



**THE EFFECT OF BRANDING ON CUSTOMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN  
SELECTED HOTELS OF GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

**by**

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**in the Faculty of Business**

**at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

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## ABSTRACT

The success of any hotel depends entirely upon the satisfaction of its consumers. In order to get this right, hotels have to know the buying behaviour of their customers, hence the saying that “the Customer is King, therefore the Customer is always right!” The Botswana hospitality and tourism market has experienced remarkable changes of late. The well-known hotel brands seem to have increased their market share in the existing market, which used to be dominated by local brands. A brand is a powerful tool that attracts more consumers to buying particular products and services. Some companies may even regard it as equity, as it can add value to the products with which it is associated. It is in this regard that branded properties are important in the hospitality industry. “Brands play an intangible role in the operational effectiveness of any organisation” (Bruce & Harvey, 2008:6). “Brands are increasingly important to tourist destinations and are used by all consumers in the process of buying situations” (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2006:315). This study focused on exploring the research problem, which stated: What will the effect of branding be on consumer buying behaviour in the hospitality industry of Gaborone? and the sub-problem, which stated: Will there be an increase in the buying behaviour of consumers due to branding in the hospitality industry of Gaborone? Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the sales managers of the three participating hotels, and two questionnaires were distributed – one for guests and one for staff. The analysis of the questionnaires and the interview results indicated that the guests and employees of the hotels were aware of the brands that were available to them in the hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana. This was shown by the results that revealed that 52.99% guests stated that the hotel brand had a very important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 76.06% of the employees thought that the hotel brand had a very important effect in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose.

*Key words: Consumer buying behaviour, brand, market, hospitality*

"A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another."

- Seth Godin – American Entrepreneur, Public Speaker and

Author of "Go Make Something Happen"

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**DEDICATION**

To my late mother

*Mme Esther Mmutsi Gaboutloeloe*

&

my late brother

*Zola James Senkapere Gaboutloeloe*

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## GLOSSARY

<b>Brand</b>	A name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of all of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2002: 301).
<b>Brand name</b>	A brand name is a trade name used to identify a specific product, manufacturer or distributor (Etzel, Walker & Stanton, 2001:265).
<b>Branding</b>	Associating a mark, name or logo with an offer of value (Kapferer, 2001:41).
<b>Consumer behaviour</b>	A study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires (Needham & Dransfield, 2000: 229).
<b>Hospitality</b>	Those commercial activities that offer consumers accommodation, meals and beverages when they are away from home (George, 2001: 18).
<b>Market</b>	A market is a set of people or organisations with needs to satisfy, money to spend and the willingness to spend it (Etzel, Walker & Stanton, 2001:5).
<b>Product</b>	Anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010: 7).
<b>Service</b>	A service is an activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010: 603).

**ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CERT</b>	Certificate
<b>CONF. FACILITIES</b>	Conference Facilities
<b>DIP</b>	Diploma
<b>HND</b>	Higher National Diploma
<b>NCC</b>	National Craft Certificate
<b>SEC. EDUCATION</b>	Secondary Education
<b>4Ps</b>	Product, Price, Place, Promotion

## CHAPTER ONE

### ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction and background to the study

All over the world a vast amount of different goods and services are purchased by different consumers every day, therefore an understanding of the behaviour of hospitality and tourism consumers is among the most important challenges facing management in this industry (Needham & Dransfield, 2000:131).

The emotional connection consumers have with brands has an immeasurable impact on what they buy and how they perceive the companies behind the products, and it is only through a thorough understanding of who the customers are and what they are trying to achieve that can one succeed best in serving them. This becomes even more important as the relationship between the supplier and customer becomes more and more of a partnership, rather than a continuing battle (Morrison, 2002: 588).

George (2001:18) “describes hospitality as those commercial activities that offer consumers accommodation, meals and beverages when they are away from home”. Hospitality can be interpreted as the act of being friendly and welcoming to other people when they are away from their normal place of domicile. The phrase is synonymous with the hotel industry, as the business of hotels is to offer accommodation and food and beverages to visitors when they are away from their homes.

Branding is the association of the symbol and value of the product that the company promises to give to their customers. In contemporary markets, branding can be termed a capital asset of a company. A brand can be an intangible asset to a company and yet command authority, as it can be based on the aspect of the product, consumer benefit, consumer experience, service levels or a vision (Kapferer, 2001:89).

A brand is a name or mark intended to identify the product of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate the product from competing products (Etzel, Walker & Stanton, 2001:264). The hospitality industry has been increasingly globalised over the past two decades. Brand names such as Hilton, Sheraton, Hyatt, Holiday Inn, Mc Donald’s, KFC and Pizza Hut figure prominently in the landscapes of many countries around the world (Yu, 2007:xiii).

Local and regional hospitality companies such as Sun International, Three Cities Peermont Hotels and the Cresta Marakanelo Hotel Group are expanding their hotel businesses in Botswana and throughout Africa to be equivalent to the standards of international hospitality.

This study focused on the effect of branding on customer buying behaviour within certain hotels that were identified in Botswana.

## **1.2 Research problem and sub-problem**

In this section, the main research problem and the sub-problem are presented.

### **1.2.1 Research problem**

What will the effect of branding be on consumer buying behaviour in the hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana?

### **1.2.2 Sub-problem**

Will there be an increase in the buying behaviour of consumers due to branding in the hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana?

## **1.3 Research aim and objectives**

The research aim and the objectives were discussed in this section.

### **1.3.1 Research aim**

The aim of the study was to establish the effect that brands have on the buying behaviour of consumers in selected hotels in Gaborone, Botswana.

### **1.3.2 Objectives of the study**

From the aim the following objectives are relevant:

- To explain the effect that branding has on the perceptions of consumers when it comes to choosing the facilities they want to use.
- To describe what informs the consumers to purchase the products and services of hotels in the hospitality market in Gaborone.

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

There are hotels in Gaborone whose branding have changed. The researcher wanted to establish whether the change of brand of the hotels influenced the consumers when they selected to frequent the hotels. What was the influence on the consumers when they choose

a particular hotel? The outcome of this research study will contribute towards informing the hotels in Gaborone about the significance of branding.

### **1.5 Literature review**

The researcher used books, magazines, newspapers, brochures and the internet to gather information for the study. In order for the researcher to obtain useful, up-to-date, valid and relevant information, the research process had to be administered and managed well to underpin the success of the outcome. The literature that was found was used to add value to the work and to support the work.

Kotler & Armstrong (2010:260) “describe a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of all of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. A brand is a name or symbol that the company uses as an identity that the customers or end users of their products or services can identify with when choosing amongst a range of products.

A brand name is that part of a brand that can be vocalised (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:260). A brand name is a trade name used to identify a specific product, manufacturer or distributor (Oxford Dictionary of Business, 2002:65). A brand name is the name that accompanies a symbol that makes up a company’s identity that can be remembered easily and vocalised by the customers.

Levin (2003:1) describes “branding as a process with the goal of creating and developing a specific identity for a company, product, person or commodity, and that it is not a campaign slogan or logo”. Branding is associating a mark, name or logo with an offer of value (Kapferer, 2001:41). Brassington & Pettitt (2000:1049) describe branding as the creation of a three-dimensional character of a product, defined in terms of name, purchasing, colours and symbols, that helps to differentiate it from their competitors and helps the customer to develop a relationship with the product. Brand imaging is successful because firms realise that consumers not only buy products, but also buy images associated with the ownership and use of those products (Moynihan & Titley, 2001:328).

For a brand to be successful, it has to be well received by the target market within the total population that uses those particular products or services. Blythe (2003:113) explains that corporate branding is about establishing an overall image of the organisation. Corporate brands need to be meaningful for all stakeholders, and brands should project the vision of the founder or founders of a company.

Cant, Brink & Brinjoball (2002:218) state that “successful branding involves the totality of the brand”.

The authors explain that the perception phenomenon of the brand and the brand personality come from the quality of the product and packaging, which are characteristics of a product that influences the customer's choice of the product or service. The marketer must address customers' needs and promise consistency in quality. According to Aaker (2005:47), "the key to keeping customers is to reward loyal customers by living up to their expectations consistently, providing an ongoing relationship and offering extras that surprise and delight".

Consumers influence the quality of goods and services produced and their price through the amount they spend. This influence is usually compounded by the customer's perception of the brand name, the logo, and the identity associated with the goods and services that are being purchased. "A product has a set of tangible and intangible attributes, which may include packaging, colour, price, quality and brand, plus the seller's services and reputation" (Etzel *et al.*, 2001:215).

Lancaster & Massingham (2002:53) explain how the use of models to explain consumer behaviour can reflect an effort to order and integrate the various components of information that are known about consumer behaviour. They add that models are useful in aiding research design to give a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour. It is vital that marketers understand the needs of the customers and what influences these needs, and how customers go about satisfying them.

Ebert & Griffin (2000:328) explain "consumer behaviour as the various facets of the decision-making process by which customers come to purchase and consume a product". They also point out that the four major influences on consumer behaviour are:

- Psychological
- Personal
- Social
- Cultural

All these factors have a strong impact on the products that people purchase. Some consumers regularly purchase products because they are satisfied by their performance.

Ebert & Griffin (2000:329) identify the stages of the consumer buying process as follows:

- Problem/need recognition
- Information seeking
- Evaluation of alternatives

- Purchase decision
- Post-purchase evaluations

Dalrymple & Parsons (2000:49) explain that it is complex to ascertain how customers buy, due to the fact that the decision-making process takes place inside the buyer's mind, making it difficult to observe exactly how choices are made. This is where the decision-making process comes into play as the consumer buying model used can explain or reveal how purchase decisions are influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. Perception, which means values attached to products by consumers, can be a determining factor in the buying behaviour of consumers. Individual differences play an important part in the way products and services are perceived (Dalrymple & Parsons, 2000:52).

Even consumer products are bought to satisfy needs (thirst, hunger, fashion requirements) and for the effects they induce. When people have conceived an impression of something, they are thinking in terms of how the product or service will provide the desired benefits. Customers therefore are motivated by their conception of what the product will do for them. Lewis & Trevitt (2000:224) explain "that the process called branding, which endeavours to give a product distinction from other products and make people want to buy it, plays an important role in decision making when people want to purchase a product or service". Branding gives a product appeal, with a name, a pack design and a personality. What motivates the consumer to buy one product and not another is the satisfaction that can be expected from the use of it (Lewis & Trevitt, 2000:246).

Service, in the context of the hospitality industry, is an activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:603). A market is the people who are going to be the end consumers of the product that is being offered by the company, and marketing is the way in which those products are presented for the customers to choose based on the value of the product or service.

Consumers are essential for the survival of a business. They provide income, repeat business and contribute to profit. They provide a valuable source of market and research information for the business, providing the business with information on what they want to buy, how often they will buy and the products they desire. "A market is a set of people or organisations with needs to satisfy, money to spend and the willingness to spend it" (Etzel *et al.*, 2001:5).

Consumers' perceptions of a product can be changed by creating a brand image and using a distinctive brand name, logo, humorous catch phrase or visual treatment to make the product stand out from its competitors. It does not particularly matter whether the product really is different; what matters is whether or not customers think it is (Moynihan & Titley, 2001:328).

This research study reports on the work that the researcher undertook in order to establish if branding has any effect on consumer buying behaviour in the hospitality industry in Gaborone, Botswana.

According to Needham & Dransfield (2000:299), "consumer buying behaviour is the process of buying a good or service". A customer does not usually make a purchase without thinking carefully about his or her requirements. Consumer behaviour can be a way in which consumers use a step-by-step process in order to buy the goods and services they want to purchase and use. The decision on which to buy always lies with the consumers having to satisfy their needs and wants with the goods and services they want to acquire.

This study will benefit the hotel industry in that it will provide them with a clear understanding of whether their brand is any better compared to that of their competitors, whether they are able to entice consumers by using their brand image, and what influences buying behaviour has on their consumers.

A service is a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily, always take place in interactions between customers and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems (Grønroos, 2000:46). A service can be intangible and can be termed an activity, as it results in the consumer not being able to show the physical form of the service at the end of receipt or when the said service has been rendered to them.

Kotler & Armstrong (2010:7), states "that a product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need".

## **1.6 Research methodology**

A case study was done at the selected hotels that were participating. This was because the subjects under study, being the employees of the hotel, were interviewed at their place of work in order not to disturb their daily duties. It was also done to get as much information from them as possible without them being influenced by the new environment if they were to leave their work place.



A case study, as defined by Collis & Hussey (2003:68), “is an extensive examination of a single instance of a phenomenon of interest and is an example of a phenomenological methodology”. Hence, the case study approach was congruent with the phenomenological paradigm employed within this research study.

A case study is directed at understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity. The objective of this method is to investigate the dynamics of some single bounded system, typically of a social nature, such as a family, group, community, and participants in a project, institution and practice (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:25). This method was employed because a particular group, being employees of the hotel group, was interviewed and completed the questionnaire at a particular time.

The group was monitored as the questionnaire was distributed to them while at work and their responses to the given elements of measure were recorded to obtain the total score. The study was controlled, as the same population and sample was used throughout the study.

#### **1.6.1 Qualitative and quantitative research**

Multi-strategy research integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches into the research design. This was based on the stages of data collection and data analysis (Bryman, 2006:98). Qualitative research was used, as interviews took place in order for the researcher to have a better understanding of how branding affects consumer behaviour. In a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives (i.e. specific goals for the research) or hypotheses (i.e. predictions that involve variables and statistical tests) (Creswell, 2003:105). The intent of qualitative research is to understand and give meaning to a particular social situation, event, role, group or orientation. This approach complemented the case study used in this research.

Johnson & Christensen (2008:34), states “that the nature of observation in quantitative research is to study behaviour under controlled conditions, and its purpose is to test a specific hypothesis, looking at cause and effect, and to make predictions at the end”.

The common research objectives of quantitative research are to describe, explain and predict the result, which is generalisable findings that can be applied to other populations (Litchman, 2006:7-8). Quantitative does not involve the investigation of processes, but emphasises the measurement and analysis of causal relationship between two variables (Welman *et al.*, 2005:8).

The researcher sent out questionnaires that were analysed statistically. Questionnaires were completed by the staff of the selected hotels and by the customers who visited the hotels and this complemented the quantitative aspect of the research.

### **1.6.2 Sampling**

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007:110) “identified two main methods of sampling, namely probability (also known as random) sampling and non-probability sampling”. In non-probability sampling, the sample is derived by the researcher targeting a specific group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population.

The sampling methods were purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, and stratified random sampling, which is a probability sampling method. Purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, was used because the researcher handpicked the participants to be included in the sample for the interviews on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought. Stratified random sampling, which is a probability sampling method, was used for the participants who completed the questionnaires. The sample was first divided into strata for the different levels of staff in the hotels, and then a random sample was taken for those who completed the questionnaire.

A sample of selected hotels was contacted for interviews, with the purpose to gather information on the research problem from staff members directly involved in the operations of the hotels. The study was limited to three hotels that are located in the city centre of Gaborone.

The population and sample were chosen because they were easily accessible and were branded in their own right, and belonged to different hotel groups operating in the country, although they attracted and served a diverse market base in Gaborone. The research instruments for gathering information were interviews and questionnaires.

### **1.6.3 Questionnaires**

The researcher distributed two different types of questionnaires, one for the staff of the hotels and the other for the customers/clients of the hotels. The questionnaires were structured to obtain the following information from the respondents:

- Demographical details, e.g. age, educational background and qualifications.
- Typical behaviour, e.g. which product they thought was the most recognisable by the customers.

- Opinions, beliefs and convictions, e.g. what they thought about the brands they were using and why they opted to use those brands.

The sample of participants that was selected to complete the questionnaires and the information that was solicited from them covered why they chose certain brands, how and what determined the choice of the brands, how long they had been using the brands, and what differentiated the brands they selected.

#### **1.6.4 Interviews**

Fox (2009:4) describes “an interview as an important data collecting method involving verbal communication between the researcher and the participant”. The study took place in the natural setting of the people being interviewed. The researcher visited the hotels that were selected to interview guests and employees on their perceptions of the branding of the hotels and how this influenced their choice of staying in the particular hotel or working for that particular hotel. Using this method, the researcher conducted interviews with the relevant people who were identified in the selected hotels. The researcher interviewed selected people who used the facilities of the hotel, and this was done to get their views on why they were using the facilities of the hotel they selected to visit.

#### **1.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are a fundamental part of every research process and need to be dealt with throughout the entire duration of the study – from start to finish, as well as afterwards (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:170).

The matter of ethics is important, as it sets out to avoid uncomfortable situations for all participants and is an important mechanism to protect the interests of all and ensure that no harm is caused to anyone (Scott & Morrison, 2006:88). Ethical matters arise out of the researcher’s interaction with other people and environments. This means that the individual has the right to be informed about the study, to participate freely and to withdraw from the study at any point. The participants’ identity would also be protected strictly, and the researcher would ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were upheld. The data was treated with confidentiality and only relevant people would have access to the data. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained at all times.

The researcher received written consent from all participants, and did not expect any of the hotels to disclose private confidential information. The research proposal, questionnaires and letters from the hotels were submitted to the Ethical Committee of the Business Faculty for ethical clearance.

The researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines of the Research Committee of Cape Peninsula University of Technology and respected the rights of participants.

## **1.8 Overview of the study**

The study was reported as follows:

### **Chapter 1 - Orientation and Background to the Study**

This chapter included the research problem and a sub-problem, objectives, significance of the study and a preliminary literature review. The research methodology and ethical considerations were explained.

### **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

Chapter 2 details the literature reviewed and forms the main body of the research study. The literature that was relevant to the research study was discussed and elaborated on in this chapter. Discussions were conducted on branding, the roles of branding, brand familiarisation, the buying habits of consumers, consumer buying behaviour in relation to brands and types of consumer buying behaviour.

### **Chapter 3 - Research Methodology**

The focus in this chapter was on the research methods that were applied in the research study. A case study was conducted. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied. Questionnaires were sent to the staff of the selected hotels and to guests that frequented the hotels. Interviews were conducted with the managers of the selected hotels.

### **Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The researcher analysed the questionnaires that were sent out in terms of the structure of the questionnaires, the source of information for the questionnaires and data collection methods used. The notes taken during the interviews were transcribed and themes were analysed. The results of the research are discussed in terms of their relation to the main and sub-problem.

### **Chapter 5 - Findings and Recommendations**

Chapter 5 comprises an explanation of the findings and recommendations derived from the questionnaires.

### **Chapter 6 – Concluding Remarks**

Chapter 6 provides a brief summary of the study and presents the conclusions that the researcher derived from the findings.

## **1.9 Summary**

Consumers are people who want and use services and products, e.g. individuals, firms or even the government. In most cases, consumers have many choices and these choices allow them to employ a variety of thoughts in the process of making a final buying selection.

The aim and objectives of this study have been identified and the research problem and sub-problems were stated. The significance of the study was provided, and the literature review, research methodology and ethical considerations were discussed. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the literature review.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The literature review discusses the literature that was researched to elaborate on the different concepts and terms that are used in this research study. Why are brands important, more especially in the hospitality industry including tourist destinations? The core concepts of brands and branding are discussed to provide a clear explanation why brands play an important role in the decision-making process of consumers when they select a hotel. The terms customers and consumers are used interchangeably according to the reference materials used in this chapter.

Branded properties are important in the hospitality industry and they play an intangible role in the operational effectiveness of any organisation (Bruce & Harvey, 2008:6). Hospitality entities use brands to express what they are all about and to show what sets them apart from their competitors. "In hospitality, a brand, as defined by Shoemaker & Shaw (2008:464), is the internalised sum of all impressions received by customers, resulting in a distinctive position in their minds' eye based on perceived emotional and functional benefits".

As mentioned by Shoemaker & Shaw (2008:464), "impressions make a promise to the customer regarding what she will receive when staying at one of these branded properties". Hotel products and services are intangible, meaning that the purchase decision is highly emotional and difficult to replicate.

"Brands are increasingly important to tourist destinations and are used by all consumers in the process of buying situations" (Kotler *et al.*, 2006:315). Hospitality companies need to expose their products and services to create and increase brand-loyal customers who will buy their product wherever it is available. Branding is associating a mark, name or logo with an offer of value (Kapferer, 2001:41). The creation of a three-dimensional character of a product, defined in terms of name, purchasing, colours and symbols that help to differentiate it from its competitors, will help the customer to develop a relationship with the product (Brassington & Pettitt, 2000:1049).

The customer is an active participant in the process of change. Across the world, customers have become more demanding and they also respond with a will to the increase in quality and sources and the variety of supply (Needham & Dransfield, 2000:131).

Consumers/ customers nowadays seem to be more aware of the products and services they buy and, more often than not, associate these products and services with the brand names attached to them when they select them.

In the consumer's mind, strong brands guarantee an expected level of satisfaction and facilitate the purchase process for the consumer. "Branding is a critical factor in company achievements and therefore it requires adequate management and strategies" (Kotler, Keller, Brandy, Goodman & Hansen, 2009:429).

In the hospitality and travel industry, consumers have many choices as there are many hotels and other outlets to select from. These choices allow the customer to employ a variety of thought process to make the final buying selection. Lewis & Chambers (2000:214) elaborate that "comparisons of alternatives allow the consumer to evaluate similar offerings by measuring the expectations that lead to the buying choice". Perceptions by the consumer of the hospitality offering may or may not become reality, which will result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Kotler & Pfoertsch (2010:1), state that consumers are willing to pay more for a branded product, as some brands command a premium price and exclusive reputation.

## **2.2 What is a brand?**

Etzel *et al.* (2001:264), state that a brand is a name or mark intended to identify the product of one seller or group of sellers and differentiate the product from competing products. Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2002:301) explain "brand as a name, term, design or a combination thereof that identifies a seller's products and differentiates them from the competitor's products". According to Dalrymple and Parsons (2000:129), "brands are found everywhere and a brand is a name attached to any product to help the product sell to customers". They further state that a brand includes a summation of consumers' perceptions and feelings about a product's attributes. Consumer products are identified by brands and brands create repeat buyers and the process culminates in brand loyalty.

A brand is a product or service made distinctive by its positioning, relative to the competition, and by its personality. Positioning defines the brand's point of reference, either by price or by usage. Personality consists of a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values with which the target consumers identify (Kavaratzi & Ashworth, 2005:508).

Pickton & Broderick (2005:242) define a brand as the totality of what the customer takes into consideration before making a purchase decision.

“This implies that the brand is the sum of all experiences received by the customer through name, logo, symbol, communication and design that differentiates the corporation and its offerings (products and services) from those of competitors” (Okonkwo, 2007:107).

A brand name is that part of a brand that can be vocalised (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:260). A brand name is a trade name used to identify a specific product, manufacturer or distributor (*Oxford Dictionary of Business*, 2002:65). In the hospitality industry sense, a brand is a series of tangible elements that can connect with emotion to create a perception in a customer’s mind about a product or service (Shoemaker & Shaw, 2008:464).

For consumers, brands make it easy to identify goods and services. “Brands also help assure consumers that they will get consistent quality when they re-order” (Etzel *et al.*, 2001:265). According to Okonkwo (2007:9), consumers who perceive the brand to be beneficial will then form an emotional and psychological attachment towards it, which then will create economic value for the brand owner, who will have a competitive advantage and experience stable if not increased sales.

Lamb *et al.* (2002:302) state that, for a brand to be effective, it should have several of the following features. They should:

- Be easy to pronounce
- Be easy to remember
- Be short in nature
- Be distinctive, unique
- Describe the product
- Describe the product benefits
- Have a positive connotation

The researcher therefore views brands not only as a representation of the name or symbol of the company that produces the products or services, but as a connector between the final choice made by the consumer and the product or service that is being consumed. It is clear that a brand represents a rich source for creating a distinctive guest experience and for making guests want to return.

### **2.3 Branding**

Seaton & Bennett (2000:127), explained that “branding developed in the field of packaged goods as a method of establishing a distinctive identity for a product based on competitive differentiation from other products”. The brand identity produces a consistent image in the customer’s minds that facilitates recognition and quality assurance.



Ellwood (2002:219) explains that “branding is important because it is more difficult to build a business; the successful key to this is differentiation”. If an organisation is not going to be a tertiary brand then the organisation needs to build some values into their brand that makes it a premium profitable brand. “Branding is unique in its ability to build strong brands, while at the same time increasing revenue as well as achieving a number of other objectives” (Duffy & Hooper, 2003:69). Blythe (2006:160) describes “branding as adding value to a product”. Branding is the result of a series of actions and activities across the entire marketing mix leading to the brand image, which conveys a whole set of messages to the final consumer about quality, price, expected performances and status”.

Branding is very important for hospitality companies because a strong brand allows a company to attract more clients, which means higher revenue. Shoemaker & Shaw (2008:480) explain that “branding enables hotels to gain management contracts, access to capital and higher than average revenue per available room”. Forgacs (2006:2) states that “branding is one of the most dominant trends in the global hotel industry”.

Simoës and Dibb (2001:217) argue that “branding plays a special role in service companies because strong brands increase customers’ trust in the invisible, enabling them to better visualise and understand the intangible and reduce customers’ perceived financial, social or safety risks”. Branding is a tangible feature that helps consumers decide which product to purchase. “Brand names, logos or trademarks encourage consumers to purchase particular offerings because they provide consumers the benefits they are seeking, given the intangible nature of tourism and hospitality offerings” (George, 2001:172).

Branding is the means for establishing a brand – what is done in relation to the name, logo, symbol, communication, design and so forth – and, more specifically, can be defined as a strategy to differentiate products and companies and to build economic value for both the consumer and the brand owner (Pickton & Broderick, 2005:242). They further explain that branding as understood by the researcher is the association of the symbol and the value of the product that the company promises to give to its customers. This leads the researcher to conclude that assigning a brand name to a product or service adds value to that particular product or service, and gives it a personality that sticks in the consumer’s mind and therefore the consumer will be encouraged to purchase such a product or service repeatedly.

## 2.4 Roles and benefits of brands

Ellwood (2002:1) discusses roles of a brand with one that relates to customers being that a brand provides the key communication with customers. Brands communicate complex messages quickly and with emotional impact, and draw the attention of customers. According to Eztel *et al.* (2001:265), brands are easily recognised when displayed and this helps reduce price comparisons and therefore reduces the likelihood of purchase decisions based solely on prices. They further state that one of the major benefits of brands is increased customer loyalty, which helps customers develop a strong affiliation for particular brands.

According to Seaton and Bennett (2000:343), the objective of hotel branding is to achieve increased market share". The benefits of hotel branding apply to the following areas:

- **Financial**

Strong brands will achieve superior operating results and thus more easily be able to attract favourable financing, joint venture capital or franchise partners.

- **Marketing**

The objectives of brand marketing are to achieve brand recognition and to convey a distinct image of the brand to the potential guest. Guest loyalty therefore is achieved by offering and providing value-added services that clearly distinguish the brand from the competition.

- **Operations and personnel**

Branded property management allows for the standardisation of management and operating systems, which ultimately will result in increased guest satisfaction, greater efficiency and higher standards of service.

A brand has a vital role in the process of customer choice of products in that a brand can help spread the benefits of the product or service and lead to the delivery of information to prospective consumers.

The following, according to Seaton & Bennett (2000:343), are the roles of a brand.

- A brand identifies the seller or maker.
- A brand protects both the consumer and the producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical.
- A brand reduces the primacy of price in the purchase decision.
- A brand accentuates the bases of differentiation.

- A brand is essentially a seller's promise to consistently deliver a specific set of features, benefits and services to the buyers.
- A brand gives the seller the opportunity to attract a loyal and profitable set of customers. Brand loyalty gives sellers some protection from competition and greater control in planning their marketing programmes.
- Strong brands help build the corporate image, making it easier to launch and gain acceptance from distributors and customers.
- Managing a positive brand image creates opportunities to introduce new products that build on brand equity. It helps to attract and retain good employees and it improves the relationship with stockholders.

A brand as one of the most valuable assets that any business possesses, plays an important role in leveraging a company in the market place. The roles of a brand to Ellwood (2002:1):

- Provide the key communication with customers.
- Create critical differentiators in the market place.
- Shape internal company culture.
- Leverage the intellectual assets of the business.
- Generate increased business performance.

Brands communicate complex messages quickly and with emotional impact and attract the attention of customers.

## **2.5 Brand familiarisation**

Brand familiarisation is how well customers recognise and accept the company's brand, and a good brand can help build brand familiarity (McCarthy & Perreault, 2001:273). Of the five levels of brand familiarity explained by McCarthy & Perreault (2001:274), only three are going to be mentioned. These are brand recognition, brand preference and brand insistence.

The three levels are described in the following.

**Table 2.1 Levels of brand familiarity**

Level	Description
Brand recognition	Customers remember the brand. This can be advantageous if there are many brands in the market. Consumers recall the brand without help; they may be reminded if they see the product among less familiar brands.
Brand preference	Target customers usually choose that brand over other brands because of habit or favourable past experience.
Brand insistence	Customers insist on a firm's branded product and are willing to search for it.

