TOURISTS' PERSPECTIVES OF A TOURISM PRODUCT IN A SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN TOWN

by

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DECLARATION

I, Washington Makuzva, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed   **Date**

ABSTRACT

A well-packaged tourism product is the deciding factor in the choice of tourists about which destination to visit. A tourism product can be bundled with many tourism elements such as accommodation, attractions, activities and tours, price, image and climate. The tourism elements that build up a tourism product are the principle factors that contribute to the decision to choose one destination over another destination. Tourists can put a number of tourism products on the table, based on their needs and wants. However, they opt for one tourism product that promises to satisfy their demands. Destinations that offer unique tourism products are the most successful in a competitive industry since tourists will visit such destinations to fulfil their needs. However, even though some destinations like Victoria Falls offer unique tourism products, it is important to understand the nature and trends of tourists visiting this destination and their perceptions of the tourism product. This will assist in planning how to address any areas of concern as well as maintaining areas that are performing well.

Limited research exists on tourist perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product and hence this is the focus of the current research. It will help in broadening the knowledge of the relevant tourism bodies in Zimbabwe on how tourists view the tourism product, as well as aiding sustainable development and growth of the tourism product. This study followed a quantitative methodology design. The interviewer administered 377 questionnaires on face-to-face basis to tourists on a voluntary participation basis. Systematic sampling was used to collect the data.

Key findings indicate that despite the increasing number of females visiting this destination, males still dominate the tourist numbers. The majority of tourists fell within the age bracket of 21-50 years. The findings further show that availability of attractions, price of the tourism product, and accessibility of the destination play a paramount role in influencing tourists to visit the destination. Most tourists' expectations were met and they would visit again in future and recommend the destination to friends and relatives. The most satisfactory results were noted on the attractions, activities, tours, and tourist accommodation. Despite these positive results, tourists felt that prices of accommodation, activities, tours, as well as dining, was too high. Furthermore, too many police roadblocks and unnecessary fines were noted as being detrimental to the tourism product. The researcher noted all concerns and made recommendations to overcome these negative aspects.

The experience of tourists at a destination is strongly associated with an amalgamation of different elements of a tourism product. It is crucial to understand the performance of each tourism element as this contributes significantly to the success of the tourism product. The results of this study will afford the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

an understanding of the Victoria Falls tourism product from a tourist perspective. These entities will be able to improve the product, make it more attractive to tourists, and hence grow future visitor numbers.

In addition, the results of this study create a baseline for future research. Monitoring of tourist perspectives over time and an evaluation and assessment of the tourist demands can be done, which will help in the modification and upgrading of the tourism product to match the demands of the consumers (tourists).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father the late Mr. William Makuzva (1943-2010). I wish you were physically here to witness this day.

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GLOSSARY

Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition/ Explanation
COMCEC	Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TALC	Tourism Area Life Cycle
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VFR	Visits to Friends or Relatives
ZPWMA	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
ZTA	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

CHAPTER ONE
STUDY ORIENTATION

1.1   Introduction and rationale of the study

The tourism industry has gained momentum over other industries due to its contribution towards the economic benefits of the world and is viewed as one of the fastest continuously growing industries in the world (Cooper & Hall, 2008:45; Ninemeier & Perdue, 2005:23). UNWTO (2015:3) supports this view in that over a long period, tourism has maintained a continued growth and has broadened its spheres to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. The growth of the tourism industry is reiterated by UNWTO (2015:3), reporting the following statistics:

> …despite occasional shocks, tourism has shown virtually uninterrupted growth. International tourist arrivals have increased from 25 million globally in 1950, to 278 million in 1980, 527 million in 1995, and 1133 million in 2014.

From the travel statistics released by the UNWTO (2015:3) it is apparent that people are travelling across the globe, possibly because they are being offered a tourism product that suits their demands.

Peters and Weiermair (2000:23) state that due to the increase in the number of tourists travelling around the world and the evolution of new destinations across the globe, it is of paramount importance for a destination to develop and adjust its tourism product to attract more tourists and withstand the competition. UNWTO (2015:3) reports that many new places of interest to visit have developed beyond the old and well-known Europe and North America. According to UNWTO (2011:1), tourism products are the backbone of a destination's tourism sector operation. The tourism products must be good enough to meet or exceed what tourists want, this ensuring that the destination realises the full potential of tourism benefits. If the tourism products are unattractive, tourists will not visit the destination, which will then suffer diminished revenue. This emphasises the importance of a desirable tourism product in being the driving force behind a tourist destination gaining a competitive advantage over other tourist destinations. UNWTO (2011:1) continues, reporting that little is done to develop the attractiveness of the tourism product in most destinations and only a handful of destinations places emphasis on the development and delivery of various attractions and activities that make up the tourism product.

It is not only the development of an attractive tourism product that guarantees an increase in visitor numbers to a tourist destination, it is also important to understand the demands of tourists so that these are satisfied by the tourism product. It is essential to understand the type of tourism product that the target market wants so that the tourism product is marketed to the relevant people.

However, firstly the perspectives of the final consumers towards the product offering of a destination need to be explored. This knowledge will enable a destination to develop or improve its tourism product based on the tourists' perspectives, since tourists are the consumers.

A destination that offers good tourism products tends to attract more tourists and enjoys the benefits of offering the good tourism product (UNWTO, 2011:1). These benefits include longer periods of stay as well as the participation in a variety of activities.

According to Mugobo (2013:14), Zimbabwe is a landlocked country of 390,580 square kilometres between the Zambezi River to the north and the Limpopo River to the south. The name *Zimbabwe* is derived from Great Zimbabwe, the 12th to 15th century stone-built capital of the Rozvi Shona dynasty. Mandizha (2015:1) reports that Zimbabwe's tourist arrivals increased by 2.6% in 2014 to 1,880,028 in comparison to the previous year. Most arrivals were from Africa, Europe and America. Victoria Falls is a major international tourism destination in southern Africa and the most successfully developed town in terms of tourism facilities, as well as the fastest growing urban centre in Zimbabwe (Masocha, 2006:839). This town has a number of tourism products, which include attractions, accommodation, activities, facilities, infrastructure, and amenities that are sought after by tourists.

Zimbabwe has great potential to attract more foreign tourists and to encourage domestic tourism but this potential can only be realised through understanding the capabilities and the nature of the tourism products and services it has. Developing strategies to attract and increase visitor numbers to a tourist destination is an ongoing process. It has become imperative for countries across the globe to develop tourism products that at least meet or preferably exceed the expectations of the tourist. The notion of assessing a tourism product has gained importance across the world. Most governments, especially in the more economically developed countries but also in some of the less economically developed countries, have adopted a positive stance towards the development of tourism products in their countries (Adeyinka-Ojo & Nair, 2015:115).

Shahrin, Som and Jusoh (2014:1) are of the view that the development of an attractive tourism product creates a number of benefits since tourists select a destination based on the superior elements of a particular tourism product. Thus, countries need to understand the offerings of a tourism product in relation to the expectations of tourists so that the tourist expectations will be met, which can be mutually beneficial to both tourists and the destination.

Long (n.d:76) states that many studies conducted thus far on tourists' perspectives of tourism and tourism products have shown that these facets can be explained by the use of the Social Exchange

Theory (SET). SET is a theory aimed at understanding the mutual sharing of resources between individuals and groups in a well communicated situation (Ap, 1992:668). This is discussed in detail later in the study but this paradigm explicitly explains that people are interested in following something that is beneficial to them. Dorcheh and Mohamed (2013:35) emphasise that in SET what is perceived as the outcome is one of the main elements in understanding the tourist perspective of a tourism product. This model suited the subject under investigation as it is used as a baseline to assess the value of a tourism product from a tourist's point of view.

Victoria Falls is a small resort town and a major tourist hub located in the Matebeleland North Province on the western side of Zimbabwe. The town is 713 kilometres from the capital city Harare and is just one kilometre from the mighty Victoria Falls waterfall. The tourism product in Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe has a number of tourism elements that make up the tourism product. Victoria Falls town is surrounded by attractions that include Victoria Falls National Park, the famous bridge across the Zambezi River, which is the border between Zambia (Livingstone) and Zimbabwe, the waterfall itself—Victoria Falls—which is one of the seven natural wonders of the world and a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) heritage site, offering unsurpassed holiday experiences. In terms of the activities, the town is regarded as the adventure capital of Africa and tourists can embark on adrenaline-pumping activities like bungee jumping, bridge swing, bridge slide, zip-lining, diving, white water rafting, game viewing, walking with lions, sunset cruises and canoeing on the mighty Zambezi River. Victoria Falls offers diverse accommodation facilities ranging from two to five-star hotels, resorts, guesthouses, lodges, backpackers, safari camping tents and self-catering apartments. The infrastructure in the town is superbly maintained and has been reinforced by the development of the new Victoria Falls International Airport, which accommodates the landing of large aircraft (Kawadza, 2016:1).

The main purpose of this study was to assess tourists' perspectives of tourism product in Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe. The key reason for selecting this town is that it is the hub of Zimbabwe's tourism and has many tourist attractions and activities in the area and in close proximity to each other (Kawadza, 2016:1). To attain the results of this study, data were collected in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe from tourists in relation to their perspectives of the tourism product offered in Victoria Falls. There are many elements that build up a tourism product but in this study, the focus was on the main elements of accommodation, activities, accessibility, attractions, facilities, image, price, and tours.

1.2   Clarification of basic terms

1.2.1   Victoria Falls

Victoria Falls is the name of the resort town on the Zimbabwean side and there are accommodation establishments like The Victoria Falls hotel and Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, as well as the waterfall (Kawadza, 2016:1). The waterfall was named Victoria Falls by David Livingstone in 1855 who is believed to have been the first European person to view the waterfall and named it in honour of Queen Victoria of Britain. However, the native people named the waterfall *Mosi-oa-Tunya* that means the smoke that thunders. On the Zambian side is the town of Livingstone named after David Livingstone. The waterfall is mainly called Victoria Falls though some indigenous people of Zambia also refer to the waterfall as *Mosi-oa-Tunya*. In this study, the name Victoria Falls refers to the town.

1.2.2   Tourism

According to Inkson and Minnaert (2012:14), the word tourism comes from the Greek word *tornos* and Latin *tornus* which mean to turn or to circle, and evolved into the French *tour*. It means a journey or a trip that ends in the same place from where it started, thus the term "round trip". The definition of the term tourism has a number of elements and is complex. Various scholars have different definitions for the term but Kandampully (2000:10) defines tourism as a unique product compound that comprises tangible and intangible services for tourists' experiences. However, the following definition by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as cited in Inkson and Minnaert (2012:16) is more widely recognised:

> Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

1.2.3   Tourism product

A tourism product is a combination of tourism elements brought together in a 'bundle' to satisfy the consumer's needs and wants (Hudson, 2008:145). Camillo (2015:331) proposes that a tourism product is something offered for attraction, acquisition or consumption and comprises services, physical objects, places, personalities, ideas and organisations. In addition, Arunmozhi and Panneerselvam (2014:32) define a tourism product as an object that attracts tourists and includes the elements of accommodation, transportation, dining and entertainment, as well as attractions and tours.

1.2.4 Tourist

Misra and Sadual (2009:6) define tourists as people who do not live in the place or country of arrival and are accepted to that destination or country under a tourist visa (if required) for the main reason of leisure, recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives (VFR), health or medical treatment, and religious reasons. They must stay for at least one night in the host country or tourist destination and their maximum stay must not exceed 12 months. UN DESA Statistics Division (2010:10) defines a tourist as a visitor/traveller who takes a trip to a destination/place outside the usual environment and for less than a year, for the principal reason of business, leisure or other personal purpose and will not seek any employment opportunities in the country or place visited during the period of visiting.

1.2.5 Perspective

A perspective can be described as a point of view or a particular attitude towards something. Josh (2017:56) defines a perspective as "a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something".

