ethics and underlying codes of conduct and behaviours (for instance, environmental, social, and cultural) that are key components of ecotourism activities. In this research, the researcher acted on the advice of Koeman (2011) by classifying the norms, values and beliefs indicated by the respondents into those that can be regarded as environmental, social, cultural, and business and educational. Table 14 (cf. par. 5.6.6) will therefore be used as the source of these norms, values and beliefs of ecotourism.

6.5.1 Environmental norms

Norms are reflected in the daily activities that employees engage in. In the discussion of environmental norms, the responses of respondents P1 and P8 will be used. Both of them indicated that ecotourism was environmentally friendly tourism, or tourism that respected the sanctity of the environment. P8 added that the use of materials for the development of ecotourism was advocated accordingly:

P8: “We are promoting the construction of environmentally friendly lodges We want to promote temporary camps, like semi-permanent camps ... which are ecologically friendly. We stipulate that the material that we are supposed to use is not cement, but you are supposed to use wood ... things that you destroy after you are done.”

According to Honey (2008), (cf. par. 3.6.2), one of the characteristics of ecotourism is that it should “Minimize the negative impact on ... the environment”, and in the comment above, P8 provided an example of how negative impact on the environment was minimised in the day-to-day running of the ecotourism business in Zimbabwe.

The above example proves that the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism does conform to the norm of environmental sustainability, which is one of the tenets of ecotourism (Bien, 2006) (cf. par. 3.5). According to Bien (2006, p. 4), an environmental norm is “an activity that minimizes any damage to the environment (such as, flora,

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fauna, water, and soil, and damage related to energy use and contamination) and tries to benefit the environment in a positive way through protection and conservation”.

To continue with the discussion of the metaphorical resemblance between an iceberg and organisational culture, it can be said that the top of the iceberg, which is visible, represents norms (the observance of “laws and customs”). P8 mentioned one of these norms/laws when saying that during “game drives, the behaviour expected while in a national park should conform to ‘friendliness’ towards nature (noisy trucks are not permitted; no noise making therein”. Photograph 4 earlier on in this thesis indicates that this norm is being conformed to. However, certain laws and customs are not being adhered to in the practice of Zimbabwean ecotourism. For instance, it is against the law for anyone to engage in poaching activities, and stiff penalties are paid by those convicted of the crime. Nevertheless, the observance of this law is greatly undermined, for example, due to lack of adequate resources, as stated by P1, “... there is very thin manpower on the ground, ill-equipped guides and guards”. It seems that Zimbabwean ecotourism could be failing to perform at its best due to a scarcity of resources resulting from the country’s current poor economic condition.

6.5.2 Cultural norms

According to Schein (1992) (cf. par. 2.3.1), artefacts are portrayed through the architecture and physical surroundings of the business; its products; its technologies; its style as shown through, among other things, clothing, art, and publications; stories told as well as rituals performed, its published values and mission statement. These comprise the visual elements of an organisation’s culture. At all the research sites that the researcher visited, some of these elements (signs of culture) were visible, and reported to be in existence (except for stories and rituals). Since these are obviously invisible, the researcher needed to find out about them from the respondents. Apparently, no stories were reported, and no rituals were talked about, notwithstanding the statement by Sole and Wilson (2002) (cf. par. 2.3.2) that business organisations can use storytelling as a mechanism to share knowledge in their organisations, and that stories can be a very powerful way to represent and convey complex, multi-dimensional ideas and to socialise new employees. The glaring absence of stories and rituals means that the orientation of new employees do not include a proper induction into the organisation’s established “ways of doing things.” Asong (2014) (cf. par. 2.3.1) mentions

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that artefacts can be comprised of an organisation's history, reports, speeches, and the thoughts of customers, employees, frontline staff, and ex-staff – all of these are documents that convey meanings. Wall hangings are a perpetual reminder of what an organisation stands for; they are seen on a daily basis, so they constantly remind people how things are done in a particular organisation, and how they must be perpetuated. The use of wall hangings has the religious backing of the belief communicated by the E. G. White Estate organisation (2012) that “By beholding, you become changed”. By constantly seeing these artefacts, the employees eventually conform to them and behave in accordance with them. Below is the mission statement of the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality displayed in one of the offices that the researcher visited to do the field work.

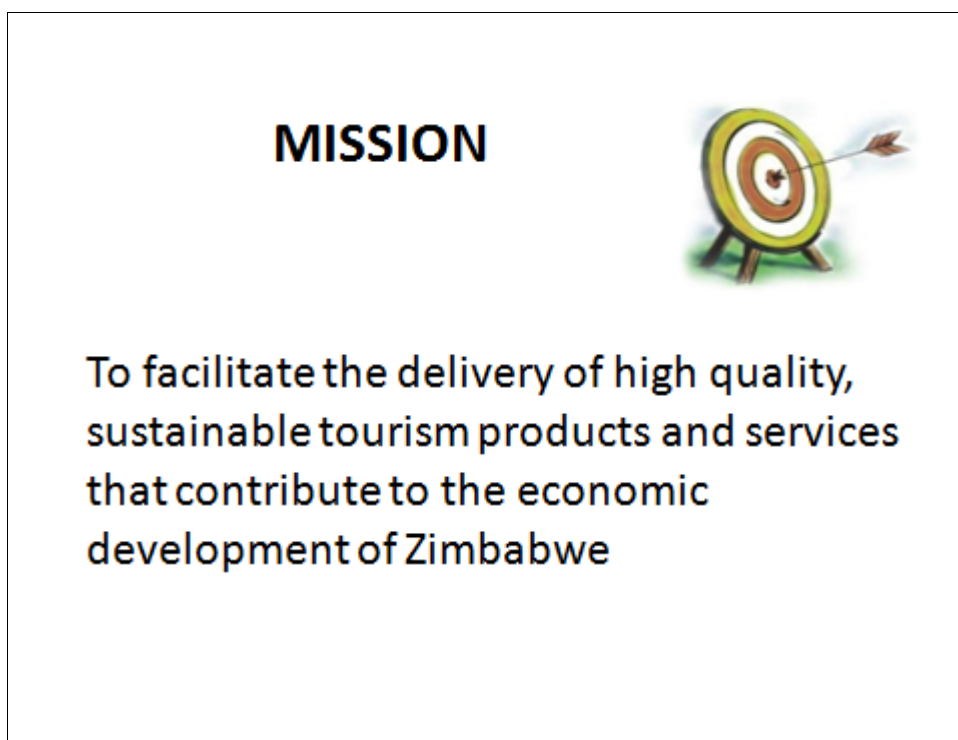


Figure 14: Mission statement in one of the offices at the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality

One of the cultural norms referred to by P3 was the preservation of the Zimbabwean culture in a “uniquely Zimbabwean way, different from any other”. The wall hangings in the offices, the employees’ dress code, and their behaviour in welcoming visitors portrayed the unique cultural norms peculiar to a particular group of people, cultural norms that represented “gained knowledge, explanations, values, beliefs, communications and behaviours of a large group of people, at the same time and same place” (Shazaad *et al.*, 2012, p. 976) (cf. par. 2.3.3). Below is Photograph 5 taken of

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employees in uniform of Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife. Their motto is “In harmony with nature”, and their culture of identifying with nature is reflected in the type of uniform they wear. Rahman (2010) states that an ecotourism destination must be developed taking environmental concerns into account, and that the activities planned must blend in with the environment and be environmentally sensitive.



Photograph 5: Employees of Zimbabwe National Parks in their uniform which harmonises with nature

Source: <http://victoriafalls24.com/blog/2013/01/14/vic-falls-anti-poaching-unit-annual-report/>... On 08/07/2014

Asong (2014) mentions that symbols (artefacts) are not culture in themselves, but are rather a means to highlight the existent “*software of the mind*”. By portraying their identification with nature in their dress code, the department of National Parks and wildlife is demonstrating some evidence of an existing and operational organisational culture.

P9 mentioned that for ecotourism to succeed, the cultural norm of the “*preservation and respect of a community’s way of life*” (for example, their mountain, their paintings, and rainmaking ceremonies) should be respected. In describing a sustainable activity, Bien (2006, p. 4) (cf. par. 3.5) mentions that it is “an activity that can be done in the same or similar manner for the indefinite future” and that it is sustainable in three main aspects, one of which is “socially and culturally”. Bien (2006) explains that whatever the activity, it should not harm, but should revitalise the social structure or

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culture of the community where it is located. This is exactly what P9 is alluding to by emphasising the preservation of and respect for a community's way of life. The locations of some ecotourism centres are such that they fall under the jurisdiction of certain chiefdoms, and are considered as sacred. Before these centres can be opened to the public, certain cultural rituals must be performed, according to P9. Constant consultation with the traditional leadership becomes of paramount importance, since these leaders are the repositories and guardians of their communities' cultural and traditional ways of doing things. In the same vein, P4 states that "those traditional values of ours should be tapped into", emphasising that before anything cultural can be done within a community, traditional leadership should be consulted with. Writers such as Fairbairn (1988) and Samvura (2014) (cf. par. 2.3.1) state that ecotourism can be built from the assets of local people, such as their traditions, festivals, their land, and natural as well as built heritage. Evidently, P9, along with P4, lamented the disregard of traditional cultural leadership in the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism. This was happening notwithstanding the emphasis in available literature that the respect accorded local cultures is the basis of a vibrant ecotourism practice. An organisation's "way of life" is classified as a norm. Those involved in the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism disregard the norm of "respecting local cultures" as advocated by Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2). The custodians of the traditional ways of preserving the environment are being side-stepped (as alluded to by respondents P4 and P9), and this may be one of the reasons why ecotourism is not performing as well as it should.

To continue the discussion of cultural norms, reference is made here to P3's indication that the Ministry emphasises the promotion of the Zimbabwean national brand of tourism by likening the country's seven major attractions to the Seven Wonders of the World. Two of these attractions are "Our rich culture and heritage ... and our wonderful people" (P3). This is in agreement with the statement of Kuuder *et al.*, (2013, p. 131) (cf. par 3.6) that "music, dance, folklore, friends and family make up a society's socio-cultural capital". It is commendable that Zimbabwe has wonderful people (as indicated by P3), but having wonderful people and NO culture is not worth a lot. P1 mentioned that "the best marketers of any country are its citizens", but if these citizens do not have an ecotourism culture, this does not benefit the development of ecotourism in any way. P3 lamented the situation that the culture of practising ecotourism was the country's "greatest challenge", and that there were many "stereotypes" of people who made it difficult to practise ecotourism, to the point that counteractions had to be devised to

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combat their behaviour. Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) mention that “norms help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs”. Since the norm signified by an ecotourism culture is lacking among Zimbabweans, it is currently impossible for this particular *norm* to help operationalise actions that are consistent with the values and beliefs referred to by Flamholtz and Randle above. The following words uttered by P8 confirmed the absence of an ecotourism culture:

P8: “Right now, the concept of ecotourism, or tourism in general, this is something that is not part of the culture of Zimbabweans, to be very honest ... but it’s coming up slowly.”

Since it is not a “norm” or a “way of life” for Zimbabweans to patronise their own ecotourism sites, how can ecotourism be expected to succeed? As the framework (see Figure 16 clearly suggests, ecotourism leadership has the task to first of all *live* such a culture and set the example so that it can cascade down to everyone else.

When considering the list of components that make up an organisation’s artefacts (Schein, 1992) (cf. par. 2.3.1) and comparing these with those found in Zimbabwe, the glaring absence of “myths and stories” from the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism is noted. When doing the fieldwork the researcher observed that the respondents did not mention any stories, myths or rituals; yet these kinds of artefacts play the significant role of sharing norms and values (see paragraph 2.3.2), particularly with new employees. Jaber *et al.*, (2013) (cf. par. 2.5.1) mention that employees learn of organisational culture through a variety of ways, such as through stories, which are narratives about significant events or people. These stories, according to Liwanag (2011), anchor the present in the past, and provide explanations and legitimacy for current practices, while Asong (2014) adds that rituals as well as routines are activities or events that serve to reinforce a people’s way of life. Schein (1992) (cf. par. 2.3.1) reinforces the idea that organisational stories and legends serve as powerful social prescriptions of the way things should (or should not) be done. They provide human realism to individual performance standards, and the use of real role models demonstrates that organisational objectives are attainable. In the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism, no stories are told to new employees as part of their orientation. New employees need to know their roles when they become part of an organisation; they need to know who their competitors are. This kind of knowledge is transferred through

organisational stories and legends, and if these are absent the orientation fails to fully anchor the employees.

6.5.3 Business and Educational Norms

It is important to note that only human beings (employees) can translate ecotourism theory into practice when they deliver ecotourism products and services. Therefore, employees are an important link in the operation of an ecotourism business. The business norm under scrutiny in this section is the treatment of the employee in the ecotourism business. In an organisation, the consideration of everyday business issues, such as the relationships between managers and employees, is considered to be part of organisational culture.