**Source: McCarthy & Perreault, 2001:274**

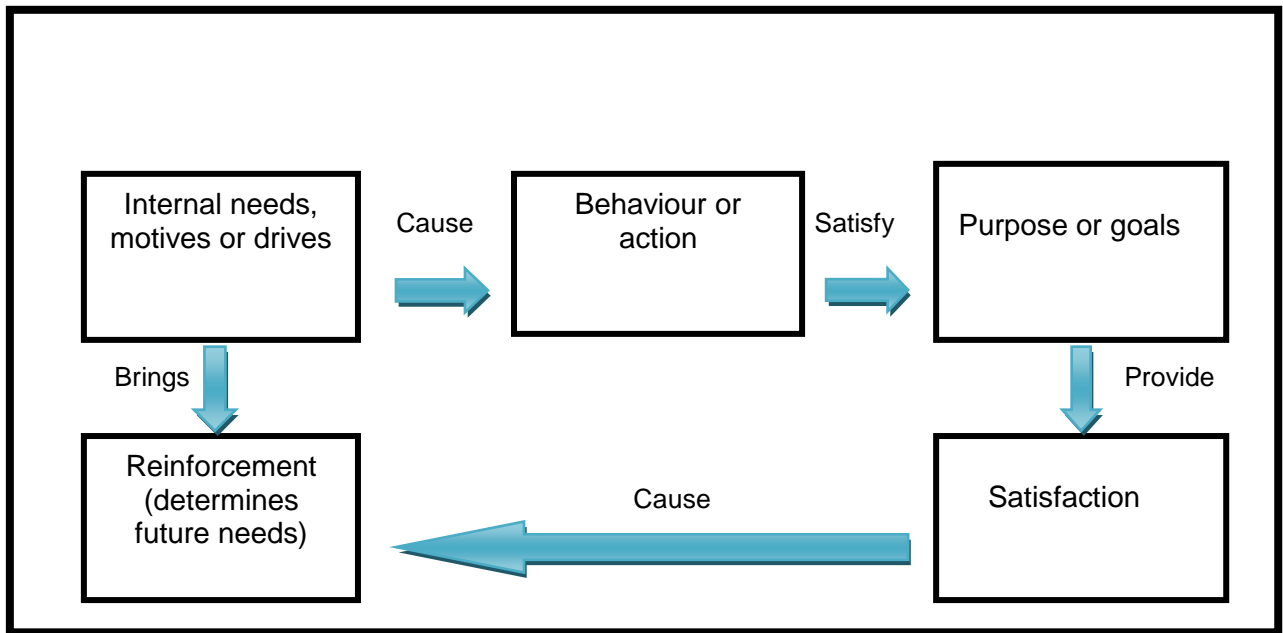
The information in Table 2.1 relates to the research undertaken in that the customers that were involved in the survey remembered the brands that are in the market and they expressed that usually they would choose their preferred brands over the others for personal reasons and gain.

## **2.6 Characteristics of consumers**

Human beings have an innate drive, stimulus or incentive to satisfy a need that may arise (Cronje, Du Toit & Motlatla. 2000:154), therefore human beings are bound to have a motive to satisfy a need. It is this motive that sets the need-satisfying process towards an individual's achieving of a preconceived goal, e.g. it motivates an individual to satisfy a need in a particular manner.

George (2001:131), states that "motivation is a state of arousal of a drive or need that impels people to activity in pursuit of goals". There are a wide range of factors that motivate consumers to buy tourism and hospitality offerings.

**Figure 2.1: A fundamental motivation model.**



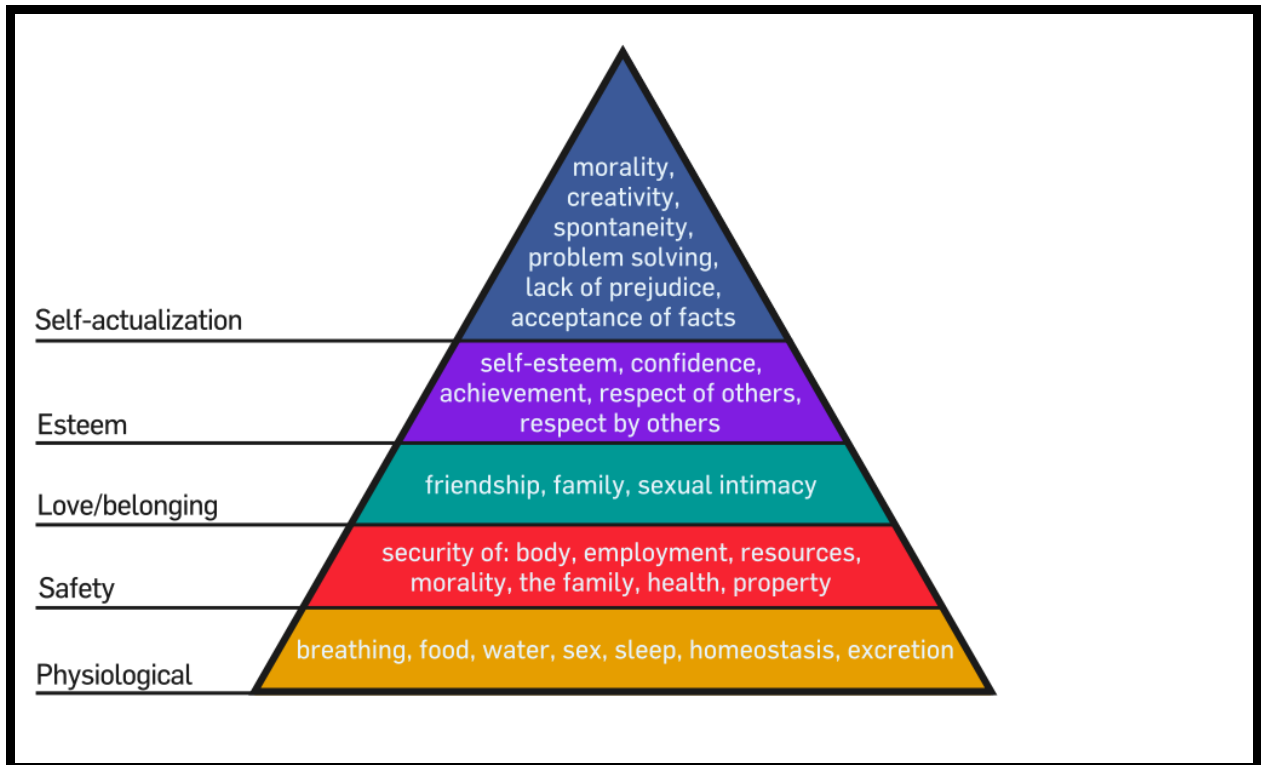
**Source: Cronje, Du Toit & Motlatla (2000:155)**

The customers who participated the survey showed that for them to settle or buy a service provided by the hotels they needed a motivation to do so as they had a purpose why they were buying that particular brand.

Maslow's theory of motivation seeks to explain why people are driven by particular needs at particular times. The model shows that the needs are arranged in a hierarchy from the most pressing to the least pressing (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders, 2008:256).

The hierarchy of needs, as developed by Abraham Maslow (see Figure 2.3), shows that needs such as hunger and thirst are the base needs, moving up to safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and graduating to the need of self-actualisation (Lewis & Chambers, 2000:213). This shows that needs drive purchase decisions.

**Figure 2.2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs**



**Source: Lewis and Chambers (2000:213)**

From the above figure, it was shown through the interviews that were conducted with the staff, customers and managers of the hotels that, all the factors that are explained in the diagram were a major factor that the customers used as a base in their choosing to use a certain brand.

## **2.7 Buying habits of consumers**

The buying habits of different types of consumers are extremely valuable to businesses and organisations, as they need information on the types of consumers who want to buy their products (George, 2001:113).

These buying habits tend to vary between different groups of consumers depending on the following consumer characteristics (George, 2001:113):

- Their age
- Their gender
- Where they live
- Their lifestyle, tastes, fashions and preferences

Each of these characteristics will now be discussed in more detail.

### **2.7.1 Age**

As people, our needs and wants tend to change as we grow older, therefore consumers can be divided into segments by age. Age and life-cycle have a potential impact on consumer buying behaviour. It is obvious that the consumers change their purchase of goods and services with the passage of time. The family life-cycle consists of different stages, such as young singles, married couples and unmarried couples, and these help marketers to develop appropriate products for each stage (George, 2001:113).

### **2.7.2 Gender**

Men and women have different buying habits and are attracted by different kinds of promotions and marketing activities. According to George (2001:113), the differences between the sexes are often used by marketers to develop offerings for the wide range of variety of physical needs and self-images of men and women.

### **2.7.3 The place of abode**

The place where a customer lives may also influence what they would be likely to buy according to their needs. This habit is based on the idea that people tend to be attracted by communities in which they will find others with similar lifestyles and characteristics. This has become increasingly important to the marketer, as tourism and hospitality consumers are more sophisticated and fragmented (George, 2001:115).

### **2.7.4 Other factors**

Factors such as social class, tastes, fashions and culture, which are termed lifestyle factors, can also determine the buying behaviour of an individual. The lifestyles of customers are another import factor affecting consumer buying behaviour. Lifestyle refers to the way a person lives in a society and is expressed by the things in their surroundings. It is determined by customer interests, opinions and activities, and shapes the customer's entire pattern of acting and interacting in the world (George, 2001:115).

## **2.8 Consumer buying behaviour**

Consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of final consumers – individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption (Kotler *et al.*, 2008:238).

Consumer buying behaviour, as explained by Needham & Dransfield (2000:299), is the process of buying a good or service. A customer does not usually make a purchase without thinking carefully about his or her requirements. Consumer behaviour is a study of the process involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.

Lamb, Hair & McDaniel (2002:719) explain “consumer buying behaviour as the process a consumer uses to make purchase decisions, as well as to use and dispose of purchased goods and services; it also includes factors that influence purchase decisions and the use of products”.

Consumer behaviour, as explained by Cronje *et al.* (2000:182), refers to the behaviour patterns of decision-making units (families or individuals) directly involved in the purchase and use of products, including the decision-making process preceding and determining these behaviour patterns. Consumer behaviour consists of overt acts (acts that can be observed by people), e.g. a consumer buying, using and enjoying a product, and covert acts (acts that cannot be observed by people), e.g. consumers considering their financial position and considering the merits of various branded products before purchasing.

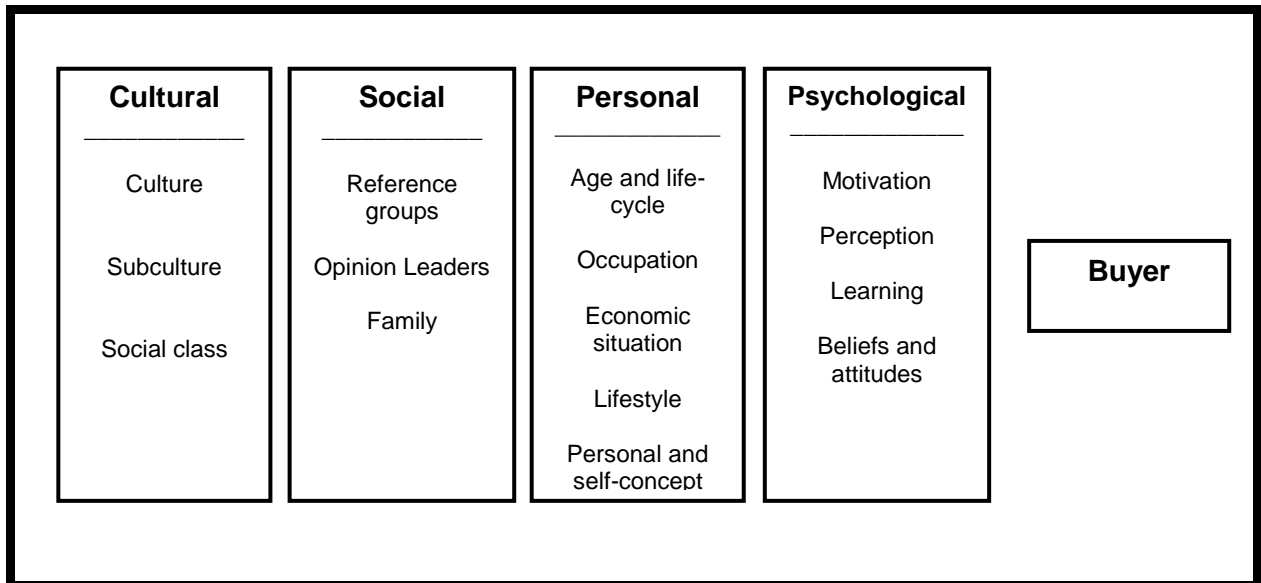
Morrison (2002:588), explains “customer buying behaviour is the ways in which customers select, use and behave after they purchase hospitality and travel services”.

The purchase of a product (Sheth & Mittal, 2004:14) is both a mental and physical activity. These activities are called behaviours and their result is a combination of variety determined by the relation between the type of customer and his/her role. According to Kotler *et al.* (2008:239), “consumer purchases are influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors”.

These characteristics are shown on the following figure 2.3:



**Figure 2.3: Factors influencing consumer buying decisions**



**Source: Kotler *et al.*, (2008:240)**

From the above figure, it was shown through the interviews that were conducted with the staff, customers and managers of the hotels that the pattern in which they answered the posed questions the researcher could identify within the answers that they related to the characteristics and the factors that are shown on the diagram above i.e. that for an individual to make a purchase, their choice of purchasing a service or a product is influenced and depicted factors such as cultural, social, personal and psychological as shown in the diagram.

According to George (2001:131), “the purchase of tourism and hospitality packages differs somewhat from traditional product purchase decisions in the light of the intangible nature of tourism and hospitality offerings”. When evaluating the offering. Prospective consumers have to make a choice from a number of similar alternatives without being able to inspect the purchase beforehand.

## **2.9 Consumer buying behaviour in relation to brands**

This section discussed the consumer buying behaviour in relation to brands. In most cases, consumers use brands when they intend to buy products or services. According to Cronje *et al.* (2000:201), well-known brands offer advantages to consumers when they make a decision to purchase a product or service. The following are the advantages that brands have for consumers in the decision-making process:

- They assist in the identification of products when purchasing.
- They guarantee consumers a quality standard they can count on.

- They offer a certain degree of protection to consumers, because branded products can be identified with a specific manufacturer.
- They assist in decision making, because consumers easily recognise the brands they usually buy.
- They serve as a warning against products that do not meet requirements set by consumers.

With all these, consumers develop a loyalty towards a brand resulting, in a repeat purchase of that product or service. Consumers generally shop around until they find the branded product of their choice.

## **2.10 Types of consumer buying behaviour**

The types of consumer buying decisions are based on the degree of involvement and the extent of the differences among brands. According to Kotler *et al.* (2008:261-262) there are four types of buying behaviour:

### **2.10.1 Complex buying behaviour**

Consumer buying behaviour in situations are characterised by high consumer involvement and significant perceived differences among brands. When the consumer is highly involved in the purchase and has knowledge about significant differences between brands, then it is called complex buying behaviour. So, in this case, the consumer must obtain relevant information about the product attributes and the marketer must develop brand preferences to provide detailed information regarding the product attributes.

This happens when different brands of the same commodity are competing for consumers' attention, e.g. when buying a television or air conditioner, as there are a variety of these in the market and it is an expensive and once-off purchase.

### **2.10.2 Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour**

Consumer buying behaviour in situations characterised by high consumer involvement but few perceived brand differences. Sometimes the consumer is highly involved in the purchase but there are few differences between brands. High involvement means that the product is expensive, but due to few differences between brands the consumer will buy the product frequently. Like consumers buying wall paint, who will buy it quickly as there are few differences between brands.

This type of consumer buying behaviour is witnessed in situations where the product is expensive or has a risky factor in its purchase, but there are different brands that have little or no difference between them.

### 2.10.3 Habitual buying behaviour

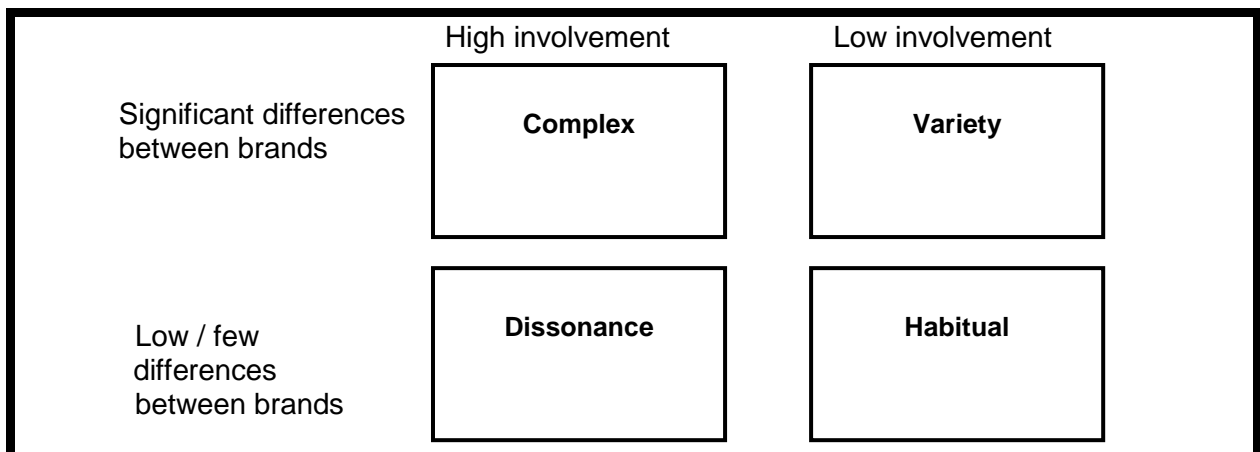
Consumer buying behaviour in situations characterised by low consumer involvement and significant perceived brand differences. In this case there is low involvement by the consumer regarding the product and there are few differences between brands.

This kind of behaviour results when the products in question have little or no significant differences between them, making consumers purchase the product that they have been using for some time without having to think of switching to another brand. The consumer just goes to the market and buys the product, e.g. salt, bread, margarine and sugar.

### 2.10.4 Variety-seeking buying behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour in situations is characterised by high consumer involvement and significant perceived differences among brands. In this case there is low involvement of the consumer regarding the product and there are significant differences between brands. Consumers generally buy different products not due to dissatisfaction, but to seek variety. For instance, they might buy different soap every time just for variety. In this case the marketer must encourage the consumer to buy the product by offering discounts and free samples, and by advertising the product a lot. This kind of behaviour takes place when the consumer has many different products that serve the same purpose to choose from.

**Figure 2.4: Four types of buying behaviour**



Source: Kotler *et al.*, (2008:262)

- **High involvement:** This is when the consumer is highly involved when buying a product. Generally this happens in the case of expensive goods, such as buying a car, in which case the consumer is highly involved.

- **Low involvement:** This is when the consumer is not highly involved when buying a product. This generally happens in the case of low-cost goods, such as buying salt, in which case the consumer is not highly involved.
- **Significant differences between brands:** This is when there are many differences between the brands.
- **Few differences between brands:** This is when there are very few differences between brands.

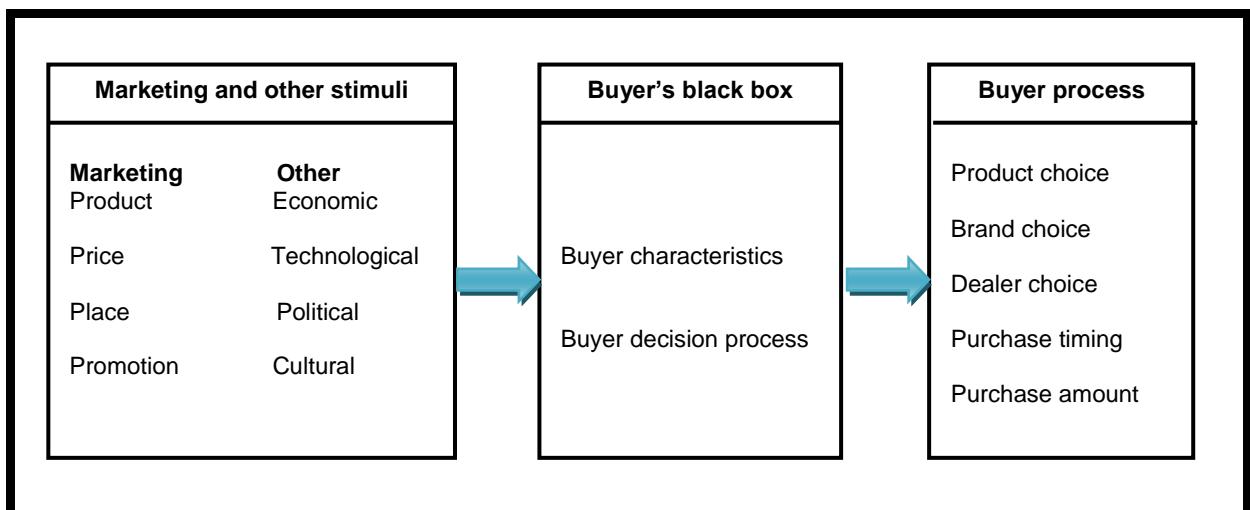
## 2.11 Models of consumer buying behaviour

Several models have been developed with a view to provide explanations for consumer buying behaviours. This is because buying behaviour is not simple.

For the purpose of this report, the stimulus–response model of buying behaviour will be elaborated on. Kotler *et al.* (2008:239) explain marketing stimuli as consisting of four Ps, viz. product, price, place and promotion (see Figure 2.6). Other stimuli include major forces and events in the buyer’s environment, which can be economic, technological, political and cultural.

All these are processed in the buyer’s mind and only the buyer will comprehend why and how the decision to purchase such a product or service was arrived at. These stimuli are turned around in the buyer’s mind into a set of observable buyer responses: product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing and purchase amount.

**Figure 2.5: Stimulus response model of buyer behaviour**



Source: Kotler *et al.*, (2008:239)

## 2.12 Consumer buying decision process

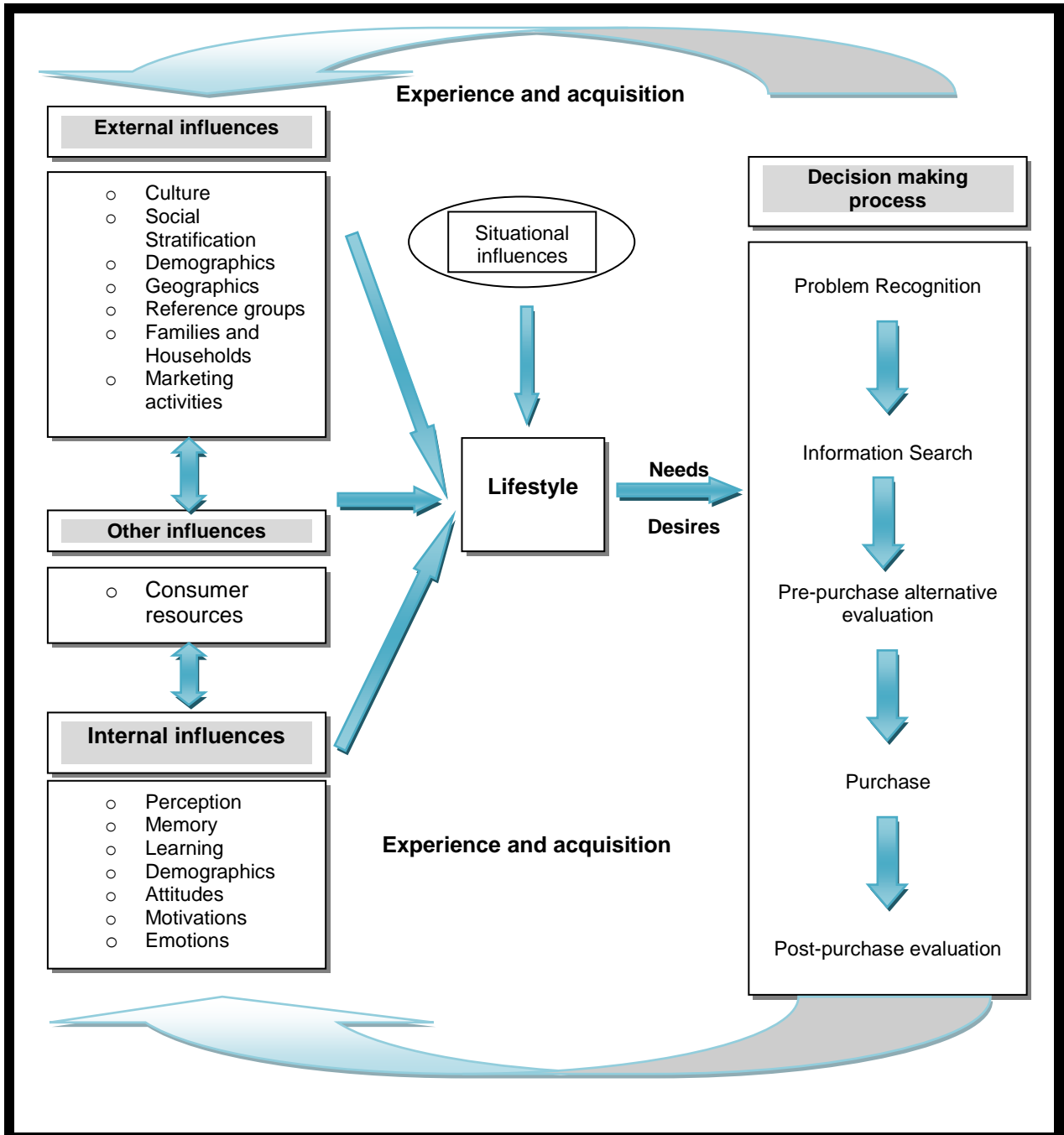
Lamb *et al.* (2000:719) describe the consumer decision-making process as a step-by-step process used by consumers when buying goods or services. Morrison (2002:588), describes “consumer buying behaviour is the stages that customers go through before and after making a purchase”. The process is made up of the following stages:

- Need awareness
- Information search
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Purchase
- Post-purchase and evaluation

The five basic tenets of consumer buying behaviour, according to Lewis & Chambers (2000: 213), are:

- Consumer behaviour is purposeful and goal-orientated
- Consumers have a free choice
- Consumer behaviour is a process
- Consumer behaviour can be influenced
- There is need for consumer education

**Figure 2.6: Model of decision-making process**



**Source: Hawkins, Best & Coney, (2001:26)**

The figure above depicts that consumer decision making process is dependent on external, internal and other influences based on the consumer's lifestyle and experience. Through the interviews that were conducted with the staff, customers and managers of the hotels it was shown that the respondents, for them to acquire a service or product is through all the tenants of the decision making process from problem recognition to post – purchase evaluation coupled with the factors that are external, internal and others that in the end they get what they desire or want.

It was evident that the lifestyles of the customers were influenced by their needs and desires which in turn influenced their decision making processes leading to acquisition of the product and service and therefore the experience of that product or service will be borne.

The following are the stages in the buying decision process.

### **2.12.1 Need/problem recognition**

This is the stage when the buyer recognises a need or problem. The buyer at this stage will sense the difference between his or her actual state and some desired state. The need is triggered by internal stimuli according to one's personal normal needs, such as hunger, thirst or sex drive.

### **2.12.2 Information search**

If the consumer does not have a satisfying product at hand, the consumer may seek information on other alternatives to satisfy the need. The information that is sought can be obtained from several sources, such as:

- Personal sources: family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances.
- Commercial sources: advertising, salespeople, the internet, packaging, displays.
- Public sources: mass media, consumer rating organisations.
- Experiential sources: handling, examining, using the product.

The information heightens the awareness and knowledge of the available preferred brands and brands that are not sought after are dropped.

### **2.12.3 Evaluation of alternatives**

At this stage, the consumer uses the information gathered to decide on the alternative brands that are available. Some customers carefully evaluate, but others just purchase on impulse.

### **2.12.4 Purchase decision**

This is the stage where the buyer actually buys the product that is selected. The decision to buy is basically based on expected income, expected price and expected benefits of the product.

### 2.12.5 Post-purchase behaviour

The buyer takes further action after purchase based on his or her satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The action will be taken based on the relationship between the buyer's expectations and the product's perceived performance.

### 2.13 Roles in the buying decision

There are various people involved in the buying decision process in the tourism and hospitality markets. Individuals who come together and make purchasing decisions together, e.g. a family, form a decision-making unit (DMU).

**Table 2.2 Consumer buying roles**

Role	Description
Initiator	The person who first suggests or thinks of the idea of buying a tourism and hospitality offering. e.g. a child recommending lunch at some restaurant.
Influencer	A person whose view or advice influences the buying decision e.g. a friend recommending a holiday destination
Decider	The person who ultimately makes a buying decision or any part of it whether to buy, what to buy, how to buy or where to buy. The person will have either the finance or authority within the DMU.
Buyer	The person who makes the actual purchase. The one who is going to be paying for the service.
User	The person who consumes the product or service. e.g. those who visit a theme park

**Source: George, (2001: 137)**

This table explains the roles played by different people in the purchasing decision process. It was shown that the customers have roles in the buying process of the products and services offered by the hotels. In some instances one customer could combine all the five factors or just be one of them.

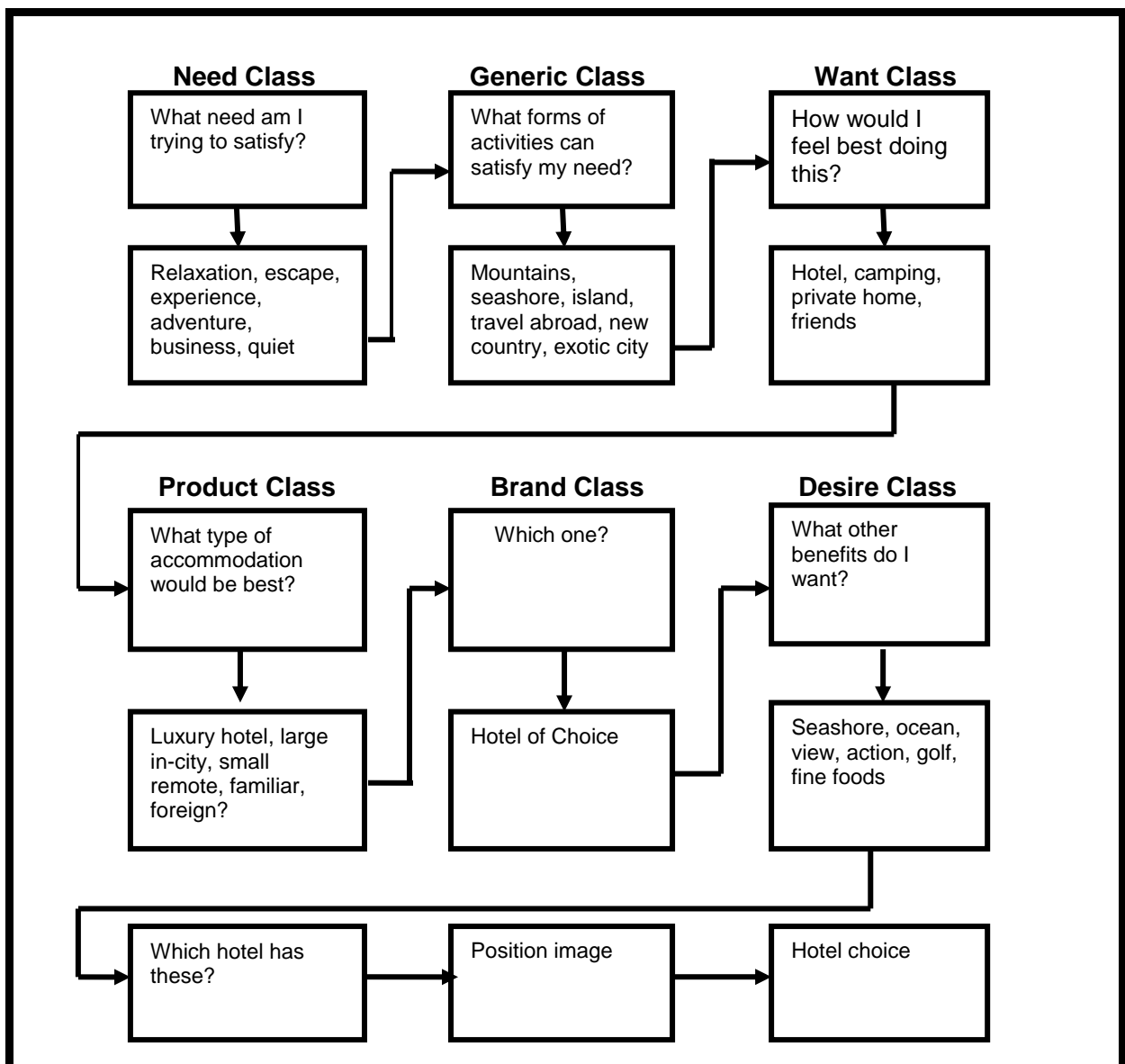


## 2.14 Consumer mental evaluation process in the hospitality industry

Consumers make decisions to purchase services and goods in the hospitality industry by mentally evaluating the choices they have before they settle for choosing to purchase and use the facilities of their choice.