1.2.6 Tourist perspective

Pearce and Schanzel (2013:140) define tourist perspective as the tourist's views of the characteristics of good and poor destinations, which are particularly important to help shape the focus of destination management activity by drawing attention to what needs to be managed.

1.2.7 Destination

Destinations are amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers (Buhalis, 2000:97). The author further explains that traditionally destinations are regarded as well-defined geographical areas, such as a country, an island or a town. However, it is increasingly recognised that a destination can also be a perceptual concept, which can be interpreted subjectively by consumers, depending on their travel itinerary, cultural background, purpose of visit, educational level and past experience (Buhalis, 2000:97). Therefore, the researcher proposes that a destination can be regarded as a combination (or even as a brand) of all products, services and ultimately experiences provided locally.

1.2.8 Social exchange theory

Ap (1992:668) defines SET as a theory that is aimed at understanding the mutual sharing of resources between individuals and groups in a well communicated situation. In addition, from a tourism point of view, SET proposes that an individual's attitude towards tourism and their supporting level for its development is inclined to their evaluations of the results of tourism for themselves and the community at large (Ward & Berno, 2011:1557). Andereck, Valentine, Knopf

and Vogt (2005:1061) note that people can opt to participate in an exchange if they have scrutinised the costs and benefits of such an exchange and if the benefits override the cost they will engage themselves.

1.3   Problem statement

Despite the tourist's arrivals in Victoria Falls diminishing as noted by Samukange (2015) and even though the benefits of tourism to Victoria Falls and the information on attitudes and insights of tourists are of great significance for tourism to flourish, there is no literature on tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe. The tourist's numbers to Victoria Falls is constantly dropping between the years 2012 to 2015 (ZTA, 2015:19). Yet, there is evidence of considerable research on tourism activities and the socio-economic impacts of tourism in Victoria Falls but no research exists on the assessment of the tourism product in Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe. Hence, there is a need for a study that will lay the foundation as to what defines a good tourism product from a tourist's point of view in the study area.

The assessment of a tourism product will highlight valuable resources that are underutilised and pinpoint areas that detract from the tourism product (Hultman & Hall, 2012:548). A thorough, systematic assessment of a tourism product can assist the relevant municipality, tourism planners, tour operators, community decision-makers and tourism promoters to identify challenges and to devise relevant and operative policies applicable to the area, thereby capitalising on the merits and mitigating the shortfalls that are stumbling blocks to the development of the Victoria Falls tourism product.

The development of an attractive tourism product tends to generate a number of benefits to the host destination (Keyser, 2002:168). Wondowossen, Nakagoshi and Yukio (2014:73) support the view that a tourism destination could be competitive if it has comparative superiority in tourism products and service quality compared to other tourism destinations that aim for the same market segments. Sharpley and Telfer (2002:85) stress that tourists prefer destinations that are attractive and will spend money there. This means that if the tourism product is not attractive tourists will not visit the destination and the destination will lose that revenue (Smith & Stewart, 2014:231). The development and marketing of a tourism product such as Victoria Falls requires an understanding of the profile of the people who visit and utilise the destination. Furthermore, knowing the profile of the tourists alone is not enough for Victoria Falls to create a viable tourism product, hence the main elements that influence a tourist's decision to visit Victoria Falls need to be identified. A tourist is the final consumer of a tourism product so it is crucial to examine the perspectives of the tourists on Victoria Falls. Once their perspectives are known, a tourism product that suites,

satisfies or exceeds the tourist demands can be developed. Earlier researchers (Kabote, 2015:4; Karambakuwa, Shonhiwa, Murombo, Mauchi, Gopo, Denhere, Tafirei, Chingarande & Mudavanhu, 2011:68; Mazapu & Sibanda, 2016:56) have mainly touched on the concepts of the contribution of tourism (socially and economically) to the locals or to the country of Zimbabwe. An in-depth literature search could not identify research that assessed tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in a selected Zimbabwean town, similar to the current topic.

Considering the above view, the problem identified in this study is that failure to capture tourists' perspectives on the tourism product may create a gap in understanding their needs, meeting their expectations, and the ability of the destination to develop a sustainable tourism product.

1.4   Research aim

The main aim of this study is to assess tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe.

1.5   Research questions

The following questions are required to assess tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe:

a) What is the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls?
b) What are the main elements that influence tourist decisions to visit Victoria Falls?
c) What are the expectations of tourists from the Victoria Falls tourism product?
d) What is the level of tourist satisfaction derived from the Victoria Falls tourism product?
e) What are the areas of improvement for the Victoria Falls tourism product?

1.6   Objectives

To achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives were pursued:

a) To ascertain the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls;
b) To determine the main elements that influence tourists' decisions to visit Victoria Falls;
c) To understand the expectations of tourists from the Victoria Falls tourism product;
d) To determine the levels of satisfaction derived by tourists from the Victoria Falls tourism product; and
e) To identify areas of improvement for the Victoria Falls tourism product.

1.7 Research design and methodology

Research is defined by Merriam (2014:3) as inquiring into, or investigating something in a systematic manner. Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003:207) define the same term as a process of using scientific methods to broaden knowledge in a specific study area.

1.7.1 Research design

Research design can be defined as a blueprint of how an investigation will take place (Business Dictionary.com, 2015a:174). In furthering the explanation, Business Dictionary.com (2015a:174) explains that research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means of analysing data collected. Kothari (2004:31) shares a similar sentiment by articulating that the term research design refers to the concrete structure of research and it includes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data.

The study is quantitative in nature because it is aimed at gathering statistical information in assessing the tourism product of Victoria Falls from the final consumers of the product, which are the tourists. To achieve the desired objectives of the study, both primary and secondary sources were used.

1.7.2 Research methodology

Kothari (2004:8) defines research methodology as "a way to systematically solve the research problem". It is the methodical procedure whereby the researcher starts from the identification of the problem to last stage of the conclusions and involves general activities such as identifying problems, reviewing of literature, formulating research questions, data collection and analysis of data, interpreting results and drawing of conclusions (Singh, 2010:156).

The researcher conducted a literature review focusing on the tourism product, the perspectives of tourists of the tourism product, as well as the SET and how they link to the topic under investigation. This was to establish what had previously been done regarding the research area as well as to identify the gaps. Furthermore, literature on the current tourism product offering in the study area was also investigated. This helped the researcher to familiarise himself with the topic as well as determining the parameters of the research.

The search for information can be done in two main ways, being primary or secondary research. Primary research refers to fresh research that is done to answer precise issues or questions (George, 2011:117). Bryman (2012:212) postulates that primary research involves the use of questionnaires, surveys, or interviews with individuals or small groups. In this study, the tourists

visiting Victoria Falls were the primary source. Interviewer-administered questionnaires were conducted with tourists on a voluntary participation basis. According to George (2011:144), a questionnaire is a chain of questions put to respondents to provide answers to the stated research objectives. Gillham (2008:1) argues that the greatest advantage of using questionnaires is that they give a quick answer for the research methodology.

Cowton (1998:423) states that secondary research involves the use of information that was researched for other purposes and is already available and is part of the literature review as it includes books, journals, articles, magazines, theses and the Internet.

1.7.2.1   Quantitative research

The term quantitative research is described by George (2011:117) as research that enables the researcher to ascertain how many respondents agree or disagree with a particular statement but it is not likely to provide insight into why respondents have answered as they have. Aliaga and Gunderson (2000:15) describe quantitative research as "…explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)".

1.7.3   Population and sampling

The research population is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study (Kothari, 2004:41). For this study, the population was determined by the statistics showing the number of tourists from the previous year. Systematic sampling was used to collect data from the tourists. Business Dictionary.com (2015b:177) defines systematic sampling as a technique of selecting a random sample from the bigger population to get the representation of the population from the sample. This process typically involves the selection of a permanent beginning point in the larger population and then getting subsequent observations by using a constant interval between samples taken. In this study, the researcher asked questions to every fifth person at the entry point to the Rain Forest of Victoria Falls and if the person refused to complete the questionnaire, the next person was asked. The population and sample included both domestic and international tourists. Questions on rating the main elements of a good tourism product, perceptions of the tourists towards the main elements of the tourism product of Victoria Falls, overall level of satisfaction with the service offering of Victoria Falls tourism product, to mention a few, were asked.

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA, 2016) noted that 257,043 tourists arrived in Victoria Falls during the period January to December 2015 and on average numbered 21,420 per month. For this study the population N = 21,420 (based on 2015 average

per month tourist arrival statistics). The sample according to Isaac and Michael (1981:193) is $n = 377$ to achieve the 95% confidence level.

1.7.4 Pilot study

The questionnaire was distributed randomly to students and staff in the Tourism and Events Management Department at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Five of the questionnaires were given randomly to lecturers and following the same procedure, the other five were given to post-graduate students to complete. The researcher considered the feedback from the people who completed the questionnaire in terms of the time spent to complete the questionnaire, the relevance of the questions to the subject, objectives of the study under investigation, as well any comments or suggestions to improve the study. The supervisor assisted with suggestions on how best the statements were to be structured and based on the feedback obtained from the pre-tested sources, the questionnaire was improved and used in the field to collect primary data.

1.7.5 Data analysis

Data collected from the fieldwork were analysed, interpreted, and synthesised into meaningful information. This is graphically presented in Chapter Four. The IBM24 Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 was used as an instrument to analyse the data collected during the fieldwork.

1.8   Ethical considerations

Research ethics involve certain requirements to be adhered to, such as the protection of dignity of subjects as well how the information is published in research articles (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011:4). Ethical considerations involve the disclosure of procedures and methodology involved in the research process and making the respondents aware of their exact role in the study (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi & Cheraghi, 2014:7). In carrying out this study research ethics were applied to safeguard the veracity of the research. Detailed ethical considerations applied in this study are explained in Chapter Three.

1.9   Significance of the research

The results of this study will afford insight to the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) on the position of the Victoria Falls tourism product from tourist perspectives. This will assist these authorities in how to improve the product to broaden its appeal, which will increase visitor numbers in the future, as well as increasing

revenue. This will be achieved by the identification of the main elements of the tourism product in Victoria Falls and assessing the performance of these elements based on the tourists' views.

This study will identify the tourism products that need special attention, especially those which are underperforming, and solutions to rectify the problems will be suggested so that Victoria Falls will achieve its potential in increasing the tourist numbers in future years. In addition, this research will improve the authorities' understanding of the Victoria Falls tourism product and elucidate tourists' expectations. In turn, this will allow for improved planning and enhance the marketability of Victoria Falls. An improved tourism product will encourage repeat visits and attract more visitors, and grow revenue.

1.10   Delineation of the study

This study was limited to assessing tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe. This research was restricted to domestic and international tourists over the age of 18 years who visited Victoria Falls for business purposes, for leisure, or were visiting friends and relatives.

1.11   Structure of the dissertation

The study comprises five chapters and the format is guided by van Aswegen's (2010) Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) postgraduate dissertations guidelines. This guide informs a researcher about the presentation and format of dissertations, and how to reference reviewed literature when compiling the paper.

Chapter One: Study orientation

This chapter introduces the reader to the study and provides a background to the research. The chapter addresses the problem statement, study aim, research questions, and objectives of the study. The significance of the study is discussed, as well as ethical considerations, and the delimitation of the study.

Chapter Two: The tourism product and destination development

Chapter Two reviews various literature sources, which aim to provide an overview of the tourism product, its characteristics, and elements. The theoretical and conceptual framework is outlined, including a discussion on the social exchange theory (SET). A review of relevant literature is crucial in identifying authoritative research pertaining to the study topic. Various sources of secondary data are reviewed, including journal articles, newspaper articles, theses, and books.

Chapter Three: Research design and methodology

Chapter Three drills down into the research design and methodology applied in gathering data for the study. The methods and tools used to collect data, the sampling procedure, and data analysis are discussed.