In identifying elements of an effective organisational culture in the service sector that have an impact on financial performance, Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) (cf. par. 2.6.2) mention, among other things, orientation toward employees. In a people-orientated organisation, there is a greater emphasis on and expectation of treating people (both employees and customers) with respect and dignity. Nevertheless, P5 pointed out that in Zimbabwean ecotourism practice, employees were almost never involved in the daily affairs of the business. For ecotourism practice to be a success, P5 advocated the “involvement of employees in decision-making that supports green tourism; training and exposing them to ecotourism issues and to be efficient in execution of duty”.

If an employee is considered as important and is given a platform to express an opinion, the employee’s attachment to the organisation will be strengthened. P5 explained as follows:

P5: “... in their business model, management need to incentivise; not only monetary incentivisation ... but even mere recognition ... acknowledgement of one’s good efforts at work. Another idea would be for management to take on the habit of implementing employee values and ideas ... the prevailing thing is, can anything good come from employees? Sometimes, when asked to come forth, they can present very good contributions towards the practice of ecotourism.”

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What P5 was calling for was acknowledgement of employees' contributions towards the success of an organisation, as recommended in the literature cited above.

In terms of educational norms, P5 suggested that employees should constantly be trained in ecotourism issues:

P5: "Employees should be trained ... nowadays they should be trained in 'going green'."

Training involves education, and this requirement is included in the principles published by TIES (2015) (cf. par. 3.6.2) and contained in the revised definition of ecotourism which reads: "Ecotourism is now defined as 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education'". This education "is meant to be inclusive of both staff and guests", highlighting that education in terms of the practice of ecotourism is one of the main philosophical foundations to be upheld by those who engage in its practice. According to Kellert (1996) (cf. par. 3.6.2), the higher a person's education in matters of the environment, the more likely that person is to express greater concern, affection, interest, and knowledge about nature and wildlife, and the less likely that person is to have exploitative and authoritarian attitudes towards nature and wildlife. It is gratifying to report that four national universities in Zimbabwe offer tourism studies, with some specialising in ecotourism development.

In a document published by TIES (2015) it is stated that one of the principles of ecotourism involves educating both visitors and local people on the importance of conserving natural and cultural resources. It is to be noted that, in this instance, not only visitors but also employees and local people involved in ecotourism must be educated. This realisation of the need to educate people is a norm in the practice of ecotourism, and once people are educated, following the principles of ecotourism will become a way of life for all. The other components of organisational culture will then easily fall in place, as "norms help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs" (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012b).

The essence of P3's remark that "selling the ecotourism idea to the nation at large" is that people must be educated in order to make everyone aware of the practice of ecotourism. P6 strongly supported this notion by saying: "I advocate for the education

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of the population: nurturing of love for the environment; educate them on the value of the environment – that is the most important thing.”

It can be said that subscribing to the norm of educating people stands out as one of the activities that is upheld in the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism.

6.5.4 Environmental values

Values are championed by a company’s leadership and management. This refers to what *they* say they value, in other words the public image they want to display. According to Flamholtz and Randle, (2012b, p. 77) (cf. par. 2.3.1), “values are the things an organisation considers most important with respect to its operations, its employees, and its customers, they are the things an organisation holds most dear – the things for which it strives and the things it wants to protect at all costs”. Espoused values explain “why you are doing what you are doing” (Schein, 2004) (cf. par. 2.3.1) within a particular organisation.

Values comprise the norms, roles, ideologies, beliefs and philosophy of the organisation. All these are classified as “the thinking of the organisation”. (Norms, on the other hand, are classified as the “doings” or actions prevalent in an organisation.) In the literature, the environmental values of ecotourism are classified by Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2).

As far as the participants were concerned, the environmental “values” of ecotourism involved the following:

P5, P9: “Preservation of the environment”

P1, P2: Sustainable management of the environment for the sake of our posterity

P2: “Incorporation of green concepts in the development of tourism”

P3: “Carrying out activities that maintain our tourism environment in its best of state for future use”

P3: “Protection of our nature, flora and fauna”

P8: “Sustainable utilisation of nature by the people”

It is clear that the respondents’ comments correspond with what is said in the literature; therefore, they are aware of the environmental values of ecotourism. The

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question that remains to be answered is whether these employees in carrying out their daily ecotourism activities are acting on their knowledge of the right things to do. Are these values espoused values or enacted values? Many organisational strategies, though well thought out, have been known to fail at execution level. The respondents' views are in agreement with those in the literature, yet the performance of ecotourism is not satisfactory; hence the conclusion that it is most probably the execution of ecotourism that is failing.

6.5.5 Social and cultural values

According to Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2), "Providing benefit and empowerment for the local people by providing them with jobs and quotas" is one of the values of ecotourism, and when asked to contextualise these values based on their own understanding, the respondents stated that these involved the following:

P9: "Central involvement of the local people in ecotourism issues"

P3: "Economically empowering communities through community-based tourism projects"

Yet again, there is a consensus between the literature and the participants' conception of the social values of ecotourism. However, the disparity that arises is that, while there is an understanding that local people should be involved in ecotourism issues, this involvement is apparently not happening. Local people are represented by their traditional leaders who, according to respondents P4 and P5, should be, but seem not to be, consulted in such matters. These respondents pleaded that traditional leadership should be consulted. When asked about the ways in which ecotourism involved the local people, P9 answered as follows:

P9: "... the involvement of the local people comes in in that they are centrally involved; they own these facilities, they have natural rights to them."

Although there is awareness that local people must be involved, no action is being taken to do that. As a result, the local people are not embracing ecotourism in its totality; they fail to see the monetary value of practising ecotourism; hence, P3 commented as follows:

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P3: "... if someone sees a poacher, he doesn't say anything; like leading information unto the arrest of the concerned. Why? Because these guys are saying the community is not at heart, all you need is your money and generation of your self-interests."

Respecting local cultures (Honey, 2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2) is another one of the tenets of ecotourism. P5 alluded to this aspect in his response when he recommended: "Follow our communal traditions/values; or our old ways of promoting ecotourism." As has already been commented on previously, while it is known and understood that local cultures should be respected, in reality they are not, and this is probably one of the many reasons why ecotourism is not performing as it should.

6.5.6 Business/educational values

When discussing the theoretical origins of ecotourism (cf. par. 3.6), it was said that ecotourism was premised on the principle of giving nature value so that conservation could be achieved without sacrificing economic growth. According to the strategy developed by Stevens and Jansen (2002) (cf. par. 3.6.3), "ecotourism must, for pragmatic as well as ethical reasons, contribute to local economic development".

The respondents were aware of this fact, and alluded to certain business practices through which these ecotourism principles could be upheld:

P6: "Honesty in ploughing back ecotourism profits into the community ... ploughing back into the community is a business that we all know about ... and linking it up with the building of a good ecotourism organisational culture ... this would mean that economic gains realised from the practice of ecotourism are balanced with the socio-economic needs of the resident community."

P4: "Sustainability in all business transactions is basically the key business value ... if businesses were to appreciate that development is only development if it is sustainable."

P4, in mentioning sustainability in all ecotourism business transactions, expressed agreement with Bien (2006) (cf. par. 3.5) who mentions that a sustainable activity is sustainable in three main aspects, one of which is economic sustainability, which means that *"the activity does not simply begin and then rapidly die because of bad business practices; it continues to contribute to the economic well-being of the local*

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community. A sustainable business activity should benefit its owners, its employees and its neighbours”.

In the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe, sustainability seems to be the missing link. In the narrative provided by P8 regarding ecotourism development in the country, it was mentioned that there was a time when ecotourism was vibrant, and major developmental strides were realised (see paragraph 3.7.1). However, this was not sustainable and everything came to a standstill. P8 mentioned as follows:

P8: “... to be honest, between the period 1990 to 2001, that’s when meaningful development really happened. You would be very lucky to find any documentation of development between 2002 and 2008.”

Developmental projects of the magnitude described in paragraph 3.7.1 are no longer being realised; therefore, these projects were not sustainable.

Another one of the business values advocated by respondent P1 was that of “lobbying for fiscal budgets towards the success of sustainable tourism”. In the literature, Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2) lists this as one of the precepts of ecotourism, stating that ecotourism should “provide direct financial benefit for conservation of biological and cultural diversity”. In this regard, the intention of the ecotourism practitioners in Zimbabwe is the same as that stated in the literature. They are lobbying for funds from the government, and are trying to raise money through their own efforts. Once again, the problem seems to arise at execution level. Indeed, efforts are being made to “lobby for fiscal budgets” from government, *but* not much is materialising. P1 stated as follows:

P1: “Support for tourism in this country is below single digit; in fact, it’s below 1% ... until there is a very ... irrevocable commitment in terms of decreeing percentage support by fiscus to tourism, I would be defeated because of lack of financial support.”

Support for ecotourism at the highest level involves sourcing and providing fiscal support; therefore, the intended framework needs to address the issue of financial support (incentivisation) for the cause of ecotourism.

An important business value suggested by P1 and P2 was that of the provision of leadership in the practice of ecotourism. Earlier on in this thesis, organisational culture

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was discussed from a management science perspective (cf. par. 2.4.2), and reference was made to Schein (2004) who stated that organisational culture was shaped by leadership behaviour. According to Finnegan (2000) (cf. par. 2.5), people identify with visionary leaders – how they behave and what they expect. They note what such leaders pay attention to and see them as role models. During the fieldwork, P1 suggested that visionary leadership in ecotourism was required – leadership that people could look up to and use as role models. On the occasion of the launching of the National Tourism Policy, P1 called on Zimbabwean political leadership (the then Vice-President and Patron of Tourism) to take a leading role in turning around the performance of tourism. He was recorded as saying, “Honourable Minister, turning around the performance of tourism does not require money; it does not require resources ... just policy reviews”.

Apart from calling for visionary leadership, P1 also called for political will and commitment, because he was of the opinion that culture started from the top. He referred to the State President’s decision to take personal responsibility for authorising the export of a certain type of coconut as an example of visionary leadership in action. That kind of authorisation could only have been given by someone who had the highest level of authority. Concluding his narrative in which he called for leadership in ecotourism, P1 said, “So, this issue, I was talking about executive buy-in ... at the highest level”. In accordance with the iceberg model (see Figure 14), executive buy-in is not easily visible (it is hidden underneath), reflecting the thinking or the philosophy of the ecotourism organisation that controls the procedure followed (as in the case of the export of coconuts).

Apart from the business values that have been discussed, educational values in ecotourism are also of importance. In the available literature, emphasis is placed on building environmental awareness (as well as educating) as another of the tenets of ecotourism (Honey, 2008 (cf. par. 3.6.2); Hall & Page, 2006 (cf. par. 3.6.1, Table 4)). As part of its document on principles, TIES (2015) (cf. par. 3.6.2) defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”. Education is meant to be inclusive of both employees and guests, who should be educated and made aware, as P4, P5, P6 and P9 rightly put it:

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P4: “The first port of call would be, h’m, sensitisation; to sensitise people and make them aware of the benefits, what it’s all about ... and how they could participate in the process.”

P5: “Firstly, the education and conscientisation of our people in ecotourism issues ... teach them to appreciate the value of the environment.”

P6: “I advocate for the education of the population, nurturing of love for the environment; educate them on the value of the environment – that is the most important thing.”

P9: “This means educating the people, so that everyone becomes a protector of the environment.”

In terms of educating the people, great strides have been made. P1 (the Minister responsible for tourism) stated that he had embarked on creating synergies with other relevant ministries towards the achievement of this feat. P1 mentioned as follows:

P1: “I am advocating for a curriculum on tourism ... that’s the topical subject in education. We must get tourism as a mandatory subject. It must start at primary school ... you must catch them young.”

As far as educating the people is concerned, Morgan (1999) (cf. par. 3.6.4) explains what they are supposed to be taught in order to enhance their attitudes and actions towards the preservation of the environment. Part of the job of guides entails imparting education to the visitors. What remains to be seen is whether P1’s intentions of introducing a tourism curriculum will actually transform peoples’ behaviour.

Organisational culture is composed of norms, values, and belief systems. Having analysed the norms and values of ecotourism as observed by the respondents, this section will now deal with the relevant beliefs, *from the point of view of the respondents*. In this context, beliefs refer to the belief systems in the practice of ecotourism; they are taken to mean assumptions that individuals have about themselves, their customers, and their organisation.

Values represent “the thinking” within the organisation. In terms of the iceberg model, values form the deep centre of the iceberg, and is described by Stoyko (2009, p. 1) (cf. par.2.5.2.2) as being:

the deep and invisible elements [that] are the most difficult to detect and change because they are the most strongly embraced. They influence thinking in ways that are not always conscious and straightforward. Identifying them may require collective reflection exercises involving probative questioning.