Below is a mental evaluation process that can be applied in the hospitality, travel and tourism set-up.

**Figure 2.7: Consumer mental evaluation process**



**Source: Lewis & Chambers, (2000:224)**

The model above explains the decision-making process of consumers when they purchase hotel services. Before consumers can decide whether or not they like a product, they must decide what constitutes a good or a bad product. Consumers create criteria against which to measure products' ability to solve their problems and satisfy their needs.

As a result, the researcher has come to the conclusion that consumers use brands as evaluative criteria, since in most cases, the brand stands for all attributes desired in a particular product.

The elements shown on figure 2.9 could be detected when the customers were answering some of the research questions in that customers aligned their needs, desires and wants to the products and brands in order for them to settle for a certain hotel in the end.

## **2.15 Summary**

This chapter covered the literature overview on why brands are important, more especially in the hospitality industry, including tourist destinations. The core concepts of brands and branding were also discussed to give a clear explanation of why brands play an important role in the decision-making process of consumers when they select their outlet of choice when buying or using hospitality outlets. Consumer buying behaviour in relation to brands, factors influencing consumer buying decisions, models of consumer buying behaviour and the decision-making process model were also discussed.

The methodology and design of the study will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Marketing research specifies the information required to address issues, explains the method for collecting the information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyses the results and communicates the findings and their implications (Perry & Winson, 2003:661). Proctor (2003:3) supports the American Association's definition of marketing research as the function that links the consumer, customer and public to the manager through information. He further states that information is used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems, generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions, monitor marketing performance and improve an understanding of marketing as a process.

This chapter explained the research procedures and techniques that were used for the study. The theoretical perspective of the research process is provided. The focus is on the research methods that were applied in the research study. The method that was followed to collect data from the sample, the specific procedure and the reliability and validity of the questionnaires that were used are discussed. The processing and analysis and evaluation of the data are outlined. Details of the data collection methods, sampling process and data analysis are also provided.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Cooper & Schindler (2001:134) state that the research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. The research design is a plan and structure of investigation to obtain answers to the research questions. According to Welman *et al.* (2005:52), a research design is the plan according to which the researcher obtains participants (subjects) and collect information from them".

The study followed the descriptors shown below (Figure 3.1):

**Figure: 3.1 What the research design constitutes**

Category (descriptor)	Options
Degree of research crystallisation	Exploratory or <b>formal</b>
Method of data collection	Monitoring or <b>communication</b>
Researcher's control of variables	Experiential or <b>ex post facto</b>
Purpose of the study	<b>Descriptive</b> or causal
Time dimension	<b>Cross-sectional</b> or longitudinal
Topical scope	Case or <b>statistical</b>
Research environment	<b>Field setting</b> or laboratory research or simulation
Participants' perceptions	Actual routine or <b>modified routine</b>

Source: Cooper &amp; Schindler (2006:139)

**Source: Cooper & Schindler (2006:139)**

- **Formal**

Since the main objective of this research was to investigate why consumers tend to purchase certain brands over others in the hospitality industry of Gaborone, it has a social research setting, as it deals with people and their communications. Babbie (2004:102) points out that “social research often involves revisiting phenomena and building on the results of earlier research”.

- **Communication**

The study was not undertaken to monitor subjects, but intended to elicit responses from them on why they chose certain products and services over others in the market. In this regard, the study can be classified as a communication study in relation to the data collection method used.

- **Ex post facto**

The researcher had no control over the variables, but instead was interested in reporting what had transpired during the experiment. The study therefore can be said to have an ex post facto design. The study was done to realise the differences between people as they exist in a set-up, viz. the hospitality and tourism industry of Gaborone, and the choices they make to select and use the facilities of their choice.

- **Descriptive**

This study can be considered a descriptive study, as it attempted to define and describe subjects. This kind of study is popular in business research and in the leisure area (Veal, 2006: 3). However, a descriptive study does not explain why an event has occurred, or why the variables interact the way they do.

- **Cross-sectional**

The study was only carried out once and represented a 'snap shot' of participants' perceived value for consuming the product they consumed.

- **Statistical**

Statistical studies are designed for breadth rather than depth, meaning that statistical studies tend to capture a population's characteristics by making inferences from a sample's characteristics. Therefore this study should be regarded as both a quantitative and qualitative study, since it aimed to describe consumers' perceptions by studying the attributes of a sample statistically and qualitatively. Denzin & Lincoln (2000:87) state that it is difficult to avoid quantitative elements in the most qualitative subject matters. Quantitative components are crucial to most good qualitative research, which begins with theories, concepts and constructs. However, the study is not only statistical. The questionnaires were analysed via a statistical programme, Moonstats.

- **Field setting**

Qualitative research is characterised by fieldwork during which the researcher physically goes to people, a setting, site or institution to record behaviour in its natural setting. According to Welman *et al.* (2005:193), when a group or institution is investigated fieldwork is used by conducting the investigation on the spot under the natural circumstances of the specific case.

The researcher went to meet, interact with and interview subjects at their workplaces and as guests of the participating hotels in a hotel set up to gain information for the study.

- **Modified routine**

The respondents were sensitised to the fact that they were participating in a research study. This means that their normal daily routine was modified, therefore the study could be considered as a modified routine study.

### **3.3 Case study**

A case study, as defined by Collis & Hussey (2003:68), is an extensive examination of a single instance of an object of interest and is an example of the qualitative method. Hence, the case study approach was congruent with the objective paradigm employed within this research study.

Case study research aims to provide an analysis of the context and processes that illuminate the theoretical issues being studied (Hartley, 2004:323).

In terms of the research aim and objectives of this research study, Riege (2003:80) provides a fitting description of the case study approach, thus highlighting the justification for selecting this approach. Riege (2003:80) suggests that the case study method is about theory construction and building and is based on the need to understand a real-life phenomenon, with researchers obtaining new, holistic and in-depth understandings, explanations and interpretations of previously unknown practitioners' experiences. The case study approach seeks to gather detailed data about the unit of analysis "with a view of obtaining in-depth knowledge" of the phenomena being analysed (Collis & Hussey, 2003:68).

For this research study, the perceptions of the consumers of the target market were determined by means of qualitative research. This research method was chosen over the quantitative method as it elicited information that dealt with feelings, ideas and perceptions. The case study was done at selected hotels that were participating in the study. This was done to ensure that the subjects under study, being the employees of the hotel, were interviewed at their place of work in order not to disturb their daily duties. It was also done to get as much information from them as possible without having them being influenced by a new environment if they were to leave their workplace. In this regard, the investigation was done within the natural setting of the subjects' workplace.

### **3.4 Types of data**

Parasuraman, Grewal & Krishnan (2004:42) "identify two types of data, namely primary and secondary data". Secondary data refers to information that has already been collected and is readily available from other sources, while primary data are collected for specific research needs.

Berg (2007:268), on the other hand, states that primary data are the sources that involve the oral or written testimony of eye witnesses, whereas secondary sources involve the oral and written testimony of people not immediately present at the time of a given event.

Secondary data are information collected by individuals or agencies and institutions other than the researcher. Secondary data can come from academic or non-academic sources and may be qualitative or quantitative in nature. Secondary data can take other forms and could encompass qualitative data: articles in academic journals, and the popular press, other branches of the mass media, literature, formal and informal documents of government publications, speeches and letters.

Proctor (2003:69) states that information helps an organisation to solve its marketing problems and to make decisions. A distinction is made between information and data. Data comprises of unorganised news, facts and figures about a certain topic, while information is a body of facts that is organised around a specific topic or subject. It comprises facts organised and presented to help solve a problem or develop a plan.

For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary data sources were used. Secondary sources were used to form the theoretical part of the study, which was done on the basis of presenting an extensive literature review from different sources to define the structure and the methods used, as well as the processes followed to conduct the primary research. The primary data were collected by means of a questionnaire and focus group interviews. Each phase will now be discussed.

### **3.5 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research”, according to Proctor (2003:528), is an approach usually involving a large sample that is designed to generate data that can be projected to the whole population. Welman *et al.* (2005:8) posit that “quantitative research methods do not involve the investigation of the process, but emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables within a value-free context. Quantitative research is used to evaluate objective data consisting of numbers that are produced by the minds of respondents or interviewees. Cresswell (2003:19) posits that a quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge, i.e. cause-and-effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories.

Johnson & Christensen (2008:34), state that “the nature of observation for quantitative research is to study behaviour under controlled conditions, and its purpose is to test a specific hypothesis by looking at cause and effect and to make predictions in the end. The common research objectives of quantitative research are to describe, explain and predict the result, which is generalisable findings that can be applied to other populations (Litchman, 2006:7-8). The use of sampling techniques (such as consumer surveys) whose findings may be expressed numerically and are amenable to mathematical manipulation, enables the researcher to estimate future events or quantities (Business Dictionary, 2013).

The following are the characteristics of quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:64):

- Data are in the form of numbers and statistics.
- The conclusions are deductive – based on reasons and logical analysis of the available facts.
- The researcher documents the results using objective language.
- The researcher uses tools such as questionnaires or equipment to collect numerical data.
- The researcher carefully designs all aspects of the study before actually collecting data.
- The researcher knows clearly in advance what he/she is looking for. The research is done in a highly controlled environment.
- The results are depicted mainly in pie charts, statistics and graphs.

Some of the questions included in the research questionnaire are numerically based and therefore the research will apply the quantitative approach to get information from the participants.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

Veal (2006:39) suggests that the best sources of information about individuals' leisure behaviour or aspirations are individuals' revelations about themselves. Therefore a self-administered questionnaire, which would reveal information about the target sample, was used to collect data from the consumers. The self-administered questionnaire approach places more reliance on the people being studied to provide their own explanation for their particular situation.

Cooper & Schindler (2001:135) explain that data collection methods can be classified into monitoring processes and communication processes. The former include studies in which the researcher inspects the activities of a subject or the nature of some material without attempting to elicit responses from anyone. A communication process was used for the purpose of this research. The data collection method that was employed by the researcher was the questionnaire method. The researcher visited the hotels and distributed structured questionnaires.

The questionnaires were used as a means of gathering information from the guests and employees of the hotels for the research at hand. According to the researcher, the following are the reasons for using questionnaires as data collection tools:



- Economy – Questionnaires reduce the expense and time involved in training interviewers and sending them out to interview the selected sample. This is useful in that the researcher is the one who will be doing all the work single handily.
- Uniformity of questionnaires – Each of the respondents, will receive the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way. In this regard, the data that is going to be yielded is comparable and easy to analyse.
- Standardisation - The questionnaires are highly structured and the conditions under which they are answered are controlled making the questionnaire become standardised.

The other reasons are that the researcher was able to find out from the guest and employees of the participating hotels their exact perceptions of the brands they choose when using the hotel of their choice. In this way the researcher was able to deduce why the guest chose the branded hotels and why employees chose to work for certain branded hotels.

A survey questionnaire is an instrument that is used to gather information from a sample or units of analysis. Questionnaires are effective methods of collecting information, particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events.

A questionnaire is one of the measuring instruments that are susceptible to measurement reactivity, and therefore using them to gather information may cause the researcher not to get enough information from the respondents, as they may withhold information, not cooperate with the researcher or deliberately deceive the researcher with the information they provide.

The questionnaire was structured to induce the respondents to complete it by keeping it short and simple. The researcher also had to bear in mind when creating the questionnaire that it had to achieve the objectives of the study and how the responses obtained were to be aggregated, i.e. the questions posed in the questionnaire were coded to make them easy to analyse.

As pointed out by Kumar (2005:130), “a self-administered questionnaire is limited in that it cannot be used on a population that is illiterate, and there are advantages and disadvantages attached to using a self-administered questionnaire”. These are:

### 3.5.1.1 Advantages

- Less expensive when compared to interviews, while simultaneously saving time as well as human and financial resources.
- Self-administered questionnaires can offer greater anonymity.

### 3.5.1.2 Disadvantages

- Lack of honesty
- Lack of accuracy
- Difficulty in remembering or bringing to mind needed details

Veal (2006:39) states that “there are a number of disadvantages in using questionnaires as data collection methods when dealing with people”. When people are aware of research being conducted about them, they do not always remain purely passive subjects. According to Berg (2007:97), “questionnaires are effective methods of collecting information, particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events”.

## 3.5.2 Structure of questionnaires

The researcher distributed two types of questionnaires, one to the staff of the hotels and the other to the customers/clients of the hotels. Each questionnaire consisted of **19 questions** that were both qualitative and quantitative. The questionnaire was structured to obtain the following information from the respondents:

- Biographical details, e.g. age, educational background and qualifications.
- Typical behaviour, e.g. which product they thought was the most recognisable by the customers.
- Opinions, beliefs and convictions, e.g. what they thought about the brands they were using and why they opted for those brands.

The questionnaire was designed with the following questions as the basis of the structure of the questionnaire:

- How are people to be induced to complete the questionnaire?
- How are the responses to be aggregated?
- Will it achieve the objectives of the study?

The researcher used both open and closed-ended and pre-coded questions when structuring the questionnaire.

An open-ended question is one in which the interviewer asks a question without any prompting with regard to the range of answers expected.

In a self-completed questionnaire, a line or space is left for the respondent to write his or her own answer and there is no prior list of answers. The closed questions restrict the answers to a small set of responses and require the questionnaire designer to have a fair knowledge of the range of options the subjects might have in this area. It does, however, generate precise answers.

The open-ended questions had the merit of not imposing restrictions as to the possible answers, but were harder to aggregate and computerise. These questions provided deeper, richer meaning.

The respondent's reply was noted verbatim, while a closed or pre-coded question offers the respondent a range of answers to choose from. In the case of a self-administered questionnaire like the one used by the researcher, a range of answers were set in the questionnaire for the respondent to tick the appropriate boxes.

According to *Welman et al.* (2005:174), the following are the key aspects to ensure when formulating a questionnaire:

- The choice of the variety of questions used – open or closed questions.
- The respondent's literacy level should be taken into consideration.
- The interviewer should be careful not to offend the respondents.
- The interviewer should be brief and focused.
- The interviewer should maintain neutrality.
- The interviewer should use a justified sequence of asking the questions.
- The interviewer should be sure to use questions that are applicable to all respondents.
- The layout should be easy to follow.

The whole task of creating a questionnaire must be seen as part of the larger process that involves its application.

### 3.6 Qualitative research

Qualitative research can be described as an approach rather than a particular design or set of techniques. It covers an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world, making it a descriptive form of research.

Berg (2007:97) explains that “the notion of the accurate communication of ideas implies that researchers have a clear idea about the type of information they want to access and about the purpose of the research”. According to Berg (2007:8), “qualitative research seeks to answer questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings”.

The research method was applied in order to attempt to elicit descriptive information dealing with the ideas, feelings, perceptions and thoughts of the respondents. As indicated by Berg (2007:3), “the notion of quality is essential in the nature of things, while quantity amounts to something”.

Quality refers to the what, how, when and where of a phenomenon. Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things. Welman *et al.* (2005:193) describe “qualitative research approaches as descriptive designs that are used in investigations amongst individuals or groups within a given community”. Denzin & Lincoln (2000:3) state that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpreting objects in terms of the meanings people bring to them”.

Babbie and Mouton (2010:102) define the following key aspects of qualitative research:

- Research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors;
- The focus of the research is on the process rather than the outcomes;
- The actors’ perspective (the “insider” or “emic” view) is emphasised; and
- The primary aim is in-depth (“thick”) descriptions and understanding of actions and events.

This is supported by Creswell (2003:105), who states that the following are the characteristics of qualitative research:

- It takes place in a natural setting.
- It uses multiple methods that are interpretive.
- It is emergent rather than tightly prefigured.
- It is fundamentally interpretive (role of the researcher as an interpreter).

- The researcher views social phenomena holistically.
- The researchers systematically reflect on whom they are inquiring from and are sensitive to the person they are inquiring from (the participant's personal biography and how it shapes the study).
- The researcher uses complex reasoning that is multifaceted, iterative and simultaneous.
- The researcher adopts and uses one or more strategies of inquiry.

Creswell (2003:18) further posits that "a qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructive perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent to develop a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-orientated, collaborative or change-orientated, or both)".

In qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives (i.e. specific goals for the research) or hypotheses (i.e. predictions that involve variables and statistical tests). Using the characteristics of Creswell (2003:18), the following explains how the researcher applied them in the study so as to gather information from the subjects.

The study took place in the natural setting of the people being interviewed. The researcher visited the hotels that were selected for the research to interview guests and employees on their perceptions on the branding of the hotels and how they influence their choice of staying with the particular hotel or why they are working for that particular hotel.

The study used multiple methods that are interpretive. The survey method was applied in the form of questionnaires, and focus group meetings were conducted, as well as one-on-one interviews with the employees of the selected hotels. The study was emergent rather than tightly prefigured, and this was realised in the fact that the participants were given an opportunity to voice their views, rather than the researcher telling them to reveal only what she wanted to hear from them.

The study was fundamentally interpretive (role of the researcher as an interpreter). The researcher acted as an interpreter and introduced the reasons why the study was being undertaken before administering the questionnaire or conducting focus group meetings so that the participants were fully aware of the reasons why the study was being done and why they were participating.

The researcher viewed social phenomena holistically and did not generalise where it was not applicable, as the participants had different views on some of the topics covered. The researcher systematically reflected on who the participants were and was sensitive to them as people (the participants' personal biographies and how these shaped the study). In this regard, the researcher used complex reasoning that was multifaceted, iterative and simultaneous so as to get information from the participants.

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000:14), qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek to answer questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.

This study fit into the qualitative research paradigm, which allows one to gain detailed, in-depth insight into the issues explored and to understand the social interaction, dynamics and beliefs among the participants chosen for the case study. The idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants who may best answer the research question. This study assessed perceptions and therefore a qualitative approach was followed. Qualitative researchers are interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings. The researcher therefore deemed it fit to use a qualitative approach to the research based on the analysis of Gremler (2004:66), who states that a measurement or analysis of experience from the interviewees' subjective construction of previous experiences can be obtained through this type of research. Hence face-to-face interviews were conducted to analyse the role that experience plays in the development of social competencies from the interviewee's points of view.

### **3.6.1 Interviews**

An interview is a communication process and thus requires a good understanding of all the factors that enhance or detract from the success of that process. An interview is a spoken exchange of information, usually between two people or between one person and a small group. This exchange of information is generally, although not always, planned in advance and involves speaking and listening on both sides (Dobson, 2003:134).

As posited by Welman *et al.* (2005:163), "an interview is a data-collecting method that is unstructured, although some are structured and standardised". Personal interviews tend to have a higher response rate opposed to postal surveys and telephonic interviews, since the interviewer can physically confront the respondent, which means there is less chance of the respondent eluding the interview.

In research, three types of interviews are used:

- Structured interviews

These are the interviews in which the interviewer puts a collection of questions from a previously compiled questionnaire to a respondent face to face and records the respondent's responses.

- Unstructured interviews

These are informal and are used to explore a general area of interest in depth. This type is usually employed in qualitative research to identify important variables in a particular area to formulate penetrating questions about them.

- Semi-structured interviews

These are interviews in which the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered and may vary from one interview to the other. They offer a versatile way of collecting data. When conducting interviews, it is important that the researcher introduce the study and its purpose to the interviewees in order to orientate the respondents to what research questions are.

There are advantages and disadvantages of applying interviews in a study, as explained by Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler (2005:508-510):

### **3.6.1.1 Advantages**

- Interviews include the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena.
- They encourage each participant to provide accurate responses, which is a method to get a large amount of data quickly.
- They encourage each participant to provide an adequate amount of information.
- Follow up and clarification of information can be done immediately.
- The researcher may have the opportunity to probe further on certain aspects as respondents divulge them.

### **3.6.1.2 Disadvantages**

- Interviews discourage participants from refusing to answer certain questions. There may be situations where interviewees are unwilling or uncomfortable to divulge information that the researcher seeks.
- They discourage each participant from early discontinuation of participation.

- Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive to divulge the desired information.
- Respondents may not be able to accurately recollect their experiences.

The interviews were conducted with the employees and guests of the participating hotels in order to get their views and opinions on why they utilised the hotels they chose and what attracted them to the hotels and the facilities they opted for.

The interviews were conducted in order to collect information about the participants' experiences and impressions about the hotel brands they chose to stay in or that they work for. Interviews served to reinforce the information provided in the questionnaires that were administered earlier.

By using open-ended interviews, the interviewer obtained rich details and new insights regarding the research. The interviews gave the researcher leeway to ask the participants for additional information that might be important to the study besides what was in the questionnaires. The participants also were able to raise issues that they felt were of importance and could express ideas in their own words, and were not inhibited by the structured questions in the questionnaire.

### **3.6.2 Focus groups**

According to Berg (2007:144), "a focus group is an interview style designed for small groups of unrelated individuals formed by the researcher and led in a group discussion on some particular topic or topics". Using this approach, researchers strive to learn about the conscious, semi-conscious and subconscious psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and processes in various groups.

Cooper & Schindler (2001:142), on the other hand, described "a focus group as a panel of people, led by a trained moderator". Participants in a focus group are requested to supply and share their perceptions in order to obtain qualitative information. The technique is supposed to encourage not only an exchange of views and ideas, but also the production of new ideas as a consequence of the public sharing and assessing of the ideas of others.

The facilitator or moderator uses group dynamic principles to focus or guide the group in an exchange of ideas, feelings and experiences on a specific topic with open-ended questions. Participants in focus groups are requested to supply and share their perceptions in order to obtain qualitative information. The information that is collected through a focus group is raw data (Berg, 2007:162). Focus groups can also be described as group in-depth interviews.



These groups consist of a small number of individuals or interviewees who are together for the purpose of expressing their opinions on a specific set of open questions.

The purpose of group interviews is to collect qualitative data and therefore the researcher used focus groups to collect data from the sample because this was one of the techniques that can be used to collect information that might have been left out when interviewing people on a one-on-one basis and may shed light on some of the questions that would have been asked in the questionnaire.

The focus group interview served to compare the data collected from the questionnaire responses by determining if the data was of a similar nature to the responses from the focus group interviews. This ensured that the questions that were set out in the questionnaires would produce results that matched the objectives of the research.

The focus groups consisted of employees and guests of the participating hotels who were not involved in the completion of the questionnaires. They were included in the groups so that information that may have been left out when collecting data by means of the questionnaire would be obtained.

### **3.7 Population**

The population, according to Welman *et al.* (2005:53), refers to a full set of cases from which a sample is taken that encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis and does not necessarily have to be people". On the other hand, Bradley (2007:170) states that "a target population is the entire group under study as specified by the research objectives".

Parasuraman *et al.* (2004:356) define "population as consisting of the entire body of units of interest to decision makers in a situation". Proctor (2003:102) elaborates on this definition of population as the total group to be studied, it is the grand total of what is being measured. Babbie & Mouton (2010:100) define population "as a group of people from whom conclusions would be drawn for a particular study". For the purpose of this research, the population was the branded hotels in the hospitality industry of Gaborone that were offering more or less the same product and services to the populace of the city. The selection was done deliberately, as these hotels were competing against each other for customers. Because the population of the country is only two million, the hotels face stiff competition to lure and keep customers without losing them to the next competitor, as more and more hotels are cropping up, especially in the city centre.

The hotel entities are now at a time where they have to vigorously market their products in order to entice consumers and keep them as regulars, and some hotels have resorted to re-branding and re-positioning of themselves within the hospitality market in the country.

### **3.8 Sampling**

Parasuraman *et al.* (2004:356) assert that “sampling is the selection of a fraction of the whole total number of units of interest for the ultimate purpose of being able to draw general conclusions about the entire body of units”. Cooper & Schindler (2001:167), on the other hand, define “sampling as the method used to select some of the elements in the population”. By so doing, conclusions can be drawn about the entire population. Bradley (2007:519), defines “sampling as the process of selecting parts from a defined population in order to examine these parts, usually with the aim of making judgements about the parts of the population that have not been investigated”. The major advantage of this approach is that it involves less costs and time than looking at every member of the population.

There are several decisions to make when securing a sample. These decisions essentially pertain to the relevance of the population and the parameters of interest, the sample type and the sample size. For the purpose of this research, the respondents of the selected hotels filled out the open-ended questions meant for the profile of the target market. The researcher chose to use purposive sampling and convenience sampling for this research. The purposive sampling method was chosen because the researcher deemed the sample to be appropriate for the study, i.e. the number of participants would be limited and was the experts in the field of the hospitality industry that was being researched.

The convenience sampling method was selected because the researcher deemed it fit to do the research at the hotels to have easy access to the participants at their place of work and the guests at their places of choice.

According to Welman *et al.* (2005:69), “the purposive method is a non-probability method and is less complicated and more economical to use”. This is the most important type of non-probability sampling. Researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population.

The sample for the questionnaires was employees and clients of the participating hotels. This method was chosen because the researcher was able to control and regulate the sample as being representative of the relevant population. The non-probability approach was adopted in that it was a less complicated method and more economical in terms of time and financial expenses.

This method was applied to the staff of the hotels that were going to be included in the study.

Convenience sampling was applied to the customers of the hotels. According to Cooper & Schindler (2006:423), "convenience sampling is a simple non-probability sampling method". The researcher therefore used readily available individuals as participants as they went in and out of the selected hotels. "This was deemed to be a perfect method because element selection in a convenience sample is based on ease of accessibility. Convenience sampling involves haphazardly selecting those cases that are easiest to obtain for the sample, such as a person interviewed at random. The sample selection process was continued until the required sample size was reached.

### **3.8.1 Selecting the sample**

The sample has to have the exact properties, in the exact proportions, as the population it was drawn from, but in smaller numbers. Such samples, if selected in certain ways, can be used as a legitimate basis for drawing inferences about the population from which they were drawn. Several decisions need to be made when securing a sample. These decisions pertain to the relevance of the population and the parameters of interest, the sample type and the sample size. According to Ritchie & Lewis (2003:83), "qualitative samples are usually small in size". For the purpose of this research, the composition of the focus group and respondents selected to fill out the open-ended questions met the profile of the target market.

The sample was the selected hotels that gave the researcher consent to carry out the research in them. The hotels were selected because they were branded and the management of the hotels gave the researcher permission to conduct research on their premises and among their employees.

### **3.8.2 Sample for questionnaires**

The sample for the questionnaires was employees and clients of the participating hotels. These two groups of people were selected from the population who use and work for the hotels that were participating in the research. The guests and employees of the hotel chose to stay in or work at certain hotels because of the value they perceive in the brand that stands for the hotel entity. "The economic value for the consumer, according to Okonkwo (2007:9), therefore was created through the functional and emotional benefits that a successful brand signals to the consumer, who consequently feels confident that the brand will deliver a certain experience".

The sample covered the management of the hotels, employees at different levels and guests from different walks of life who frequent the participating hotels.

### **3.8.3 Sample for interviews**

The sampling methods that the researcher used for selecting the sample for interviews were snowball and purposive methods. The snowball method was deemed useful in that the researcher approached a few individuals from the relevant population and those few individuals then acted as key informants and identified other members from the same population that could be included in the sample. These individuals may in turn identify a further set of relevant individuals so that the sample, like a rolling snowball, grows in size until saturated. The interviews were aimed at the managers and senior personnel of the hotels to get a broader picture of why the consumers choose their hotels over others in the city. For the purposive sampling, the researcher relied mainly on experience to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample obtained could be regarded as being representative of the relevant population.

### **3.9 Summary**

The research procedures and techniques that were used for the study were discussed, including the research methodology that was used to conduct the study.

The theoretical perspective of the research process was provided. The focus was on the research methods that were applied in the research study. The method that was followed to collect data from the sample was explained. The processing and analysis and evaluation of the data were outlined. Details of the data collection methods, sampling process and data analysis were provided.

The types of data, research design, population and sample, and qualitative research methods were discussed. The data collection instrument, data collection methods and the structure of the questionnaire were discussed, as were the population, the sampling and how the sample for the research was selected. Interviews and focus groups that were used in the survey were also discussed to give a clear picture of how the data was collected from the sample.

The data analysis and interpretation are presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

Data is a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables; restated, data is individual pieces of information. The analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making. Data analysis is the application of reasoning to understand and interpret the data that has been collected. The appropriate analytical technique for data analysis shall be determined by the researcher's information requirements, the characteristics of the research design and the nature of data collected (Zikmund, 2003:73). Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using analytical and logical reasoning to examine each component of the data provided. Data was gathered from various sources, reviewed, and then analysed to come to some sort of finding or conclusion. A variety of specific data analysis methods were used, some of which were data mining, text analytics, business intelligence, and data visualisation.

This chapter looks at the analysis and interpretation of the data. The data that was collected had to be analysed to make sense of what it represents. Welman *et al.* (2005:211) state that "data analysis helps us to investigate variables, as well as their effect, relationship and patterns of involvement within our world by means of statistical techniques". The data was obtained from the questionnaires that were completed by the guests and staff members of the hotels participating in the research.