Chapter Four: Analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter Four supplies the demographic profile of the respondents. It presents an analysis and interpretation of the data that were sourced from the respondent tourists. The results are presented in the format of tables, pie and bar charts, as well as descriptive summaries.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter Five concludes the study. The attainment of the research objectives is discussed, as well as a conclusion to each objective. Recommendations are made, the limitations of the study are outlined, and lastly, future research directions are proposed.

1.12   Summary

This chapter introduced the reader to the study and provided a background to the research. The chapter addressed the problem statement, study aim, research questions, and objectives of the study. The research design and methodology were briefly discussed and the method of data collection was outlined. The basic terms that are used throughout the research project are clarified. The significance of the research is briefly discussed, as well as ethical considerations and the delimitation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO
THE TOURISM PRODUCT AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature pertinent to the study topic and identifies gaps to be explored. Ridley (2012:3) defines literature review as a part of the study or thesis where correlations and linkages from the available secondary sources relevant to the study are drawn and examined. Additionally, Hart (1998:13) defines literature review as:

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

This chapter provides the conceptual framework of the study and discusses comprehensively the theories and models that surround the research topic and the research questions. An in-depth analysis of the models and theories is presented.

The literature review plays a significant role in the formulation of research questions as well as identification of the relevant theories that underpin the topic being investigated (Ridley, 2012:3). In this study, the literature review focused on the characteristics of a tourism product and the main elements necessary for the tourism product to compete with other tourism products. Furthermore, the theories and concepts that underpin the phenomenon under investigation are discussed.

2.2   The tourism product restated

A tourism product is the core feature that can distinguish between a good destination and a memorable destination (Candela & Figini, 2012:86). Zappiano (2005:6) posits that a tourism product can be understood as the chief necessity behind the holiday motivation. This is mainly because a well-built tourism product can stimulate the passion of tourists to travel, knowing that their needs and wants will be met. Various scholars define the characteristics of a tourism product. Gupta, Singh, Kirar and Bairwa (2015:49) define a tourism product as any product that is marketed by a country or an organisation to attract tourists to visit the destination and enjoy the experience of the product. They elaborate that a tourism product consists of a combination of important products, which includes objects and attractions, transportation, accommodation, and entertainment but each element is prepared by an individual or organisation and offered separately to tourists (consumers). A tourism product is defined by Grzinic and Zanketic (2008:6) as:

> ...a sum of available resources, service, and facilities that tourists can use in a specific place and at a specific time to satisfy their needs.

Tourism has been identified as one of the principal and fastest growing industries across the globe (Dorcheh & Mohamed, 2013:31; Pedersen, 2002:11). This could be because of the multifaceted nature of the tourism industry. Zappiano (2005:7) notes that tourism is accepted around the world as a multi-sector economy because many different industrial sectors play a role in the tourism supply system. Zappiano elaborates and explains that due to the odd characteristics of tourism, which include various industries within it, it has become the main industry in the world for promoting economic development, especially for developing countries. However, the growth of the tourism industry across the globe has also stimulated the emergence of new tourist destinations, which has led to strong competition amongst tourist destinations (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003:10).

The continued growth of tourist destinations has resulted in broadening the variety of tourist products a destination has to offer (Goodall, 2004:172). Stange and Brown (n.d:16) argue that each destination has to devise strategies to attract tourists, to remain popular as well as to withstand competition. Mulec (2010:14) opines, "Competition is not a battle of products or services, it is a battle of perceptions in the customer's mind". Consequently, for a destination to continue to be recognised, the tourism product it offers should create a desire in the minds of tourists. The same dictum is supported by Mulec (2010:14), who elaborates that destinations may offer excellent tourism products and experiences but should be able to create the impression in the minds of potential travellers that it offers unique products which are better and more appealing than other destinations.

Planet, Murphy, Armstrong, Corne, Fitzpatrick, Grosberg, Ham, Holden, Morgan and Waters (2013:544) assert that a trip to southern Africa will not be complete without visiting Victoria Falls. These authors further describe the Victoria Falls waterfall as the largest, most beautiful and majestic waterfall on the planet, that is the main drawcard to visit not only this resort town but southern Africa at large. The spectacular Victoria Falls destination appeals to all people of all ages and Planet *et al.* (2013:544) are of the view that Victoria Falls is a magnet for all tour groups, families, thrill seekers or honeymooners—it is one of the most spectacular sights on earth. The tourism product offered in this destination comprises a number of elements, certain characteristics of which will be discussed in detail in this section. Planet *et al.* (2013:545) describe Victoria Falls thus:

Whether you're here purely to take in the sight of a natural wonder of the world, or for a serious hit of adrenaline via rafting or bungee jumping into the Zambezi, Victoria Falls is a place where you're sure to tick off numerous items from that bucket list.

2.3   Characteristics of a tourism product

A tourism product has certain characteristics, which differentiate it from manufactured products. It is fundamental to understand these unique characteristics as they offer insight into how the tourism product should be developed, marketed, and advertised, and sustainable strategies implemented.

Laws (2004:16) indicates that the distinguishing characteristics of a tourism product, commonly known as tourism services, compared to those of a manufactured product, have been studied since the early 1980s. Scholars such as Cowell (1986) summarised some of the characteristics that are unique to tourism products based on the tangibility, separability, homogeneity, and storability of the products, as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Difference between manufactured products and tourism products (Laws, 2004:16)

Manufacturing characteristic	Meaning	Service characteristic	Service feature
Tangibility	Customer can test-drive a car	Intangibility	The customer cannot sample a service before purchasing it
Separability	Customer is not involved in manufacturing the car	Inseparability	The customer is part of the service and interacts directly with the organization and its staff during the service
Homogeneity	Each car is identical to others produced to a given specification	Heterogeneity	A particular service may be experienced differently by each client
Storability	Most new cars are stored for weeks or months prior to sale and delivery	Perishability	The organization cannot put an unsold service into storage

Muhcina (2008:2786) argues that like a tangible product, a tourism product gets its characteristics from the interaction of its compositional elements. Several authors (Balaure, Catoiu & Veghes, 2005:275; Gupta *et al.*, 2015:51) are of the view that a tourism product is a combination of

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elements that are offered to the tourism firm by different service suppliers, such as accommodation, transporters, food and beverage, leisure and many more. As mentioned earlier, the characteristics of tourism products vary from destination to destination while some of the characteristics identified by scholars are the same. Balaure *et al.* (2005:276) suggests that the characteristics of a tourism product are unique, depending on tourist demand and time factors, is not able to be stored, and it is perishable. Tourism products are intangible, perishable, and heterogeneous in nature. Hence, selling the product becomes challenging as it is mostly feeling-based (Arunmozhi & Panneerselvam, 2014:32; IRMA, 2014:42).

George (2011:24) reports that, although some of the characteristics are similar to Laws (2004:16) and Balaure *et al.* (2005:276), there are four generic characteristics of services that differentiate the marketing of tourism services to manufactured products: intangible, inseparable, variable, and perishable. Furthermore, non-ownership, seasonality, loyalty, high costs, distribution channels, as well as external shocks and events are specific features of tourism services (George, 2011:29). According to Mok, Sparks and Kadampully (2013:16) tourism service offerings can be categorised into:

- The core (basic) service—this is regarded as the principle reason for purchasing the tourism product, for example the accommodation at the destination.
- The expected service—this is also referred to as the actual service, which is made up of the basic core service and the tangible support service, for example the accommodation plus a comfortable bed in the room.
- The augmented product—a combination of the core service offering and the tangible support service, as well as the added value which can be quick responsiveness, reliability, good service quality and value for money on offerings.
- The potential product—the possible features and benefits that can be added to the tourism product to increase the willingness of travellers to visit a destination.

The available literature revealed that the main characteristics of the tourism product are centred on the following characteristics, which are explained in detail hereunder.

2.3.1 Intangibility

According to Mok *et al.* (2013:16):

> Tourism services are primarily intangible as they do not have a physical dimension, which can be touched seen, tasted, or smelled as the manufactured goods.

This aphorism is supported by Bennett and Strydom (2001:5), Laws (2004:16), George (2011:24), and Tassiopoulos (2011:268), that tourism is a service industry and its services cannot be inspected or tested in advance or even brought to the consumer. The intangible nature of tourism products is characterised by the experience to be enjoyed at the destination but consumers take the risk of buying a product they cannot see or feel. Tassiopoulos (2011:268) continues, that because one cannot taste or experience the services beforehand, tourists rely mainly on word of mouth referrals from previous travellers or travel agents to make their decision to purchase a holiday package. It is here that service delivery plays a crucial role as it determines whether the tourist will spread positive or negative word of mouth reviews.

Because of the difference between expectations and the actual tourism product offered at a destination, the tourist experience will also differ, meaning differing tourist perspectives of the tourism product. George (2011:34) proposes that because of the intangible nature of tourism products the marketer of the destination should tangibilise the tourism product with visible physical aspects, to create an image in the minds of tourists of what to expect at the destination. Laws (2004:16) notes a clear distinction between tourism products and manufactured products and he reiterates that a manufactured product can be tested and inspected by the customer before purchase. An example is a car, which the customer can test drive before buying it. In contrast, the tourism product can only be experienced after purchase, which is termed palpable intangibility by Mok *et al.* (2013:17).

From the above discussion, one can understand the difference between these two forms of products in that manufactured products are experienced before purchase whereas tourism products are experienced after purchase. Sanyal (2014:1) explains that manufactured products are first produced, then sold, and then consumed, whilst tourism products are first sold, then produced, and then consumed at the same place and time. Mok *et al.* (2013:17) articulate that due to the intangibility of tourism products the tourists or travellers are offered an abstract concept of what they will experience before they visit the destination. Mok *et al.* (2013:17) calls this mental intangibility, whereby tourists perceive what their holiday experience will be based on the activities and previous experiences they are shown.

It is interesting to note that not all tourism services are intangible but rather a combination of both the tangible and intangible (Mok *et al.*, 2013:17). He offers an example of airlines, which offer intangible elements in the form of transportation and tangible elements in form of aircraft, meals, seats, and pillows. However, the rule is that tourism services cannot be displayed and experienced before purchasing the services (Sanyal, 2014:1). Due to the intangible nature of a tourism product,

George (2011:34) asserts that there are difficulties in selling the tourism product as there is nothing physical to show the customer except images, which do not really reproduce the holiday experience. However, Mok *et al.* (2013:17) claim that to reduce the challenges associated with the intangibility of tourism services, tourism marketers, for example travel agents and tour operators, show images of the destination to potential buyers, as well as explaining the benefits that are attached to each package.

2.3.2   Inseparability

Tourism products are created and consumed at the same time, in contrast to physical products, which are created beforehand and then sold to customers (Tassiopoulos, 2008:207). Mok *et al.* (2013:18) explain that tourism services cannot be manufactured in one place, transported for sale to another place, and then sold and consumed again in another place, but rather, they are sold, produced and consumed at the same place and time. This means that tourism services require the service provider and the customer to be at the same place and same time for the tourism product to be consumed. The term inseparability is defined by George (2011:26) as the situation that occurs where a service and the provision of that service happen at the same time and both the provider and the consumer (tourist) are involved in the process of delivery.

Tassiopoulos (2008:207) in explaining the inseparability of tourism services states that the provision and consumption of tourism services are inseparable. For instance, in the case of a tour the driver and the guide are part of the product and the tourist has direct experience of the service at the same time it is produced. This means the goodness or badness of the service delivery is based on the person who is delivering it and the one receiving the service. It follows that the service providers, who are the employees, become part of the product and should render good services to the tourists to encourage repeat business and positive word of mouth reviews (Tassiopoulos, 2008:207). As explained earlier, the experience received by the tourist is vested in the attitude of the employee providing the service as the comfortable seat in a plane or car are not good enough to make the experience complete, and customer service is the key to good service delivery. Moreover, it is crucial for service providers to maintain good customer service since beautiful attractions alone, without someone narrating the interesting stories behind them, will mean nothing to the tourist. Similarly, luxurious accommodation or comfortable seats without good customer service cannot cement the satisfaction of the tourist.