6.5.7 Environmental beliefs

Respondents P1 and P2 reported that the belief in "green tourism" principles was one of the main environmental beliefs prevalent in the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe.

P1: "We are very active in areas of sustainable waste management, sustainable energy ... green gardens ... and the overall concept of, h'm, green concepts in general."

P2: "In whatever we will be doing, we will be saying: to what extent are we complying with the green concepts, and therefore ordinarily answering to ecotourism."

The belief in the principles of green tourism has encouraged ecotourism policy makers to consider alternative sources of energy. Green tourism was advocated by P1 and P6:

P1: "As we advance in technology, we must see other alternatives in terms of energy supply."

P6: "Teach them not to cut trees, but make use of alternative sources of energy."

This belief is expounded in the literature, for instance by Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2) who describes it as one of the tenets of ecotourism targeted at "minimizing the negative impact on ... the environment". The observations of the respondents indicated that this belief was upheld in ecotourism practice in Zimbabwe, proving that there is conformance to the tenets of ecotourism.

Regarding environmental beliefs in the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe, P1 advocated "reverting to our own local laws in sustainably managing our excess wildlife".

While the Western belief of ecotourism is that it should be non-consumptive (Fennel, 2008 (cf. par. 3.7.1); TIES, 2015 (cf. par. 3.7.1)), with influential and powerful nations such as the United States of America declaring that they "are trying to move

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towards non-hunting activities” (P8), Zimbabwe is declaring at ministerial level (P1) that natural resources will continue to be sustainably managed in the Zimbabwean way:

P1: ...”it has to be done in compliance with ... our own local laws ... there is nothing wrong in managing our excess wildlife, as long as it’s strictly transparent ... going by the book and complying with the national statutes.”

This approach is supported in the literature based on the Zimbabwean context, with Zimbabwean writers on ecotourism advocating “conservation through utilization” (Muzvidziwa, 2013) (cf. par. 3.7.1). Changing the prevailing mindset of an organisation is very difficult, and judging from the iceberg model this belief in Zimbabwe would be deep seated and not easily influenced even by the ideologies of one of the most powerful nations such as the USA.

6.5.8 Social and cultural beliefs

P1 and P4 expressed the belief that their natural inheritance should be passed on to future generations:

P1: “We must pass this inheritance on ... we must look beyond our noses.”

P4: “We must have a mentality which seeks to ensure that the present generations, in whatever we are doing; we make use of the resources around us in a way which does not compromise the ability of our children to make use of the same resources to meet their needs ... so it’s actually acting in a responsible manner.”

This social belief in preservation for future generations is deeply ingrained in the way ecotourism is practised in Zimbabwe; it is reflected in the way business is conducted. Even the educational efforts related to environmental conservation keep the youth, tomorrow’s leaders, in mind. In this respect, P3 mentioned the activity of “running promotional awareness campaigns on importance of preservation of ecotourism products for future generations as well as for the current benefit of the community”.

Therefore, the allegory proffered by Carpenter *et al.*, (2010) (cf. par. 2.3.1) that: “Just as water is invisible to the fish swimming in it, yet affects their actions” is applicable in the Zimbabwean context. It is recognised that culture consists of unseen elements such as assumptions (beliefs) and values that affect organisational life.

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Another social belief that was brought to light during the fieldwork was that of incentivising the people so that they could preserve the environment:

P9: "... incentivisation of the local people to look after the natural resources in their area".

One of the goals of ecotourism is to preserve the environment (Honey, 2008), but this cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the society; hence, society's involvement is important. In this regard P9 mentioned as follows:

P9: "However, these locals need to be incentivised to look after the natural resources in their area, otherwise, to them, with no benefit coming, they would not look after it with 'preservation' in mind."

In the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism, cultural beliefs are also portrayed as a form of ecotourism. P4 mentioned as follows:

P4: "Ecotourism has always been around as a way of life for most communities, even before education [about ecotourism issues] came about."

P4 continued by referring to some of the cultural beliefs in the everyday life of a community.

P4: "... it is a community, with their way of life ... their graves ... their rainmaking ceremonies and clay pots of Rapoko ... which have a bearing on their livelihoods."

These are the kinds of activities that Honey (2008) (cf. par. 3.6.2) refers to when speaking about "respecting local cultures" as one of the tenets of ecotourism. These are the kinds of activities that visitors want to experience. In view of the fact that the cultural practices, which are referred to in the literature, are present in the practice of Zimbabwean ecotourism, it can be said that the country is conforming to the international practice of ecotourism.

In Zimbabwean culture, traditional leadership has always been considered as the custodian of a community's way of life. This is confirmed by P4 when remarking that, "ecotourism has always been around as a way of life for most communities, even before education [about ecotourism issues] came about". He suggested that upholding the belief in the practice of ecotourism had been embodied in the local leadership even before the practices of ecotourism had been documented. However, most cultural

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beliefs have started to erode, as have beliefs in traditional leadership, resulting in the failure to properly conserve the environment. Therefore, P4 made a call to resuscitate this cultural belief and “involve our traditional leadership in harnessing traditional ways of conservation” (for instance, to prune a tree and not cut it down entirely, and to engage in communal hunting and farming at regulated intervals).

P5 also mentioned the cultural belief of compelling the younger generations to “walk in the footprints of their ancestors ... and to preserve their cultural identity”:

P5: “Some of our values and beliefs are lying forgotten, and considered useless in this modern day ... and our children nowadays do not even know about them and their significance ... and if the government makes the effort to resuscitate these, by making use of traditional leadership ... there would be much to showcase in terms of our ecotourism.”

The above is a cultural belief that is commonly upheld in the Zimbabwean ecotourism practice and in day-to-day business transactions, sometimes unconsciously, in the same way that fish swimming in the sea are unconscious of the water surrounding them (Carpenter *et al.*, 2010) (cf. par. 2.3.1).

P1 mentioned a cultural belief reflected in the behaviour of Africans in general, before being “polluted” by capitalism:

P1: “I think there is a traditional acceptance of ecotourism in our communities ... let’s take, for example, wildlife management at rudimentary and community level. Africans have never poached, they hunt for subsistence, for domestic consumption ... therefore I think there is an appreciation that we should hunt just for consumption to the extent that we are able to proliferate the wildlife population for future benefit.”

This belief in subsistence hunting is a deep-seated belief in the practice of ecotourism, not only in Zimbabwe, but in Africa as a whole, and it has an impact on the implementation of ecotourism. The literature on the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe reflects this belief. Writers, such as Muzvidziwa (2013), Mawere and Mubaya (2012, and Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011) (all cf. par. 3.7.1), present ecotourism as a type of tourism that emphasises conservation through utilisation, instead of conservation through preservation only. This is further supported by Moinuddin and Begum (2004) (cf. par. 3.7.1) who state that the definitions presented in the literature are contextual in that they

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are framed with respect to a particular context or to a community's eco-resource base. There seems to be a "clash of interests" regarding this belief in that ecotourism from a Eurocentric perspective promotes "non-extractive" ecotourism (Fennel, 2008) (cf. par. 3.7.1) while it upholds the value of "respecting local cultures" (cf. par. 3.6.2). The dilemma is: how can the principle of non-extractive ecotourism and the principle of respecting the cultural belief that "Africans never poach, but hunt sustainably" be upheld at the same time?

6.5.9 Business and educational beliefs

The respondents highlighted certain business as well as educational beliefs related to ecotourism. P2 mentioned that in the running of the ecotourism business, the major role of the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality was to provide leadership. It is a well-known fact that leadership is needed for any business to run efficiently, and once this is in place, there will be direction and guidance as regards the achievement of the organisation's goals. P2 stated that: "As far as entrenched beliefs ... we are very clear As a ministry, we provide leadership as far as guiding the tourism sector in every respect."

According to Moinuddin and Begum (2004) (cf. par. 3.7.3), the role of government in promoting ecotourism is to provide leadership. In this respect, the comment by P1 concerning the role of leadership in establishing an ecotourism organisational culture is significant. P1 recommended drumming up support for ecotourism from the highest levels of authority, not only nationally, but on a global scale.

P1: "... at the UNWTO level, we sat down, partly under my leadership as the co-president of the UNWTO, Chairman for CAF and an Executive Council member, to seek the highest support, or support at the highest level, in States, h'm, answering to what we call 'The Golden Book on Tourism', where we are seeking heads of states to make an irrevocable commitment to their support for tourism in their national economies."

This kind of action is promoted in the literature, for instance, by Steele-Prohaska (n.d., p. 280) who states that "People working in all areas of ecotourism need to encourage their national and local politicians to take actions which implement this philosophy". Support at the highest level involves sourcing and providing fiscal support, and this is exactly what P1, in his capacity as a leader in the tourism sector, is doing.

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Leadership is also expected to take other actions apart from providing leadership, and these areas of need are highlighted by Moinuddin and Begum (2004) (cf. par. 3.7.3).

Another business belief that was revealed was that of aggressive marketing of ecotourism products. P9 stated as follows:

P9: "I would say marketing at various levels ... there is a need to articulate ecotourism products. Ecotourism means a lot of things in our context ... and all these need to be marketed."

In terms of marketing ecotourism products, P3 mentioned the introduction of new ecotourism concepts. One of these was to make available to ecotourists many more facets of ecotourism at the same time and in the same area, over and above the ones they came to see.

P3: "... in these different facets, these different niches, not all people are then going to come and put a burden on our nature, because not all people are nature lovers. So, in trying to relieve our nature and our resources, we give these people different tourist products so that our resources are not burdened."

Such an approach can be said to emanate from the definition of ecotourism by Honey (2008, p. 32-33) (cf. par. 3.6.1) that "Ecotourism is to travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (often) small scale". Therefore, as far as this belief is concerned, there is proof that Zimbabwean ecotourism supports the view expressed in the reviewed literature.

Employee involvement was mentioned as an important desirable belief in the ecotourism business. P5 remarked as follows:

P5: "Management, in order to develop a strong organisational culture, should foster employee involvement in decision-making and problem-solving, as well as to implement employee values and ideas."

With reference to the literature, Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) (cf. par. 2.6.2) have drawn up a list of the elements of an effective organisational culture in the service sector that impact on financial performance, among which is "orientation toward employees". In addition, Uysal and Magnini (2011) (cf. par. 3.8) mention that employees are the ones who are responsible for creating a unique experience for the visitor. Their

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role is therefore very important, hence the classification of the treatment of employees in any organisation as a belief, which is deep seated.

A business belief brought up by respondent P4 was that of employing business strategies. Ecotourism is now a big business, with many competitors constantly seeking to develop a competitive edge over the next opponent. In this case, the main competitors south of the Sahara are Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. P4 suggested that in this scenario Zimbabwe should come up with a strategy in order to succeed:

P4: "I think, first, its strategic planning, h'm, the country needs to establish a strategic position and then strategic direction; and a vision, a strategic vision with regard to ecotourism."

P4 went on to suggest that those in ecotourism leadership should strategically plan around what the country had at its disposal. P4 expressed the following opinion:

P4: "The good thing about Zimbabwe is that ecotourism has always been around; it's actually a way of life for a lot of communities out there. And even in our cultural values and beliefs, we have all sorts of, you know, beliefs which support ecotourism."

P5 also mentioned the issue of employing a political strategy to ensure ecotourism success:

P5: "Firstly, the state of the nation 'does us down' so to speak. Who would want to come to Zimbabwe without really being coerced, and convinced that it is now a safe place to come to? There is a need to strategically position the country as worth visiting."

The stigma attached to the country needs to be removed. The current general perception of Zimbabwe, at least in its former source markets (most of Europe), is of a country that is burning, where there is chaos, and which they would not want to visit. The campaign of rebranding the image of the country needs to be even more aggressive.

The belief related to informing people and educating them about ecotourism issues was brought up by several of the respondents as being of paramount importance (P4, P5, P6, and P9) (cf. par. 6.5.6).

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Benchmarking in educating people about ecotourism was mentioned by P9 who indicated that when benchmarking was applied, information sharing took place, which led to other side-benefits:

P9: “Learning from the region is on-going; you talk ... with countries like Namibia, Botswana, and RSA, there is information sharing going on, there is an information sharing platform as we speak”.

In ecotourism literature, there is an abundance of examples that can serve the purpose of benchmarking. For example, Epstein (2005) (cf. par. 3.7) refers to frequently cited worldwide initiatives of ecotourism, such as the ACAP in Nepal, ULURU/Ayers Rock in Australia, and CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe. Such information that is made available about countries that are doing well can be used by other countries to do their benchmarking.