Malhotra & Birks (2006:422) state that the "data process is guided by the preliminary data analysis that was formulated in the research design phase". In analysing quantitative data, the major preparation techniques include data editing, data coding and data input (Bradley, 2007:328). Malhotra & Birks (2006:423) further explain that "editing is the review of the data with the objective of increasing accuracy and precision". Editing, as explained by Bradley (2007:329), ensures that the answers are complete, accurate and suitable for further processing. Through editing, the questionnaires were screened to identify illegible, incomplete, inconsistent or ambiguous responses.

## **4.2 Structure of the questionnaires**

The questions in the questionnaire were based on the objectives of the research and how the objectives tied in with the variables involved. In order to understand the relationship between consumer behaviour and brands, the researcher deemed it necessary to first define the field of interest, being the population of the study – branded hotels in Gaborone. The researcher then had a clear idea of the participants from whom information could be gathered. The reason for selecting the participating hotels out of the many was that one was a new entrant in the Gaborone hospitality market, while the other two had recently been re-branded.

## **4.3 Structure of interviews**

Unstructured interviews were conducted, as most of the participants were visited at their place of work during work time. Unstructured interviews are informal and are used to explore a general idea of interest in depth. This method was adopted as the research study was qualitative research that sought to identify important variables in a particular area to generate hypotheses for further investigation. McMillan & Schumacher (2010:206), states that “unstructured interviews allow the interviewer great latitude in asking broad questions in whatever order is deemed appropriate”.

## **4.4 Data collection methods**

The data collection methods included qualitative and quantitative methods.

### **4.4.1 Qualitative**

The interviews were conducted at the selected hotels in Gaborone after the data from the questionnaires had been gathered in order to expand on the respondents' answers. The specific respondents responsible for completing the questionnaires, namely the marketing and sales managers of the participating hotels, were contacted for interviewing.

The questions that constituted the interview were an addition to what was asked in the questionnaires, and sought to supplement what could have been omitted from the answers to the initial questions.

### **4.4.2 Quantitative**

The questionnaires were distributed to the selected hotels in Gaborone. A total of 200 questionnaires for guests and 100 for staff were distributed to three hotels out of a possible nine situated in the Greater Gaborone area. The questionnaires were given to the sales managers to distribute to the guests and staff in their respective hotels.

A total of 134 questionnaires were received back by the researcher from guests, making it a response rate of 67%, and 71 questionnaires for staff were received back by the researcher, making it a response rate of 71%. The researcher followed up the questionnaires by telephone and the questionnaires were collected as and when the hotels were ready.

Certain themes or questions that were present in both the guest questionnaires and the staff questionnaires were repeated. This was due to the fact that at some point the staff were using the hotels as guests, e.g. a staff member spending a night in a sister hotel that was branded under a certain category but still for the same group of hotels. The researcher utilised this method of cross-questioning in order to increase the accuracy of the responses received from the respondents mainly staff from the employee point of view and from the staff as a guest point of view.

#### **4.5 Program used for data analysis**

The results were entered into the statistics solution computer program, Moonstats. The data was produced by Moonstats, including the graphs to depict the results.

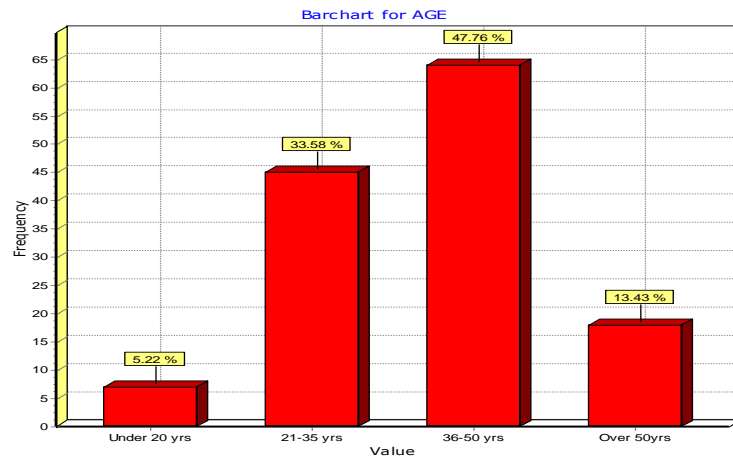
#### **4.6 Analysis of questionnaires for guests**

##### **4.6.1 Biographical details**

##### **4.6.1.1 Question 1**

What is your age?

This question was asked to determine what age group the respondents belonged to. This was used to determine if age played a role in the selection and the use of the branded hotels. A total of 5.22% of the respondents were under the age of 20, 33.58% of the respondents were in the age group 21 to 35 years, 47.76% of the respondents were in the age group 36 to 50 years, and 13.43% of the respondents were in the age group over 50 years. This showed that the people who frequented the hotels were aged 21 to 35 years. This could be because they were actively employed and had money to spend on frequenting hotels.

**Figure 4.1 Age of participants**

Frequency table for AGE

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Under 20 years	7	5.22	5.22
21-35 years	45	33.58	38.81
36-50 years	64	47.76	86.57
Over 50 years	18	13.43	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

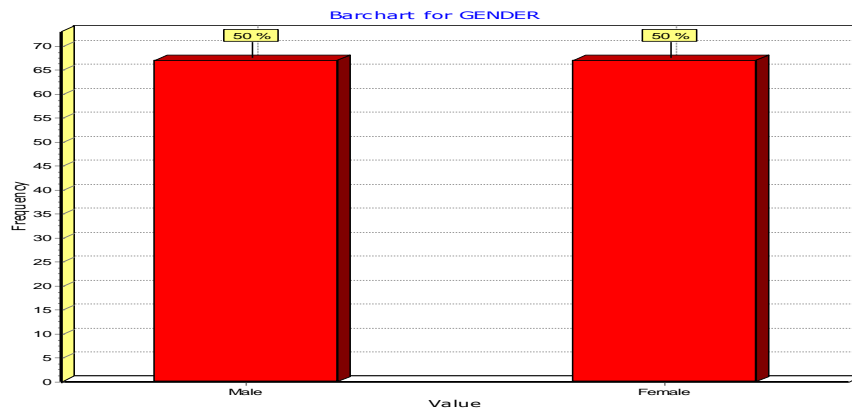
**4.6.1.2 Question 2**

What is your gender?

This question was asked to determine the gender of the respondents. This could provide an indication of which gender was aware of the brands that were available in the hospitality market of Gaborone. It was determined that 50% of the 134 respondents were males and 50% were females. This means that both males and females actively participated in the survey.



**Figure 4.2 Gender**



Frequency table for GENDER

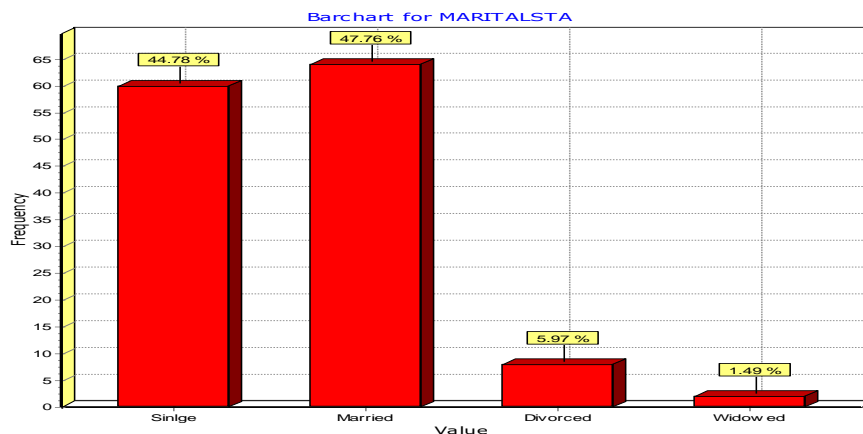
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Male	67	50.00	50.00
Female	67	50.00	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.1.3 Question 3

What is your marital status?

This question was asked to determine the marital status of the respondents and whether this had any connection with the way the respondents chose the branded hotels they used. It was deduced that 44.78% of the respondents were single, 47.76% of the respondents were married, 5.97% were divorced and 1.49% were widowed.

**Figure 4.3 Marital status**



Frequency table for MARITAL STATUS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Single	60	44.78	44.78
Married	64	47.76	92.54
Divorced	8	5.97	98.51
Widowed	2	1.49	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

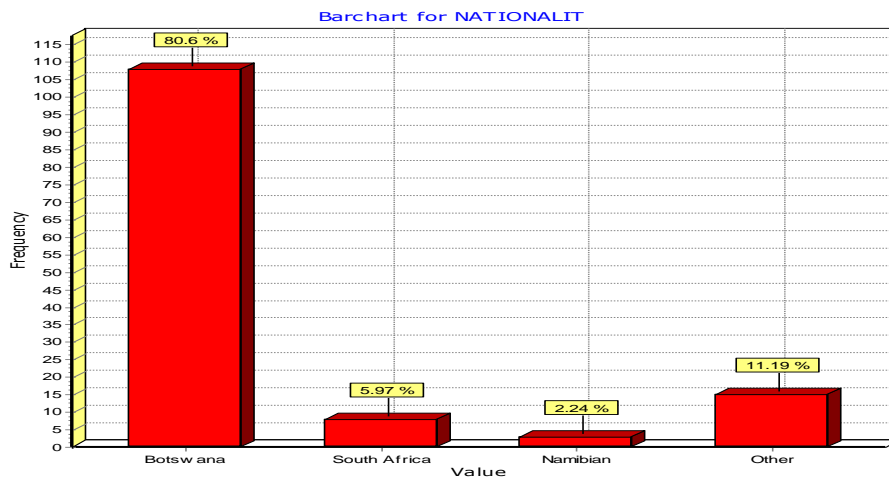
**4.6.1.4 Question 4**

What is your nationality?

This question was asked to determine the nationality of the respondents and how it affected their tendency to choose to use branded hotels. The results showed that 80.6% were Batswana, 5.97% were South African, 2.24% were Namibian and 11.19% were from other countries.

This showed that Batswana frequented the hotels in large numbers.

**Figure 4.4 Nationality**



Frequency table for NATIONALITY

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Botswana	108	80.60	80.60
South Africa	8	5.97	86.57
Namibian	3	2.24	88.81
Other	15	11.19	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

### 4.6.2 Guest information

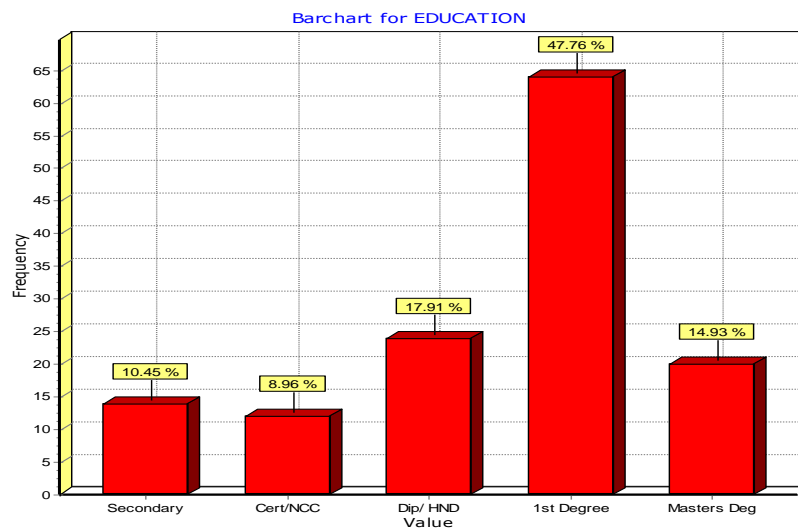
#### 4.6.2.1 Question 5

What is your education level?

This was asked to determine the educational level the respondents had attained, as their education level could influence their way of thinking when they choose a branded hotel and what they understood by brands. It was deduced that 1.45% had a secondary education, 8.96% had a certificate or NCC, 17.91% had a diploma or HND, 47.76% had a first degree and 14.93% had a master’s degree.

This was an indication that the respondents may have an idea of what a branded hotel is and the benefits of using such hotels.

**Figure 4.5 Education attainment**



Frequency table for EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

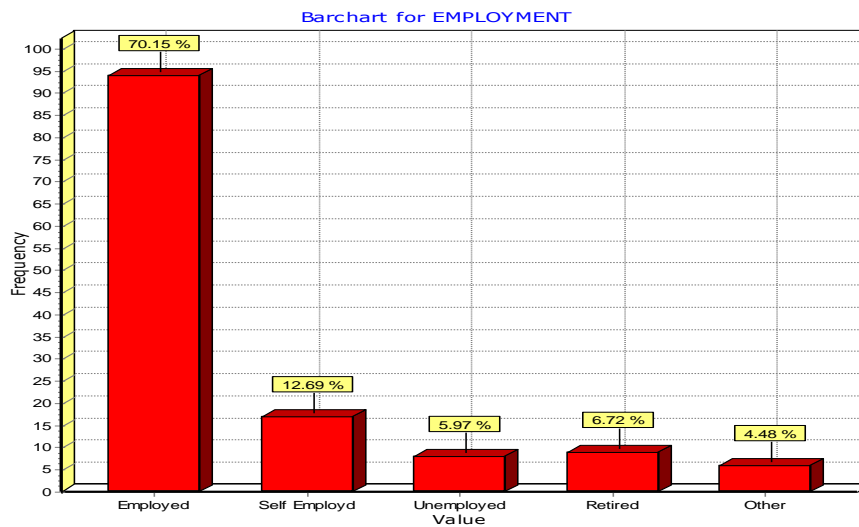
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Secondary	14	10.45	10.45
Cert/NCC	12	8.96	19.40
Dip/ HND	24	17.91	37.31
1st Degree	64	47.76	85.07
Master’s Degree	20	14.93	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.2.2 Question 6

What is your employment status?

This was asked to determine the employment status of the respondents, which indicate how they used their time and how long they could stay in the hotel of their choice. The researcher could determine that, out of the people who responded, 70.15% were employed, 12.69% were self-employed, 5.97% were unemployed, 6.72% were retired and 4.48% stated other. This further indicates that most of the respondents were able to afford using the hotels

**Figure 4.6 Employment status**



Frequency table for EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Employed	94	70.15	70.15
Self Employed	17	12.69	82.84
Unemployed	8	5.97	88.81
Retired	9	6.72	95.52
Other	6	4.48	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.2.3 Question 7

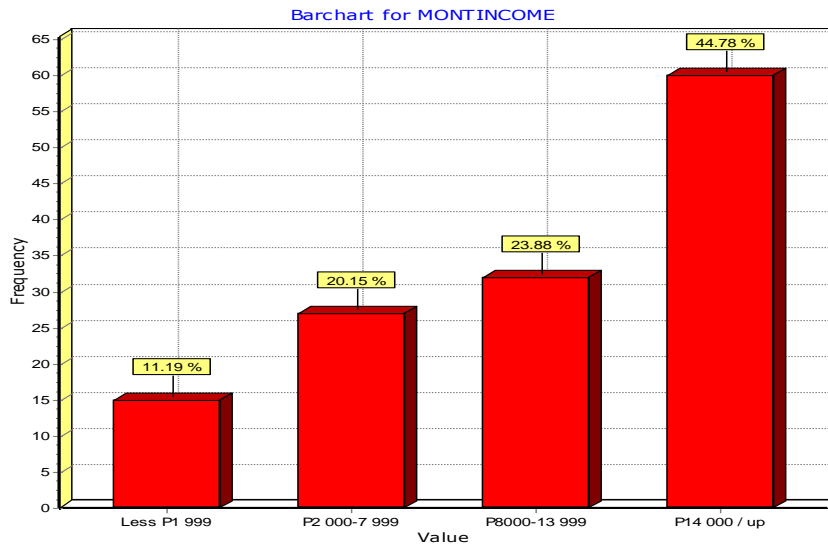
What is your monthly income?

This question was asked to determine the monthly income of the respondents. This could determine if the respondents could afford to spend money on branded hotels. The results showed that 11.19% earned less than P1 999.00 (R 20590.58), 20.15% earned P2 000.00 (R 2591.88), to 7 999.00 (R10633.23), 23.88% earned 8 000.00 (R10367.52), to P13 000.00 (R

16 847.23), and 44.78% earned P14 000.00 (R 18 143.17), or more. (1 BWP = 1.2959 ZAR)

The researcher further deduced that most of the people could afford to stay in branded hotels looking at their monthly income.

**Figure 4.7 Monthly income**



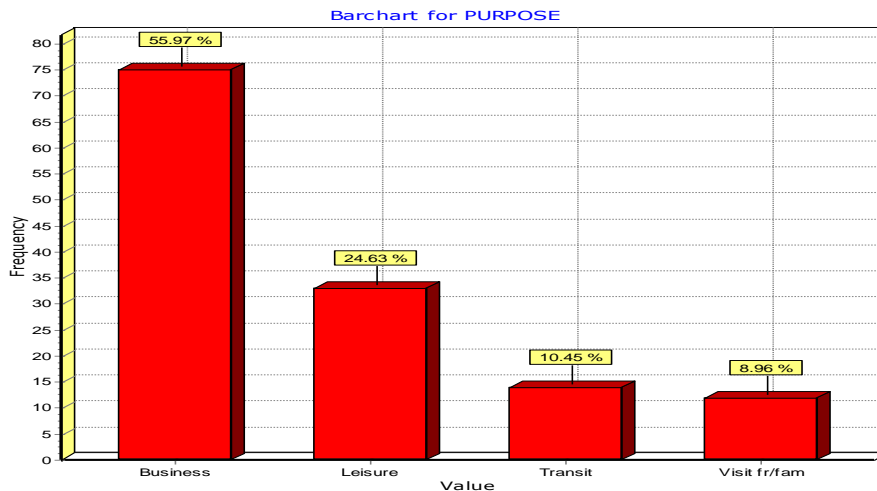
Frequency table for MONTHLY INCOME

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Less P1 999	15	11.19	11.19
P2 000-7 999	27	20.15	31.34
P8000-13 999	32	23.88	55.22
P14 000 / up	60	44.78	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**4.6.2.4 Question 8**

What is your main purpose for choosing a hotel?

This question was asked to determine the respondents' main purpose for choosing the hotel. It was determined that 55.97% used the hotels for business, 24.63% used the hotels for leisure, 10.45% used the hotels for transit and 8.96% used the hotels to visit friends or family. This showed that most of the people frequented the hotels for business purposes.

**Figure 4.8 Main purposes for choosing a hotel**

Frequency table for PURPOSE FOR CHOOSING HOTEL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Business	75	55.97	55.97
Leisure	33	24.63	80.60
Transit	14	10.45	91.04
Visit friends or family	12	8.96	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**4.6.2.5 Question 9**

Please rank the following factors that you think could promote your choice of a hotel.

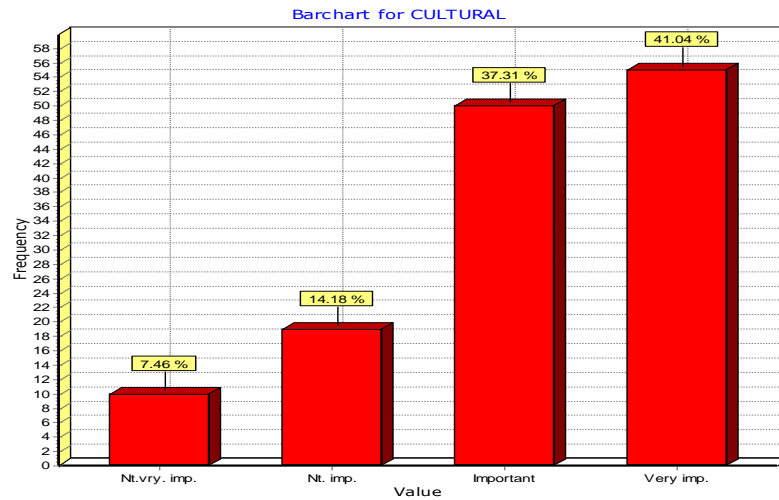
This information was requested to determine the factors that the guest thought promoted their choice of hotel. The factors were cultural (culture, subculture and social class), social (reference groups, opinion leaders and family), personal (age and life cycle, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle and personal, and self-concept) and psychological (motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitude). These factors influenced the buying decisions of consumers. The purchase of a product is influenced by both mental and physical activity.

These activities are called behaviours and their result is a combination of varieties determinant of the relation between the type of customer and his / her role.

**Cultural**

From the responses it was determined that 7.46% thought that cultural factors were not very important in influencing their choice, 14.18% thought that cultural factors were not important in influencing their choice, 37.31% thought that cultural factors were important in influencing their choice, and 41.04% thought that cultural factors were very important in influencing their choice. This shows that people chose the hotels based on their cultural background.

**Figure 4.9.1 Cultural factors**



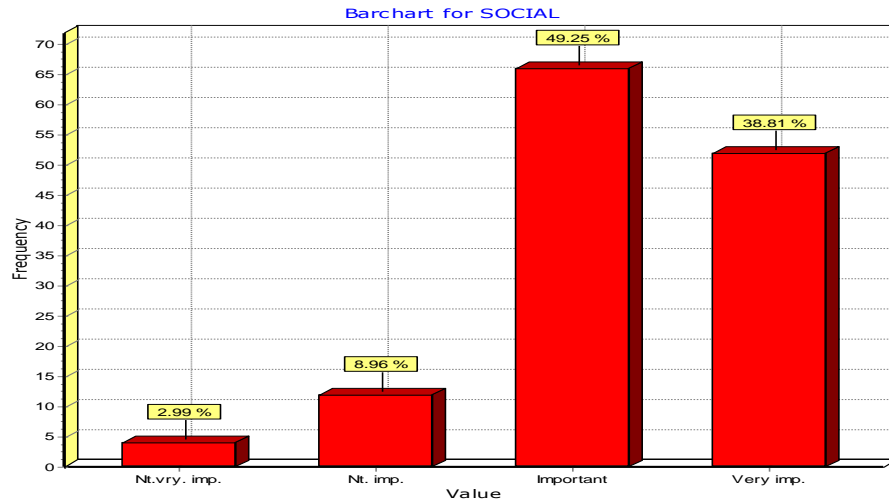
Frequency table for CULTURAL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	10	7.46	7.46
Not important	19	14.18	21.64
Important	50	37.31	58.96
Very important	55	41.04	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

### Social

From the responses it was determined that 2.99% thought that social factors were not very important in influencing their choice, 8.96% thought that social factors were not important in influencing their choice, 49.25% thought that social factors were important in influencing their choice and 38.81% thought that social factors were very important in influencing their choice. This indicates that people chose the hotels for social reasons, looking at the number of respondents who stated important and very important combined.

**Figure 4.9.2 Social factors**



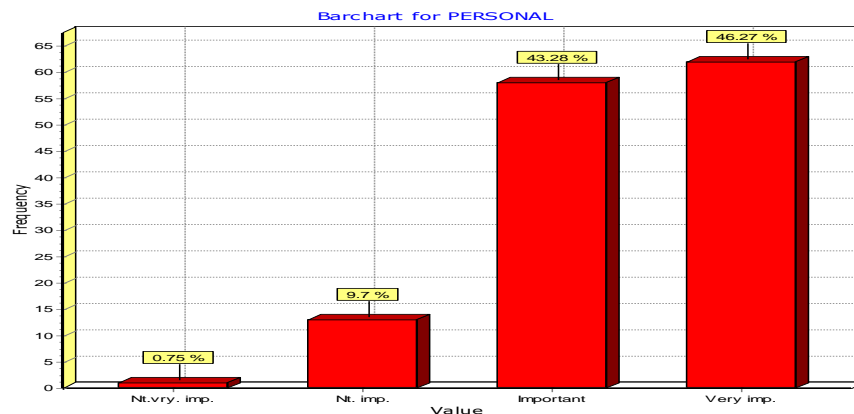
Frequency table for SOCIAL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	4	2.99	2.99
Not important	12	8.96	11.94
Important	66	49.25	61.19
Very important	52	38.81	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**Personal**

From the responses it was determined that 0.75% thought that personal factors were not very important in influencing their choice, 9.7% thought that personal factors were not important in influencing their choice, 43.28% thought that personal factors were important in influencing their choice and 46.27% thought that personal factors were very important in influencing their choice. The researcher deduced that the respondents chose the hotels for personal reasons, looking at the number of people who responded with important and very important combined.

**Figure 4.9.3 Personal factors**





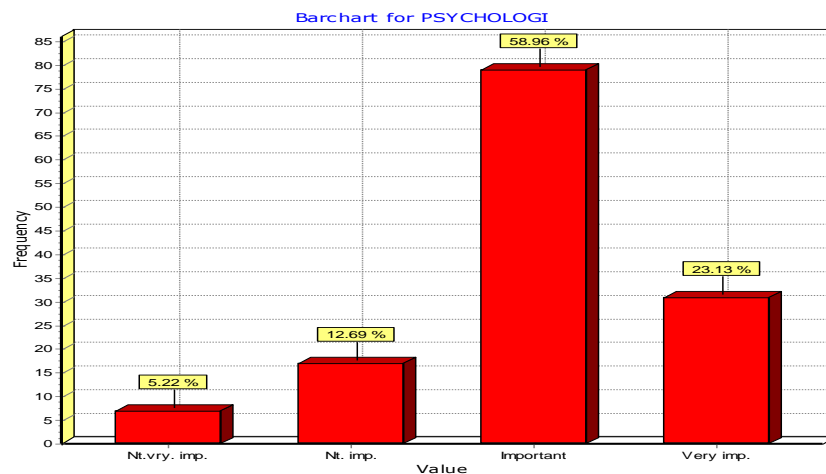
Frequency table for PERSONAL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	1	0.75	0.75
Not important	13	9.70	10.45
Important	58	43.28	53.73
Very important	62	46.27	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

### Psychological

From the responses it was determined that 5.22% thought that psychological factors were not very important in influencing their choice, 12.69% thought that psychological factors were not important in influencing their choice, 58.96% thought that psychological factors were important in influencing their choice and 23.13% thought that psychological factors were very important in influencing their choice. This further indicated that people were aware of what they chose psychologically when they selected hotels to stay in.

**Figure 4.9.4 Psychological factors**



Frequency table for PSYCHOLOGICAL

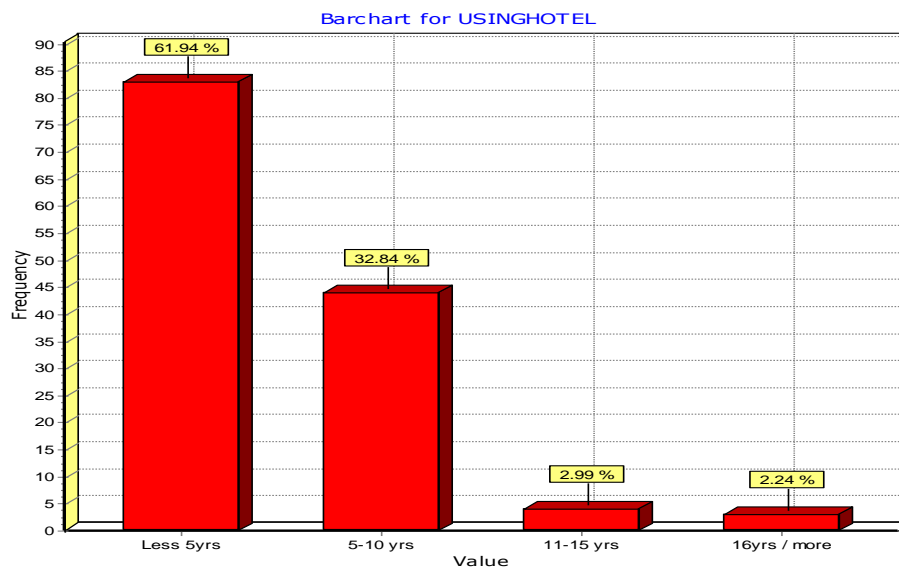
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	7	5.22	5.22
Not important	17	12.69	17.91
Important	79	58.96	76.87
Very important	31	23.13	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.2.6 Question 10

How long have you been using the hotel you have chosen?

This question was asked to determine how long the guests had been using the hotel they chose. It was determined that 61.94% of the guests had used the hotel for less than five years, 32.84% of guests had used the hotel for five to ten years, 2.99% of the guests had used the hotel for 11 to 15 years, and 2.24% of the guests had used the hotel for 16 or more years. It was deduced that 38.07% (11 to 15 years, five to 10 years and 16 years or more combined) of the respondents may be the loyal customers, while 61.94% (less than five years) may be using other brands at times (first time visitors).

**Figure 4.10** Frequenting of the hotel



Frequency table for USING HOTEL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Less 5years	83	61.94	61.94
5-10 years	44	32.84	94.78
11-15 years	4	2.99	97.76
16 years or more	3	2.24	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

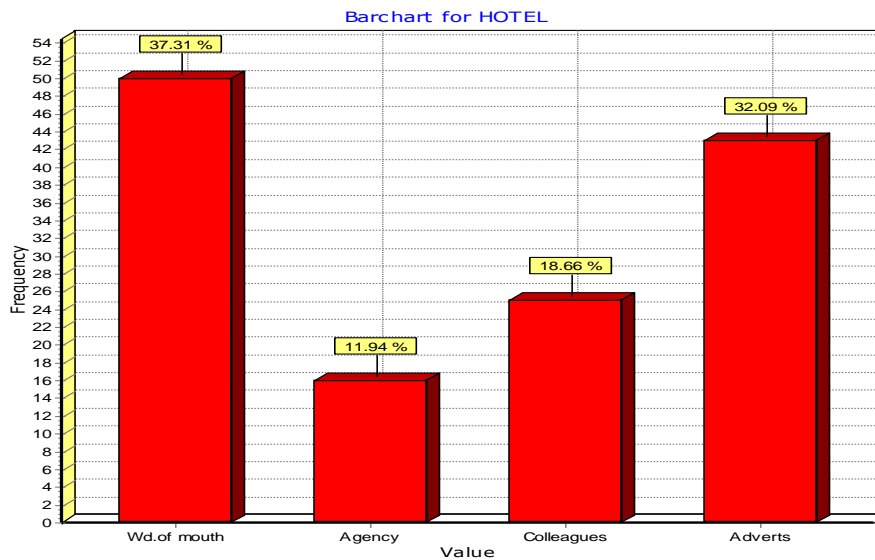
#### 4.6.2.7 Question 11

How did you learn about the hotel you have chosen?