To elaborate on the inseparability of the tourism products, Bennett and Strydom (2005:5) explain that the ownership of a tourism product is not transferred to the buyer, however, the buyer can only utilise the tourism product for the period concerned and leave the product for the next person,

hence consumed simultaneously. This may contribute to the variation of tourist perspectives on the tourism product offered at a particular destination. Employee management is crucial, employees need to be trained to be friendly, polite, and be motivated, thereby capacitated to deliver good service to the customer, and there is no substitute for quality service.

Mok *et al.* (2013:18) assert that it is difficult to practise mass production of tourism services due to the inseparability nature of the tourism services, which means that large numbers of tourists as well as service providers will be clustered at one point, which result in negative environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts. George (2011:28) concurs with Tassiopoulos (2008:207), that due to the inseparability of service production and consumption it means that each service encounter is likely to be different and this contributes to the next characteristic of tourism products.

2.3.3 Variability

Travel and tourism products are considered services rather than tangible goods (Bennett & Strydom, 2001:5). The fact that the tourism product service is offered at an interface with the consumer (tourist) and is based on who is delivering, as well as to whom the service is delivered, causes it to vary as it is attitude-based. Tassiopoulos (2008:207) describes this analogy by explaining that:

> The service providers delivering a hotel restaurant meal are part of the offering and they cannot provide exactly the same level of service as their colleagues; they are not machines.

Bennett and Strydom (2001:6), Balaure *et al.* (2005:276), and Arunmozhi and Panneerselva (2014:32) all concur that tourism products are heterogeneous in nature. Mok *et al.* (2013:18) indicate that tourism services vary in standard and quality over time because they are delivered to people by people and this can be influenced by the mood of the person delivering the service as well as the person receiving the service. Tassiopoulos (2008:207) posits that tourism services can even vary from day to day—a service provider delivers excellent service on a certain day but renders bad service on the following day. Moreover, the characteristics of consumers differ, hence, the way they receive the service offering is different, which makes the tourism offering experience completely different from time to time, place to place, as well as from person to person.

George (2011:28) offers the analogy that even though the flight seat might be comfortable and well designed, the completion of the good service lies in the hands of the flight attendant as they are the ones who provide the service. Consequently, because the attendant is human and cannot provide exactly the same level of service as his or her colleagues, the product will vary and not be standardized (Tassiopoulos, 2008:207). Similarly, from the consumers' side, no two consumers are the same and their demands on one thing might be very different. This makes the

standardisation of the tourism product very complicated as each consumer has different tastes, expectations, perspectives and moods. George (2011:28) describes variability as the most challenging characteristic of the tourism product and standardisation poses a major risk as consumers have different tastes. This means that by satisfying one consumer it is not guaranteed that the next consumer will be satisfied. However, the development of service standards and employee training programmes is the key to ensuring consistent service (Tassiopoulos, 2008:207).

Mok *et al.* (2013:19) aver that it is of great significance to maintain consistency in the service industry. However, it is not easy to maintain consistency in the service industry because the service delivery of a tourism service is complete only when the customer receives the services, and this will depend on a number of factors, the main factors being the service providers (employees) and the consumer (tourist). Tourists who perceive that they receive consistently good quality service at a certain destination will continue to visit that destination and become repeat visitors, whereas if the service delivery varies they will look for destinations that strive for consistency (Mok *et al.*, 2013:19; Tassiopoulos, 2008:207).

2.3.4   Perishability

This characteristic of a tourism product means that tourism offerings/products cannot be stored, saved, returned or resold (George, 2011:28). It clearly differentiates tourism products from manufactured products as the tourism products are time-bound. This means if the tourism product, for example a seat on a flight, is not sold for a particular day it cannot be stored or resold for tomorrow because the revenue from that seat for that day is lost and cannot be compensated (Gupta *et al.*, 2015:50). This also applies to the accommodation sector and attractions. If sales were not made for a certain day the revenue lost cannot be recovered, despite the fact that the hotel room or the attraction is still physically present. George (2011:36) proposes a remedy to reduce the impact of perishability is by managing supply and demand. The process demands a change in working hours for staff—extended working hours during peak season and reduced working hours for off peak times. Tassiopoulos (2011:268) concurs with George (2011:36) that it is very important to manage demand and supply and offer better pricing for the tourism product since this product is perishable.

Besides the above characteristics of a tourism product, it is also important to understand the elements that constitute a tourism product. Different scholars put forward different views on what constitutes a tourism product and some of the elements differ, which leads to the following discussion.

2.4   Elements of a tourism product

According to Gupta *et al.* (2015:50), there are three basic elements of a tourism product—attractions at destinations, facilities at destinations and ease of accessibility to destinations. These three elements form the basis of the main components that build up a tourism product.

Commercii (2001:94) and Verma (2016:1) identify five main components of a tourism product, which are attractions, accessibility, destination facilities/amenities, image, and price. Commercii (2001:94) argues that the local populace of a destination are also a component of the tourism product as they interact with the tourists and cultural tourism results from the interaction between the tourists and the locals as they share their cultures. Commercii (2001:95) emphasises that the local populace of a destination forms an integral part of the destination product as they can help tourists by giving them the information they want, but they can be dangerous to the tourists as well. In addition to the above-mentioned components, other elements such as infrastructure, accommodation, climate, travel agencies, tour operators and activities also constitute a tourism product (Becken, 2010:2).

Grzinic and Zanketic (2008:3) define a tourism product as "a complete experience from the time the tourist leaves home to the time he returns to it". Arunmozhi and Panneerselva (2014:32) define a tourism product as "an object that attracts tourists and normally has the following elements: accommodation, transportation, dining and entertainment as well as attractions and tours". These elements are designed to give the tourist an all-round holiday experience of the tourism product. An explanation of these elements is given below and follows the context of the study.

2.4.1   Attractions

The most phenomenal characteristic of tourist attractions is that they are only consumed at the tourist destination and not at the domicile of the tourist. It is from this understanding that tourist attractions are the main components to pull tourists to visit a tourist destination. For example, a tourist who is longing to see Victoria Falls will need to travel to where the tourist attraction is to satisfy that longing. This can be assumed as the starting point of what is called tourism.

An attraction is anything that draws people either geographically or through remote electronic means so that they might have an experience (Stange & Brown, n.d:4). Lubbe (2003:104) summarises all the types of attractions into two main types, which are natural attractions and man-made attractions. Natural attractions are attractions that have developed naturally without any human intervention, for example the Victoria Falls waterfall, whereas man-made attractions are attractions created by human beings either for the purpose of attracting tourists, for example

casinos and theme parks, or for the sole purpose of human beings' endeavours, for example architecture or certain ceremonies (Lubbe, 2003:105). Ivanovic, Khunou, Pawson, Reynish, Tseane and Wassung (2009:169) and George (2011:474) propose that tourist attractions are mainly classified into natural, cultural, purpose-built and special event attractions. However, it is difficult to determine the parameter of each type of tourist attraction because often characteristics of the different types overlap. According to Verma (2016:1), attractions comprise natural attractions (landscape, seascape, beaches, and climate), built attractions (historic and/or new townscape as in newly built resorts), purpose-built attractions such as theme parks, cultural attractions (presentation of history and folklore organised as festivals and pageants, museums, theatre), and social attractions (opportunities to meet with or encounter the residents of destinations and experience their lifestyle to some extent).

Verma (2016) argues that for business and other non-leisure visitors, such as visits to friends and relatives, the primary motivation is provided by their affinity and association with the destination but the leisure attractions may still be an influence. Ambient attractions, such as climate, the atmosphere or vibe of a place, hospitality and other intangible characteristics of tourism resources, is another type of attraction (Gezt, 1991; Garner, 1996; both cited by Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:169). This is because the ambient attraction is argued to be the heart of the attraction, which develops the motive of the tourist to visit the attraction or destination.

Attractions are those elements in a tourism product that determine the choice made by a tourist to visit one particular destination rather than another (Patel & Nayab, 2014:62). Patel and Nayab (2014:62) propose that the attractions could be cultural, like sites and areas of archaeological interest, historical buildings and monuments, flora and fauna, beach resorts, mountains, national parks or events like trade fairs, exhibitions, arts and music festivals, and games. Bhatia (2006:310) opines that attractions are key elements that need to be considered in assessing the tourism potential of an area. What makes some attractions successful while others fail is determined by the distance pull. According to Bhatia (2006:310) the distance pull refers to how important or interesting an attraction or activity is to a visitor, compared to the distance that has to be travelled to experience it. The scholar then evaluates that some attractions have very strong distance pull and people are prepared to travel long distances, spend money and perhaps even undergo some inconvenience to visit them (Bhatia, 2006:310).

Lubbe (2013:109) and Gupta *et al.* (2015:50) postulate that the attractions at the destination are the principal component of the product. These scholars further assert that if there are no attractions there is nothing to motivate a tourist to travel or visit the destination, hence the

attractions at the destinations are the prime element of the tourism product. The pulling power of attractions can make tourists travel long distances to fulfil their experience anxiety. In a bid to understand the pulling power of an attraction, a clear distinction between primary attractions and secondary attractions needs to be articulated. However, in distinguishing the two sub-types of attractions, an attraction's pulling power also needs to be defined. An attraction's pulling power is the ability of an attraction to pull visitors (tourists) to the attraction and is measured by the distance travelled by the tourist to visit the attraction (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:151). Gunn (1997:51) terms this "magnetism". Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:167) further elaborate that attractions with strong pulling power are known as primary attractions. Edelheim (2015:15) defines primary attractions as:

> …iconic attractions that tourists travel long distances to visit, whereas secondary attractions act as elements in the region of primary attractions that are known to the tourist before the journey but are not influential enough to warrant the journey on their own.

George (2011:475) shares the same sentiment when differentiating between primary and secondary attractions. Grzinic and Zanketic (2008:4) denote that it may be difficult to name or categorise what falls under primary attractions and what falls under secondary attractions for the very reason that tourists, whether free independent travellers (FITs) or groups, do not equally assign the same importance to one attraction. This means that what some would view as the drawcard (primary attraction) to visit a particular destination, could be seen as an inferior or secondary attraction by another. Grzinic and Zanketic (2008:4) and Long and Palmer (2008:146) state that primary attractions resemble the drive behind the holiday and they are what influence the decision to visit one destination over another. There is another sub-type of attraction called a tertiary attraction. Edelheim (2015:15) concurs with Long and Palmer (2008:146) that tertiary attractions are encountered by tourists already on the trip to the primary attraction or on their way back and they are not known to the tourists before the trip commences. Long and Palmer (2008:146) further assert that tertiary attractions have no influence on the choice of the destination to be visited by the tourist.

Tourist typologies vary in each segment and at each level and this results in the difficulties in understanding their perceptions of the tourist attractions as what seems to be the primary attraction to someone might be a secondary or even tertiary attraction to another (George, 2011:475; Ivanovic *et al.*, 2009:151;). However, Lubbe (2013:109) argues that tourist attractions are the main influencers for tourist to travel, which might be the case in Victoria Falls as the main reason for travelling to this destination could be to see the mighty waterfall as the primary attraction. Other attractions in Victoria Falls which might be classed as secondary attractions are The Big Tree, a baobab tree which has a 20 metre circumference with its historical importance as a main trading post between the Zimbabwean and Zambians; Falls Craft Village—a souvenir

station where most of the souvenirs in Victoria Falls are crafted; the Crocodile Ranch and Wildlife Nature Sanctuary which offers a number of crocodiles, lions and leopards; and the Victoria Falls Aquarium which is arguably the biggest freshwater aquarium in Africa, which showcases the aquatic life in the Zambezi River (Murphy, Armstrong, Bainbridge & Firestone 2010:617).