Training employees was also considered as an important belief in the success of ecotourism. P5 mentioned that employees needed to receive training in ecotourism issues:

P5: “Training and exposure to such practices [ecotourism] will enable employees to easily identify with the core values of ecotourism.”

In the document produced by TIES (2015) (cf. par. 3.6.2), support is given to the principle that well-trained, multilingual naturalist guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication are essential to good ecotourism. Training in these areas is, therefore, of paramount importance.

The first part of the main research question reads: What is an organisational culture and its defining elements in support of ecotourism, and to what extent do they comply with such a culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe?

The section above has answered this question, and from the findings of the fieldwork, it appeared as though ecotourism values and beliefs were in place in the Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism and were practised in accordance with the views expressed in the literature. However, the aspect of norms appeared to represent the missing link in the implementation of ecotourism. According to Flamholtz and Randle

(2012b), norms "... help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs".

6.6 BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN THE PRACTICE OF ECOTOURISM

The respondents did not report much in terms of the benefits that an organisational culture could bring to the practice of ecotourism. Of the few proffered responses, the researcher opted to divide these into:

- a) benefits to the organisation; and
- b) benefits to the community.

In regard to organisations not performing according to expected standards, Erdogan and Tosun (2009) (cf. par. 2.3) attribute such poor performance to a lack of a good culture in these business organisations, affecting the delivery of products and services. Therefore, if there is a good organisational culture in an organisation, the organisation will tend to reap "economic benefits" (P3). P3 commented that an organisation that had developed an organisational culture would improve its performance and experience increased inflows of revenue. This view is in support of the view expressed by Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) (cf. par. 2.3.4) that an organisational culture gives an organisation a competitive advantage, which sets it apart from other organisations.

P1 mentioned "increased hotel and airline bookings" as one of the benefits of having an organisational culture. This view supports statements in the literature reviewed, for instance the observation by Crawford and Mulvey (2009) (cf. par. 3.8.1) that having an organisational culture increases the potential of creating unique tourism experiences, which will lead to enhanced business performance.

P8 was of the opinion that one result of having an organisational culture would be having "highly experienced tour guides" who were moulded by a knowledge of what to do and how to do it, in the end making up the high calibre of employees the organisation would like to be known for. This opinion supports the requirement stated by Kusler (2000) (cf. par. 3.6.4) that a successful ecotour must have well-trained guides. According to this researcher, the guides for such ecotours must have graduate or

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undergraduate degrees in the natural or social sciences. If this becomes a requirement, ecotourism will be able to offer opportunities for educational and scientific research, which will be an added benefit.

According to Erdogan and Tosun (2009) (cf. par. 2.3.), the existence of an organisational culture signals to workers which practices are acceptable, worthwhile, and meaningful, all of which will contribute to the success of the business. In the same vein, Buchanan and Huczynski (2004), together with Shani and Lau (2005) (cf. par. 2.3.), mention that an organisational culture positively affects outcomes such as productivity, performance, commitment, self-confidence, and ethical behaviour (of employees). Ecotourism literature clearly states the positive benefits of establishing an ecotourism organisational culture. However, these benefits are not visible in Zimbabwe owing to the failure of the ecotourism organisation to perform: No tangible benefits are being realised for communities. Since ecotourism is not performing to expected levels, there is a paucity of information from the respondents. In the literature the expected benefits are stated (cf. par. 3.6.4), but in reality these have not come to fruition in the Zimbabwean context. When the researcher asked the participants what their views were on the benefits to the community of having an ecotourism culture, they were quick to mention that there was nothing to talk about since any meaningful contribution had occurred only up until 2001:

P9: "... not much since inflow of tourists is minimal."

P8: "... benefits, to be really honest, were between 1990 and 2001."

P7: "... currently, I don't think there is anything to talk about."

Upon its inception, ecotourism in Zimbabwe brought hope to many people, and for a number of years there was substantive development (structurally, economically, and socially). Chiutsi *et al.*, (2011) (cf. par. 3.7.1) mention that benefits to locals during the period when ecotourism was vibrant included the building of schools, clinics, and grinding mills, sinking of boreholes, improvement of roads, electrification of households, connection of telephones, installation of water reticulation systems, and development of general infrastructure. During the fieldwork interviews, P8 mentioned that at that time "nothing is filtering down to the community because of the RDCs". Before the establishment of these RDCs (rural district councils), communities used to benefit from what was called "a buffer zone" (an area on the periphery of a main national park where people lived and farmed) (P8). At that time, these communities were free to hunt

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animals that seasonally strayed into their areas. Only stray animals could be hunted as the people were not allowed to venture beyond their areas or into the national parks. Currently the RDCs are monitoring the situation and are taking all the proceeds, with the result that nothing is filtering down to the communities. The fact that there are no meaningful returns on the practice of ecotourism have caused some of the respondents to quickly denounce this practice as non-viable. Participants' responses regarding the theme of the context and practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe were provided earlier in this report (cf. par. 5.6.3, Table 13).

Since abundant benefits that can be associated with the adoption of an organisational culture are provided in the literature, those involved in the management of ecotourism should strive to develop such a culture.

6.7 STRATEGIES TO BUILD AN ECOTOURISM ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Strategies that might improve the performance of Zimbabwean ecotourism have been listed in Table 16 (cf. par. 5.6.6). For ease of reference, the participants' responses were classified into those of a strategic nature, an operational nature or an academic nature with the aim of positioning a strategy on the level where it can best be addressed.

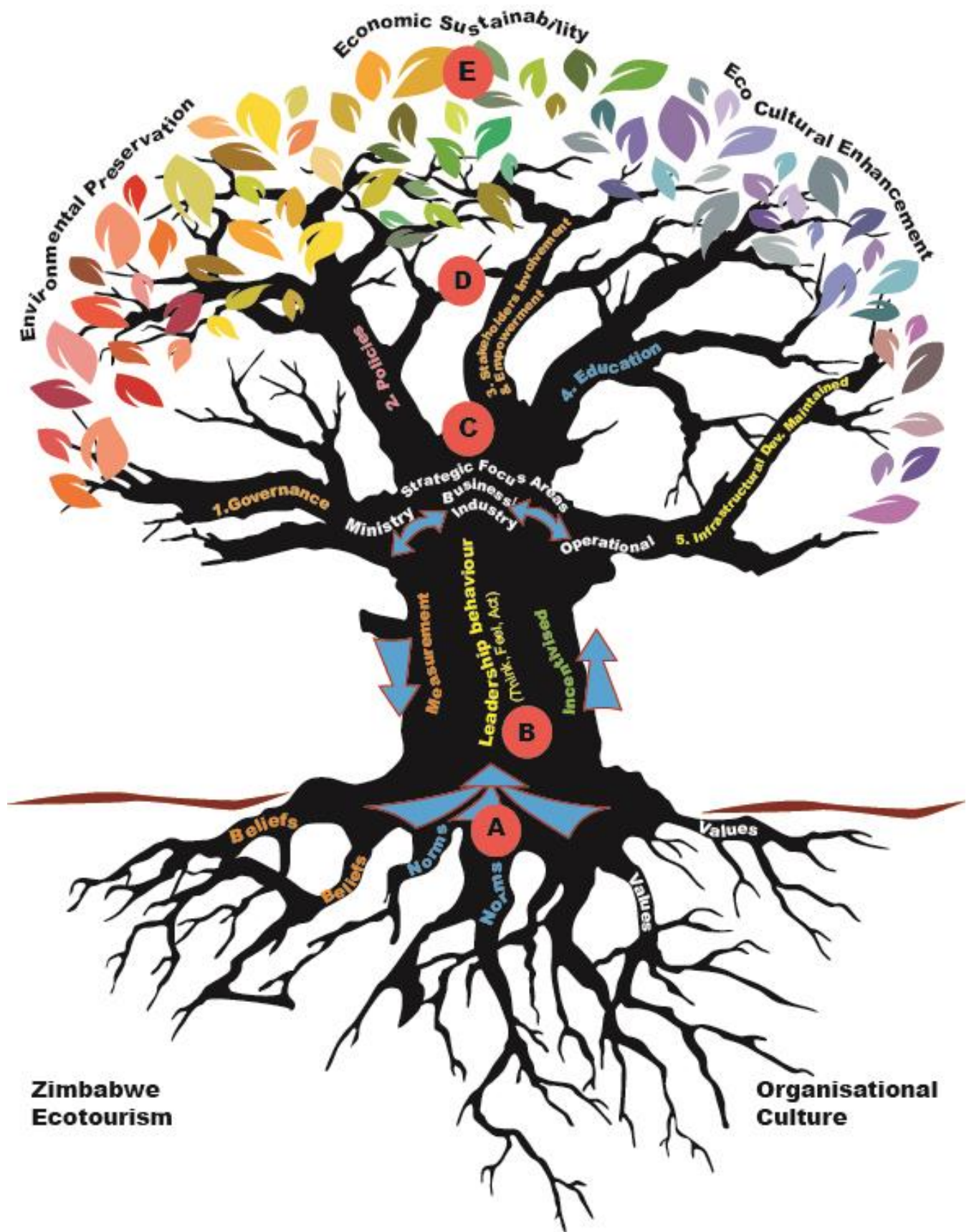
From an analysis of Table 16, it was deduced that most of the suggested strategies could best be dealt with at the strategy-making (decision-making) level. It has been said that culture starts from the top; therefore, if an organisational culture is to be developed, the process can only start with the consideration and implementation of suggestions at a strategic or policy level.

In the preceding sections of this chapter the views of selected participants on various issues were presented, namely: their understanding of organisational culture; their perception of ecotourism; their understanding of what ecotourism organisational culture is; their opinion about whether it is practical for a country such as Zimbabwe to pursue ecotourism; their input about the benefits of developing an organisational culture in the practice of ecotourism; and, their suggestions about strategies to be adopted to develop an organisational culture that is supportive of ecotourism. The next step is to

use the data gathered to achieve the aim of the research, which is to develop an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism.

6.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is synonymous with a theory, or a model, or a theoretical framework. Seakamela (2011) mentions that a conceptual framework (or a theoretical framework) can be defined as a set of ideas/concepts that is used to describe a phenomenon or how something should be done. According to Gaynor (1998), the term conceptual framework includes a broad diversity of structured ideas about organisations. Veal (2006, p. 54) describes a conceptual framework by saying that “a conceptual framework explains, either graphically, or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationships among them”. In simplifying this definition, Malherbe (2011, p. 69) explains that “a conceptual framework is simply a graphic or written description of a set of relationships which still needs to be tested empirically”. According to Jonker and Pennink (2009), a conceptual framework represents reality and shows how something in general should look and how it should work. The framework developed in this particular research has been tailored to suit the current Zimbabwean practice of ecotourism.



Organisational Culture in support of Ecotourism in Zimbabwe

Figure 15: The Ecotourism Organisational Culture Framework

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The conceptual framework presented in Figure 15 complies with the definitions of Gaynor (1998), Veal (2006), Malherbe (2011), and Jonker and Pennink (2009) given in the preceding paragraph. The framework was developed based on the review of existing literature and the research conducted for this study within the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe. This framework is a metaphoric representation of ecotourism as a living tree, kept alive through the support of the multiple levels in the industry in which an organisational culture in support of ecotourism is “lived”. The symbolic meanings contained in the tree metaphor will be elaborated on, clarifying the framework and its implementation.

6.8.1 Symbolism of the Roots of a Tree

According to Davies (1988), the roots of a tree lie deep in the ground, drawing up nutrients and providing a solid base to anchor the tree, gripping tightly and firmly into the earth. This position also ensures upward mobility of the important nutrients that will feed all the other parts of the tree. In the same way, the roots of the cultural tree depicted in Figure 15 are firmly rooted in the Zimbabwean soil or context. The roots (representing norms, values and beliefs) are the nutrients that are transmitted upwards to the rest of the tree (see the elements portrayed in the image), and all action is dependent on these nutrients.

6.8.2 Roots of the Tree (A)

In this research, the concept of organisational culture has been dealt with at length. According to the consulting company New Horizons (2009) (cf. par. 2.3.3), the culture of an organisation is considered as the organisation’s DNA – it is invisible to the naked eye, yet it is a powerful template that shapes what happens in the workplace. This idea is reinforced by Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) who state that “norms help to operationalize actions which are consistent with values and beliefs”. All action that is taken emanates from norms. McShane (2011) (cf. par. 2.3.1), in particular, mentions that the assumptions (norms), values, and beliefs that represent organisational behaviour operate beneath the surface; they are not directly observable, but their effects are everywhere. This notion was also mentioned when discussing the iceberg model (see Figure 13). Both Figure 13 and Figure 15 serve to explain the positioning of organisational culture beneath the surface, well hidden from view, but

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having an effect on and being reflected in the behaviour of the leadership, and subsequently in the behaviour of the employees in the organisation.