This was asked to determine how the guests got to know about the hotel they chose. It was deduced that 37.31% of the guests heard about the hotel through word of mouth, 11.94% heard about the hotel through an agency, 18.66% heard about the hotel through colleagues and 32.09% heard about the hotel through advertisements.

This shows that 55.97% of the respondents knew about the hotel through word of mouth and colleagues combined, while 44.03% knew about the hotel through advertising and agents combined.

**Figure 4.11 How did you learn about the hotel that you have chosen**



Frequency table for HOTEL

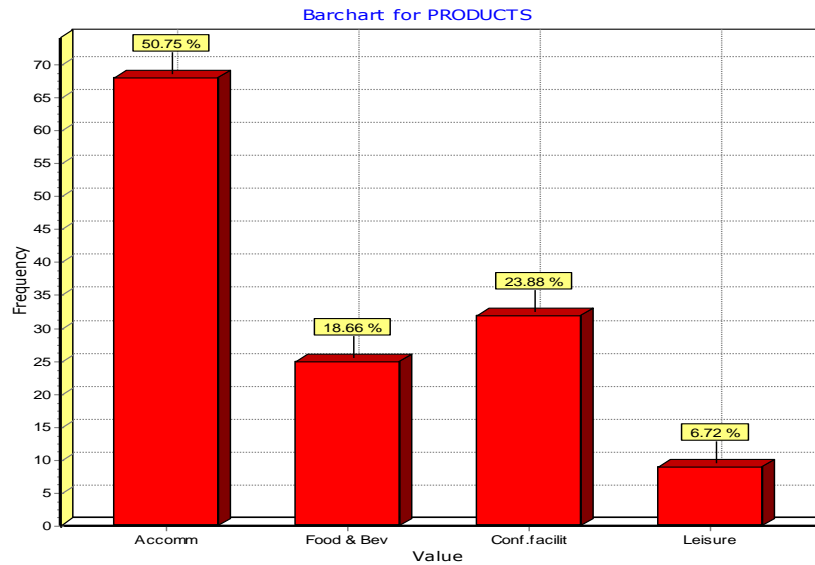
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Word of mouth	50	37.31	37.31
Agency	16	11.94	49.25
Colleagues	25	18.66	67.91
Adverts	43	32.09	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**4.6.2.8 Question 12**

Which products of the hotel do you think customers use as the basis for selecting the hotel in order to frequent it as a hotel of their choice?

This was asked to determine which product of the hotel they used as a basis for choosing and frequenting a hotel. It was determined that 50.75% used accommodation as the basis for choosing a hotel, 18.66% used food and beverages as the basis for choosing a hotel, 23.88% used conference facilities as the basis for choosing a hotel, while 6.72% used leisure as the basis for choosing a hotel. Most customers frequented the hotels in Gaborone for accommodation.

**Figure 4.12 Which products of the hotel do you think customers use as the basis for selecting the hotel in order to frequent it as a hotel of their choice?**



Frequency table for PRODUCTS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Accommodation	68	50.75	50.75
Food & Bev	25	18.66	69.40
Conference facilities	32	23.88	93.28
Leisure	9	6.72	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.2.9 Question 13

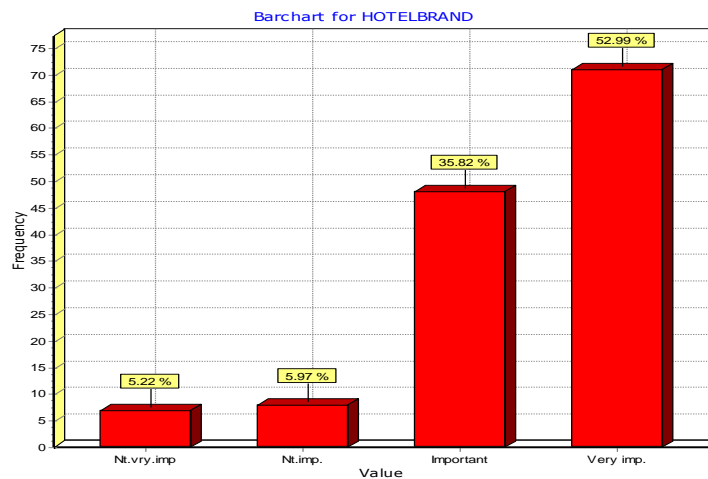
Please rate the following factors that in your opinion could affect your decision when choosing hotels.

This question was asked to determine which factors affected the decision making of the guests when choosing a hotel. The question was asked based on consumer buying behaviour, which explains that people are prompted by a stimulus when they are in the process of acquiring something, e.g. when they make a choice of a hotel, there is a decision-making process that they go through. The stimuli in this case were marketing and other stimuli, namely the 4Ps – product, price, place and promotion, as well as economic, technological, political and cultural stimuli. All these are tied to the buyer process, namely product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing and purchase amount.

#### 4.13.1 Hotel brand

From the responses it was determined that 52.99% of the guests stated that the hotel brand had a very important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 35.82% stated that the hotel brand had an important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, 5.97% stated that the hotel brand was not an important effect in their decision making, and 5.22% stated that the hotel brand did not have a very important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose.

**Figure 4.13.1 Hotel brand**



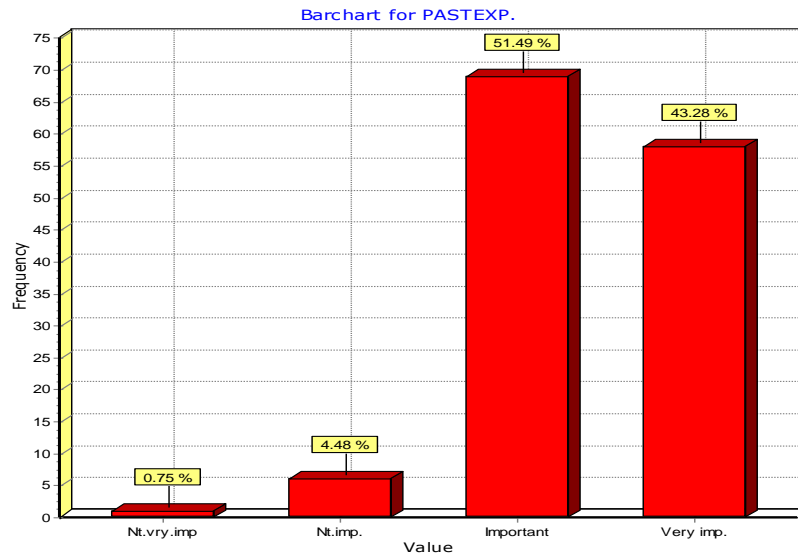
Frequency table for HOTELBRAND

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	7	5.22	5.22
Not important	8	5.97	11.19
Important	48	35.82	47.01
Very important	71	52.99	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.13.2 Past experience

From the responses it was determined that 43.28% of the guests stated that past experience had a very important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 51.49% stated that past experience had an important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 4.48% stated that past experience was not an important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 0.75% stated that past experience had no important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose. Most of the respondents used their past experience with the hotels as a basis of choosing which hotel to use. This was deduced by the number of respondents who responded with important and very important combined.

**Figure 4.13.2 Past experience**



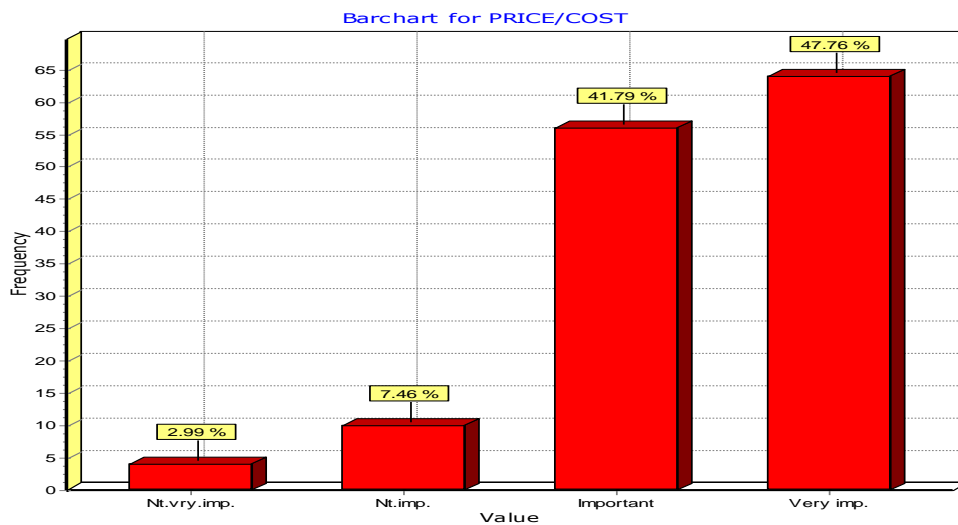
Frequency table for PAST EXPERIENCE

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	1	0.75	0.75
Not important	6	4.48	5.22
Important	69	51.49	56.72
Very important	58	43.28	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**4.13.3 Price/cost**

From the responses it was determined that 47.76% of guests stated that the price/cost had a very important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, 41.79% of guests stated that the price/cost had an important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 7.46% stated that the price/cost was not an important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 2.99% stated that the price/cost had no important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose. The results showed that, looking at the combined results of very important and important, most people used price and cost as their basis for choosing a hotel.

Figure 4.13.3 Price / cost

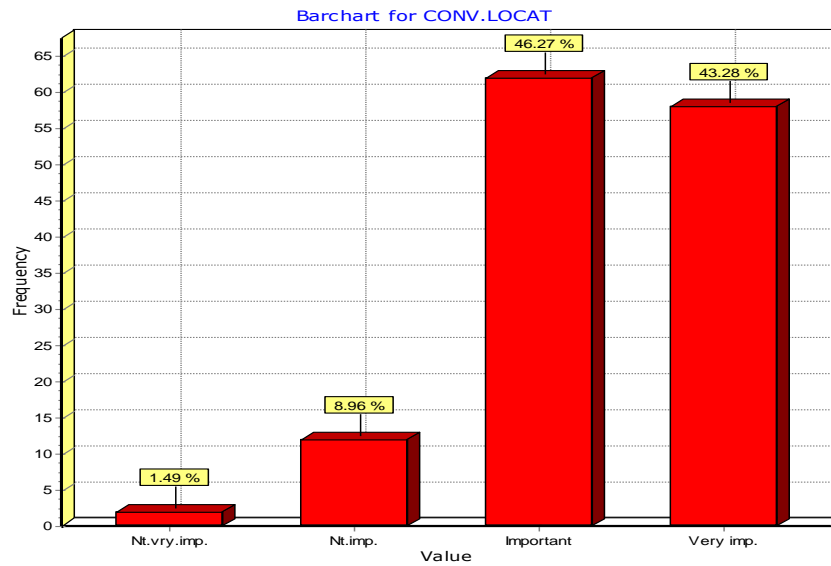


Frequency table for PRICE/COST

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	4	2.99	2.99
Not important	10	7.46	10.45
Important	56	41.79	52.24
Very important	64	47.76	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.13.4 Convenience of the location

From the responses it was determined that 43.28% of the guests stated that the convenience of the location of the hotel had a very important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 46.27% of the guests stated that the convenience of the location had an important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 8.96% stated that the convenience of the location was not an important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 1.49% of the guests stated that the convenience of the location had no important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose. Of the respondents, 89.55% stated that they chose the hotels because the location was convenient for them (results of important and very important combined).

**Figure 4.13.4 Convenience of the location**

Frequency table for CONV.LOCAT

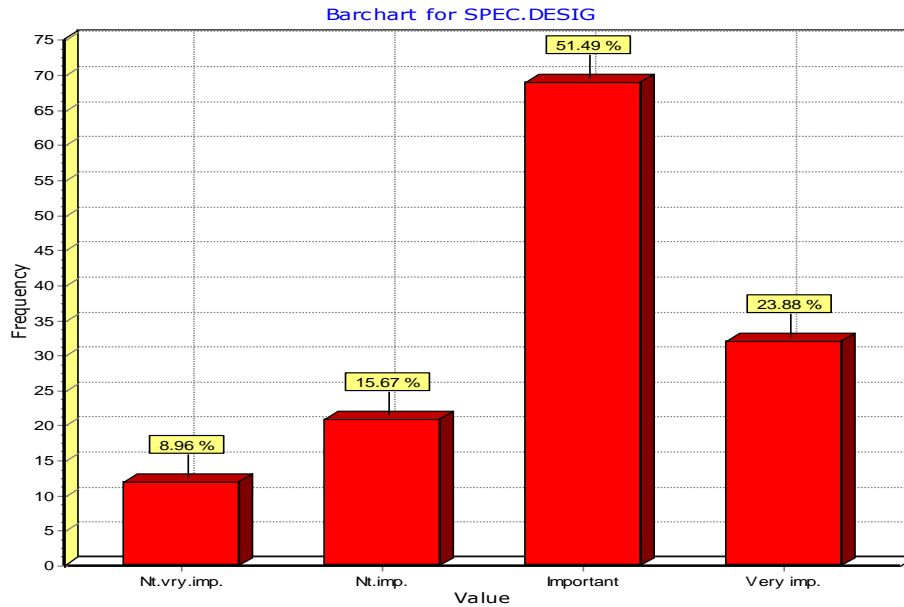
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	2	1.49	1.49
Not important	12	8.96	10.45
Important	62	46.27	56.72
Very important	58	43.28	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**4.13.5 Special design of the hotel**

From the responses it was determined that 23.88% of the guests stated that the special design of the hotel had a very important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 51.49% stated that the special design of the hotel had an important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose, 15.67% stated that the special design of the hotel was not an important effect in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 8.96% stated that the special design of the hotel had no important effect on their decision making on which hotel to choose. This showed that most respondents used the special design of the hotel as a basis for choosing the hotel, looking at the number of the respondents who stated very important and important combined.



**Figure 4.13.5 Special design of the hotel**



Frequency table for SPECIAL DESIGNS

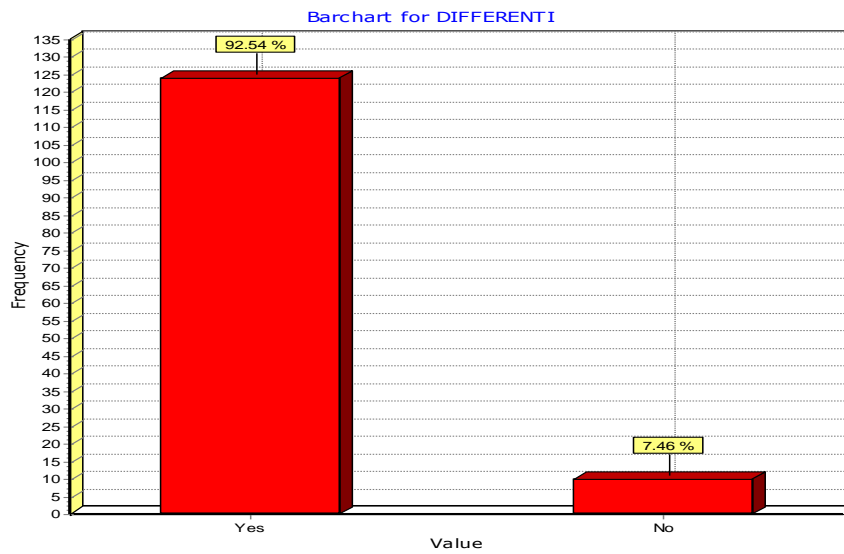
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	12	8.96	8.96
Not important	21	15.67	24.63
Important	69	51.49	76.12
Very important	32	23.88	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.2.10 Question 14

Are you able to differentiate the brand of the hotel that you have chosen in the area?

The question was asked to determine if the guests were able to differentiate the brand of the hotels in the area. It was deduced that 92.54% of the guests were able to differentiate the brand and 7.46% of the guests were not able to differentiate the brand. This further indicated that the respondents were able to differentiate the brands that were in the market.

**Figure 4.14 Are you able to differentiate the brand of the hotel that you have chosen in the area?**



Frequency table for DIFFERENTIATION

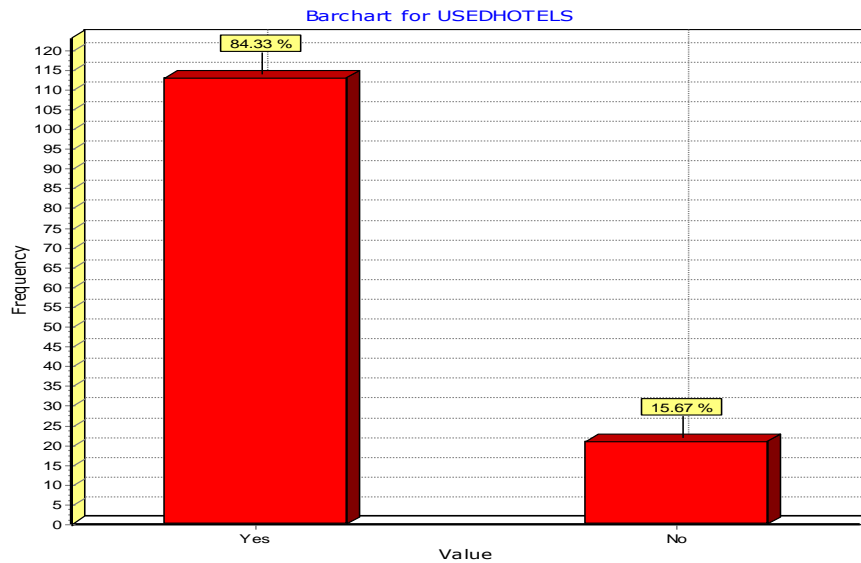
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	124	92.54	92.54
No	10	7.46	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

**4.6.2.11 Question 15**

Have you used branded hotels in the area other than the one chosen on a regular basis?

This question was asked to test if the guests used any other hotels in the area apart from the one they settled for. It was deduced that 84.33% of the guests had used other hotels on a regular basis, and 15.67% of the guests had not used other hotels on a regular basis. This showed that, since most of the hotels in Gaborone are branded, people move from one hotel to the other comparing them according to their brands.

**Figure 4.15 Have you used branded hotels in the area other than the one chosen on a regular basis?**



Frequency table for USEDHOTELS

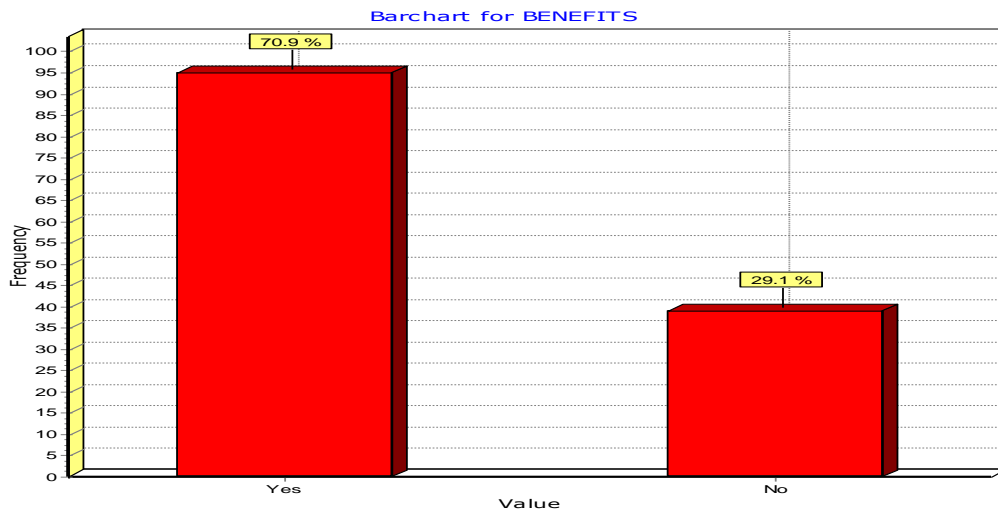
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	113	84.33	84.33
No	21	15.67	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.3.12 Question 16

In your opinion, are there any benefits in buying a branded item?

This was asked to get the opinion of the guests on whether there were any benefits in buying a branded item. From the responses it was clear that 70.9% of the guests thought there were benefits in buying a branded item, while 29.1% of the guests thought there were no benefits in buying a branded item. This showed that the guests were aware that the hotels they frequented were branded and that they frequented them because of the brands.

**Figure 4.16** In your opinion, are there any benefits in buying a branded item?



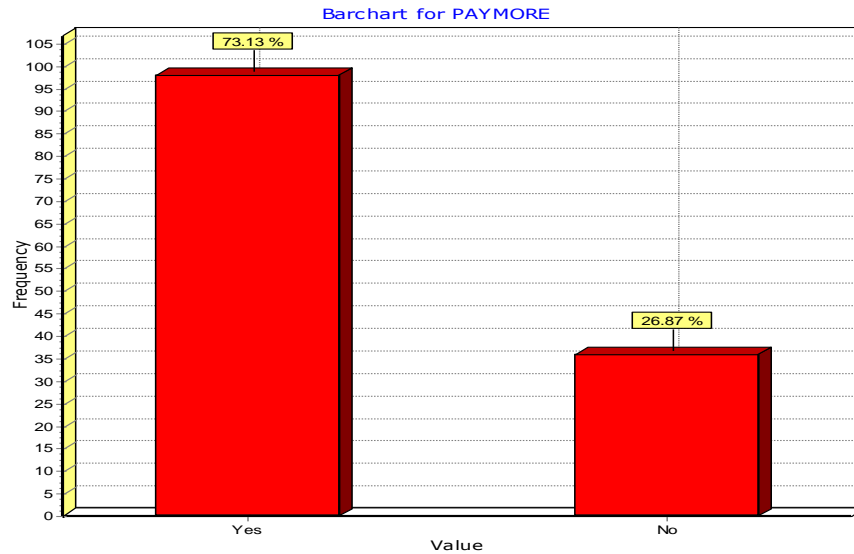
Frequency table for BENEFITS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	95	70.90	70.90
No	39	29.10	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.3.13 Question 17

Would you pay more for staying in a branded hotel?

This question was asked to determine if the guests were willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel. It was deduced that 73.13% of the guests were willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel, while 26.87% of the guests were not willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel. Most guests knew that brands were worth it and therefore they would pay more for a branded hotel.

**Figure 4.17 Would you pay more for staying in a branded hotel?**

Frequency table for PAYING MORE FOR A HOTEL

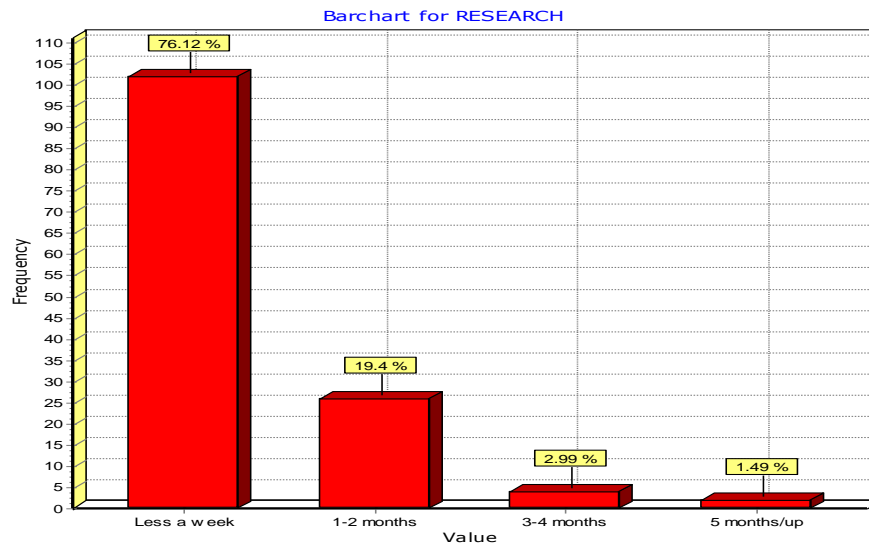
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	98	73.13	73.13
No	36	26.87	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.3.14 Question 18

How long do you usually research a branded hotel before settling for using its facilities?

This was asked to determine if the guests did research before opting to settle for a hotel and how long they did research. From the results it was shown that 76.12% of the guests took less than a week to do research, 19.4% took one to two months to do research, 2.99% took three to four months to do research, and 1.49% took five 5 months or more to do research. This further shows that, since most of the guests knew the hotels from word of mouth and from colleagues, they did not spend a lot of time doing research on hotels, and those who took one to two months may be the ones who go through agencies and advertisements.

**Figure 4.18 How long do you usually research a branded hotel before settling for using its facilities?**



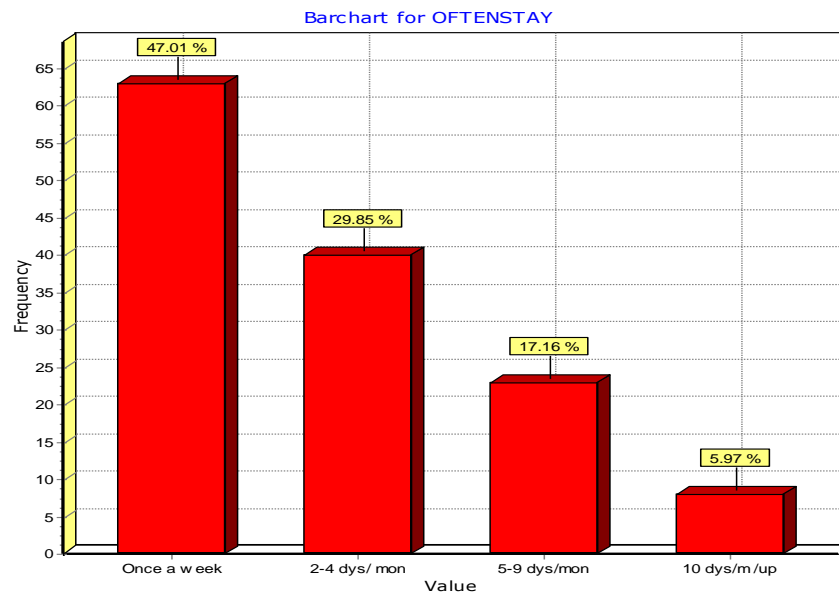
Frequency table for RESEARCHING A HOTEL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Less a week	102	76.12	76.12
1-2 months	26	19.40	95.52
3-4 months	4	2.99	98.51
5 months/up	2	1.49	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

#### 4.6.3.15 Question 19

How often do you stay in a branded hotel?

This was asked to determine how often the guests stayed in a branded hotel. It was determined that 47.07% stated that they stayed once a month, 29.85% stated that they stayed two to four days a month, 17.16% stayed five to nine days a month, and 5.97% stated that they stayed 10 days a month or more. This further explained that, since most of the guests used the hotels for business, they normally did not stay longer than nine days. Those who exceeded nine days were using the hotels for leisure.

**Figure 4.19 How often do you stay in a branded hotel?**

Frequency table for OFTEN STAYING IN A HOTEL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Once a week	63	47.01	47.01
2-4 days a month	40	29.85	76.87
5-9 days a month	23	17.16	94.03
10 days a month or more	8	5.97	100.00
TOTAL	134	100.00	

## 4.7 Analysis of questionnaires for staff

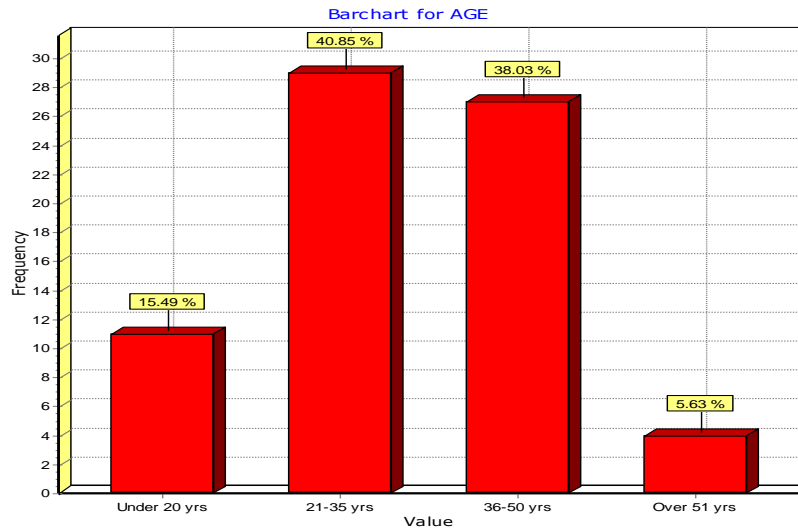
### 4.7.1 Biographical details

#### 4.7.1.1 Question 1

What is your age?

This question was asked to determine what age group the respondents belonged to. This was used to determine if age played a role in the selection of the branded hotels. A total of 15.49% of the respondents were under 20 years of age, 40.85% were in the age group 21 to 35 years, 38.03% of the respondents were in the age group 36 to 50 years, and 5.63% of the respondents were in the age group over 50 years.

Figure 4.20 Age



Frequency table for AGE

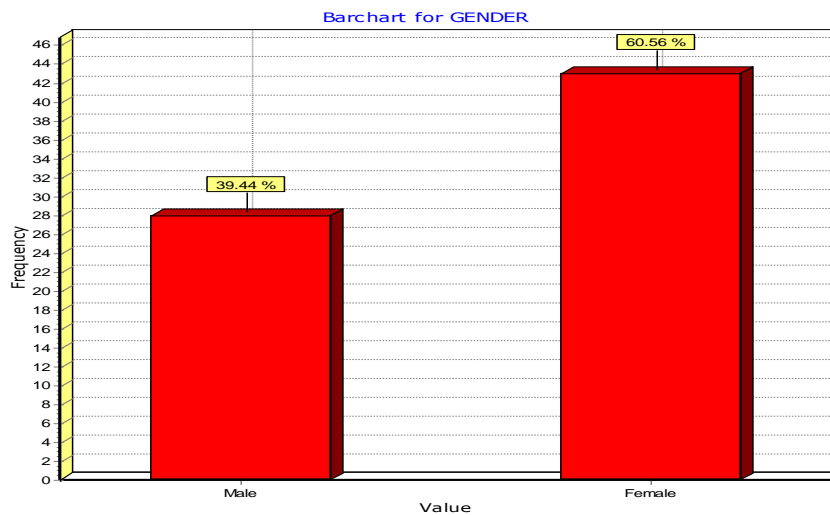
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Under 20 years	11	15.49	15.49
21-35 years	29	40.85	56.34
36-50 years	27	38.03	94.37
Over 51 years	4	5.63	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

#### 4.7.1.2 Question 2

What is your gender?