2.4.2   Activities

This is one of the elements of the tourism product that cements the reason for a tourist to choose to visit for a vacation. Activities are elements of great importance and without them a tourism destination would attract few tourists and depreciate its value (Anuar, Ahmad, Jusoh & Hussain, 2012:65). The availability of activities at a destination is extremely important because tourists are keen to partake in the activities to create remarkable memories; this is why activities at the destination influence the decision to choose a tourism product to purchase (Anuar *et al.*, 2012:65). In addition, on the destination side the tourism product should be packaged with activities that leave a strong impact in terms of experience and memory, therefore the relevant parties should brainstorm activities needed by tourists and utilise the advantage of available resources (Anuar *et al.*, 2012:65). Ritchie and Crouch (2003:60) emphasise that the importance of activities as an element of a tourism product is increasing as tourists seek new experiences.

The extent to which a tourist perceives this tourism element varies and is based on tourist typologies. It is necessary to examine tourist typologies as this helps in unwrapping the types of activities that tourists seek when they visit a tourist destination. Dey and Sarma (2006:31) note that there is a relationship between tourist typologies and the activities they want at a destination. This is because the typology of a tourist helps in determining the needs and motivation behind a visit to a particular destination. Dey and Sarma (2006:31) state that many tourist typologies have been identified based on a number of variables, but the most familiar typologies are the ones described by Cohen in 1972 and Plog in 1973. Cohen (1972, cited by Dey & Sarma, 2006:31 and Oh & Pizam, 2008:246) classified tourists into drifters (those who do not want to mix with others and they prefer to do their own activities), explorers (those who want to experience new activities), individual mass tourists (those who want to partake in activities alone or with a small group), and organised mass tourists (those who want to travel with others and do the planned activities with the group). On the other hand, Plog (1973, cited by Dey & Sarma, 2006:31 and Oh & Pizam, 2008:246) classified the tourists into psychocentrics (those who prefers doing the same activities) and allocentrics (those who seek adventure activities and new destinations.

From the tourist typologies mentioned above it can be understood that tourist activities at the destination are attractive to different types of tourists. Moreover, the nature of activities at a

destination can help in determining the types of tourists who visit that destination. For example, a destination that offers adventure activities is linked to the allocentric tourist type and explorers (Oh & Pizam, 2018:246). In the context of this study, these are tourists seeking to participate in the adventure activities like bungee jumping from the bridge, zip-lining across the Zambezi river, diving into the Devil's Pool, elephant-back riding and walking with lions, just to mention a few. It is also important to note that based on the motive of visiting a destination some tourists, especially business tourists, prefer to visit the same destinations as they know that they will be provided with the relevant activities. These were referred to as psychocentrics tourists by Plog in 1973 (Lowry, 2017:2). Moreover, these are the tourists who seek indoor activities like shopping after a conference (Prideaux, Moscardo & Laws, 2006:19).

However, tourism products at destinations should be packaged in a way that it is interesting to the tourists but caution will need to be exercised as the taste of tourists is continually changing. For example, a destination entrenched in nature would have activities based on natural geography and tourists can use and benefit from nature without interfering with the values of the local community (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003:61). Victoria Falls can use the natural occurrence of the waterfall for activities like diving, swimming and canoeing and attractions like the Victoria Falls Bridge offers incomparable adventure activities like the 111 metre bungee jump, abseiling, bridge swing, walking with lions, elephant back safaris, Flight of the Angels and zip-lining across the Zambezi river from the Zambian side to the Zimbabwean side. These are some of the activities in the tourism product of Victoria Falls and could influence a tourist's decision to visit this destination as they are undertaken near the thundering waterfall, which is a UNESCO heritage site.

2.4.3 Accessibility

According to Medlik (2011:4), accessibility is defined as:

> …a function of distance from centres of population, which constitutes tourist markets, and of external transport, which enables a destination to be reached and is measured in terms of distance travelled, time taken, or the cost involved.

This definition does not consider accessibility of the destination in terms of communication methods such as internet or telecommunications, this definition applies to physical access to the destination. Anuar *et al.* (2012:63) state that accessibility decides how easily the destination is reached and it links tourists with the destination either by sea, land, or air transport modes. The definition proposed by Ivanovic *et al.* (2009:187) states that accessibility depends on several factors, such as transport, accommodation, support services, information, and culture. This implies that the accessibility of the destination is determined starting from the generating source (tourist's place of origin) where accommodation and activities are booked prior to travel, by means

of telecommunications the Internet. The process then progresses to the transport segment (how to get to the destination physically). When the tourist actually arrives at the destination, he/she will need access to accommodation and support services like Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), as well as access to the activities or culture of the host destination. Once a combination of these aspects are present in the tourism product then the destination will be accessible. Therefore, accessibility is a system with a combination of all the aspects involved when one is travelling away from home.

Accessibility, as do other elements discussed earlier, plays a paramount role as an element of the tourism product as it influences a tourist's decision on which destination to visit, based on the costs incurred to access the destination. The tourism product must not be difficult to access, as tourists will look for alternative destinations to visit if the destination is inaccessible (Gupta *et al.*, 2015:50). Furthermore, the accessibility of the destination is determined by the location where the tourism product is found. This means that if the tourism product is located in an inaccessible destination the value of the destination will diminish as it will receive fewer tourists due to the extra costs incurred to reach the destination (Gupta *et al.*, 2015:50).

Ritchie and Crouch (2003:65) argue that the accessibility of a tourism product at a destination is determined by the macro- and micro-environment. These scholars add that from a macro perspective, it is influenced by extensive economic aspects as well as political and social conditions. For example, the enforcement of regulations that must be adhered to in the flight industry, entering a country with a visa and permit, path connections, hubs, landing slots, airport capacities and competition between airplane companies, are elements that impact and influence accessibility (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003:65). Muzapu and Sibanda (2016:58) argue that "… a visa application system that is not complicated or too strict is ideal for a country to lure more tourists". Using modern technology, if online visa applications could be done it would be beneficial to tourists as they would obtain their visa immediately. Some tourists might be deterred from visiting certain destinations because they do not know how to obtain a visa. From the micro perspective, accessibility is more centred at the tourism destination, such as accessibility to national parks, mountains, lakes, waterfall, cultural sites, and local community (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003:65). However, despite these macro and micro perspectives that influence the accessibility of a tourism product, the tourism planners and all the parties involved must ensure that the tourism product is easily accessible but close monitoring to prevent potential mass tourism is needed to maintain sustainability.

George (2011:476) states that transportation and infrastructure are necessary to ensure that the destination is accessible to visitors. Victoria Falls is easily accessible by road, rail, and air transport systems (Murphy *et al.*, 2010:615). The different modes of transport to reach this destination may influence the motivation of the tourist to visit Victoria Falls and experience the tourism products in the area. The government of Zimbabwe and the relevant bodies have invested USD 150 million in upgrading the new Victoria Falls Airport to improve accessibility to the destination (Mazara & Mano, 2016). Tourists can also buy a day visa to cross from the Zimbabwean side to go to the Zambian side to participate in various activities.

2.4.4   Accommodation

The accommodation element is one the crucial elements of the tourism product as it provides shelter for the tourists and gives a feel of home from home (du Plessis & Saayman, 2011:26). Tourists cannot visit a destination that does not have accommodation options or an opportunity for camping. Butler and Russell (2010:1) argue that a destination without accommodation suffers very limited tourism and which will be mostly day visitors. It can be asserted that the destination will not be generating much revenue as tourists will be at the destination only for a day because there are no accommodation options. Poudel (2013:13) postulates that comfortable hotels and other forms of accommodation play a pivotal role in attracting tourists to a destination. This being said, some tourists do not really care about how comfortable the accommodation is as their main interests are the outdoor activities, attractions, and meeting new people and they prefer to stay in backpacker accommodation.

Modern tourists prefer a home from home feeling whereby they want the accommodation in which they stay during their vacation to offer similar facilities to what they have at home. Poudel (2013:13) supports this notion, stating that if the tourist is away from home and can still get the same facilities and comfort as they have at home they will become attached to the place and possibly even willing to stay longer at the destination. In contrast, an uncomfortable accommodation experience can ruin the holiday experience of the tourist. The image of the tourism product or destination can be tarnished by negative word of mouth reviews, which in turn impacts on return business and causes a drop in revenue generation. Poudel (2013:13) confirms the importance of paying attention to the accommodation element of the tourism product since it has a big influence on the overall holiday experience. However, understanding the perspectives of tourists on types of accommodation is complex because of their differing economic backgrounds.

Accommodation is one of the elements that makes a tourism product complete because it is fundamental to a vacation. Travis (2011:20) posits that tourists can make a decision to travel based on the accommodation available at the destination and while at the destination, the tourist might even stay longer if the accommodation is of a good standard. Besides playing a pivotal role in the decision to buy a tourism product, accommodation also plays a vital role in the country's economy because of its revenue generation (Poudel, 2013:14). Therefore, tourism planners and government should prioritise the development of improved accommodation facilities at destinations so that the tourism product will be well positioned to make the holiday experience of tourists memorable.

Victoria Falls boasts a number of accommodation options including hotels, lodges, self-catering, guesthouses, backpackers, and camping (Planet *et al.*, 2013:545). Some of the well-known accommodation establishments are the Elephant Hills Resort, the Victoria Falls Hotel, the Kingdom Hotel, Ilala Lodge, Rainbow Towers Victoria Falls, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls Backpackers and Shearwater Backpackers. There is also the famous Rovos Rail train, offering luxurious suites which accommodate tourists on a railway trip to Victoria Falls from South Africa and Zambia. Quality service delivery is key in the accommodation element in contributing to the satisfaction of the tourist. Excellent service from the accommodation sector could encourage tourists to extend their stay. This can be achieved through the implementation of a Total Quality Management (TQM) process whereby management and employee abilities, roles, duties and responsibilities are clearly defined in line with the organisational goals (Alsrabi, 2013:1). Through the TQM process, everyone in the organisation will know exactly what the company goals are and how to achieve these goals. This will assist staff to deliver excellent service that represents the company at large. In return for good service, the tourist will spread positive word of mouth recommendations about the accommodation, encouraging more tourists to make use of the accommodation.

2.4.5 Price

The tourism product can have all the aforementioned elements, but price is the one that makes the destination worth a visit. Tourists opt to visit destinations that offer value for money and they are mostly very sensitive to changes in price. Blackman, Smith, Rowe and Stewart (2005:80) postulate that defining the term value for money is complex because each person defines the term differently. One person could say "Does the park offer us more for our money at a better quality?" Another one could say "Will there be enough for us to do and enjoy making the initial expense worthwhile?" In this scenario, both are asking for the same term but differently. Williams and Soutar (2009:146) define value for money as "the utility that a customer derives from the

product/service in return for money spent on it". This is sometimes referred to as the value received for the price paid (Williams & Soutar, 2009:147). This can be understood in the SET context, whereby if tourists perceive to have benefited or received maximum enjoyment from the price paid, then they will call it value for money (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006:128). Though the term value for money is so broad and encompasses a number of factors that are linked to the service delivery, it is crucial to note that the destination enjoys some benefits if it offers value for money to tourists. Botha, Fairer-Wessels and Lubbe (2003:210), Blackman *et al.* (2005:81), and Jennings and Nickerson (2006:128) argue that the benefits of offering value for money are that it helps in the satisfaction of the tourists, which in turn results in good word of mouth referrals. Tourists recommend the destination to friends or relatives, the same tourist returns to the destination regularly, which generates constant revenue. In addition, by offering value for money the destination can reduce competition, which results in gaining significant market share (Vanhove, 2011:148).

George (2011:285) asserted that price is one of the marketing mix and the only one which generates revenue. He further explains that due to the nature of tourism markets, price is the most complicated element. The price of the tourism product should not be too expensive as this can scare away the tourists (Mutori, 2016:1). Competition between the tourist destinations is growing daily, with each destination striving to gain market share (Uysal, Perdue & Sirgy, 2012:533). This caused some destinations with similar tourism products to look at different product positioning strategies to sustain their tourism products in the face of intense competition (Carol, 2015:115). Most destinations consider the positioning strategies of price, quality, service, location and access, ability to customise, as well as sustainability (Carol, 2015:116). However, it is the price and quality that take centre stage because tourists want to visit a destination where they will enjoy quality experience at a reasonable price (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006:128). In addition, the element of price is interwoven with the quality of the service to be expected. This is because tourists perceive that expensive destinations offer high quality services (Carol, 2015:116).