During the fieldwork interviews, P1 outlined the main belief guiding Zimbabwean ecotourism:

P1: “Let’s take for example, wildlife management at rudimentary and community level. Africans have never poached, they hunt for subsistence, for domestic consumption ... therefore I think there is an appreciation that we should just hunt for consumption to the extent that we are able to proliferate the wildlife population for future benefit.”

This belief that hunting is not indiscriminate is deeply embedded in the Zimbabwean way of life. It is recognised that relations of spiritual significance exist between human beings and the environment. Animal life is highly valued by society, and this was evidenced by the public outcry when Cecil the lion was killed by an American trophy hunter close to Hwange National Park in early July 2015. A relationship had been established between the animal and not only the locals, but everyone who had known Cecil the lion.

Norms, or artefacts, according to McShane (2011) (cf. par. 2.3.1), are those things that are most noticeable when entering an organisation. In this research, these things were the publications and statements of intent displayed at the premises of the organisation. Through these items the intentions of the organisation were explained to the researcher.

Also submerged under the surface are the values, and these are also not easily visible. Exactly what these values are is explained by Flamholtz and Randle (2012b) (cf. par. 1.1.1). In addition, Oyserman (2002, p. 16150) (cf. par. 2.3.1) states that “values are implicit or explicit guides for action, general scripts framing what is sought after and what is to be avoided”. In this research, it was pointed out that maintaining sustainability was the most prominent stated value of ecotourism. This is evident in the mission statement of the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality, which is “To facilitate the delivery of high-quality, sustainable tourism products and services that contribute to the economic development of Zimbabwe”, and most of the respondents confirmed this mission, validating the claim of Oyserman (2002, p. 16151) (cf. par. 1.1.1) that “values are scripts or cultural ideas held in common by members of a group; the group’s social

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mind ... they are social agreements about what is right, good, to be cherished". The following respondents indicated that they cherished the value of sustainability:

P1: "My major concern really, is on the sustainable management of the environment ... to pass an environment in the future, that future generations can continue to exploit sustainably."

P6: "... ecotourism organisational culture is the preservation of the ecosystem ... the behaviours and actions that preserve the environment with a view to making it viable for future generations."

P8: "We promote hunting, but the hunting has to be done sustainably."

In keeping with the value of maintaining sustainability, there is a practice of ensuring that wildlife is not over-harvested. In this regard P8 referred to the following practice in the national parks:

P8: "We've come up with a quota system for harvesting, and then if we say, you are only going to harvest two impalas, that's what you are going to harvest. Plus we monitor that regularly."

Another belief strongly upheld among Zimbabwean communities, which serves to guard against over-harvesting of wildlife, is "totemism" according to which human beings believe they are mystically related to an animal that interacts with them "spiritually". The image of this animal is used by the particular group of people as their emblem. If, for instance, the eland is the totem of the people in an area, in other words it is considered as a sacred animal of spiritual significance to this particular group of people, the eland will not be harvested and it will be found in larger numbers than the other animals.

Collectively, the roots of the tree (the elements of organisational culture in an organisation) can be regarded as "a common set of values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation and which influences how people perceive, think, and act" (Schimmoeller, 2010, p. 126) (cf. par. 1.2. By implication, the leadership of an organisation in carrying out their daily mandate of leading, are guided by these structured roots of organisational culture which are unshakable as they are firmly rooted in the African earth. Expanding this metaphor, African beliefs, values and norms are portrayed in the way leaders at various levels execute their day-to-day business, which are then visible in the branches of the tree (strategies/policies followed by the leaders).

6.8.3 Symbolism of the tree trunk

The trunk of the tree, which stands above the ground, provides strength for the whole tree and supports it. In this research, the trunk is symbolic of the leadership of ecotourism, which exists at three levels, namely, the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality (which sets the policy governing tourism and its subsectors), the industry, and the operational level (individual tour operators and the community).

6.8.4 The trunk of the tree (B)

Rosenfeld *et al.*, (2006) (cf. par. 2.6) state that one of the best practices for building and maintaining a strong organisational culture is to have leaders who understand the essential qualities of the desired culture, and who reinforce the necessary behaviours throughout the organisation by establishing appropriate policies, management practices, and goals, and reinforcing these by behaving in ways that are consistent with the set vision. In this research, which is titled “An organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe”, the role of the leadership is to transmit the organisational culture that is yet invisible (underground) to all three levels of leadership identified above in order to achieve the goal set by the UNWTO (as well by the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality) to increase the contribution of tourism (the fruit of the tree) to the country’s GDP to 15% by the year 2015 (The Herald, 17/01/2013) (cf. par. 2.1).

However, it must be noted that having a framework in place is not good enough; it will not result in the achievement of the intended results. This framework must be an operational one, and in order to operationalise it, leadership needs to take action. According to the literature, culture is lived, and it has to be lived first of all by the leadership, since culture starts at the top. Finnegan (2000) (cf. par. 2.5) states that one of the channels through which values and norms (the basis of culture) are formed is an organisation’s leadership. Therefore, it is imperative that leadership should take the initiative of operationalising the desired culture. From the fieldwork it was evident that Zimbabwean ecotourism leaders were not taking the initiative to operationalise or to “live” the ecotourism organisational culture. When commenting on the Zimbabwean context and the practice of ecotourism (cf. par. 5.6.3), P1, P2 and P3 pointed out that it was the leadership (tourism policy makers) who displayed indecisiveness in regard to the success of practising ecotourism in the country. The leadership is not optimistic, and

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this attitude needs to change. Leadership at *all* levels needs to be positive and of one mind if an ecotourism organisational culture is to be developed successfully.

Below, a proposition is made as to how top leadership can transmit this desired organisational culture to all levels of leadership.

6.8.5 Transmission of Culture (C)

Mahrokian *et al.*, (2010) (cf. par. 2.6.1) explain that clear communication is a key aspect in developing culture, and that top management needs to communicate its commitment to building and managing a strong organisational culture, and to make such thoughts transparent to all employees. Figure 16 shows the specific activities that leadership (collectively – at all three levels indicated) can undertake in order to communicate and effect culture change management. These activities are discussed below.

1. Motivate change: The first step in effective culture change management is for the leadership to motivate change, in this particular situation by motivating social acceptance of the development of an ecotourism organisational culture. Such motivation entails breaking down barriers of resistance that may exist, since change is always difficult in any situation. Barriers can be broken down by creating a readiness for the anticipated culture change, and the laying down of the proper foundations upon which this change is to be based. In so doing, there is a need to incorporate the philosophy of humanism (cf. par. 4.3). Humanism is normally used to break down barriers and resistance to change.
2. Create anticipation of the new vision: The second activity is to create the anticipated vision by clarifying or creating new core beliefs and values that are to be adopted. This vision has to be a *shared* vision among the entire leadership structure (the Ministry, industry, and on the operational level) so that leaders at each level have buy-in, and there is collective ownership of the desired operational culture change programme. This involves a change in the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of the stakeholders.

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3. Mobilise political support and commitment: This is very important as change cannot take place without political support. Mobilising political support means first of all identifying the “power centres” (the group leaders that control the prevailing organisational mindset) and selling the idea of the intended ecotourism organisational culture to them. Getting their commitment will also be necessary. If top management pledge their support and declare their commitment, they will have to endorse every endeavour of the change programme and make the required resources available, such as financial support, resources for training, as well as time allocation for working on the change programme.
4. Manage the transition: This stage is best dealt with by the adoption of the change process in human systems (Lewin’s unfreezing-change-refreezing model). In essence, this model states that in order to implement change, prior learning and orientation in the people must be rejected, and then replaced by new and relevant learning. The *driving* forces and the *restraining* forces must be dealt with until they operate at a level conducive to implementing the desired change (Kritsonis, 2013) (cf. par. 2.6.1).
5. Sustain momentum: This means reinforcing all the desired outcomes, such as continually innovating the programme, motivating all those involved, rewarding and incentivising. Where the programme is not going as planned, extra support needs to be provided. The changes that have been brought about need to be stabilised and formally institutionalised as part of the accepted and normal routine or standard procedure of “how things are done here” (organisational culture).
6. Monitor change: This entails assessing the progress and result of the cultural change programme: checking whether the level of uptake of the intended process is as expected or not; checking the costs; checking the benefits realised; and assessing the time taken to implement the desired change. If there are areas where problems have been encountered, then modifications will be necessary to put the programme back on course.

These proposed activities are necessary, and failure to observe them may cause abandonment of the intended change and a return to the old ways of doing things

because it will not be feasible to effect the change. If the planning process has not been carried out correctly the change programme will fail.

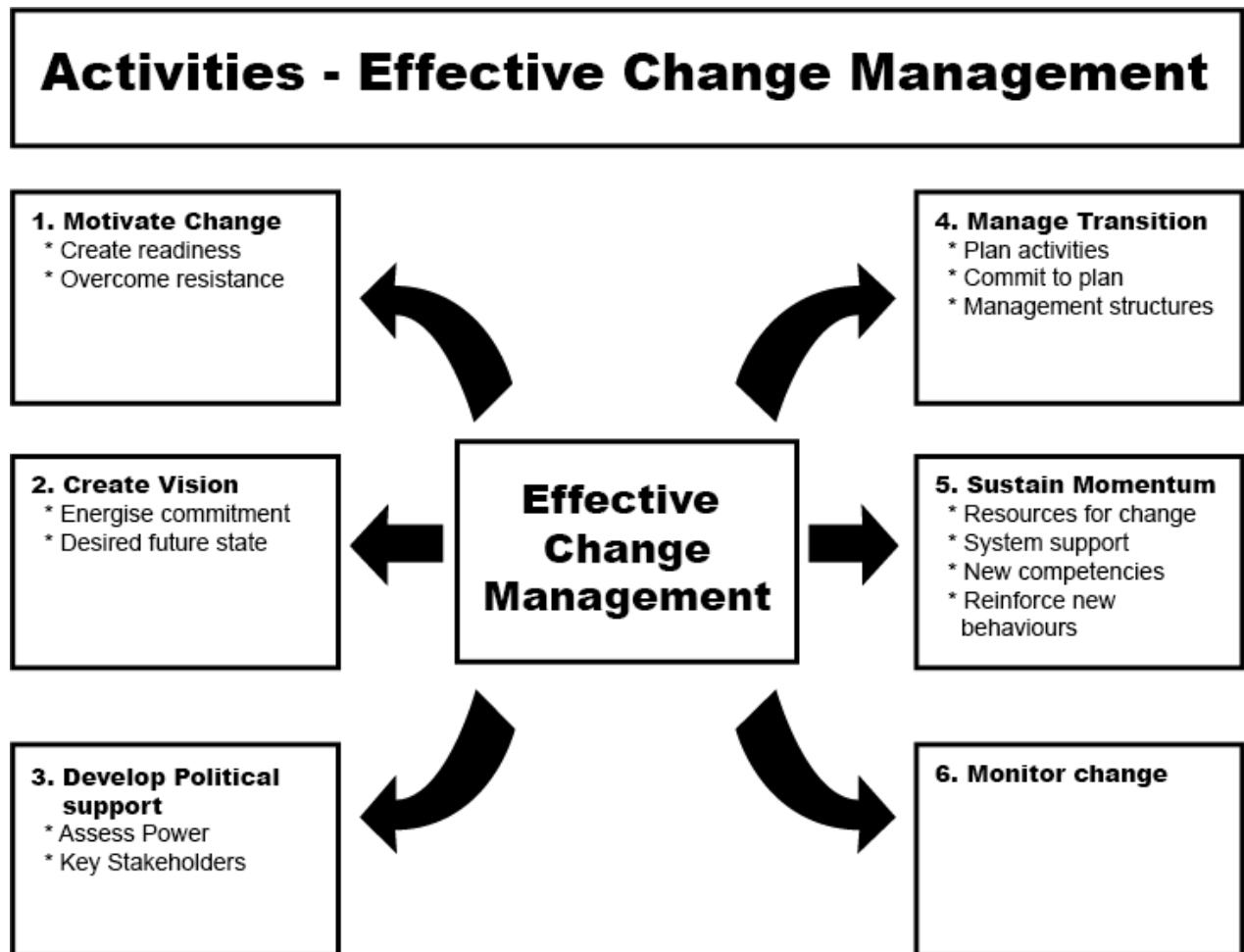


Figure 16: Culture changing activities of leadership

Source: Adapted from lecturer's notes (2014)

If the leadership of ecotourism work towards effective culture change at all three levels of leadership, then fulfilment will be achieved of experiencing the effects on organisational behaviour of the assumptions, values, and beliefs that, although they are not directly observable, operate beneath the surface of organisational behaviour (McShane, 2011) (cf. par. 2.3.1). In the same way that the effects of the nourishment provided by the roots will be manifested in the branches of the tree, the effects of the way that the leadership deal with strategic focus areas will be manifested in the organisation. The outcome of a successful process? – the fruit that is borne/the desired ecotourism performance that is achieved.