This question was asked to determine the gender of the respondents. It was determined that, out of the 71 respondents, 39.44% were males and 60.56% were females. This meant that more females responded than males.

Figure 4.21 Gender





Frequency table for GENDER

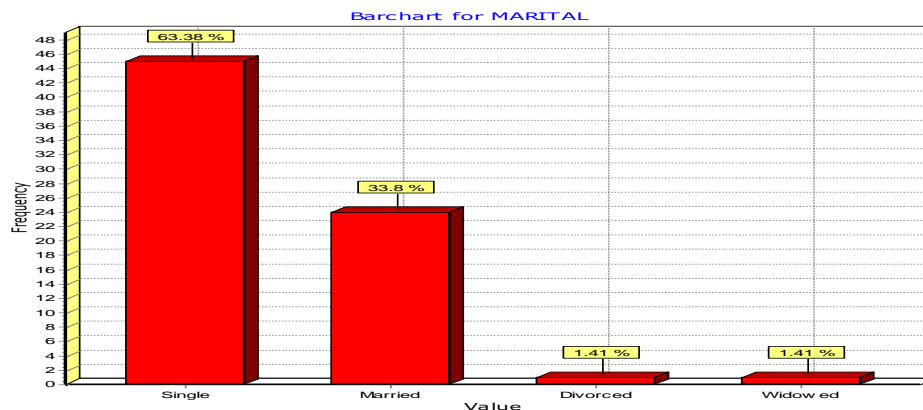
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Male	28	39.44	39.44
Female	43	60.56	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

#### 4.7.1.3 Question 3

What is your marital status?

This question was asked to determine the marital status of the respondents and whether this had any connection with the way the respondents chose the branded hotels they worked for. It was deduced that 63.38% of the respondents were single, 33.8% were married, 1.41% were divorced and 1.41% were widowed. This further showed that most of the people who were working in hotels were single, probably because of the working hours.

**Figure 4.22 Marital status**



Frequency table for MARITAL STATUS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Single	45	63.38	63.38
Married	24	33.80	97.18
Divorced	1	1.41	98.59
Widowed	1	1.41	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

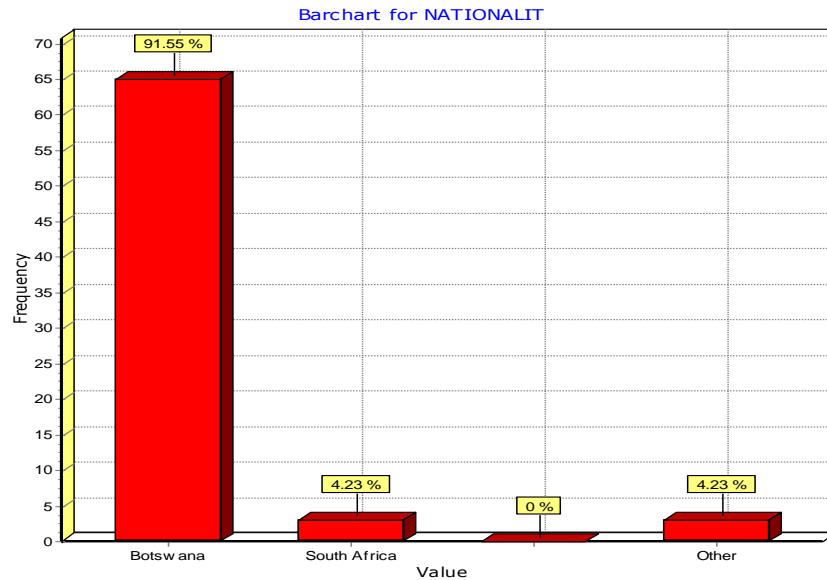
#### 4.7.1.4 Question 4

What is your nationality?

This question was asked to determine the nationality of the respondents and how it affected

their tendency to choose the branded hotels. The results showed that 91.55% were Batswana, 4.23% were South African and 4.23% were from other countries. This showed that most of the employees of the hotels were locals.

**Figure 4.23 Nationality**



Frequency table for NATIONALIT

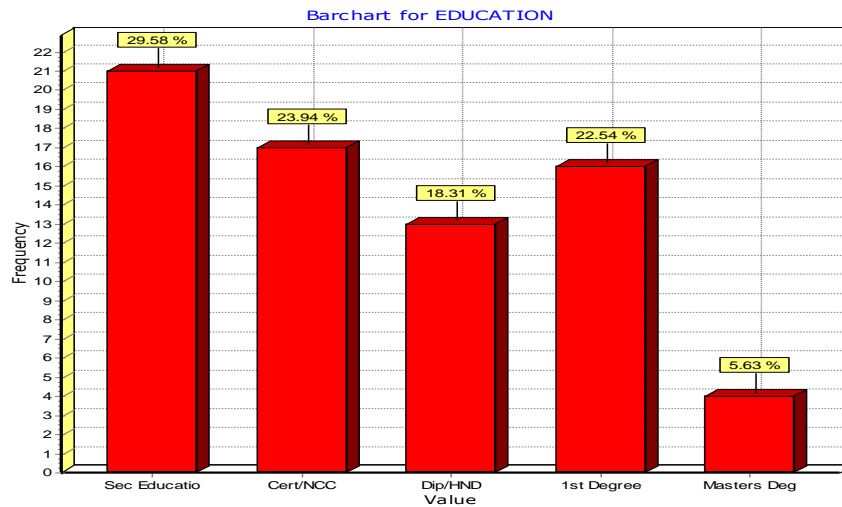
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Botswana	65	91.55	91.55
South Africa	3	4.23	95.77
Other	3	4.23	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.1.5 Question 5**

What is your education level?

This was asked to determine the educational level the respondents had attained. This indicated how their education level influenced their way of thinking when they chose a branded hotel and what they understood by brands. It was deduced that 29.58% had a secondary education, 23.94% had a certificate or NCC, 18.31% had a diploma or HND, 22.54% had a first degree and 5.63% had a master’s degree.

This showed that the number of employees with a secondary educations were more compared to other levels, this could be the fact that hotels preferred to employ young people and train them in – house according to the organisation’s needs.

**Figure 4.24 Education level**

Frequency table for EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

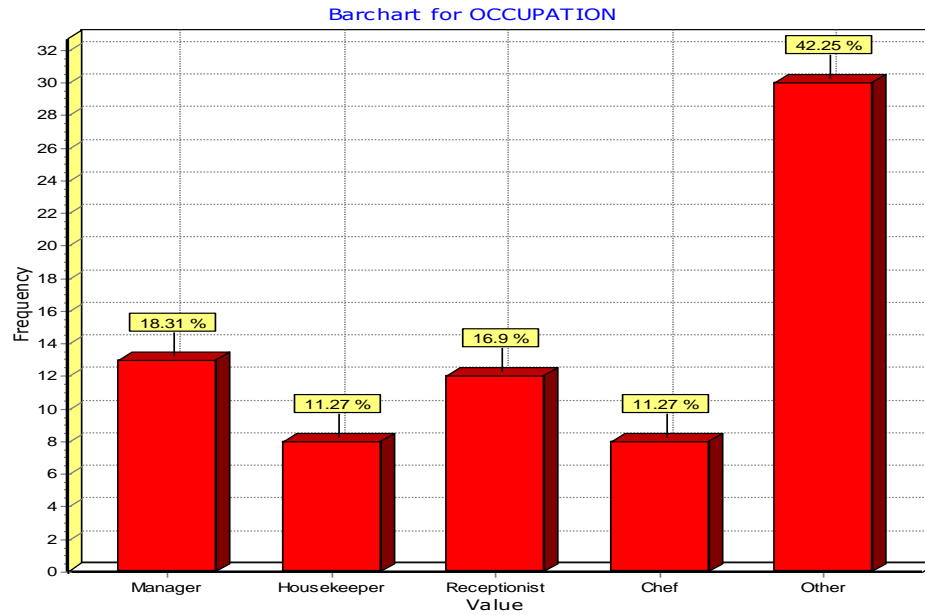
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Sec Education	21	29.58	29.58
Cert/NCC	17	23.94	53.52
Dip/HND	13	18.31	71.83
1st Degree	16	22.54	94.37
Master's Degree	4	5.63	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.1.6 Question 6**

What is your occupation?

This question was asked to find out the occupation of the respondents. It was deduced that 18.31% were managers, 11.27% were housekeepers, 16.9% were receptionists, 11.27% were chefs and 42.25% fell in the category of others, such as maintenance, porters, sales, marketing, night auditing and hosting.

**Figure 4.25 Occupation**



Frequency table for OCCUPATION

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Manager	13	18.31	18.31
Housekeeper	8	11.27	29.58
Receptionist	12	16.90	46.48
Chef	8	11.27	57.75
Other	30	42.25	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

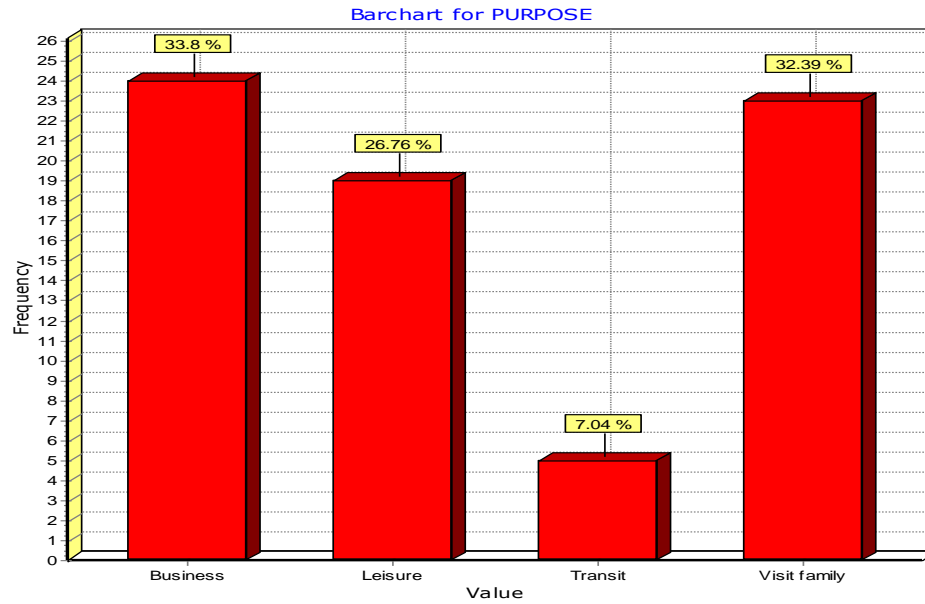
## 4.7.2 Staff information

### 4.7.2.1 Question 7

What is your main purpose for choosing a hotel?

The question was asked to determine the main purpose for choosing the hotel by the respondents. It was determined that 33.8% used the hotels for business, 26.76% used the hotels for leisure, 7.04% used the hotels for transit and 32.39% used the hotels to visit friends or family. The results showed that most employees used the hotels – probably the hotels from the chain group they worked for – for business, followed by visiting family on their off days and staying in the sister hotels they work for.

**Figure 4.26 Main purpose for choosing a hotel**



Frequency table for PURPOSE OF CHOOSING THE HOTEL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Business	24	33.80	33.80
Leisure	19	26.76	60.56
Transit	5	7.04	67.61
Visit family	23	32.39	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.2 Question 8**

Please rank the following factors that you think could promote your choice of a hotel.

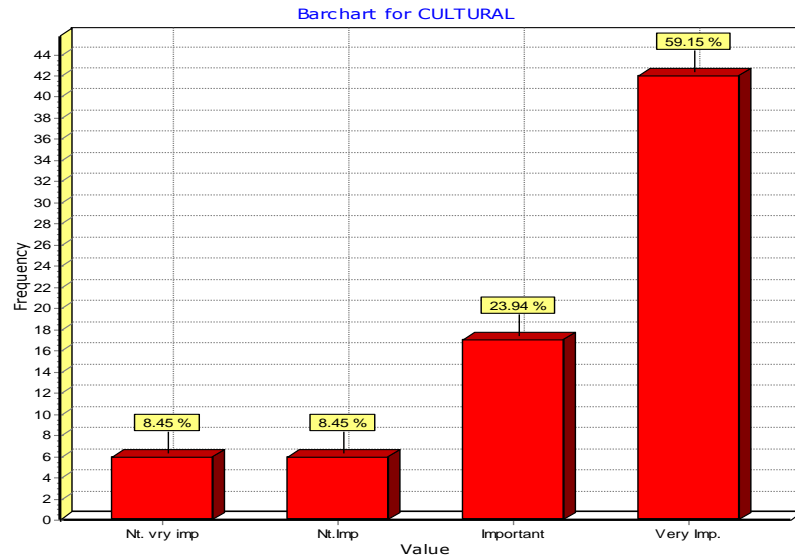
The question was asked to determine the factors that the respondents thought promoted their choice of hotel. The factors were: Cultural (Culture, subculture and social class), social (reference groups, opinion leaders and family), personal (age and life-cycle, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle and personal, and self-concept) and psychological (motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitude). These factors were chosen because they are the factors that influence the buying decisions of consumers.

**4.7.2.2.1 Cultural**

From the responses it was determined that 59.15% of the respondents thought that cultural factors were very important in influencing their choice, 23.94% of the respondents thought that cultural factors were important in influencing their choice, 8.45% of the respondents thought that cultural factors were not important in influencing their choice, and 8.45% of the respondents thought that cultural factors were not very important in influencing their choice.

This goes to show that employees use their cultural background to choose a hotel.

**Figure 4.27.1 Cultural**



Frequency table for CULTURAL

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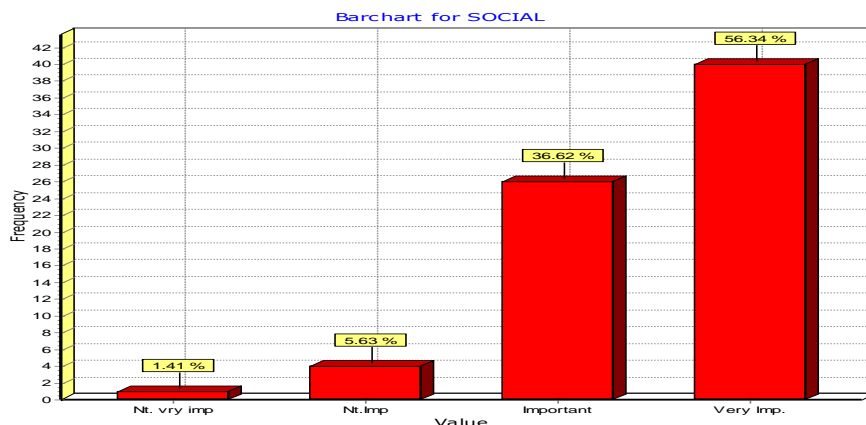
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	6	8.45	8.45
Not important	6	8.45	16.90
Important	17	23.94	40.85
Very important	42	59.15	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

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**4.7.2.2.2 Social**

From the responses it was determined that 56.34% thought that social factors were very important in influencing their choice, 36.62% thought that social factors were important in influencing their choice, 5.63% thought that social factors were not important in influencing their choice, and 1.41% thought that social factors were not very important in influencing their choice. This further asserts that employees choose a hotel based on social preferences.

**Figure 4.27.2 Social**



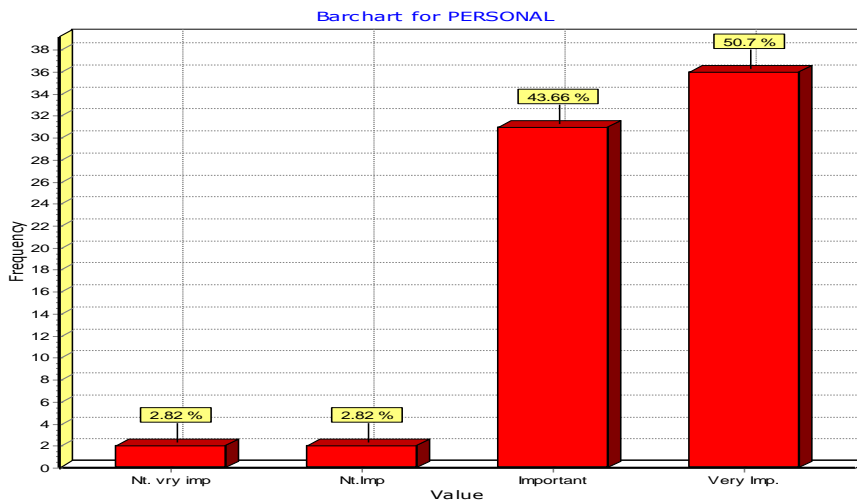
Frequency table for SOCIAL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	1	1.41	1.41
Not important	4	5.63	7.04
Important	26	36.62	43.66
Very important	40	56.34	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.2.3 Personal**

From the responses it was determined that 50.70% thought that personal factors were very important in influencing their choice, 43.66% thought that personal factors were important in influencing their choice, 2.82% thought that personal factors were not important in influencing their choice, and 2.82% thought that personal factors were not very important in influencing their choice. This further clarifies that most employees chose the hotels based on personal preferences.

**Figure 4.27.3 Personal**



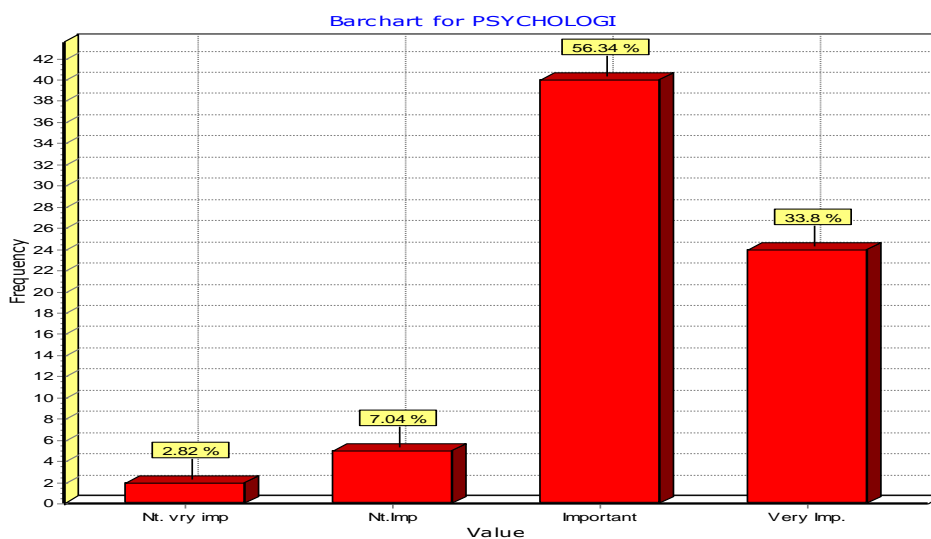
Frequency table for PERSONAL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	2	2.82	2.82
Not important	2	2.82	5.63
Important	31	43.66	49.30
Very important	36	50.70	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

#### 4.7.2.2.4 Psychological

From the responses it was determined that 33.8% thought that psychological factors were very important in influencing their choice, 59.34% thought that psychological factors were important in influencing their choice, 7.04% thought that psychological factors were not important in influencing their choice, and 2.82% thought that psychological factors were not very important in influencing their choice. This showed that 90.14% of the employees used psychological factors as one of the factors when choosing a hotel.

**Figure 4.27.4 Psychological**



Frequency table for PSYCHOLOGICAL

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	2	2.82	2.82
Not important	5	7.04	9.86
Important	40	56.34	66.20
Very important	24	33.80	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

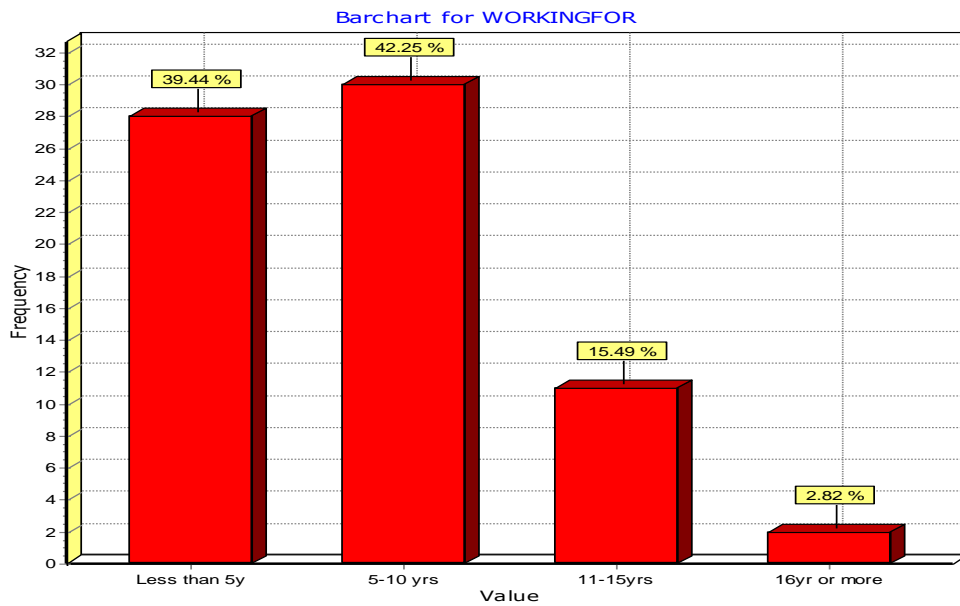
#### 4.7.2.3 Question 9

How long have you been working for this particular hotel?

This question was asked to determine how long the respondents had been working for the particular hotel they had chosen. A total of 39.44% of the respondents stated that they had worked for the hotel for less than five years, 42.25% stated that they had worked for the hotel for five to 10 years, 15.49% stated that they had worked for the hotel for 11 to 15 years, and 2.82% stated that they had worked for the hotel for 16 or more years.



**Figure 4.28 How long have you been working for this particular hotel?**



Frequency table for WORK DURATION AT THE HOTEL

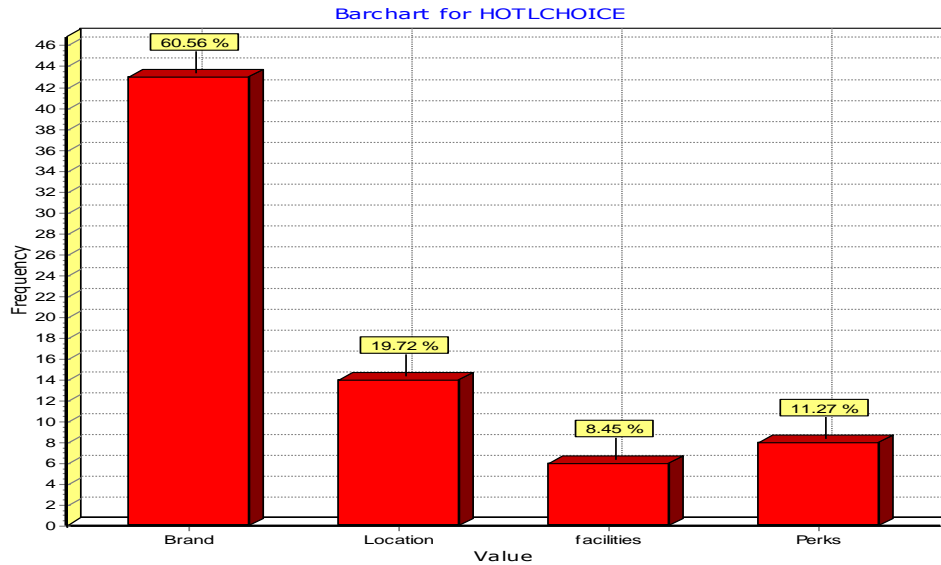
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Less than 5y	28	39.44	39.44
5-10 years	30	42.25	81.69
11-15 years	11	15.49	97.18
16 years or more	2	2.82	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.4 Question 10**

How did you come to choose the hotel you are working for?

This question was asked to determine the factors that the respondents used to choose the hotel they worked for. The results showed that 60.56% used the brand of the hotel group as guidance for their choice, 19.72% used the location of the hotel as guidance for their choice, 8.45% used the facilities of the hotel as guidance for their choice, and 11.27% used the perks the hotel offers to staff as guidance for their choice. Most employees used the brand of the hotel to seek employment with that hotel, showing that people preferred to work for branded hotels.

**Figure 4.29** How did you come to choose the hotel you are working for?



Frequency table for HOTEL CHOICE

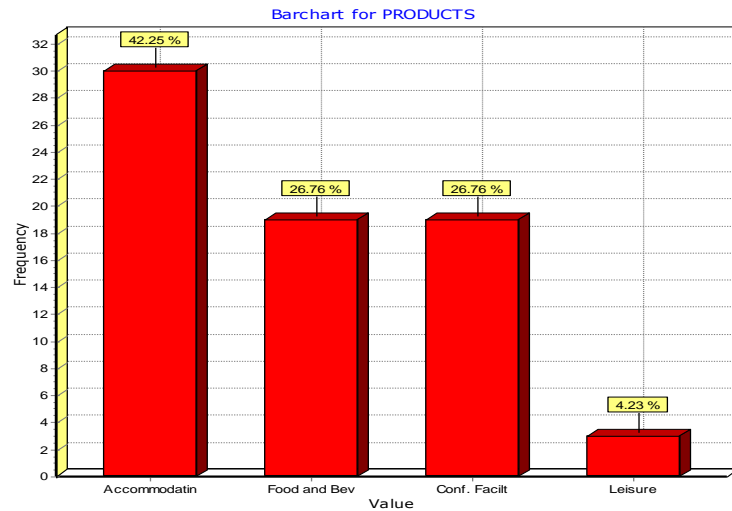
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Brand	43	60.56	60.56
Location	14	19.72	80.28
Facilities	6	8.45	88.73
Perks	8	11.27	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

#### 4.7.2.5 Question 11

Which of the following products of the hotel do you think customers use as the basis for selecting the hotel in order to frequent it as a hotel of their choice?

This question was asked to determine which product of the hotel the employees thought customers used as a basis for choosing and frequenting a hotel. It was determined from the results that 42.25% thought the customers used accommodation as the basis for choosing a hotel, 26.76% thought customers used food and beverage as the basis of choosing a hotel, 26.76% thought customers used conference facilities as the basis of choosing a hotel, and 4.23% thought customers used leisure as the basis for choosing a hotel. This showed that the customers who frequent the hotels they work for were mainly attracted by their accommodation product.

**Figure 4.30 Which of the following products of the hotel do you think customers use as the basis for selecting the hotel in order to frequent it as a hotel of their choice?**



Frequency table for HOTEL PRODUCTS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Accommodation	30	42.25	42.25
Food and Beverage	19	26.76	69.01
Conf. Facilities	19	26.76	95.77
Leisure	3	4.23	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.6 Question 12**

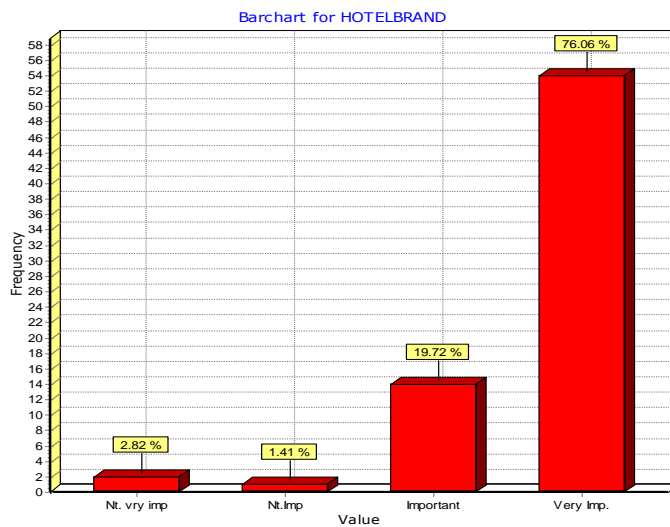
Please rate the factors that in your opinion could affect a customer’s decision on choosing hotels.

The question was asked to determine which factors affected the decision making of the guests when choosing a hotel. The question was asked based on the consumer buying behaviour, which explains that people are prompted by a stimulus when they are in the process of acquiring something, e.g. when one is to make a choice of hotel, there is a decision-making process that they go through. The stimuli in this case were the marketing and other stimuli (4Ps) – product, price, place and promotion, as well as stimuli such as economic, technological, political and cultural. All these were tied to the buying process as product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing and purchase amount.

**4.7.2.6.1 Hotel brand**

From the responses it was determined that 76.06% of the employees thought that the hotel brand had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 19.72% of the employees thought the hotel brand had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 1.41% of the employees thought that the hotel brand did not have an important influence in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose, and 2.82% of the employees stated that the hotel brand had no important influence in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose. Most employees thought branding could influence the customer’s decision making when choosing a hotel.

**Figure 4.31.1 Hotel brand**



Frequency table for HOTEL BRAND

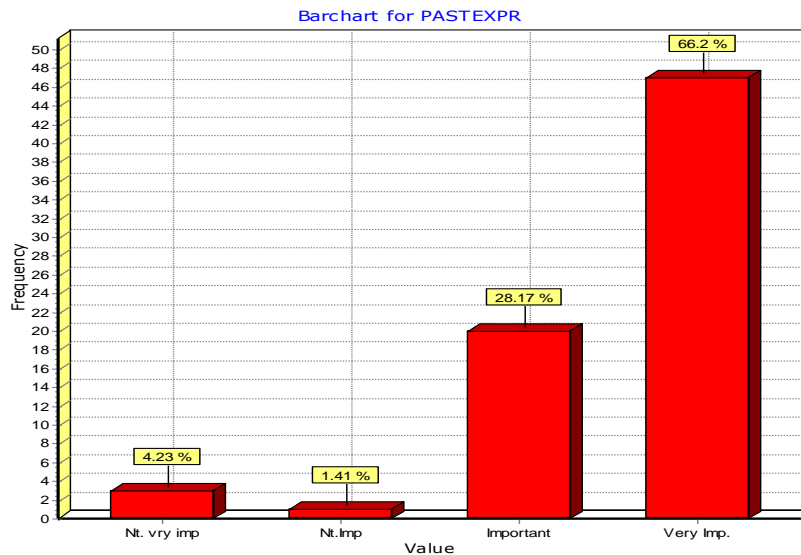
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	2	2.82	2.82
Not important	1	1.41	4.23
Important	14	19.72	23.94
Very important	54	76.06	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.6.2 Past experience**

From the responses it was determined that 66.20% of the employees stated that past experience played a very important role in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose, 28.17% of the employees stated that past experience played an important role in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose, 1.41% of the employees stated that past experience did not play an important role in the decision making

of customers on which hotel to choose, and 4.23% of employees stated that past experience did play an important role in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose. A total of 94.37% of the respondents therefore stated that they thought that past experience of the hotel was one of the factors that the customers used to choose the hotel (very important and important responses).