The fluctuations in currencies influence the purchase of tourism products. Zimbabwe adopted the American dollar (USD) in 2009 and this might have caused a negative impact on the tourism sector as the destination is perceived as expensive (Mutori, 2016:1). Due to the use of USD in Zimbabwe, which is strong compared to the South African Rand (ZAR), Zambian Kwacha (ZMK), Botswana Pula (BWP), and the Namibian Dollar (NAD), tourists may opt to visit these surrounding countries. They are perceived to be cheaper and, in most cases, offer the similar tourism products to Zimbabwe except for the mighty Victoria Falls. Katunga (2016:1) reports that "Zimbabwean tourism operators have been urged to review pricing after research suggests tourists are avoiding

overnight stays in Zimbabwe". Mutori (2016:1) confirms that prices charged for tourism products in Zimbabwe in USD leaves tourist with no choice other than to visit other tourist destinations. For example, regional tourist from countries like South Africa, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia may find it too expensive to visit Zimbabwe due to the weakening ZAR, ZMK, BWP and NAD respectively. Moreover, not only international or regional tourists will not buy the Zimbabwe tourism products like Victoria Falls due to this price issue, but also domestic tourism will be also hampered as the locals cannot afford to buy the product, which will result in a decline of domestic tourism in the country.

According to Murphy *et al.* (2010:617), accommodation in Victoria Falls is expensive. This has resulted in many tourists spending their holiday on the Zambian side and only coming to Victoria Falls as a day visitor. Similarly, Katunga (2016:1) states that because the high prices charged in Victoria Falls many American tourists enter Zimbabwe from Zambia while a significant number enter Zimbabwe from Botswana. The same applies to the Japanese markets, that also enter Zimbabwe from Zambia. This in an indicator that Zimbabwe is merely an 'add on' destination from both Botswana and Zambia.

2.4.6   Image

George (2011:492) asserts that destination image has a huge influence on the decision of a tourist to travel. He defines a destination image as the visual or mental impression that a person has for a place. Image is also one of the tourism products elements that play a big role when tourists choose a holiday destination. George further argues that:

> Whether good, bad, or indifferent, all destinations have images and some of the images are based on the destination's geography, standard of living, people, infrastructure, climate, and other natural attractions. Other images are based on the cost, ambience, history, cleanness, and safety and security of the destination.

The image of the tourism product is mainly aligned to the destination and if the destination has a bad image, the tourism product will be affected. George (2011:493) maintains that tourism destinations are very dependent on a positive image, like good word of mouth recommendations and the media, for example social media, television and radio or newspapers. Rajesh (2013:67) submits that an image of a destination may result in tourists forming perceptions. Wood (2006:169) defines perception as a practice by which persons choose, shape, and interpret information to create a meaningful picture of the world. Woodside and Kozak (2014:2) define perception as "something directing attention to, interpreting, identifying, categorising, naming, and frequently associating an object, living organism, process, or behaviour". Woodside and Kozak further confirm a synergy between perceptions and assessments whereby they influence each other. The

perceptions of tourists can positively or negatively affect a destination. Tourists who have a positive perception of a certain destination will try their best to visit that destination to satisfy their desire, whereas if they have a negative perception they will not visit it. Hence, the views or perceptions of tourists influence their decision to visit a particular destination. A good example is when South Africa was about to host the FIFA World Cup in 2010 and the British and German newspapers published stories about high crime in South Africa (George, 2011:493). This created a bad image of South Africa and according to George (2011:493) "…a group of 11 French tourists cancelled their booking because of a story about the murder of Eugene Terre' Blanche …"

George (2011:493) and Candela and Figini (2012:1) believe that the image of a destination can be transformed. However, to change tourists' perceptions is no easy task as they receive information about the image of a destination through two main sources, which are organic image sources and induced image sources. The difference between these two image sources is that organic image sources include personal experience which is shared publicly through word of mouth, media or Internet, whereas induced image sources are designed by advertising agencies to promote a destination (George, 2011:493; Howie, 2003:130).

The image of the tourism product should allay any concerns the tourist may have about the product. Although Victoria Falls is regarded as a safe tourist destination (Victoria Falls Guide, 2015), the image of a tourism product is influenced by other macro factors of the destination or the whole country (Anuar *et al.*, 2012:107). Korstanje and Clayton (2012:9) assert that tourists are not willing to visit destinations that pose high security risks. Zimbabwe is currently in the midst of bleak political and economic crises where cash shortages are experienced in all parts of the country. This portrays a bad image to tourists as they will not be guaranteed that their holiday experience will be enjoyable (Zengeni & Kadzere, 2016:1).

In addition, Schwaighofer (2014:39) notes that the destination image can be influenced by the demand factors as well as the supply factors. Schwaighofer continues that on the demand side the potential traveller can be influenced by psychological, physical, cultural and socio-economic factors as well as experiences and word of mouth feedback from relatives or friends. On the supply side, Schwaighofer reports that there are a number of factors such as climate, availability of natural resources such as vegetation and wildlife, the infrastructure of the destination, recreational facilities, and the social situation of the destination in relation to the behaviour of the local people. Figure 2.1 below depicts some of the factors that affect the image of the destination.
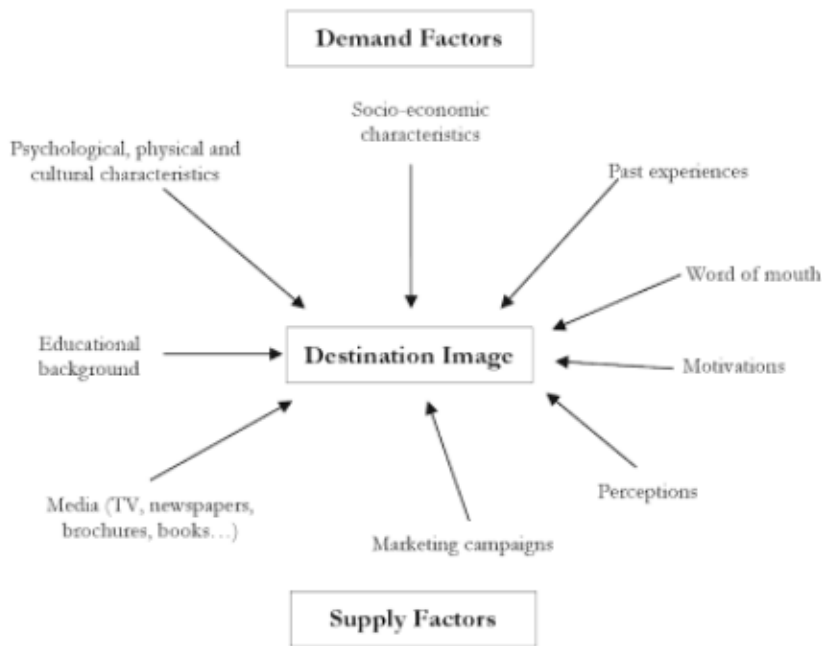
Figure 2.1: Factors influencing the image of a destination (Goodal & Ashworth, 1995, cited by Schwaighofer, 2014:40).

2.4.7   Facilities

Facilities are another element of a tourism product that contribute to tourist satisfaction. Even though often not considered in the equation, without facilities the tourist's holiday will be incomplete. Bhatia (2006:310) posits that facilities are the elements that aid the main attractions and are very important for a destination. Kozak (2004:92) argues that the facilities at the destination are crucial for creating return business and the tourism product should have attractive and maintained facilities for the destination to remain competitive. In research conducted in Turkey and Mallorca, Kozak (2004:92) report that the repeat visit tourists identified some significant changes in the airport facilities, roads and traffic, as well as in cleanliness of the two destinations. Facilities require constant attention and monitoring as it can influence whether tourists return to a destination or not.

Facilities include many components with the weight to convince a tourist to buy a particular tourism product. Facilities tourists want include infrastructural facilities, transport facilities, and ancillary services that keep the destination clean and attractive. Facilities in the accommodation element include fitness centres, spa facilities, hairdressing salons, laundry facilities, restaurants, ATMs, telephones, shopping, and water and electricity supply. Javanovic and Ilic (2016:289) emphasise the importance of infrastructural facilities in a tourism product as tourists require certain services to enhance their stay at the selected tourist destination.

In particular, there is an increase in the demand for infrastructure services in terms of water supply, waste disposal, communication, and electricity supply, as the necessary elements for comfortable functioning of tourists at the selected destination (Javanovic & Ilic, 2016:289).

Furthermore, the modern tourist wants to exercise and maintain their fitness regimen even while on holiday, hence gym facilities are a prerequisite today for most destinations.

2.5   Theoretical and conceptual framework

This section of the literature review presents the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study and discusses the theories and models that surround the research topic and research questions. A comprehensive analysis of the models and theories is presented. The concept as well as the link between the models or theories is drawn in relation to the topic, as well as the research questions under investigation.

To gain a better understanding of this section it is paramount to first clarify the terms framework, theoretical framework and conceptual framework in relation to research. Liehr and Smith (1999:13) define the term framework as "a structure that provides guidance for the researcher as research questions are perfected, methods of measuring variables are selected, and analyses are planned". According to Pearce (2012:7), a framework is "a general term for a structure that provides learning and teaching supports". Imenda (2014:188) understands a framework as a blueprint used to measure and assess the results of the study.

Regarding theoretical and conceptual frameworks, even though these two terms seem to be similar or used interchangeably, Imenda (2014:188) believes that they are different. Lierh and Smith (1999:20) define a theoretical framework as "a structure of interrelating concepts that describe and explain the meaning of a phenomenon". Pearce (2012:12) when referring to theoretical framework interprets "it is the structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study". According to Egbert and Sanden (2013:60), theoretical framework is an integration of the theoretical concepts that apply to the problem under investigation. Grant and Osanloo (2014:13) and Smith and Liehr (2014:8) share the same sentiment and claim that the term refers to a structure that embraces and supports a theory being investigated, which is usually developed by creating a clear clarification of a phenomenon to be examined and its relationships. In the same vein, Imenda (2014:189) defines a theoretical framework as the theory selected by the researcher as a guideline for the study under investigation, which helps the researcher to unpack the concepts surrounding the study. Regoniel (2015) describes a theoretical framework in the same way as the researcher understands, being the connection or relationship of variables in the study under investigation. As a result, it recognises the variables needed in the study and therefore it is the researcher's blueprint in pursuing the investigation (Regoniel, 2015).

On the other hand, a conceptual framework is defined as "an end result of bringing together a number of related concepts to explain or predict a research problem" (Imenda, 2014:189). According to Ravitch and Carl (2015:88), a conceptual framework is:

> ...the focal framework for and process of designing and engaging in research which details the primary and core constructs of a study and the relationships between them.

Pearce (2012:12) argues that conceptual framework provides the main concepts and variables to be investigated and the linkages between them.
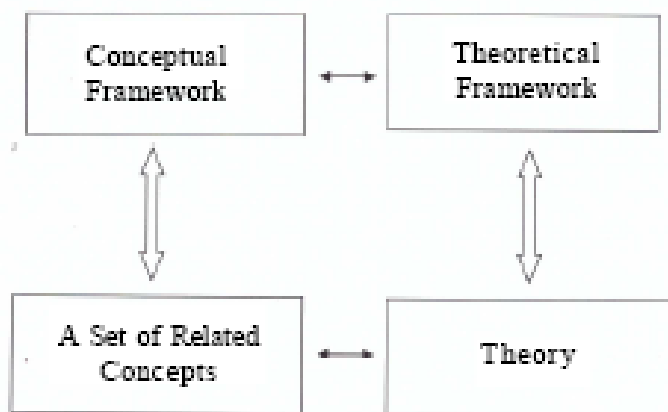
Figure 2.2: The conceptual and theoretical frameworks (Imenda, 2014:189).