6.8.6 Strategic Focus Areas (D)

The branches of the tree represent the strategic focus areas and operational plans that were identified after analysing the data from the fieldwork, and which leadership is advised to focus on. In attending to these, leadership must be guided by what lies underground (that is, the organisational culture). Support for this recommendation is provided by Carpenter *et al.*, (2010) (cf. par. 2.3.1) who offer the following allegory: Just as water is invisible to the fish swimming in it, yet affects their actions, culture consists of unseen elements (elements that, in this particular framework, are buried underground) that affect organisational life. This is the area that concerns the main research question that this research seeks to answer, namely: What are the defining elements in an operational organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe?

In accordance with the identification of the three levels of organisational culture by Schein (1992) (cf. par. 2.3.2), this section represents the “espoused values” that are championed by a company’s leadership and management; in other words what they say they value with the aim of displaying a particular public image. This notion corroborates the statement made by Flamholtz and Randle (2012b, p. 77) (cf. par. 2.3.1).

This is the area that explains an organisation’s reason for existence; “why you are doing what you are doing” (Schein, 2004) (cf. par. 2.3.1), in this case in a particular organisation.

Referring once again to the metaphor of the tree, the comparison can be extended to the leaves where the processes of nutrition take place. The green colour of the leaves is manufactured by using the nutrients supplied (that is, the process of food production), and the health or appearance of the tree will be judged based on the health or appearance of its leaves. Likewise, it is at this stage of the process that the vibrancy of ecotourism should be most visible. The strategic processes identified should receive attention to such an extent that the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe is ranked among one of the best in the Southern African region. If the leadership follows the proposed strategies, the achievement of the desired performance could be guaranteed. Each of these strategies must embody the norms, values and beliefs of organisational culture

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that are lying sacred under the ground, and each strategy must be reflective of these norms, values and beliefs of an organisational culture.

The best business practices of successful countries are referred to in the next section, and these are juxtaposed with the current ecotourism business practices in Zimbabwe.

6.8.6.1 Governance

The perception of governance in Zimbabwe, particularly the perception of traditional Western economies, does not support the successful development of ecotourism in the country. In addition, existing literature focuses mostly on tourists from the West, for instance the White Paper on the Development of Tourism in Barbados (2012) (cf. par. 3.6.3), a country that is purported to have the desired qualities that could enhance the performance of Zimbabwean ecotourism. The prevailing image of Zimbabwe is that of a nation on fire. One of the research participants commented that “the state of the nation ‘does us down’ so to speak. Who would want to come to Zimbabwe without really being coerced, and convinced it is now a safe place to come to?” (P6). Understandably, if tourists have a wrong perception of a country, then tourism cannot be relied on to drive the economy. It has been established that tourism, as well as its subsectors, is very susceptible to political and social developments being experienced at the destination area. Events concerning issues of governance, such as those recorded by Muzvidziwa (2013) (cf. par. 3.7), have triggered low levels of market demand for ecotourism products. Those events, inclusive of chaotic land reforms, have portrayed the country as a hostile destination to would-be ecotourists, who then opted to go to other destinations. Currently, South Africa, which is a successful tourist destination, is facing serious challenges because of new legislation requiring children travelling in the company of their parents to have unabridged birth certificates. This has the potential effect of reducing tourist inflows from the traditional source markets.

Countries such as Costa Rica (cf. par. 2.2.3.1), the Republic of South Africa (cf. par. 2.2.3.2), and Botswana (cf. par. 2.2.3.3) have been cited as having a highly successful ecotourism industry. Each of these countries enjoys relative peace and stability, and the respective governments are reported to be very supportive of

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ecotourism initiatives in various ways. However, the Zimbabwean situation is quite different. The following finding of the researcher is mentioned in paragraph 2.2.3.4:

Up until June 2014, literature scans have revealed no documented manuals and no publicised policies or strategies on the philosophies of the responsible leadership towards the success of tourism, and ecotourism in particular.

The situation in Zimbabwe as reported on in the preceding paragraphs can be considered a contributory factor in the poor performance of the country's ecotourism. Efforts to "rebrand" Zimbabwe as a "world of wonders" have been undertaken, but these campaigns need to be more aggressive to woo back the traditional high-spending market, in particular the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, Australia, and South Africa. One of the ways in which this can be done is to capitalise on one of the values upheld by Zimbabwean people, namely their generally friendly nature. During the fieldwork, P3 mentioned the following:

P3: "We have wonderful people ... our hospitality is exceptional, that's one. In terms of language and communication, h'm, the fact that we are literate, we converse better with most of the countries across the globe."

This cherished value of friendliness and warmth to tourists or visitors must, therefore, be reflected in the governance of ecotourism to mend the broken relationships mentioned above. In support of this, Bloch (2012) encourages that "Zimbabwe must vigorously pursue harmonious reconciliation, co-operation and collaboration".

6.8.6.2 Policies

As mentioned by Anderson (2011) (cf. par. 3.7.3), policy refers to the behaviour of some actor, or actors (such as government), in an area of activity, or it can also be taken to mean whatever governments choose to do or not to do. In Zimbabwe, the Government (through the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality) is responsible for policy-making, and in the ecotourism industry the policy requirements demand the Government to be on the forefront of leadership in the industry. In other words, Government ought to draw up the policy framework in this regard (Moinuddin & Begum, 2004). The Government of Zimbabwe only came up with its first National Tourism Policy in June 2014 (cf. par. 2.2.3.4). In comparison, South Africa has had a strong policy

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basis for responsible tourism since 2002 (Spenceley, 2007) (cf. par. 2.2.3.2). Having a policy in place (and following it) is probably why South Africa is being considered as having “best practices” that are worth emulating. Botswana is another country that has had a tourism policy for a number of years and has formulated other legislative pieces as reported in the country’s ecotourism strategy plan:

The government position on tourism is contained in the Tourism Policy, Government Paper No. 2 of 1990, while the Tourism Act 1992 makes provisions for regulating the tourism industry with a view to promoting its development and well-being. Numerous other pieces of legislation also address-or have an indirect impact-on tourism. (Stevens & Jansen, 2002, p. 3)

In defence of Zimbabwe it has to be said that the tourism sectors of these countries (South Africa and Botswana) with “best practices” in ecotourism have had policies guiding them for a very long time, while Zimbabwe only launched its policy in 2014. There is still much for Zimbabwe to learn, which partly explains the current poor performance.

Policy formulation: In the newly launched National Tourism Policy (2014), ecotourism was not included as a stand-alone sector. If this had been the case, the sector would have been better positioned in terms of regional competitiveness. What, therefore, needs to be done is to contextualise ecotourism, glean from the main tourism policy document the information that is specific to ecotourism, interpret that which is applicable, and issue it to ecotourism leadership to serve as an essential handbook. In the future, Zimbabwe may have to consider emulating Botswana in developing a national ecotourism strategy over and above the National Tourism Policy. Such a document is of significant importance, which is why participant P8 stated as follows:

P8: “I think, possibly ... that is the reason why you have seen CAMPFIRE also going down. We should have come up with a deliberate policy as a country ... as long as there is no deliberate strategy, national strategy on such kinds of concepts ... they will be deemed to fail.”

Ecotourism policy interpretation: There is a need for an ecotourism policy guideline (or strategy) that clearly explains and interprets, for example, how communities are supposed to benefit, and how land is supposed to be managed in order to cater for all stakeholders. This policy document could serve as a guide to all practices that involve

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ecotourism, in this way establishing uniformity and a common understanding of what exactly should be done on a day-to-day basis at each level of management. Participant P8 had this to say:

P8: “I think we need a policy to say ... what is the policy when it comes to ecotourism within and outside of parks? It has to be clearly written down, because right now, if we look at the CAMPFIRE that I was talking about; if you ask a person to say, can I please have the policy guideline, which stipulates all these things ... how communities are supposed to benefit, how land is supposed to be reserved for ecotourism within the communities, how communities are supposed to manage that land ... all those things ... are not in place, are not in black and white. All those things need to be clearly written down, so that people are guided properly.”

Enforcing compliance with policy: Having set the policy governing ecotourism, and having established how it should be interpreted, methods would need to be devised to achieve compliance with this policy. Setting up systems of accountability would be beneficial. Providing visionary leadership would ensure compliance with the policy, and this leadership should have the political will and commitment. If indeed the leadership at all levels had the political will to ensure the success of ecotourism, then the poaching and poisoning of elephant and lion (as happened in the north-western part of Zimbabwe during May 2015) would be curtailed. This was advocated by participant P6 when calling for the “appointment of knowledgeable ministers to office, and avoid political appointees”.

Policy review and regulation: The policy needs to be reviewed and regulated. As advocated by P1, turning around the performance of Zimbabwe’s tourism “does not require money, it does not require resources ... just policy reviews”. Some of the policies in existence are now outdated and need to be reviewed and regulated to be relevant for the context and requirements of today. Those policies that are detrimental to the country need to be withdrawn.

6.8.6.3 Stakeholder involvement

In providing leadership in the ecotourism business, the Government needs to take into account that many stakeholders stand to be affected by any ecotourism policies and developmental plans that may be implemented, and these stakeholders

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need to be involved in important decision-making so as to ensure collaboration and improve the quality of the ecotourism product. The main stakeholders comprise the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality (that does not own any tourism infrastructure, but sets the policy governing tourism), the Ministry of National Parks and Wildlife (under whose jurisdiction all matters relating to flora and fauna in Zimbabwe fall (P8)), the marketing arm of the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (that markets the tourism product of Zimbabwe), and the community living at or around the tourist attraction (represented by the local chiefs). The management of ecotourism in Zimbabwe is currently fragmented. It would be ideal if tourism could fall under a single body of administration. At present, there is no unitary vision that can be pursued; for example, one group might instigate a project aimed at economic growth (perhaps earmarking a piece of land for the construction of a building for tourism purposes), and another group might regard it as an infringement of their mandate to protect the environment, while yet another group, the local inhabitants, might view that development as something that could have a bad influence on their culture (P7). If an umbrella body is established it needs to pass decisive legislation in consultation with all stakeholders so that nothing will hinder the positive performance of ecotourism. The fact that the Ministry makes the policy but does not own the tourism infrastructure on which the policy has a bearing makes decisive action almost impossible.

During the fieldwork, participant P2 gave an example of community involvement, and actually made available to the researcher some documented community activity relating to nature conservation that is worth mentioning. The document consists of a position statement on the Community Private Partnership – Save Valley Conservancy Partnership adopted by nine chiefs in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe (see Addendum 4). In this statement, these chiefs articulate the vision of the local communities as far as conservation of wildlife and natural resources is concerned. If contributions and recommendations of this nature could be factored in as a way of involving *all* stakeholders, then Zimbabwe's ecotourism will be set to succeed. P3, during the fieldwork, commented that "policies are not formulated together with all interested parties, implementation [of an ecotourism organisational culture] is therefore not possible". If some stakeholders are left out in policy-making, then a scenario such as that depicted by participant P3 below will arise:

P3: "For example, there was a case in Hwange where we are saying the policies that are in place, they are supporting or they are protecting the owners of the product (tour

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operators) and not the community. For example, if a lion goes astray, and it kills someone's cattle, no one is there to compensate; if the elephant goes astray and destroys someone's maize, no one is there to compensate. But if it happens vis-à-vis that a community person kills an elephant or a lion ... he is imprisoned. So these guys are saying ... no you guys ... your policies and your measures are selfish, they only protect your interests at our stake. So, this conflict is bringing resistance from communities."

The above scenario is currently the case in Zimbabwe, but it can be avoided by consulting and involving all stakeholders, and if these parties work alongside each other, conflict resolution will be easier. Botswana, having been cited as one of the countries with the best ecotourism practices (cf. par. 2.2.3.3), explains in their strategy document how they go about stakeholder involvement:

It is emphasized that, in Botswana, ecotourism refers to the country's cultural, as well as natural heritage, and that great importance is placed on the active involvement (as opposed to mere participation) of host communities and other Botswana in all aspects of the industry's management and development.

(Stevens & Jansen 2002, p. ii)

If ecotourism in Zimbabwe is to succeed, the country needs to learn from Botswana's best-case scenario.