**Figure 4.31.2 Past experience**



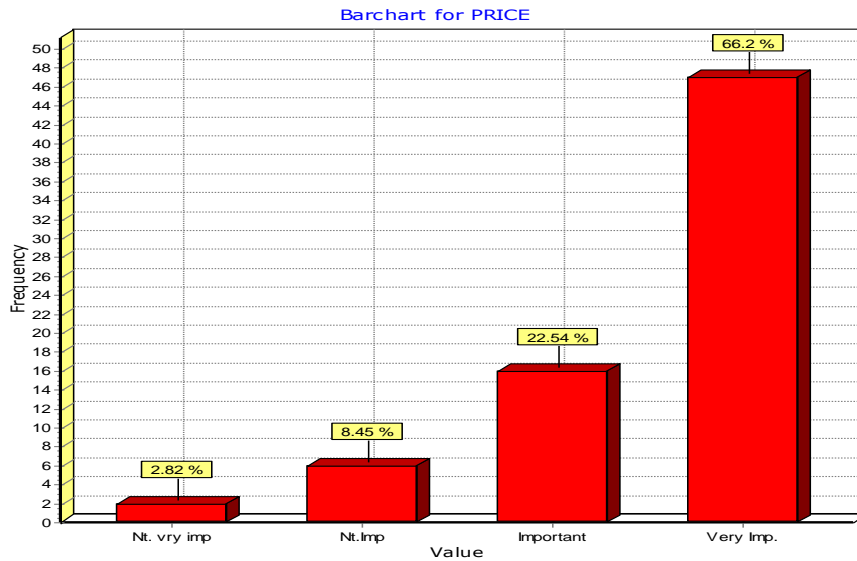
Frequency table for PAST EXPERIENCES

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very imp	3	4.23	4.23
Not important	1	1.41	5.63
Important	20	28.17	33.80
Very important	47	66.20	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.6.3 Price/cost**

From the responses it was determined that 66.20% of the employees stated that the price/cost played a very important role in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 22.54% of the employees stated that the price/cost played an important role in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 8.45% of the employees stated that the price/cost did not play an important role in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, and 2.82% of the employees stated that the price/cost did not play an important role in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose. A total of 88.74% of the respondents thus stated that price/cost determine why the customers choose the hotels.

**Figure 4.31.3 Price / Cost**



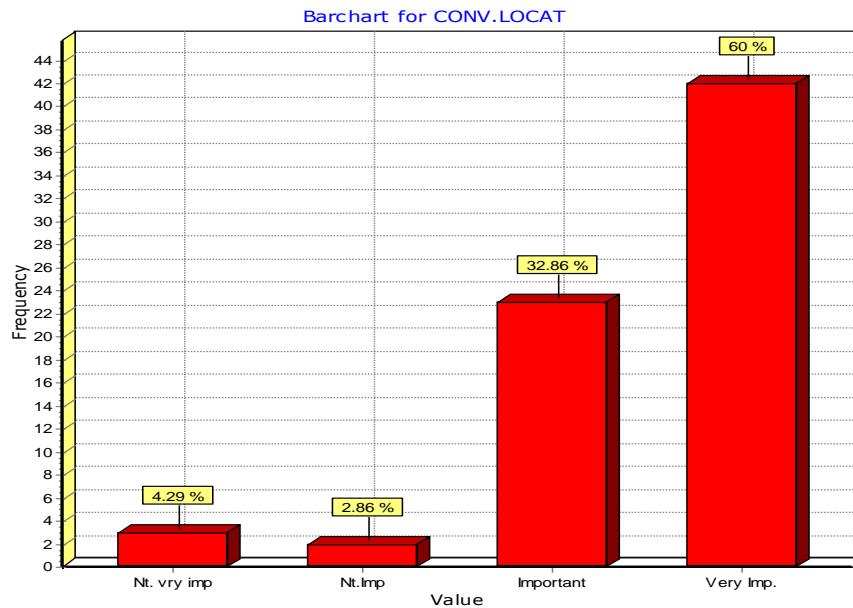
Frequency table for PRICE / COST

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very important	2	2.82	2.82
Not important	6	8.45	11.27
Important	16	22.54	33.80
Very important	47	66.20	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.6.4 Convenience of the location**

From the responses it was determined that 60% of the employees stated that the convenience of the location of the hotel had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 32.86% employees stated that the convenience of the location had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 2.86% of the employees stated that the convenience of the location did not have an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, and 4.29% of the employees stated that the convenience of the location did not have an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose.

**Figure 4.31.4 Convenience of the location**



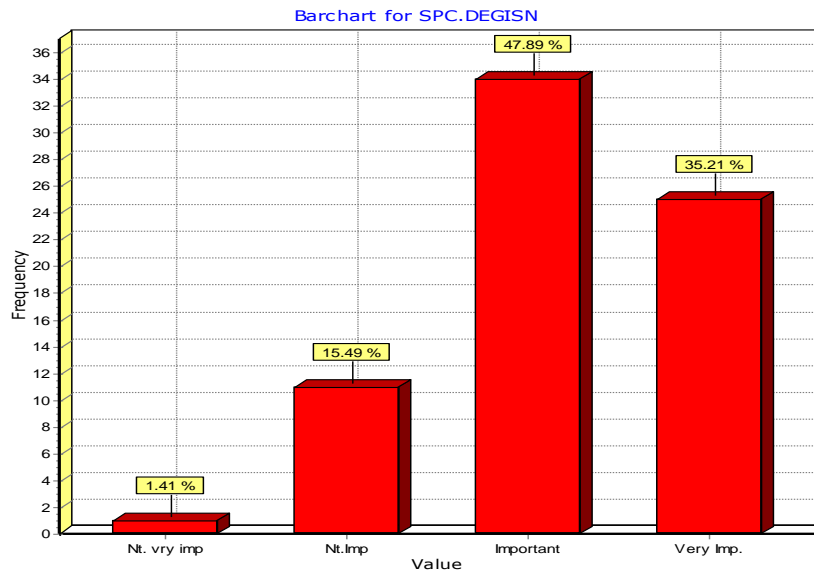
Frequency table for LOCATION CONVENIENCE

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not very imp	3	4.29	4.29
Not important	2	2.86	7.14
Important	23	32.86	40.00
Very important	42	60.00	100.00
TOTAL	70	100.00	

**4.7.2.6.5 Special design of the hotel**

From the responses it was determined that 35.21% of the employees stated that the special design of the hotel had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 47.89% of employees stated that the special design of the hotel had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 15.49% of employees stated that the special design of the hotel did not have an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, and 1.41% of employees stated that the special design of the hotel had no important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose. This shows that most of the employees thought that customers used the hotel’s special design to choose the hotels that they frequent.

**Figure 4.31.5 Special design of the hotel**



Frequency table for SPECIAL DESIGNS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Not. very important	1	1.41	1.41
Not important	11	15.49	16.90
Important	34	47.89	64.79
Very important	25	35.21	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

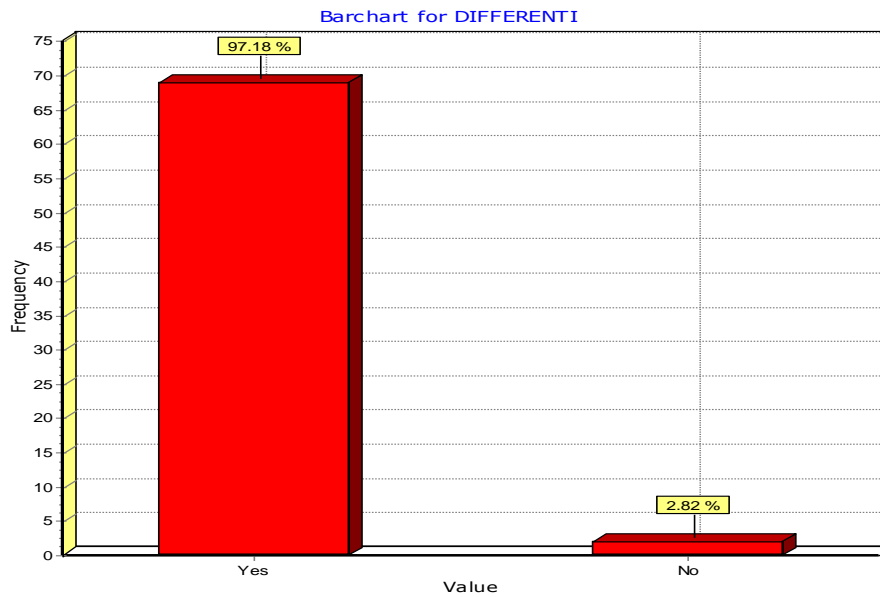
**4.7.2.7 Question 13**

Are the hotel customers able to differentiate the brand of the hotel that you work for from others in the area?

This question was asked to determine if the employees knew that the guests they served were able to differentiate the brands of the hotels in the area. It was deduced that 97.18% of the employees stated that guests were able to differentiate the brand (they answered yes), and 2.82% of the employees stated that guests were not able to differentiate the brand (they stated no). This further determined that, despite the many branded hotels in Gaborone, customers can differentiate between the brands that are available, helping them to choose one from the many.



**Figure 4.32 Are the hotel customers able to differentiate the brand of the hotel that you work for from others in the area?**



Frequency table for DIFFERENTIATION

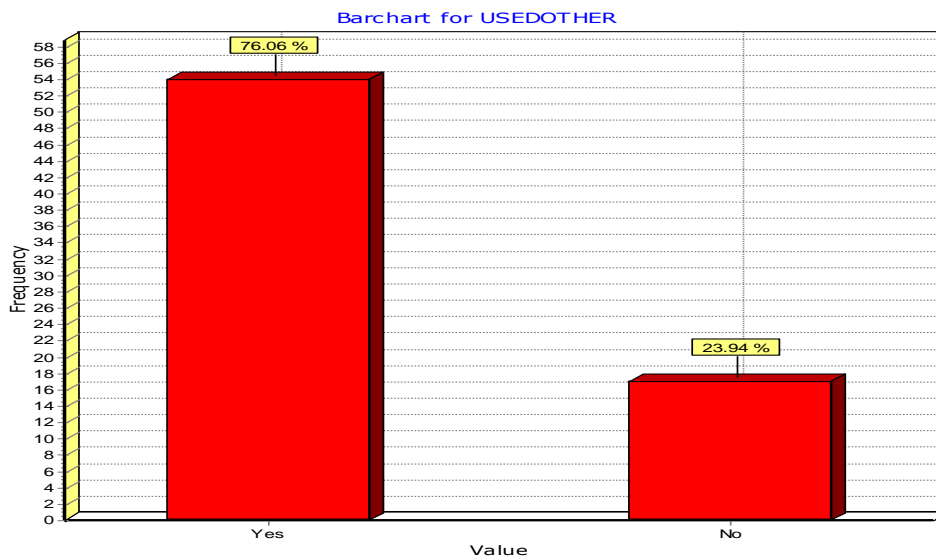
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	69	97.18	97.18
No	2	2.82	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.2.8 Question 14**

Have you as an employee used other hotels in the area before settling to use the one that you work for on a regular basis?

This question was asked to test if the employees/staff had used any other hotels in the area apart from the one they finally settled for. It was deduced that 76.08% of the staff used other hotels on a regular basis and 23.94% of the staff did not use other hotels on a regular basis. This shows that other than the hotel they work for, the employees/staff had used other hotel brands available to them.

**Figure 4.33** Have you as an employee used other hotels in the area before settling to use the one that you work for on a regular basis?



Frequency table for OTHER USED HOTELS

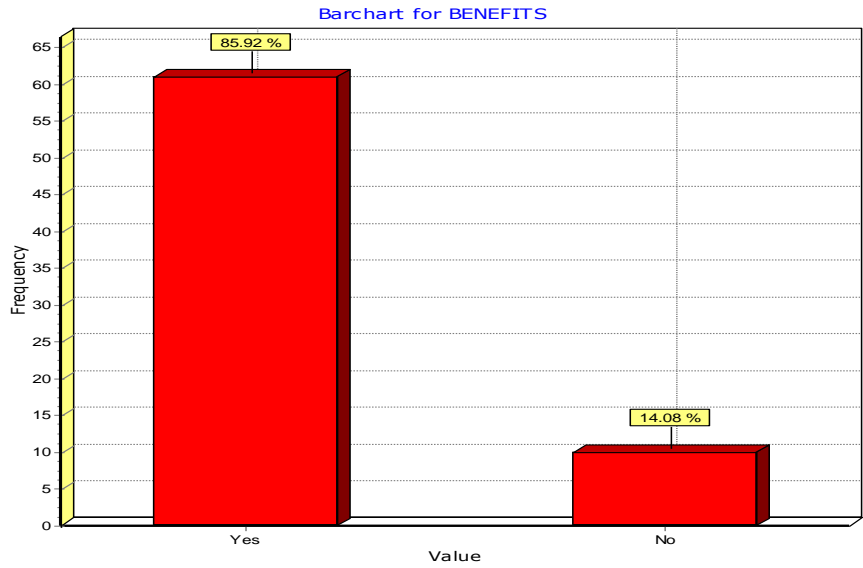
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	54	76.06	76.06
No	17	23.94	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

#### 4.7.2.9 Question 15

In your opinion are there any benefits in buying a branded item?

This was asked to get the opinion of the employees/staff on whether there were any benefits in buying a branded item. From the responses it was shown that 85.92% of the staff thought there were benefits in buying a branded item, while 14.08% of staff thought there were no benefits in buying a branded item.

**Figure 4.34** In your opinion are there any benefits in buying a branded item?



Frequency table for BENEFITS

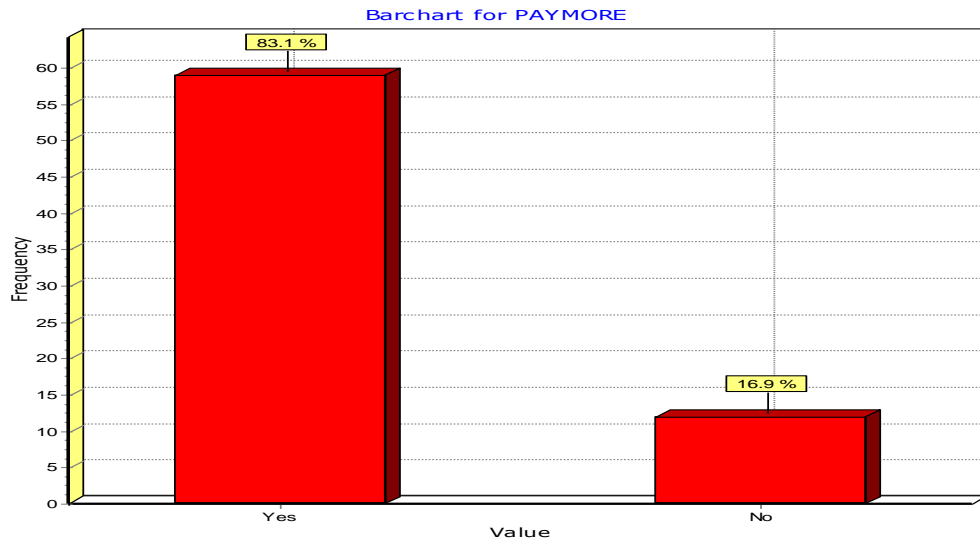
Value	N	%	Cum. %
1	61	85.92	85.92
2	10	14.08	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.3.10 Question 16**

Would you pay more for staying in a branded hotel?

This question was asked to determine if the employees/staff were willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel. It was deduced that 83.1% of the staff were willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel, while 16.9% of staff were not willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel. This was because most of the respondents associated a brand with quality and good service.

**Figure 4.35 Would you pay more for staying in a branded hotel?**



Frequency table for PAYING MORE FOR A HOTEL

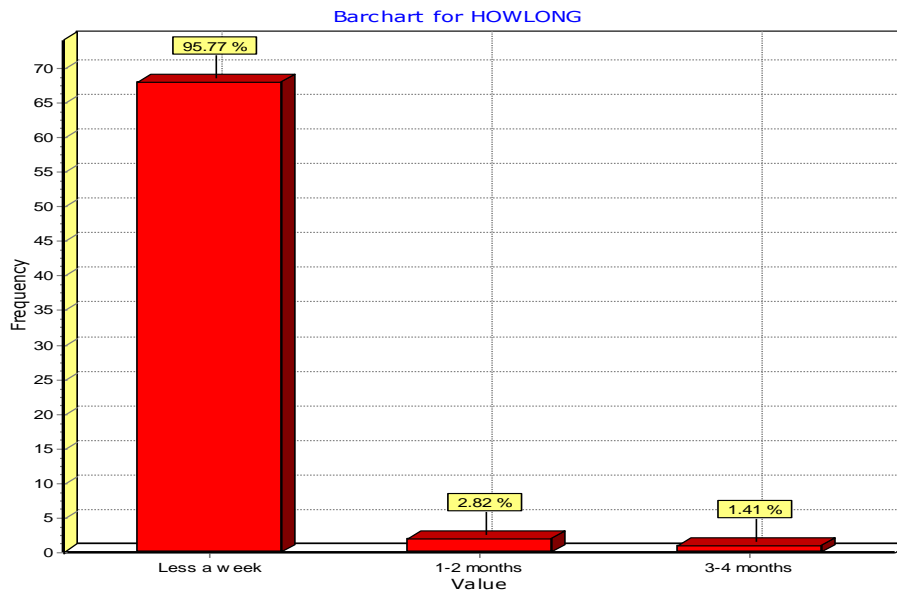
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	59	83.10	83.10
No	12	16.90	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.3.11 Question 17**

How long do you usually stay in a branded hotel?

This was asked to find out the period that the employees/staff stayed in a branded hotel of their choice or in one they worked for. From the results it is clear that 95.77% of staff stayed in a hotel for less than a week, 2.82% of staff stayed in a hotel for one to two months, and 1.41% of staff stayed for three to four months, and no members of staff stayed in a hotel for five months or more. No staff member stayed more than 5 months, as they normally used the hotels they worked for, and they stayed longer than three months if they were on training.

**Figure 4.36 How long do you usually stay in a branded hotel?**



Frequency table for HOW LONG STAYED IN A HOTEL

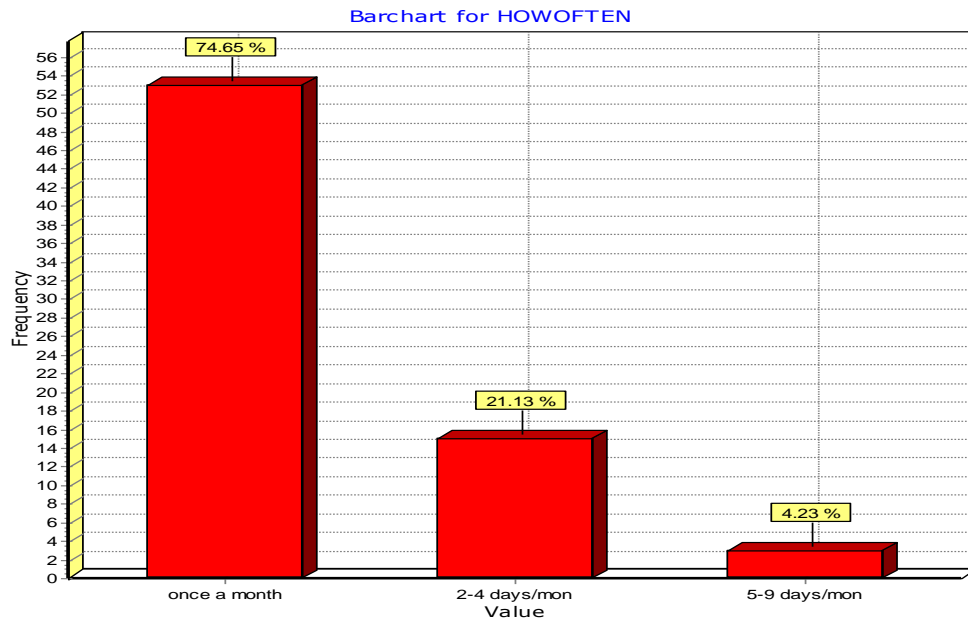
Value	N	%	Cum. %
Less a week	68	95.77	95.77
1-2 months	2	2.82	98.59
3-4 months	1	1.41	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.7.3.12 Question 18**

How often do you use the branded hotel of your choice other than the one you work for?

This was asked to determine how often the employees/staff used a branded hotel of their choice other than the one they work for. It was determined that 74.65% stated that they used the hotel once a month, 21.13% stated that they used the hotel two to four days a month, 4.23% stated that they used the hotel five to nine days a month, and none stated that they used the hotel for ten days a month or more. This further shows that employees used other branded hotels than the one they worked for, but mostly only once a month, and this may be as a result of the affordability of the hotels.

**Figure 4.37 How often do you use the branded hotel of your choice other than the one you work for?**



Frequency table for HOW OFTEN A HOTEL IS USED

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Once a month	53	74.65	74.65
2-4 days a month	15	21.13	95.77
5-9 days a month	3	4.23	100.00
TOTAL	71	100.00	

**4.8 Analysis of interviews**

**4.8.1 How does your brand contribute to the operation of your hotel?**

The manager from hotel one stated that the brand creates awareness of the operation of their hotel. The sales manager of hotel two stated that brands remind customers of the good service and creativity of the hotel, and the public relations manager of hotel three stated that brands create awareness about the hotel and its products, even after the guest has gone, and that this is etched in the memory of the guests.

**4.8.2 How do you as a hotel operate to keep or retain your customers?**

The manager from hotel one further stated that, in an effort to retain customers, they advertise, rebrand and introduce new services that the customers suggest that can add value to the operation. Hotel two’s sales manager asserted that they retained customers through advertising and good customer care programmes. Hotel three’s public relations manager

stated that they offered perks such as free accommodation and free meals on weekends to customers who hold loyalty cards to retain them.

#### **4.8.3 What other attributes complement your brand in luring customers to choose your hotel brand?**

As explained by the manager of hotel one, the hotel recognises and sponsors customers who hold loyalty cards, and that the cards and all the benefits that come with them complement their brand. Hotel two's strategy was to keep their prices affordable to complement their brand, while hotel three uses perks and free internet access to complement their brand.

#### **4.8.4 In your opinion, do you think people from different cultures buy different products, including choosing hotel brands?**

The manager of hotel one answered yes and further stated that people buy products that they associate with and choose brands that they are familiar with. The manager of hotel two also stated yes, explaining that, for example, people choose hotels according to the type of food they offer and that is how they use their culture to differentiate the hotels in the area. For hotel three, the manager stated that people's culture plays an important role when it comes to choosing a hotel, in that when guests make a booking they also enquire about the food offered, the attractions closer to the hotel and if there are churches of their religion close to the hotel.

#### **4.8.5 Would you relate the prices set by the hotels to the reason why customers choose to use the hotels?**

Manager one stated that people chose different prices according to their lifestyle, which was the same for hotel three, whose manager stated that one's lifestyle and the affordability of the hotel will determine the choice of hotel. Hotel two stated that, apart from prices, some people also use service to choose a specific hotel.

#### **4.8.6 What other factors according to you influence the decisions by the customers in choosing to use your hotel?**

All three managers echoed that accessibility, convenience, the design of the hotel and great customer care could greatly influence the decisions by customers to choose a hotel.

#### **4.8.7 Do you think your customers get their value for money by using your hotel?**

All the three managers thought the reason why customers kept coming back was because they received value for their money

#### **4.9 Summary**

This chapter presented the data analysis of the questions that were asked in the questionnaires. Data was collected from the three participating hotels in greater Gaborone. The manager of each hotel was interviewed to supplement the questions that were asked in the questionnaires, and the interview questions were the same for the three managers who participated. There were seven supplementary questions in the interviews. A descriptive approach was adopted in the work for this chapter.

The findings were presented graphically in the form of bar graphs generated by the software, Moonstats. The findings from the supplementary interviews were compared with the responses of the three managers and also presented. The interpretations and findings obtained in this chapter assisted in solving the research problem and sub-problems and proving the hypothesis.

Question 13 directed to guests and Question 12 directed to staff are what formed the core answer to the study as both questions revealed that both customers and staff used the same factors to choose a hotel to stay in and use its facilities. These factors were; Hotel brand, past experience, price / cost, convenience of location and special designs of the hotel.

Question 16 directed to guests and Question 15 directed to staff also formed a basis in that both guests and staff acknowledged that there were benefits in using branded hotels and therefore they would settle for branded hotels. The recommendations derived from the findings were explained in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the sense of the hospitality industry, a brand is a series of tangible elements that can connect with emotion to create a perception in a customer's mind about a product or service. For consumers, brands make it easy to identify goods and services. "Brands also help assure consumers that they will get consistent quality when they re-order" (Etzel *et al.*, 2001:265).

The validity of the data obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews that were conducted to substantiate the solving of the research problem and sub-problem will be discussed. According to Maxwell (2013:121), "validity is assessed as it relates to the purposes and credibility of the research study". Validity can be achieved through explicitly reporting how the research was conducted and locating the weak points within the study (Swanborn, 2010:37).

A presentation of the findings of this study, including descriptive statistics, demographic information and other relevant information of the guests and employees of the participating hotels, is provided. The chapter also comprises the findings from the various research strategies used, such as the literature review, questionnaires and structured interviews. The findings are analysed by comparing them with the literature reviewed and the results from the questionnaires and from the interviews.

The findings from the supplementary interviews are compared with the responses of the three managers and are also presented. Interpretations and findings obtained in Chapter 4 assisted in solving the research problem and sub-problem and the objectives. Finally, recommendations are made.

#### 5.2 Findings and discussion of the results

The aim of this study was to establish the effect that brands have on the buying behaviour of consumers in the hospitality industry of Gaborone. This aim was further operationalised into the objectives that follow:

### 5.2.1 Objectives of the study

The first objective was:

To explain the effect that branding has on the perceptions of consumers when it comes to choosing the facilities they want to use.

The findings have shown that factors such as hotel brand, past experience, price/cost, convenience of location and special designs of the hotel have an effect on the perceptions of consumers when choosing the facility they want to use. The findings from Question 13 of the guest questionnaire show that 52.99% of the guests stated that the hotel brand had a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, 35.82% of the guests stated that the hotel brand had an important influence in their decision making, 5.22% stated that it did not have a very important influence and 5.97% stated that the influence was not important in which hotel to choose. The findings from Question 13 combined show that 88.81% of the guests were influenced by the hotel brand to select a particular hotel to use, while 11.12% stated that it was not important. Another factor, past experience, showed that 43.28% of the guests stated that past experience had a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 51.49% of guests stated that past experience had an important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose. These two findings combined show that 94.77% used past experience of frequenting the hotels as a deciding factor to settle for a hotel. Furthermore, 47.76% of the guests stated that the price/cost had a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 41.79% of the guests stated that the price/cost had an important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose. Combining the two findings show that 89.55% of the guests used price or cost as the main reason why they choose which hotels to use.

Regarding the convenience of the location, the findings show that 43.28% of the guests stated that the convenience of the location of the hotel had a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, while 46.27% of the guests stated that the convenience of the location had an important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose. This shows that a total of 89.55% of the guests settled for the hotel using location as a factor.

The special design of the hotels also played an important part in the selection of the hotels by the guests, as it was shown in the findings from Question 13 that 23.88% of the guests stated that the special designs of the hotel had a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, while 51.49% of guests stated that the special designs of the hotel had an important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose.

A combination of these two findings led to the finding that 75.37% of the guests used special designs of the hotels as a factor to rely on when choosing a hotel to use, and 24.63% did not. The above findings combined show that there is a set of factors that all customers use as a basis for selecting a hotel to use.

The findings from Question 13 of the guest questionnaire were further explained by the stimulus response model of buying behaviour, as explained by Kotler *et al.* (2008:239). The model explains that all these factors are processed in the buyer's mind and only the buyer will know why and how the decision to purchase a product or service was arrived at. These are turned in the buyer's mind into a set of observable buyer responses: product, choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing and purchase amount.

The same set of factors as seen from the perspective of the employees are used by the customers, again cementing that branding has an effect on the perceptions of consumers when it comes to choosing the facilities they want to use.

The findings from Question 12 of the staff questionnaire further stated that 76.06% of the employees thought that the hotel brand had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, while 19.72% of the employees thought the hotel brand had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose. This constitutes 95.78% of the employees who revealed that they use the hotel brand to choose hotels to work for, and 4.22% said that they did not.

In terms of the second factor, past experience, 66.20% of the employees stated that past experience had a very important influence in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose, while 28.17% employees stated that past experience had an important influence in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose. The combination of the two findings from Question 12 of the staff questionnaire showed that 94.37% of the employees used past experience to choose which one to work for, while 5.63% said that they did not.

On the other hand, the findings from Question 10 of the staff questionnaire revealed that 66.20% of the employees stated that the price/cost had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, while 22.54% of the employees stated that the price/cost had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose.

A total of 88.74% of employees used price and cost as a deciding factor, while 11.53% did not. Sixty percent of the employees stated that the convenience of the location of the hotel had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, while 32.86% of employees stated that the convenience of the location had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose. These two findings from Question 10 of the staff questionnaire brought about the finding that 92.86% of the employees chose a hotel to work for based on the location of the hotel, while 7.14% did not.

The findings from Question 5 of the interviews with the manager of hotel one show that they used a strategy of keeping price affordable to complement their brand, while the manager of hotel two mentioned that people choose hotels based on the affordability of prices, and the third manager said price plays an important role in customer's choosing hotels. The findings from Question 10 of the staff questionnaire showed that 35.21% of employees said that the special designs of the hotel had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, and 47.89% of the employees stated that the special designs of the hotel had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose. The findings show that 83.10% of the employees select hotels to work for based on the designs of the hotel, although 16.9% did not. The findings from Question 6 of the interviews with the managers show that customers use hotels according to their accessibility, convenience, design and customer care.