Figure 2.2 above shows the difference and the relationship between a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework. Despite the difference between these terms, it is interesting to note that the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are usually used together in research as they bring together and uncover difficult issues in research, which help the researcher to understand and address any research problem in a study. The theoretical framework which informs the current study is the SET, which is discussed in the following section.

2.5.1   Social Exchange Theory

This study was informed by the SET. This theory dates back centuries and has facilitated understanding the perspectives between the buyer and the seller. Homans (1958:597) postulates that SET has been discussed in the literature platforms for sociology and social psychology and is considered one of the oldest theories of social behaviour. In the same vein, Emerson (1976:156) underscores that SET involves two persons whereby each provides some benefits to the other and the exchange interaction can happen when one perceives to be benefiting the most from the interaction. Emerson (1981:336) views SET as a frame of reference from which many theories,

whether small or big, can be derived. Ap (1992:668) states that the SET is "a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation". Brida, Disegna and Osti (2014:41) argue that people's happiness with the exchange interaction is attained by assessing the results of the exchange which can be social or economic benefits, or the interaction itself. In a broader understanding, the theory precisely articulates that humans mainly participate in things that yield positive results and they try to avoid things that bring costs or negative results (Holthausen, 2013:1).

The SET is therefore a very useful theory to a study of this nature as this study aims to understand tourist perspectives of a tourism product in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe. Nunkoo (2016:590) indicates that SET has actors who are dependent on each other for the results they value. This means the actors, in this case the tourists and the tourism product supplier (Victoria Falls) engage in the cost and benefit analysis and weigh the benefits to be attained after the exchange, and if the benefits are greater than the costs the exchange can go ahead in favour of the actor who perceives to have positive benefits (Nunkoo, 2016:590). This theory is apt to this study as it assists with understanding the views of tourists on the product under investigation. There is an exchange between the supplier (Victoria Falls) and the buyer (tourists), hence, the perspectives of the tourists towards the tourism product of Victoria Falls is being investigated using the SET. The tourists' responses determine the side to which the exchange was favourable. However, if tourists are not satisfied by the Victoria Falls tourism product then there will be reduction in the visitor's numbers, meaning that the perceptions of tourists towards this tourism product are negative.

Based on the discussion above on price (refer to 2.4.5) as one of the elements of a tourism product, it can be understood that tourists seek destinations that offer them value for money (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006:128). The SET creates a clear vision as it explicitly articulates that that the tourist can choose to visit a destination that offers something that can either meet or surpass the price they paid—meeting or exceeding expectations. If the tourism product at the destination creates anxiety in the minds of the visitor, then the exchange is positive for the destination (supplier). However, it is important to understand that it is the tourist who determines whether the tourism product is worth visiting or not. If the tourist is convinced that he/she will enjoy the destination based on the price paid, activities and tours to be undertaken, type accommodation, the infrastructure at the destination and many more factors, then the exchange is positive on the demand side (tourist side). Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2011:296) agree that tourists can have behaviour changes pre- and post-travelling, which can be referred to as travel behaviour. It is this travel behaviour that creates the social interaction, hence, it is vital for tourism products like resorts to understand the travel behaviour or the perspectives of tourists towards the

tourism product (their motivations to visit). This will help to develop the product, advance the marketing strategies, improve the service delivery techniques, as well as fashioning a competitive advantage (van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011:296). Therefore, a tourism product should be produced in such a way that it satisfies tourists because no satisfaction will deter tourists from visiting the tourism destination and this creates a negative perspective of the destination from the tourists' standpoint.

A well-packaged tourism product is the key to stimulating tourism demand at a destination (Zappiano, 2005:8). Therefore, tourism products should be a combination of the best services so that tourists are interested to engage in the interaction exchange. This can be key to convincing tourists to visit the destination. Mulec (2010:14) confirms the opinion of Zappiano (2005:7) by arguing that when a tourist buys a holiday (tourism package) referred to as a tourism product, they know that they will enjoy the benefits from a variety of services offered and carry out specific activities that are included in the travel package. This aligns with the SET described by Long (n.d:76), that people analyse an exchange by looking at the costs and benefits to be experienced from the exchange. Furthermore, if the outcome is perceived to be beneficial the individual evaluates the exchange positively, versus the perception of cost, by which the individual will evaluate the exchange negatively (Long, n.d:76). Thus, tourists who find that the exchange benefits them and increases their comfort are more likely to have positive reactions to tourism and support a well-developed tourism product.

2.6   Concepts and models: Tourism product, destination and tourists

In a bid to understand the theoretical framework and concept that underpins the perspectives of tourists towards a tourism product, it is of paramount importance to identify the concepts related to the study under investigation. Some theories/concepts are discussed in this section.

2.6.1   The generic tourism product model

Smith (1994:582) defines the term generic product as the conceptual commodity produced by an industry. From the definition above, the generic product can be understood in the context that a good is being traded by the nature of the good rather than a brand name. Smith asserts that in the case of tourism, the purpose of a generic product is to enable travel and activities of tourists. This model helps to clarify the system of tourism and the planning, development, management and delivery of its products (Smith, 1994:582).

Planning is crucial for the success and sustainability of every tourism product as it forms the blueprint for every development (Masip, 2006:4). The significance of planning is understood in

creating the best possible plans of action for a predictable future and the implementation of those plans (Gunn & Var, 2012:3). Tourism planning is regarded as the process of taking into consideration the needs of people willing to travel and based on their needs, relevant resources and activities will be included in their trip (Risteskia, Kocevski & Arnaudov, 2012:376). To achieve the best results it is important to plan for the future. However, planning for tourism services should not be rigid and requires continuous revisiting because tourists' needs and wants constantly change over time. Therefore, planning for tourism services should align with tourists' needs and wants to at least meet, or exceed their expectations. This facilitates execution of the action plans and is where product development takes over from planning.

COMCEC (2013:1) defines tourism product development as "the process by which the resources of a destination are shaped to meet the requirements of international and domestic customers". This means the resources in the physical plant element of Smith's (1994) generic tourism product model (see Figure 2.3 below) will be designed to match tourists' needs. Following development of the tourism product, management will then design and implement pertinent marketing strategies to create awareness of the product. In the management phase, the product must be assessed to determine what impacts may have arisen from the development stage. Finally, the product is delivered to the customer (tourist). This is the stage at which the services offered at the destinations are rated by the tourists and they have the opportunity to choose the tourism product they want to visit. It is crucial to monitor this stage as the feedback received informs what needs to be included in the next planning phase. Planning, development, management and delivery of products should be co-ordinated seamlessly. In addition, the product must be regularly monitored to understand how the product is performing and when to change the existing plan.

Figure 2.3 below illustrates Smith's (1994) generic tourism product model. It is relevant to this study as it helps to identify the core elements that build up a successful Victoria Falls tourism product, which can be embraced by tourism planners and relevant bodies to create a successful tourism product for tourists. However, Xu (2009:607) questions the adaptability of the model to distinct tourism products and to the different perspectives of tourists. Xu further criticised the model for showing only the complex structure of the tourism product but failing to scrutinise the structure.
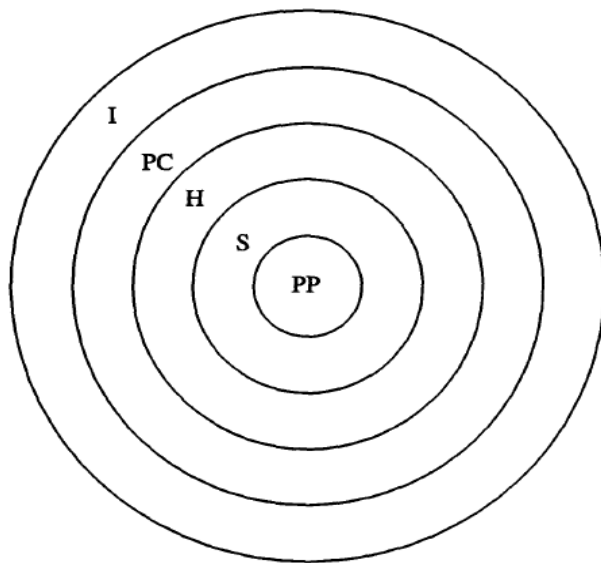
PP = Physical Plant   FC = Freedom of Choice
S = Service   I = Involvement
H = Hospitality

Figure 2.3: The generic tourism product model (Smith, 1994:587).

The model has five elements: the physical plant (PP), service (S), hospitality (H), freedom of choice (FC) and involvement (I). Smith (1994:588) argues that the accomplishment of a product in meeting the needs of tourists is based on how well each element is planned and combined with the others. Based on this model, one can understand tourism in the context of a system of multifaceted elements that are seamlessly combined to give a memorable home away from home vacation (Leiper, 1995:20).

2.6.1.1 The physical plant

Smith (1994:588) defines the physical plant as the heart of the tourism product, which consists of the site, natural resources, and facilities such as waterfall, wildlife, or resort. The physical plant is the nucleus of the tourism product that pulls the tourist to the destination. Morachat (2003:43) explains that there are two key components of a tourist destination, which are the primary and secondary resources. The primary and secondary resources proposed by Morachat align with the elements that constitute the physical plant and service shells of Smith's generic tourism product respectively. Morachat (2003:43) describes primary resources as including climate, ecology, cultural traditions, traditional architecture, and landscapes. These are the elements that make up the physical plant of the tourism product (Smith, 1994:588). From a tourist's perspective, the physical plant could influence the decision to visit a specific destination because this is where the

pulling power of the tourism product is centred. Therefore, it is very important for tourism planners and developers to ensure that the physical plant is appealing and accessible by tourists, and creates a memorable experience (Kleynhans & Zhou, 11343). However, conservation measures must be implemented to preserve the resources in the physical plant so that they will continue to attract tourists.

2.6.1.2   Service

In the context of secondary resources, Morachat (2003:43) refers to service at the destination as being paramount in ensuring that a tourist's vacation is memorable. This also draws the attention to understanding what is meant by service quality. It is defined as "the customer's rating of the overall excellence or superiority of the service offered" (Kleynhans & Zhou, 2012:11343). Sekajja (2006:36) defines service quality as "the extent to which a service meets customers' needs or expectations". This implies that if service delivery does meet expectations, the quality is deemed unsatisfactory, which will negatively affect the overall satisfaction of the customer. Service delivery is labelled as one of the problematic aspects of tourism services because the service is given by people to people, and hence varies from place to place and from person to person (Laws, 2000:32).

Smith (1994:588) reiterates that the physical plant "is only the beginning" as it needs the services to be used by tourists. He then defines service as the performance of specific tasks to meet the needs of tourists. It is very important to at least meet, or exceed the needs of tourists because this will enhance the perspectives of tourists on the tourism product, which in turn will contribute to repeat business and word of mouth recommendations. Smith further explains that each resource in the physical plant needs services, for example, a hotel needs people (human resources) who will provide the services to the tourists. This supports Tassiopoulos' (2011:10) opinion that tourism is a service industry with a multipart product offering that depends on uneven supply. However, all the parties involved in the fragmented elements that build up a tourism product need to render seamless quality of services that satisfy the needs and wants of the tourists if tourists are to have a positive perspective towards the tourism product. The quality of service received by tourists while consuming the tourism product will influence whether the tourist returns to a destination or not. Kleynhans and Zhou (2012:11343) emphasise that service industries need to offer quality services that exceed customers' (tourists) expectations for them to be universally competitive. The same is applicable to the services offered by a tourism product, it must be the best service so that tourists will view the tourism product in a positive way.