6.8.6.4 Education

With respect to the practice of ecotourism, education means teaching the principles of ecotourism and the policies and activities in existence to all concerned so as to bring about understanding. This education should be availed to both visitors and residents in order to create an awareness of ecotourism as well as an appreciation of the natural environment and cultures, including what is passed down to the next generation. According to Kusler (2000) (cf. par. 3.6.4), a successful ecotour must have well-trained guides who have graduate or undergraduate degrees in the natural or social sciences. According to Stevens and Jansen (2002) it is stated that these guides, apart from having the required educational background, should have "strong ethical principles and skills in natural and cultural history as well as environmental interpretation". Education of the people of Zimbabwe on the importance and value of

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ecotourism would greatly improve the performance of ecotourism, and help to minimise certain problems such as littering, causing unnecessary forest fires, disposal of waste in undesignated areas, and damage to the natural environment. If they are educated to see the monetary value in preserving the environment and other natural products in their neighbourhood, it is expected that they will naturally want to conserve and preserve them, since benefits will accrue to them as a result. As long as they see no benefit, they will have a very negative attitude towards the practice of ecotourism. While indeed there are “bread-and-butter issues to attend to first” (P7), education could contribute by getting people to see that these bread-and-butter issues would be attended to automatically if the “low-hanging fruits” (P1) of ecotourism were picked and embraced. The ecotourism sector needs to promote and support the educational development of the people by providing a wide range of opportunities for learning. Increased collaboration with other regional players should be enabled. Currently, education in ecotourism in Zimbabwe is undervalued. All the institutions of learning need to be incorporated in the teaching of the subject of tourism (with its subsectors), commencing with the primary school curriculum, and not postponing its introduction until secondary school level when it will be offered as an elective subject.

According to a document published by TIES (2015) (cf. par. 3.6.2), the education that is referred to in this instance is meant to include both staff and visitors. Ecotourists, being lovers of nature, have a responsible part to play in the areas that they visit. One of the tenets of ecotourism is that visitors must “respect local cultures”. They can only behave as such if they are educated and informed about issues such as the sacredness of certain destinations, the sensitivity of the local people, as well as local traditions and practices.

6.8.6.5 Infrastructural development and maintenance

As a way of supporting the ecotourism business, physical infrastructure and strategic and technical support to facilitate implementation of the mandate of ecotourism should be provided. However, it is to be noted that, in the interests of conservation, infrastructural development in natural areas is to be minimal. Rahman (2010) (cf. par. 6.5.2) emphasises that an ecotourism destination must not be planned and developed without taking environmental concerns into account. Further, it is recommended that

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infrastructure and signboards should be environmentally sensitive by blending in with the environment. In this regard, Zimbabwe is doing very well, as evidenced by the input given by participant 8:

P8: “We are promoting the construction of environmentally friendly lodges ... because we want to promote temporary camps, like semi-permanent camps. We don't want to promote permanent structures in a national park, but we promote semi-permanent camps, which are ecologically friendly ... we stipulate that the material that we are supposed to use is not cement, but you are to use wood, you are supposed to use things that you destroy after you are done ... the environment is supposed to regenerate.”

This kind of behaviour is to continue to be encouraged if the ecotourism sector is to succeed.

Infrastructure development and maintenance are of critical importance to tourists, and if Zimbabwe intends to lure high-spending tourists in particular, then due attention should be paid to infrastructural development. At the moment, the general state of the infrastructure is as follows:

Those who are prepared to travel to and from Zimbabwe by air are also recurrently frustrated by the appalling inadequacy of airport terminal buildings. It is now more than seven years since the new terminal at Bulawayo was scheduled for completion, during which time the tourist had to tolerate the ‘temporary’ terminal, with an insufficiency of seating, dilapidated toilets, inadequate check-in desks, paucity of vehicle parking facilities and many other deficiencies. (Bloch, 2012)

Bloch (2012) further comments as follows:

Exacerbating the reservations and concerns of intending visitors are frequent non-availability of essential utilities, including energy supplies, water supplies in various parts of the country, unreliable communications and internet services. All these factors militate against Zimbabwe enjoying tourist patronage.

Once the above issues are addressed by the leadership in Zimbabwe, the nation will experience increasing tourist arrivals, leading to increased tourist earnings, and ultimately to the much desired economic enhancement.

6.9 THE DESIRED PERFORMANCE (E)

With reference once again to the metaphorical tree portrayed in Figure 16, consideration is now given to the fruits right at the top representing the fruitful outcomes that result from the nurturing provided by the leadership. These fruits are representative of environmental preservation, economic sustainability, and ecotourism culture enhancement. Going by the tenets of ecotourism as stated in the literature reviewed, these are the pillars of ecotourism. If these fruits are borne, Zimbabwe will be ranked among the best performing ecotourism countries in the Southern African region. However, each programme that is implemented will have to be monitored and evaluated (as indicated on the sides of the tree trunk in Figure 16). Performance needs to be measured for the following reasons:

- to ensure that the uptake of the desired culture is taking place in the right direction;
- to ensure that decision-making is informed (If the uptake of the desired culture is not happening as intended, then there will be a need to go back to the drawing board and plan all over again.);
- to check if the implementing agencies (leadership at the three levels) are knowledgeable enough to transmit the desired culture (If they are not knowledgeable enough, then there will be a need for training and reallocation of resources. This presents an opportunity for the leadership to be accountable, and to reposition themselves to move ahead.); and
- to learn from past experience.

Furthermore, incentivisation of all stakeholders is necessary in any programme implementation to influence uptake or social acceptance of the programme. This means that the Government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality, should compile policies that are favourable to the development of an ecotourism organisational culture at industry level. Some of the suggestions made by P7 during the fieldwork interviews are noted here:

- Ensure an environment conducive to ecotourism (such as helping with grants, loans and incentive programmes).

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- Put in place policies that enable ecotourism to take place.
- Facilitate imports, television sets, and tourism equipment.
- Reduce VAT levied on stakeholders during the first five years.

Leadership at an operational level could be incentivised to adopt an ecotourism organisational culture through both monetary and non-monetary means, for example, making available branded corporate wear, offering holiday perks for employees and their families, and organising “bosberaad” or team-building outings for cementing programme values.

The community is also a stakeholder, and incentivisation for them to adopt an ecotourism organisational culture could be in the form of leadership taking a social responsibility over them. In the Hurungwe district (one of the areas where the once renowned Zimbabwean ecotourism project CAMPFIRE was operated successfully) incentives such as the building of schools and clinics, and the drilling of boreholes were used. To date, these are the incentives that the people remember as having made positive impacts on communities.

Using the tree metaphor, the researcher has presented and discussed the proposed organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe. The intention of the researcher was to provide the seed that, if cultivated and nurtured, could start to grow and bear the desired fruit of good ecotourism performance. This tree will only grow if the suggested strategic actions (Table 16) are undertaken by the leadership of ecotourism, ensuring the active involvement of all three levels of leadership and all stakeholders. The leadership needs to nurture (maintain) this tree so that more seed is produced, thereby ensuring the vital element of sustainability (which is of major importance in the practice of ecotourism). In this way, the cycle of reproduction will continue until a forest is developed – a firmly embedded ecotourism organisational culture.

6.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter 6, the findings of the research were discussed, and the information that had been gathered was used to inform the building of the intended organisational culture framework. Using the image of a tree to represent this framework, the main idea

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put forward was that the success of the ecotourism business depended on the strength of the leadership in ecotourism (the strength of the trunk of the tree) and on whether and how far they were willing to be guided by the organisational culture (the roots of the tree) in order to bring forth the desired successful outcomes (the desired fruit) that they sought.

In the last chapter, Chapter 7, the limitations of this study, recommendations for further study, and the final conclusions will be presented.

7 CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the research titled “An organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe”, and concludes the study by highlighting its major findings, limitations of the research as well as recommendations for further study.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 served to introduce the thesis and provide an introductory overview of the thesis as a whole, outlining the gist of all the chapters.

Chapter 2 offered a comprehensive analysis of the history, development, effectiveness, and relevance of the concept of organisational culture.

Chapter 3 sought to establish what constituted ecotourism, and subsequently, an ecotourism culture. Furthermore, the defining elements of an organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism were determined.

Chapter 4 presented the empirical design of the study and provided a blueprint of the methodology and methods that guided the various steps of the study. The main paradigms were briefly explained, followed by a detailed discussion of the main paradigm that guided this particular research.

Chapter 5 first described the process of qualitative data analysis, and then the actual analysis of the data obtained from the fieldwork. Subsequently, the findings of the research were presented in accordance with the prescriptions gleaned from the literature review.

Chapter 6 dealt with a discussion of the findings, implementing the information gathered to inform the building of the intended framework.

7.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main question this research sought to answer was: What are the defining elements of an operational organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism in Zimbabwe? This question was attended to by answering the following sub-questions:

1. What constitutes organisational culture and ecotourism?
2. How do members in Zimbabwe's ecotourism industry view and describe the elements of an ecotourism culture, and do they comply with this culture in the ecotourism sector of Zimbabwe?
3. How can the ecotourism industry and its members develop an organisational culture that supports the dimensions of sustainable ecotourism development in Zimbabwe?
4. How will the development of a supportive organisational culture in ecotourism enhance the economic performance of the ecotourism industry?
5. What strategies can be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture in support of establishing and institutionalising an operational ecotourism culture?

The findings of the study will be presented in the following sections based on the sub-questions as set out in Chapter 1 (cf. par. 1.3.3) and mentioned above. This presentation will include the additional theme of the practice and context of ecotourism in Zimbabwe, which emerged during the study.

7.3.1 What Constitutes Organisational Culture and Ecotourism?

The literature regarding what constitutes organisational culture is abundant (Chegini, 2010; Flamholtz & Randle, 2012b; Tsai, 2011), and the responses of the participants, with their different backgrounds and occupational orientations, indicated agreement with literature. Based on the information obtained from the literature and the responses of the participants, organisational culture can be summed up as “a common set of values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation which influences how people perceive, think, and act” (Schimmoeller, 2010, p. 126) (cf. par. 1.1). Also of note is the description of respondent P5 that ecotourism is about the beliefs, behaviours and actions that preserve the environment for future generations.

7.3.2 How do Members in Zimbabwe's Ecotourism Industry View and Describe the Elements of an Ecotourism Culture, and do they Comply with this Culture in the Ecotourism Sector of Zimbabwe?

According to the participants, an ecotourism culture has to do with behaving in accordance with issues of sustainability, as alluded to in the responses of P2, P3, P5 and P8 (cf. par. 5.6.2). The literature states that an ecotourism culture implies cherishing a deep-seated belief in its prescribed tenets in the daily execution of work, while taking into consideration the contextualisation of each of these tenets to suit the particular region's eco-resource base (Moinuddin & Begum, 2004) (cf. par. 3.7.1). The views on what constitutes the elements of an ecotourism culture presented in the literature and expressed by the respondents can be said to be in agreement. However, when it comes to compliance with such a culture, the fieldwork revealed that there was non-compliance in Zimbabwe, resulting in ecotourism not achieving its mandate and not performing according to expectations. The prevailing mindset of the participants was that embracing an ecotourism culture "benefit[ed] nobody", that it was actually detrimental, and as such should be abandoned (P3).

7.3.3 The Practice and Context of Ecotourism in Zimbabwe (emergent theme)

The practice of ecotourism is context based, and it can be said that there is an international and a national concept of this practice. According to the literature, the international concept of ecotourism is generally that it involves travelling to undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas to study, admire, and enjoy the scenery, wildlife and cultural manifestations (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993) (cf. par. 3.6.1, Table 4). On the other hand the European concept as defined by Bien (2006) and documented by TIES (2015) is different in the sense that, in essence, ecotourism is seen as an activity that is focused on sustainability; it is as an activity that benefits the environment through protection and conservation. Then there is the concept of the practice of ecotourism in a national context, which is based on a translation of the theory of ecotourism into practice, for instance in the context of Zimbabwe. Generally speaking, the Zimbabwean understanding of the practice of ecotourism is that it is a type of tourism that emphasises conservation through utilisation, instead of through preservation only (Muzvidziwa, 2013) (cf. par. 3.6.1). Therefore, ecotourism in Zimbabwe incorporates both consumptive and non-consumptive aspects.

References

During the interviews, conflicting views were expressed about the practice of ecotourism in Zimbabwe. Some respondents saw the practice as capable of yielding major benefits to the country, while others were of the opinion that it was futile to pursue ecotourism when there were bread-and-butter issues to attend to first.

7.3.4 How can the Ecotourism Industry and its Members Develop an Organisational Culture that Supports the Dimensions of Sustainable Ecotourism Development in Zimbabwe?

As a way of inculcating the desired mindset as well as bringing about cooperation as regards the development of an ecotourism culture, the leadership has a major role to play. This was demonstrated by using the image of a “cultural” tree to symbolise the proposed organisational culture framework, the trunk representing the leadership (see Figure 15). All levels of leadership can engage in activities that promote effective culture change (see Figure 16 and paragraph 6.7)

7.3.5 How will the Development of a Supportive Organisational Culture in Ecotourism Enhance the Economic Performance of the Ecotourism Industry?