The researcher therefore came to the conclusion that customers gain perceptions through the ability to differentiate the brands in the market, making it possible for them to make a choice. Employees also used their ability to differentiate the brands to get employment, as they tied brands to quality.

Brands and the branding of hotels was tied to benefits, as customers and employees alike believe that there are benefits in buying branded items and that they would pay more for staying in a branded hotel.

**The second objective was:**

To describe what informs the consumers to purchase the products and services of hotels in the hospitality market in Gaborone.

Factors that influence the buying decisions of consumers are cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.

This was evident from the findings from Question 9 that was directed to the guests. Of the guests who responded, 37.31% thought that cultural factors were important in influencing their choice, while 41.04% thought that cultural factors were very important in influencing their choice. The findings from Question 9 of the guest questionnaire show that 78.35% of the guests chose the hotels based on their cultural background. A total of 49.25% of the guests thought that social factors were important in influencing their choice, and 38.81% thought that social factors were very important in influencing their choice. The combination of these two findings from Question 9 shows that 88.06% of the guests thought social factors influenced them to choose a hotel, and 11.94% did not.

Furthermore the findings from Question 9 show that 43.28% of the guests thought that personal factors were important in influencing their choice, and 46.27% of the guests thought that personal factors were very important in influencing their choice. Therefore 89.55% of the guests used personal factors to select a hotel and 10.45% did not. Furthermore, 58.96% of the guests thought that psychological factors were important in influencing their choice, while 23.13% of the guests thought that psychological factors were very important in influencing their choice. The finding is that 82.09% of the guests thought psychological factors were useful for them when selecting a hotel and 17.91% did not.

The same set of factors was used by the employees, namely cultural, social, personal and psychological factors, which informed their buying decisions on which products to purchase.

The findings from Question 8 posed to the employees of the participating hotels showed that 59.15% thought that cultural factors were very important in influencing their choice, while 23.94% of the respondents thought that cultural factors were important in influencing their choice. This means that 83.09% of the employees used cultural factors as a basis for choosing the hotel, and 16.91% did not. A total of 56.34% of the employees thought that social factors were very important in influencing their choice, and 36.62% of the employees thought that social factors were important in influencing their choice. This shows that 92.96% of the employees thought social factors were an integral part of their choosing a hotel and 7.04% did not.

The findings from Question 4 of the interviews with the managers also show that cultural factors are important. The manager of hotel three said that that people's culture played an important role when it came to choosing a hotel in that, when guests make a booking, they also enquire about the food offered, the attractions closer to the hotel and if there are churches of their religion close to the hotel.

The findings from Question 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 of the staff questionnaire show that a total of 50.70% of the employees thought that personal factors were very important in influencing their choice while; on the other hand, 43.66% thought that personal factors were important in influencing their choice. The two findings from Question 8 of the staff questionnaire combined show that 94.36% of the employees used personal factors to choose hotels, while 5.64% did not. 33.80% of the employees thought that psychological factors were not important in influencing their choice. The findings of the two showed that what was very important in influencing their choice and 59.34% of the employees thought that psychological factors were important in influencing their choice. The two findings from Question 8 of the staff questionnaire combined stated that 93.14% of the employees were influenced by psychological factors when choosing hotels and 6.86% were not.

The findings from Question 8 of the staff questionnaire are further substantiated by Kotler *et al.* (2008:239), because according to the authors, consumer purchases are influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. The products offered by the hotels, such as accommodation, food and beverages, conference facilities and leisure facilities were what informed consumers what to purchase.

In Question 12 posed to the guests, the findings show that 50.75% of the guests used accommodation as the basis for choosing a hotel, 18.66% of the guests used food and beverages as the basis for choosing a hotel, 23.88% of the guests used conference facilities as the basis for choosing a hotel, while 6.72% of the guests used leisure as the basis for choosing a hotel. The findings show that 50.75% of the customers frequented the hotels in Gaborone for accommodation.

The same question posed by Question 11 to the employees, on what they thought could be the product that customers use as a basis for choosing hotels, yielded the following findings: 42.25% of the employees thought the customers used accommodation as the basis for choosing a hotel, 26.76% of the employees thought customers used food and beverages as the basis for choosing a hotel, 26.76% of the employees thought customers used conference facilities as the basis for choosing a hotel, and 4.23% of the employees thought customers used leisure as the basis for choosing a hotel. This shows that the customers who frequent the hotels they work for were mainly attracted by the accommodation product.

### **5.3 Solving the main research problem and sub problem**

The findings that assisted in solving the main research problem and the sub-problem are explained in the sections that follow.

#### **5.3.1 Solving the main research problem**

The main research problem was:

What will the effect of branding be on consumer buying behaviour in the hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana?

The following findings from the questions asked clearly indicate that the branding of hotels has an influence on consumer buying behaviour in the hospitality industry of Gaborone.

According to Question 13 that was directed to the guests on the factors that affected their decision when choosing hotels, the hotel brand was the main reason why they chose a hotel. The findings from Question 13 were that 52.99% of the guests stated that the hotel brand had a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, 35.82% of the guests stated that the hotel brand had an important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, 5.97% of the guests stated that the hotel brand was not an important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose, and 5.22% of the guests stated that the hotel brand did not have a very important influence in their decision making on which hotel to choose.

On the other hand, the very same Question 12 that was directed to staff on their opinion on what could affect a customer's basis for selecting a hotel in order to frequent the hotel showed that the brand was the main reason used by the customers when selecting to frequent a hotel. The findings from Question 12 of the staff questionnaire were that 76.06% of the employees thought that the hotel brand had a very important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 19.72% of the employees thought the hotel brand had an important influence in the decision making of customers on which hotel to choose, 1.41% of the employees thought that the hotel brand was not an important influence in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose, and 2.82% of the employees stated that the hotel brand did not have an important influence in the decision making of the customers on which hotel to choose.

These findings from Question 12 of the staff questionnaire show that most employees, at 76.06%, thought branding could influence the customer's decision making when choosing a hotel.

Question 10 directed at staff working in the hotels also showed that the brand of the hotel group was the main reason why they chose to work for the hotel. The findings revealed that 60.56% of the employees used the brand of the hotel group as guidance for their choice, 19.72% of the employees used the location of the hotel as guidance for their choice, 8.45% of the employees used the facilities of the hotel as guidance for their choice, and 11.27% of the employees used the perks the hotel offers to staff as guidance for their choice. The findings from Question 10 therefore imply that most employees, namely 60.56%, used the brand of the hotel to seek employment with that hotel, showing that people prefer to work for branded hotels.

The researcher therefore deduced that the brand was the most common factor on which the customers and staff based their decision making when selecting to frequent or work for certain hotels.

The findings from Question 14 that was directed at the guests, and Question 13 that was directed at the staff – on whether they could differentiate the brand of the hotel they have chosen to use or work for – shows that both the guests and staff could differentiate the brands that were available in the market and that this formed the basis for their choice of hotel. This was also evident in the findings from Question 14, which showed that 92.54% of the guests were able to differentiate the brand (answering yes), while 7.46% of the guests were not able to differentiate the brand (answering no). This further indicates that the respondents were able to differentiate the brands in the market. On the other hand, the same question posed to employees showed that 97.18% of the employees stated that guests were able to differentiate the brand (answering yes) and 2.82% of the employees stated that guests were not able to differentiate the brand (answering no).

This is further explained from the responses to Question 1 from the interviews with the managers of the hotels. All three managers stated that brands create awareness and this therefore led to the conclusion that customers could indeed differentiate between brands when choosing hotels.

The researcher therefore concludes that, with the many branded hotels in Gaborone, customers can differentiate between the brands, helping them to choose from the many that are available.



### 5.3.2 Solving the sub-problem

The sub-problem was:

Will there be an increase in the buying behaviour of consumers due to branding in the hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana?

The response to Question 16 for the guests and Question 15 for the staff, asked if, in their opinion, there were any benefits in buying a branded item, showed that both parties agreed that there indeed were benefits in buying branded items.

The findings from Question 16 for the guests show that 70.9% of the guests thought there were benefits in buying a branded item and 29.1% of the guests thought there were no benefits in buying a branded item. The findings show that the guests were aware that the hotels they frequented was branded and that they frequented them because of the brands. The very same question put to the employees (Question 15) showed that 85.92% of staff thought there were benefits in buying a branded item and 14.08% of staff thought there were no benefits in buying a branded item.

The researcher came to the conclusion that there indeed were benefits in using and buying branded goods, as shown by the findings from both the customers and the employees.

This further shows that both guests and staff settled for branded items such as hotels, as they knew that they could benefit from them.

Question 17 for the guests and Question 16 for the staff asked if both parties would pay more, and the results showed that both guests and staff would pay more for staying in a branded hotel of their choice or the one they work for. The findings from Question 17 from the guest questionnaire showed that a total of 73.13% of the guests were willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel. Most guests felt that brands were worth it and therefore they would pay more for a branded hotel. On the other hand, 83.1% of staff were willing to pay more for staying in a branded hotel. This is because most of the respondents associated a brand with quality and good service. The researcher therefore deduced that both customers and staff would pay more for staying in a branded hotel.

If this many people, namely 73.13% of the guests and 83.1% of staff, are willing to pay more, there should be an increase in the way consumers buy the services that are offered by the hotels, and the decisions they make in the selection of such hotels depend largely on the brands that are available to them.

#### 5.4 Testing the reliability of the findings

The reliability of the research is a critical factor to consider. This research was based on both secondary and primary data. Reliability therefore was deemed to be an important part of the research. According to Welman *et al.* (2005:145), reliability is concerned with the findings of the research and relates to the credibility of the findings. In order to test the reliability of the findings of this research, the researcher used parallel-forms reliability. Parallel-forms reliability of a measurement/test is determined by using interchangeable versions of the measurement/test that have been compiled to measure the same construct equally well, but by means of different content (Welman *et al.*, 2005:145). In this case, questionnaires and interviews were administered to the representative sample and the scores obtained were correlated.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport (2005:162) posit that “the reliability of a measurement procedure is the stability or consistency of the measurement”. This implies that if the same variable was measured under the same conditions, a reliable measurement procedure will produce identical or nearly identical measurements.

However, it is rare to have perfect reliability, and the following are suggestions for procedures that can increase the validity of measures:

- Clearly conceptualise all constructs – This means developing an unambiguous, clear theoretical definition for each construct and then making sure that each measure indicates only one specific concept.
- Increase the level of measurement – Indicators at higher or more precise levels of measurement are more likely to be reliable than less precise measures, because the latter pick up less detailed information.
- Use multiple indicators of a variable – Use two or more indicators, e.g. two or more questions in a questionnaire, to measure each aspect of a variable.
- Use pre-tests, pilot studies and replications – Develop drafts or preliminary versions of a measure and test these before applying the final version in a hypothesis-testing situation (Neuman & Kreuger; 2003:179-180).

The research therefore collected and used secondary data from various sources to strengthen its reliability. The software MoonStats was used to analyse the primary data that was collected, as it is commonly used in analysing and generating statistical data. In this regard the data was deemed to be reliable.

## **5.5 Testing the validity of the findings**

The validity of the research was determined by concentrating on the collection of data from both primary and secondary sources in order to provide different perspectives on the topic under discussion. Maxwell (2013:121) explained that “validity is assessed as it relates to the purposes and credibility of the research study”. “Validity can be achieved by explicitly reporting how the research was conducted and by locating the weak points within the study” (Swanborn, 2010:37).

Validity is the extent to which the research findings accurately represent what is really happening in the situation. When we measure something with the instrument, the instrument we use to measure the variable must measure what it is supposed to measure. Babbie (2004:143), explains that “validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure, while Gravetter & Forzano (2003:87) state that the validity of a measuring procedure is the degree to which the measurement process measures the variable it claims to measure”.

The researcher therefore deduced that, in totality, validity means that the instrument should measure the concept that is being researched and that concept should be measured accurately. The primary data was collected from appropriate sources amongst the target group. In order to come up with valid data, the researcher used interviews and questionnaires to gather data from the consumers and employees of the participating hotels.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

The aim of this study was to establish the effect that brands have on the buying behaviour of consumers in the selected hotels of Gaborone. To realise this aim, a literature study was undertaken that served as the foundation of the empirical research. The following recommendations can be made.

### **5.6.1 Recommendations for hotels**

- Hotels in Gaborone should educate their employees about their branding strategies, as they are the ambassadors of their hotel brands. This would help in that the employees, in turn, would educate the customers in return for repeat patronage and business.
- Hotels in Gaborone should give their customers more incentives for repeat visits and business.

- Hotels in Gaborone should vigorously drive their advertising campaigns, more especially those that deal with branding, since it was evident that their customers were able to differentiate between the brands on offer in the market. This would serve as to build up the way the customers perceive the products and services
- Kotler *et al.* (2006:315) state that “brands are increasingly important to tourist destinations and are used by all consumers in the process of buying situations”. With this in mind, hotels in Gaborone therefore should expose their products and services by creating and increasing brand-loyal customers who will buy their product wherever it is available.
- Hotels in Gaborone should work on improving their offerings because customer’s perceptions are built on expectations. This is elaborated on by Lewis & Chambers (2000:214), who say that comparisons allow the consumer to evaluate similar offerings by measuring expectations, and that this leads to the buying choice. Perceptions by the consumer of the hospitality offering may or may not become reality, which results in satisfaction or dissatisfaction.
- Hotels in Gaborone should offer competitive prices to lure customers to use their facilities, since, according to Kotler & Pfoertsch (2010:1), consumers are willing to pay more for a branded product, as some brands command a premium price and exclusive reputation. This is further elaborated on by Okonkwo (2007:9), who states that “consumers who perceive the brand to be beneficial will then form an emotional and psychological attachment to the brand, which will create economic value for the brand owner and give it a competitive advantage, leading it to experience stable if not increased sales”.

### **5.6.2 Recommendations for guests**

- Staff should use the hotels more often for leisure so that they have enough time to compare what other hotels have to offer to try to improve the services offered by their hotel.
- Staff should use the hotels for cultural reasons so that they could learn from other people how things are done. They should also use other hotels in the area apart from the ones they work for in order to become aware of the services and products that the other hotels offer.
- Staff should educate their customers on the brand of the hotel in order for the customers to know the different services and products they offer in order to encourage repeat business and patronage. This is emphasised by Bruce and Harvey

(2008:6), who state that “branded properties are important in the hospitality industry and play an intangible role in the operational effectiveness of any organisation”.

- Hospitality entities use brands to express what they are all about and what sets them apart from their competitors and this implies that staff should be more expressive when they sell the services and products of the hotel they work for.
- “A brand in hospitality is defined by Shoemaker & Shaw (2008:464) as the internalised sum of all impressions received by customers, resulting in a distinctive position in their minds’ eye based on perceived emotional and functional benefits”. The staff therefore should be mindful of portraying the brand of the hotel they work for in a positive and meaningful manner so that the guests perceive their hotel as the best to settle for in the market.
- George (2001:137) states that “an influencer is a person whose view or advice influences the buying decision, e.g. a friend recommending a holiday destination. In the hospitality sense, staff or employees are the influencers for the guests to buy the services and products on offer, and therefore staff should be in position to influence the guests to purchase the products and services offered by the hotel they work for”.
- Staff or employees are also initiators. An initiator is the person who first suggests or thinks of the idea of buying a tourism and hospitality offering, e.g. a child recommending lunch at some restaurant. Therefore, as initiators, staff or employees of the hotels should be the ones to suggest to guests why their hotel is the best to offer them services and products, as they are the ones who know what sets their services and products apart from those of their competitors.

## 5.7 Summary

There are factors that influence the buying decisions of consumers, such as cultural, social, personal and psychological factors, that inform consumers which products to purchase. The products offered by the hotels, such as accommodation, food and beverages, conference facilities and leisure facilities, are what inform consumers what to purchase.

It is clear from the findings that both the consumers and employees use factors such as the hotel brand, past experience, price/cost, convenience of the hotel’s location and special designs of the hotel as the basis for choosing which hotel to use or work for. Furthermore, the customers and employees link branded hotels and the benefits they derive from using such hotels to their services and facilities and are willing to pay more for using such hotels.

Armed with the information they gathered about the hotels and their offerings beforehand, and using the abovementioned factors, customers are able to differentiate between the

brands that were available in the hospitality market of Gaborone. The researcher therefore deduced that branding has an effect on consumer buying behaviour in the hospitality industry in Gaborone.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 6.1 Introduction

Hotels have increasingly recognised that branding strategies constitute a strategic weapon to secure a competitive edge in the hotel industry. While the customer may identify with a particular hotel brand, hotel loyalty still depends on the customer's positive evaluation of factors relating to service experiences (Kam Fung So, King, Sparks & Wang, 2013:31). However, as consumers' identification with a hotel brand affects their evaluation of these factors, hoteliers should leverage customers' brand identification to engender positive consumer evaluation of the hotel brand and, ultimately, increase brand loyalty.

In the first chapter, the researcher focused on a discussion of the hospitality industry in general and how brands affect the way in which consumers perceive hotels that are branded when they make decisions to buy services or use the hotel's facilities.

The second chapter presented the literature review, which formed the base upon which the concepts of the study were built. The target population of this research was the guests and staff of the three participating hotels in Gaborone.

The third chapter discussed the research methods used for the study. The data collection methods were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to two target groups, being the staff/employees and guests of the hotels. The interviews were conducted with the managers of the hotels. Chapter 4 discussed how the data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews. An interpretation of the results also was presented.

The findings and recommendations were presented in Chapter 5. This chapter presented the conclusion of the study and suggestions for possible future research.

#### 6.2 Findings of the research

The findings show that factors such as hotel brand, past experience, price/cost, convenience of location and special designs of the hotel have an effect on the perceptions of consumers when choosing the facility they want to use.

The same set of factors as used by the customers, seen from the perspective of the employees, cements that branding has an effect on the perceptions of consumers when it comes to choosing the facilities they want to use.

The researcher hence concludes that there indeed are benefits to using and buying branded goods, as shown by the findings from both the customers and the employees.

This further shows that both guests and staff settle for branded items such as hotels, as they knew that they could benefit from them.

### **6.3 Further research possibilities**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be deduced that the guests and employees of the hotels know how to differentiate the products in the hospitality market of Gaborone. Therefore, similar research can be done in the following areas:

- A replication of the similar research can be done in other major cities of Botswana so as to determine how different hotel groups or hotels can improve their offerings and products for their consumers.
- Continuous research can be done to determine the worth of branding or upgrading the brands that already exist in different parts of the country.
- There is a need for research on consumer perceptions in other parts of the country and not only in Gaborone, as these perceptions will enable the hotels to know exactly what their customers think of their service and the products on offer.
- Research can also be done to ensure that the hotels up their market share or work on increasing their market share, as there are many hotel chains and brands infiltrating the market at the moment.

### **6.4 Conclusion**

The hospitality industry is broad and diverse, offering intangible services and products, and in this regard, hotels strive to compete with each other for market share. For hotels to clinch a better share of the market, they use marketing to lure customers to buy their services or use their facilities.

With the advent of the superior brands available in the market, consumers have a big task to evaluate and choose from what is on offer based on factors such as price, place, cultural background, brands available to them, and benefits brought about by such hotel brands.

A brand is one of the variables that determine the value of the organisation in the competitive environment. Brands are intangible and the most valuable assets that a company can ever own, and in this sense they add value to the final product or service that the customer is going to purchase and in the end consume.



The more famous the brand, the more benefits the product has for consumers, and this will lead to the delivery of the information needed by the consumers when they make the decision to purchase such brands.

For the hotels to make their guests feel special they need to create or reinvent a 'warm hug' by moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach, as guests nowadays want to be treated in a special way, for they are paying for the products and services in return for high-class service delivery and satisfaction. Guests will always come back if a hotel brand creates a distinctive guest experience for them.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A:

#### GUEST QUESTIONNAIRE



Granger Bay Campus  
Beach Road, Mouille Point, 8001 Cape Town  
P.O. Box 652, Cape Town 8000  
Telephone number: (021) 440 5700/11  
Email address: info@cput.ac.za  
Web address: www.cput.ac.za

Dear participant

You are invited to participate in this research in the form of completing the attached questionnaire.

I am currently completing my Master's in Tourism & Hospitality at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and I am conducting research on ***"The effect of branding on customer buying behaviour in the Hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana"***.

The study will be limited to hospitality outlets that have been selected in the Greater Gaborone Area that are branded. All information that is supplied in this questionnaire will be treated as **confidential** and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Access to the questionnaires is restricted to my supervisor and I. If you would like to obtain a summary of the results of this research, I would be happy to send it to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Galeichubeloe Nnana Babili".

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Galeichubeloe Nnana Babili

*MTech Tourism & Hospitality Student*

Cell: + 267 71774549

E-mail: [nbabili@yahoo.com](mailto:nbabili@yahoo.com) or [b2babili@gmail.com](mailto:b2babili@gmail.com)

## GUEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions by putting a cross 

X
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 in the appropriate box or by writing in the spaces provided.

### Biographical detail

1. What is your age?

Under 20 years old		1
21 – 35 years old		2
36 – 50 years old		3
Over 51 years old		4

2. What is your gender?

Male		1
Female		2

3. What is your marital status?

Single		1
Married		2
Divorced		3
Widowed		4

4. What is your nationality?

Botswana		1
South African		2
Namibian		3
Other		4

When stating other please indicate

.....

**5. What is your education level?**

Secondary education		1
Certificate / NCC		2
Diploma / HND		3
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree		4
Master's degree		5

**6. What is your employment status?**

Employed		1
Self-employed		2
Unemployed		3
Retired		4
Other		5

**7. What is your monthly income?**

Less than P1 999.00		1
P2 000.00 – P 7 999.00		2
P8 000.00 – P 13 999.00		3
P14 000.00 or more		4

**8. What is your main purpose for choosing a hotel?**

Business		1
Leisure		2
Transit		3
Visit your friends / family		4

**9.** Please rank the following factors below that you think could promote your choice of a hotel. [4 being the most important]

	1 Not very important	2 Not important	3 Important	4 Very important
Cultural				
Social				
Personal				
Psychological				

Any other factor apart from the ones stated above, please specify

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**10.** How long have you been using the hotel you have chosen?

Less than 5 years		1
5 – 10 years		2
11 – 15 years		3
16 years or more		4

**11.** How did you learn about the hotel you have chosen?

Word of mouth		1
Agency		2
Colleagues		3
Advertisement		4

**12.** Which of the following products of the hotel do you think customers use as the basis of selecting the hotel in order to frequent it as a hotel of their choice?

Accommodation		1
Food and beverage		2
Conference facilities		3
Leisure		4

- 13.** Please rate the following factors that in your opinion could affect your decision on choosing hotels. *Please rate each option individually*

[4 being the most important]

	1 Not very important	2 Not important	3 Important	4 Very important
Hotel brand				
Past experience				
Price/cost				
Convenient location				
Special designs of the hotel				

- 14.** Are you able to differentiate the brand of the hotel that you have chosen in the area?

Yes		1
No		2

- 15.** Have you used other branded hotels in the area other than the chosen one a regular basis?

Yes		1
No		2

- 16.** In your opinion are there any benefits in buying a branded item?

Yes		1
No		2

If yes, please elaborate

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17. Would you pay more for staying in a branded hotel?

Yes		1
No		2

18. How long do you usually research a branded hotel before settling for using its facilities?

Less than a week		1
1 – 2 months		2
3 – 4 months		3
5 months – or more		4

19. How often do you stay in a branded hotel?

Once a month		1
2 – 4 days a month		2
5 – 9 days a month		3
10 days a months or more		4

Please feel free to add in any other comments

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***Your contribution to this survey is greatly appreciated.***

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE**



Granger Bay Campus  
Beach Road, Mouille Point. 8001. Cape Town  
P. O. Box 652. Cape Town 8000  
Telephone number: (021) 440 5700/11  
Email address: info@cput.ac.za  
Web address: www.cput.ac.za

Dear Participant

I am currently studying for my Master's degree in Tourism & Hospitality Management at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town and my research topic is:

***The effect of branding on customer buying behaviour in the Hospitality industry of Gaborone, Botswana***

You are invited to participate in this research study by completing the attached questionnaire.

The study will be limited to hospitality outlets that have been selected in the Greater Gaborone Area that are branded.

All information that is supplied in this questionnaire will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Access to the questionnaires will be restricted to my supervisor and myself. If you would like to obtain a summary of the results of this research study once it is completed, we would be happy to send it to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Galeichubeloe Nnana Babili".

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Galeichubeloe Nnana Babili

***MTech Tourism & Hospitality Student***

Cell: + 267 71774549

E-mail: [nbabili@yahoo.com](mailto:nbabili@yahoo.com) or [b2babili@gmail.com](mailto:b2babili@gmail.com)

## STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions by putting a cross  in the appropriate box or by writing in the spaces provided.

### Biographical detail

1. What is your age?

Under 20 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
21 – 35 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
36 – 50 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Over 51 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

2. What is your gender?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

3. What is your marital status

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

4. What is your nationality?

Botswana	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
South African	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Namibian	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

When stating other, please indicate

.....



**5. What is your education level?**

Secondary education		1
Certificate / NCC		2
Diploma / HND		3
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree		4
Master's degree		5

**6. What is your occupation?**

Manager		1
Housekeeper		2
Receptionist		3
Chef		4
Other		5

If other, please indicate.

.....

**Staff information**

**7. What is your main purpose for choosing a hotel?**

Business		1
Leisure		2
Transit		3
Visit your friends / family		4

**8. Please rank the following factors below that you think could promote your choice of a hotel. [4 being the most important]**

	1 Not very important	2 Not important	3 Important	4 Very important
Cultural				
Social				
Personal				
Psychological				

9. How long have you been working for this particular hotel?

Less than 5 years		1
5 – 10 years		2
11 – 15 years		3
16 years or more		4

10. How did you come to choose the hotel you are working for?

The brand of the hotel group		1
The location of the hotel		2
The facilities of the hotel		3
The perks the hotel offers to staff		4

11. Which of the following products of the hotel do you think customers use as the basis for selecting the hotel in order to frequent it as a hotel of their choice?

Accommodation		1
Food and beverage		2
Conference facilities		3
Leisure		4

12. Please rate the following factors that in your opinion could affect a customer's decision on choosing hotels. *Please rate each option individually* [4 being the most important]

	1 Not very important	2 Not important	3 Important	4 Very important
Hotel brand				
Past experience				
Price/cost				
Convenient location				
Special designs of the hotel				

**13.** Are the hotel customers able to differentiate the brand of the hotel that you work for from others in the area?

Yes		1
No		2

**14.** Have you as an employee used other hotels in the area before settling to use the one that you work for on a regular basis?

Yes		1
No		2

**15.** In your opinion are there any benefits in buying a branded item?

Yes		1
No		2

If yes, please elaborate

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**16.** Would you pay more for staying in a branded hotel?

Yes		1
No		2

**17.** How long do you usually stay in the branded hotel of your choice or the one you work for?

Less than a week		1
1 – 2 months		2
3 – 4 months		3
5 months or more		4

18. How often do you use the branded hotel of your choice other than the one you work for?

Once a month		1
2 – 4 days a month		2
5 – 9 days a month		3
10 days a months or more		4

Please feel free to add any other comments

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***Your contribution to this survey is greatly appreciated.***

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR HOTEL MANAGERS**

1. How does your brand contribute to the operation of your hotel?
2. How do you as a hotel operation keep or retain your customers?
3. What other attributes complement your brand in luring customers to choose your hotel brand?
4. In your opinion, do you think people in different cultures buy different products, including choosing hotel brands?
5. Would you relate the prices set by the hotels to the reason why customers choose to use the hotels?
6. What other factors according to you influence the decisions by the customers in choosing to use your hotel?
7. Do you think your customers get their value for money by using your hotel?

**APPENDIX D:  
LETTERS FROM THE HOTEL MANAGERS**

T +267 397 5375  
F +287 390 0635  
E [reslodge@cresta.co.bw](mailto:reslodge@cresta.co.bw)



Cresta Lodge - Gaborone  
Samora Machel Drive  
P. Bag 00126, Gaborone, Botswana

[www.crestahotels.com](http://www.crestahotels.com)

The General Manager  
Cresta Lodge  
P /Bag 00126  
[Tel:3975375](tel:3975375)  
Gaborone

The Dean of Business Faculty  
Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
PO box 652  
Cape Town  
800  
Cape Town

16 January 2013

**Re: Permission to Conduct Research Study with Cresta Lodge Hotel, Gaborone**

Dear Sir

This is to formally acknowledge that the Administration of Cresta Lodge Gaborone Botswana has granted permission for Galeinchubeloe N. babili a student at your University to conduct a survey at our hotel.

This is in regard to her letter she presented to us requesting permission to partner with our hotel for the research pursuit of a masters Degree (Mtech) in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Sincerely,

Pearl Kuhlmann

  
Sales Manager

**T** +267 395 3631  
**F** +267 395 1840  
**E** [respresident@cresta.co.bw](mailto:respresident@cresta.co.bw)



Botswana Road  
 P.O. Box 200 Gaborone, Botswana

[www.crestahotels.com](http://www.crestahotels.com)

The General Manager  
 Cresta President Hotel  
 P.O. Box 200  
 Tel: 3953631  
 Gaborone

The Dean of Business Faculty  
 Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
 PO Box 652  
 Cape Town  
 8000  
 Cape Town

14 May 2012

Re: Permission to Conduct Research Study with Cresta President Hotel, Gaborone Botswana

Dear Sir

This is to formally acknowledge that The Administration of Cresta President Hotel, Gaborone Botswana has granted permission for Galeichubeloe N. Babili a student at your University conduct a survey/study at our hotel.

This is in regard to her letter she presented to us requesting permission to partner with our hotel for the research pursuit of a Masters Degree (MTech) in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Sincerely,

**Agripa Mbulawa**  
General Manager

Friday, 11 January 2013



**RE: PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

We are thrilled and delighted to be able to have a partnership with you conducting research/survey on hotels in Botswana and consumer behaviour and branding in the hospitality industry.

We will have your surveys on hand at the Front Desk. As guests check in, if they are willing to help; we will give them a copy. Once filled in we will collect them for you and hand them over.

Please let us know if this is acceptable.

Yours faithfully



Rupert Elliott  
General Manager

Galeichubeloe N. Babili  
Principal Technical Education Officer II  
Hospitality Operations (Programme Developer)  
Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training  
P/3ag 0062  
Gaborone