Once an organisational culture that is supportive of ecotourism has been developed, the results of the efforts made should become visible, in other words, fruits will be borne (see E in Figure 15). The fruits symbolise the desired performance that the ecotourism sector has been seeking to achieve. These fruits represent the essence of ecotourism, and if they are borne it would indicate that Zimbabwean ecotourism was performing in accordance with the tenets of ecotourism as set out in the literature, and, therefore, that benefits could be expected to accrue. One of these benefits would be financial, as high-spending tourists would once again be lured to visit the country's ecotourism sites (White Paper on the Development of Tourism in Barbados, 2012) (cf. par. 3.6.3).

7.3.6 What Strategies can be Adopted to Enable the Implementation of an Organisational Culture in Support of Establishing and Institutionalising an Operational Ecotourism Culture?

In seeking to answer to the above question, strategies were identified (see Figure 15, area D). Briefly, these strategies involved governance, policies, stakeholder involvement, education and infrastructural development and maintenance; and it was argued that if the leadership followed these strategies and operational plans, it would be possible for them to exhibit exemplary behaviour (see Figure 15, area B), while being guided by that which formed the underground foundation, namely the organisational culture (see Figure 15, area A). It was found that the implementation of an organisational culture supportive of institutionalising an operational ecotourism culture could be achieved in this way.

7.4 CONTRIBUTIONS

The main objective of this research was to develop an operational organisational culture framework in support of ecotourism that could be used to enhance the performance of ecotourism in Zimbabwe. The formulation of this objective had been inspired by findings worldwide that the success of several major companies could be ascribed to the existence of an organisational culture (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012b; Muratović, 2013; Ojo, 2012).

Numerous studies on organisational culture have been undertaken in the developed world, but a study on the incorporation of an organisational culture in the ecotourism business in a developing country in Africa, specifically in Zimbabwe, has not been done before. The contribution of this study is that the conceptual framework that was developed could be used by any organisation seeking to improve its economic performance. The findings of this research could be used to turn around the economic performance of an organisation and bring about much needed economic recovery.

In addition, the research contributes to the theory in the relevant field by amalgamating the elements of organisational culture with those of ecotourism in order to bring about an ecotourism organisational culture that could aid the enhancement of the economic performance of Zimbabwe's ecotourism sector.

References

The findings of the study could be implemented in practice. Strategies (practical steps) were introduced that could be followed in order to enable the development of a good ecotourism organisational culture.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this research, the following recommendations could be made:

- Ecotourism is being managed by several departments; hence, there is no evidence of a single operational organisational culture. The leadership should be unified in purpose (as symbolised by the structure and stature of the tree trunk in the proposed framework) in order to instil the desired organisational culture at all levels in the ecotourism sector.
- Deliberations in mainstream tourism as a whole seem to be characterised by a clash of interests. On the one hand, the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality calls for “open skies, open borders”, while on the other hand, visa regulations are restrictive and the destination (Zimbabwe) is difficult to access by air and road. There is a need to create synergies in order to achieve oneness of purpose.
- The practice of ecotourism should continue to be contextualised to suit Zimbabwe’s eco-resource base. Zimbabwe has an abundance of wildlife, and there is a need to control this resource in order to maintain a good balance as far as biodiversity is concerned.
- Tourism policy should be reviewed and regulated regularly. Some existing policies have become irrelevant, and are in reality detrimental to the nation. They need to be updated to suit the context and requirements of modern-day tourism.
- The image of the country as a tourist destination should to be rebranded vigorously to reverse current negative perceptions.
- It emerged from the research that ecotourism in Zimbabwe was a special area of study, and, as pointed out by one of the respondents, “most relevant to Africa; most relevant to countries like Zimbabwe, because it is our area of competency. The rest of the world has replaced its biodiversity with concrete jungles ... the pull factor here is actually the jungle” (P1). It is recommended that research support for studies in this area should be given.

References

- People should be educated about the benefits of developing an ecotourism organisational culture. Zimbabweans are known to be highly literate, and conscientising them about ecotourism would not be difficult.
- It was found that the absence of critical aspects of organisational culture building, such as stories and rituals, was responsible for either the development of an undesirable organisational culture, or for the “apparent absence” of an organisational culture. The telling of stories and the observance of rituals in the organisation should be reintroduced so as to develop and maintain a desired organisational culture.

7.6 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Financial implications: Carrying out research is a very costly exercise, especially if it involves travelling to another country to collect data, purchasing the requisite equipment and stationery. However, in spite of these financial implications, the researcher ensured that the quality of the research, and more so its findings, were not seriously affected.

Time factor: A research study is commenced at a certain time, and likewise a time frame is given within which to complete the study. This time frame needs to be adhered to, especially when one is a foreign student and is required to complete the study within the duration of the study permit issued by the Department of Home Affairs. This tended to exert pressure on the researcher because the possibility existed that there might not be enough time to adequately conclude the research. The researcher also experienced personal pressures in that the research competed with personal time.

Difficulty in obtaining information: Gathering data from government departments in Zimbabwe proved to be extremely difficult. Some interviews failed to materialise and some participants held back on information for fear of reprisal. Only a few organisational members are authorised to speak to “outsiders”, and as these people were almost always unavailable, data gathering was a very frustrating activity for the researcher. Divulging organisational information in Zimbabwe is a sensitive issue: it is the prerogative of only the top management, who are almost always unavailable for interviews.

7.7 AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research focused on improving the performance of ecotourism in Zimbabwe through the development of an organisational culture. Conflicting views were expressed with regard to hunting as an aspect of ecotourism. The Zimbabwean view is that hunting is acceptable as an ecotourism tenet because it facilitates sustainability, while the general view expressed in Western literature is that hunting is treated as poaching. In view of the fact that Zimbabwe has a rather large eco-resource base from which huge economic benefits are expected, the question arises how the country could benefit from its natural resources (in particular, the wildlife) without coming into conflict with major organisations such as TIES, as well as with influential countries such as the USA, who are opposed to the hunting of animals as a way of sustainably managing them.

7.8 FINAL CONCLUSION

This thesis titled “An Organisational Culture Framework in Support of Ecotourism in Zimbabwe” argued for incorporating an organisational culture in the practice of ecotourism. The norms, values and beliefs of an organisation (that is, ecotourism) were identified as elements of organisational culture. It was determined that these elements were firmly embedded in and hidden beneath the surface, and that they should remain unshakeable (like the roots of a tree or the ice at the bottom of an iceberg) so as to ensure organisational success. Although practices may vary from one organisation to the next, the basis of an organisation remains unchanged (as in the case of a firmly established tree that changes its leaves but not its roots). In order to truly benefit from the incorporation of the elements of organisational culture into its business model, an organisation should behave like a tree whose roots are firmly embedded under the ground, providing a solid base that protects it from being affected negatively by any winds of change that may blow in the business world.

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ADDENDUM 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR ZTA ECOTORISM MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES

Gender: Male/Female

Designation at work: Are you a Supervisor?

Are you in Middle Management?

Are you in Senior Management?

For how long have you been employed in the ZTA?

- 1 In your own understanding, what is organisational culture?
- 2 What, therefore, is an ecotourism organisational culture?
- 3 The employee personalises the relationship between the client and the producer (according to literature). What would you say are the most important employee practices that will foster a strong ecotourism organisational culture?
- 4 In the last 5 years, what best practices have you implemented in your organisation in order to build and maintain a strong organisational culture?
- 5 In carrying out a SWOT analysis of your organisation, what can you say are the threats that have prevented the sustenance of your organisation's best practices mentioned above?
- 6 According to literature survey, correct employee practices/skills are necessary in order to develop a desirable OC. When hiring new employees, what steps do you take to ensure that they will fit in with the ecotourism organisational culture?
- 7 What do you think are the most important issues that you as ZTA, and the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality (or with any other stakeholders) should be looking into so as to implement a strong ecotourism organisational culture?

References

ADDENDUM 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR THE POLICY MAKERS (MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY)

Gender: Male/Female

For how many years have you held this current position?

1. In your view, what constitutes organisational culture?
2. What then, is an 'ecotourism organisational culture?'
3. In the practice of ecotourism here in Zimbabwe, would you say that the ecotourism objective is being met in its fullness?
4. Is there formalised planning and intervention from the Government that aims at fostering a strong organisational culture in ecotourism ventures? (industry, governments, NGOs and local communities)
5. Does the government have a strategic vision in the sense of making organisational culture to be a tool to improve the performance of ecotourism?
6. What strategies can be adopted to enable the implementation of an organisational culture in support of an operational ecotourism culture?

ADDENDUM 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC EXPERTS

Gender: Male/Female

What is your designation?

For how long have you been involved in this current field of study?

1. According to you, what is an organisational culture?
2. What then, is an ecotourism organisational culture?
3. Would you say that in Zimbabwe, in the practice of ecotourism, there is a strong organisational culture? Would you like to explain your view on that?
4. What are the business values that contribute towards the building of a good ecotourism organisational culture?
5. What are the human values (employee values) that contribute to a good ecotourism organisational culture?
6. What can management do in order to 'build' a strong ecotourism organisational culture?
7. According to you, how can Zimbabwe develop a competitive edge over other regional ecotourism players?
8. What strategies do you propose in order to enable the successful implementation of a strong ecotourism organisational culture in Zimbabwe?

ADDENDUM 4: LETTER FROM CHIEFS



Position Statement on the Community Private Partnership: Community - Save Valley Conservancy Partnership

Adopted by the nine Chiefs on July 15, 2014 at Hakamela Camp, Chiredzi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This community position paper articulates the vision of local communities in Manicaland and Masvingo Provinces for engaging the Save Valley Conservancy in a Public Private Community Partnership (PPCP). The initiative is being led by the following Chiefs representing the shared community vision from five districts: Chief Nhema, Zaka; Chief Budzi, Bikita; Chief Ziki, Bikita; Chief Mabika, Bikita; Chief Mutema, Chipinge; Chief Musikavanhu, Chipinge; Chief Gudo, Chiredzi; Chief Tshovani, Chiredzi; and Chief Chamutsa, Buhera.

OUR VISION

The proposal contained herein will see the establishment of a viable, marketable and sustainable PPCP. This is envisaged to be a unique endeavour in that it brings together five districts/communities with a shared vision for partnering for conservation. It is expected that the initiative will surpass existing conservation models in protecting wildlife resources and delivering benefits to local communities.

The proposed partnership conforms to Zimbabwe's Indigenization Policy, is in line with the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimASSET), and it is informed by the views of community members who as custodians of resources have chosen a business model appropriate to their context. Additionally, the proposed PPCP is an opportunity to implement empowerment policies which are beneficial to all concerned. The partnership also complies with land use model option 2 of the Wildlife Based Land Reform Policy document produced by National Parks.

Communities have been at the centre of natural resources management for millennia. Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) has resulted in significant conservation and welfare benefits in areas where it has been implemented properly. Specific examples from Botswana and Namibia show that communities have benefited directly from both consumptive and non-consumptive use of wildlife resources through direct control and business like involvement. Despite a different policy context, both cases show that communities have potential to partner with private sector and operate sustainable, viable and marketable wildlife based 'companies'

References



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ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

The North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-RERC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: An Organizational culture framework in support of Ecotourism in Zimbabwe																															
Project Leader:	Prof Y Du Plessis & Prof S Swanepoel																														
Student:	HA Saurombe																														
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>8</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td></td><td colspan="6">Project Number</td><td></td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="2">Status</td></tr></table> Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation	N	W	U	-	0	0	0	8	3	-	1	4	-	A	9	Institution				Project Number							Year		Status	
N	W	U	-	0	0	0	8	3	-	1	4	-	A	9																	
Institution				Project Number							Year		Status																		
Approval date:	2014-03-26																														
Expiry date:	2019-03-25																														

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-RERC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-RERC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-RERC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-RERC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-RERC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Amanda Lourens
Chair NWU Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC)



Faculty of Commerce & Administration

Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Dept. of Business Management

AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FRAMEWORK IN SUPPORT OF ECOTOURISM IN ZIMBABWE

Research conducted by:

MRS H A SAUROMBE (24078093)
Cell: 084 0290 454

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by HAZVINEYI A SAUROMBE, Doctoral student from the School/Department of Business Management at the North-West University- Mafikeng Campus.

The purpose of the study is to propose an attempt to contribute towards the future success of Zimbabwean Ecotourism in Southern Africa.

- This is an anonymous study survey as your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 10 minutes of your time. The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader, Prof Y du Plessis (Contact Number: 083 305 6227) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. (Please tick)

YES

Participant's signature

Date