2.6.1.3   Hospitality

This is the third element of Smith's generic tourism product model. Smith (1994:588) argues that merely quality service is not sufficient for a tourism product to make lifelong memories for tourists. He asserts that beyond the service quality, hospitality is the element that shapes the overall impression of the service rendered. This is because over the years tourists have developed the expectation of "something extra" and it has become the norm that they want this "something extra" from a destination (Smith, 1994:588). This is where hospitality becomes of crucial importance. It is difficult to differentiate hospitality from service as they are inextricably interlinked, these two elements normally happen simultaneously. Smith (1994:588) defines hospitality as an expression of welcome by residents to tourists arriving in their community. A service can be rendered by anyone but if it is not accompanied with hospitality, service alone will not engender a lasting and good impression in the customers (tourists). This is because hospitality entails, for example, the smile, genuine warmth, and willingness to respond to needs of the guests (Smith, 1994:589). When buying a tourism product customers have certain expectations and they will compare those expectations with the actual service they receive, and based on that, they will rate the service (Kleynhans & Zhou, 2012:11343). Therefore, hospitality is paramount in cementing an overall impression in the minds of tourists on the service of the tourism product. This will create a home from home experience for tourists and manifest in positive word of mouth referrals.

2.6.1.4   Freedom of choice

According to Smith (1994:589), the tourism product must have options from which a tourist can choose. This means the tourism product should have a wide range of elements so that tourists are not limited to certain service providers or activities. However, there are some factors that influence the freedom of choice, such as budget, previous experience, knowledge, reliance on a travel agent or packaged tours, tourists need the freedom of choice to enhance their experience of satisfaction (Smith, 1994:589). Smith (1994:589) states that:

> Without the sense that one has permission to play or to choose one's own activities, it is difficult to fully relax or to participate wholeheartedly in recreational activities.

A tourism product needs a variety of options from which tourists can choose, for example which airline to use to reach to the destination, a range of hotels from which to select accommodation, a variety of activities from which to choose, or a number restaurants from which to pick to dine. All these elements can influence the satisfaction levels of tourists and can influence the overall perspective of tourists of the tourism product.

2.6.1.5   Involvement

Smith (1994:590) argues that the foundation for meaningful participation of tourists in creating tourism products is the amalgamation of the first four elements in his model (acceptable physical plant, good service, hospitality, and freedom of choice). This means from the development stage of a tourism product there should be good communication between the product itself and the tourist. The tourism product must be designed in such a way that it synergises with the demands and interests of tourists and in so doing, so the product will attract tourists. This is understood as the first involvement stage.

In addition, the involvement stage deepens to when the tourist is on the actual physical plant. Tourism is a service industry and tourists form part of the service delivery (Tassiopoulos, 2011:10). Thus, by the tourist being involved in the service delivery system of the tourism product, it creates that sense of involvement. Smith (1994:590) elaborates that "involvement means having access to activities and programmes that capture the imagination, interest, and enthusiasm of the potential participant". This explanation means that tourism products need to have certain elements that keep the tourist busy and above all, there should be access to those activities as they entertain the tourists. Nowadays, tourists visit a destination to participate, hence, the tourism product must have facilities to entertain them (Anuar *et al.*, 2012:65). Smith (1994:591) summarises the basis for a successful tourism product in stating that it requires a combination of a good physical plant reinforced by good service, warm hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement. He argues that if all these elements are present and are well performed, the tourist will be satisfied by the tourism product.

Overall, the model gives an idea of the generic tourism product, which is a helpful baseline in the context of understanding tourists' perspectives of a tourism product based on the elements that build up the tourism product. The model also shows that there are a number of bodies or parties that are involved in the development of a successful tourism product since each element has its own characteristics. However, Xu (2009:607) has a different view of the model and criticises it for lacking clarity and being a complex model without specific analysis. Xu also suggests that the physical plant should be at the centre and the other four elements contained in one bordering circle as they complement each other and combined, they add value to the physical plant. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that all sectors or bodies involved need to perform their duties exceptionally so that a seamless tourism product that satisfies the tourist is produced. This will result in a positive perspective of tourists of the tourism product.

2.6.2   The Tourism Area Life Cycle

The Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) is a tool that is used to estimate the position of a tourist destination based on time and tourist arrivals. Pornphol and McGrath (n.d:1744) report that the TALC model was proposed by Butler in 1980 as a way of explaining how tourism destinations move through a cycle, which starts from an almost nil tourism to a stage where massive tourism will start to happen (see Figure 2.4 below). Andriotis (2001:40) reports that many authors such as Gilbert (1939), Defert (1954), Cooper (1990), Choy (1992), Ioannides (1992), Douglas (1997), Tooman (1997), Russell and Faulkner (1998), and Johnston (2001) tried to demonstrate the different phases of a resort evolution without success. However, Andriotis credited Butler's 1980 model as the yardstick to measure the evolution and development of a resort town like Victoria Falls.

As seen in Figure 2.4, on the y axis is 'number of tourists' and on the x axis there is 'time'. In other words, the model reflects how a tourism product transforms over time from being unknown to known through several stages. Moreover, the tourism product life cycle enables planners to monitor the performance of the tourism product and action what need to be done. The model proposed by Butler comprises six stages, which are the exploration stage, involvement stage, development stage, consolidation stage, stagnation stage, and decline or rejuvenation stage. The ideology cited in Butler's 1980 TALC model is that a destination begins as unfamiliar and tourists initially come in very small numbers, which could be because of lack of access, facilities, and local knowledge, and this is referred as the exploration stage of the cycle.
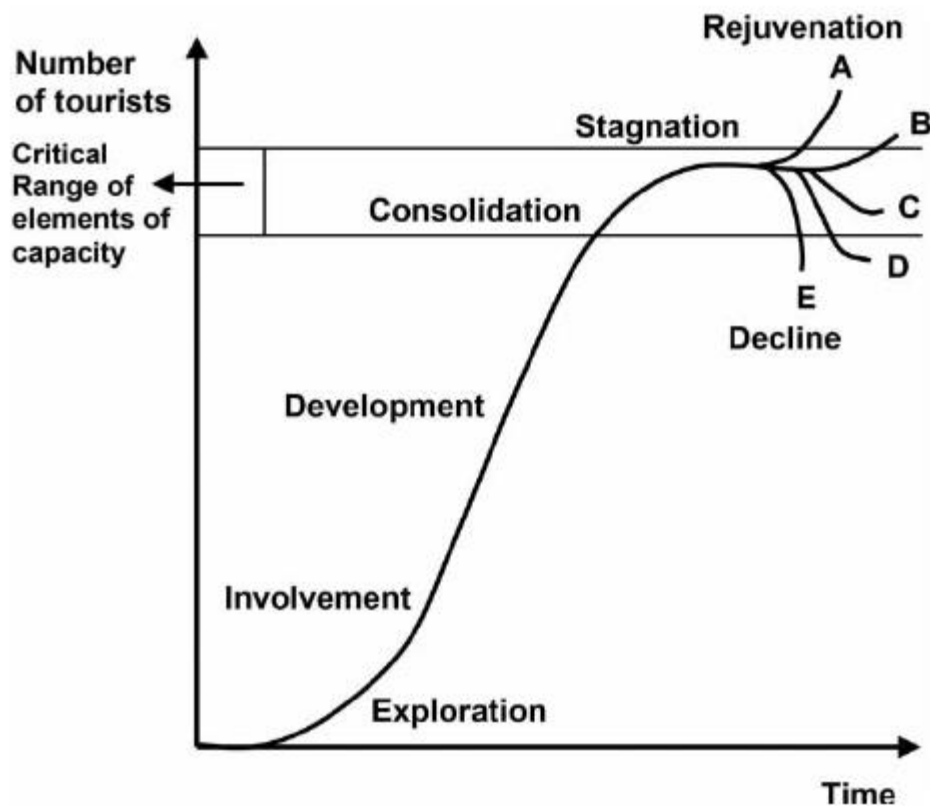
Figure 2.4: Hypothetical evolution of a tourist area life cycle - TALC (Butler, 1980)

2.6.2.1   Exploration stage

Kusumah and Nurazizah (2016:32) state that the exploration stage of the TALC is characterised by low numbers of tourists at the destination. At this stage, the tourism product is not known to the market and very few people, mainly locals, visit the destination (Andriotis, 2001:41). In addition, this stage is based on primary tourist attractions, which can be natural or cultural attractions. No secondary tourism attractions are present at this stage and the tourism has no economic or social significance to residents (Cooper, 2011:6). This can be likened to the development phase of the physical plant of Smith's 1994 generic tourism product model.

Andriotis (2001:41) asserts that the exploration stage is when most of the planning for the tourism product is complete on which strategies directed towards growth will be put in place. This is the stage when the niche market is unknown and to sell the tourism product is very challenging. Ansoff (1965, cited by Andriotis, 2001:41) noted that this stage is dominated by the risk of selling new products or new services to new markets, of which background, taste, or expectations are unknown. Profit-making at this stage is highly unlikely and the main objective at this stage is to create awareness of a new product and grow market share. A market share is defined as the

percentage of a market which is controlled by a particular destination (Davidson & Rogers, 2012:76). Rusu and Sabau (2014:186) describe the exploration stage as a phase that requires huge investments in the tourism product as it will not generate any profits. The exploration stage on Butler's 1980 TALC can be referred to as the "dog section" on the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) portfolio matrix due to the extensive attention it requires yet does not generate any profit (Enz, 2009:245). With reference to the SET, tourists (if any) at this stage, will not be willing to venture into such a destination because there would be no benefits as the infrastructure would still need to be developed and only later on transformed into a sealable product. Based on the available literature, Victoria Falls was at this stage of the life cycle in the 1960s when it started to be developed as a tourist destination but is now well past this stage (McCrea & Pinchuck, 2000:186).

2.6.2.2   Involvement stage

Even though tourist numbers will still be low at this stage, the destination starts to show signs of tourism life. The involvement stage is characterised by a slight increase in tourist arrivals and at the same time, local entrepreneurs start to provide a limited amount of services to tourists (Kusumah & Nurazizah, 2016:32; Rusu & Sabau, 2014:186). This is the stage where local residents become involved and secondary tourism facilities such as guesthouses emerge, and governments are put under pressure to develop transport facilities for tourists. The tourism product at this stage starts to show signs of potential growth. Local residents view the development of the tourism product as an opportunity for job creation and development of infrastructure. From the SET perspective again, this stage has no concrete basis for the exchange to happen, except for a few locals, since the infrastructural developments are still underway. The locals will welcome the development in their area and will be happy and excited to receive the few tourists who arrive during this stage. Ivanovic *et al.* (2011:308) term this process "euphoria". However, the Victoria Falls tourism product is beyond this stage.

2.6.2.3   Development stage

Weaver and Lawton (2014:24) opine that this stage is mainly characterised by new developments at the destination. Tourist arrivals at the destination will start to increase and other elements of the tourism product will grow. This is because as more people discover the destination, there will be the need to cater for increased visitor numbers and therefore attractions and amenities will be increased and improved (Park, 2006:7). Moreover, at this stage all the tourism stakeholders partake in the development of the tourism product and the demand for the tourism product starts to increase at this point. Kusumah and Nurazizah (2016:32) add that this is the stage where cultural and natural attractions will be developed, and some artificial attractions will be made, for

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example the famous bridge across the Zambezi River. Smith (1994:589) calls this stage the freedom of choice element in his generic tourism product model. This could be the stage at which the Victoria Falls tourism product is currently, as the product has a variety of activities, tours, accommodation and many options from which tourist can choose. The Victoria Falls product is widely marketed through initiatives such as Sanganai/Hlanganani World Tourism Expo which is an annual exhibition to showcase Zimbabwe's offerings to tourists. Emmanuel (2017) reports that the development and expansion of the new Victoria Falls Airport has resulted in the increase of regional airlines. Crafts such as Fastjet's modern Airbus A319 jet, Kenya Airways' Embraer E190, South Africa Airways' Airbus A330-200, and Ethiopian Airlines' Boeing 737 are now able to land and has resulted in the increase in tourist numbers to Victoria Falls. Figure 2.5 below indicates the fluctuation in tourist numbers between the period 1964 to 2015. However, the numbers start to increase again from 2015 onwards, which supports the view that this tourism product is in the development stage.
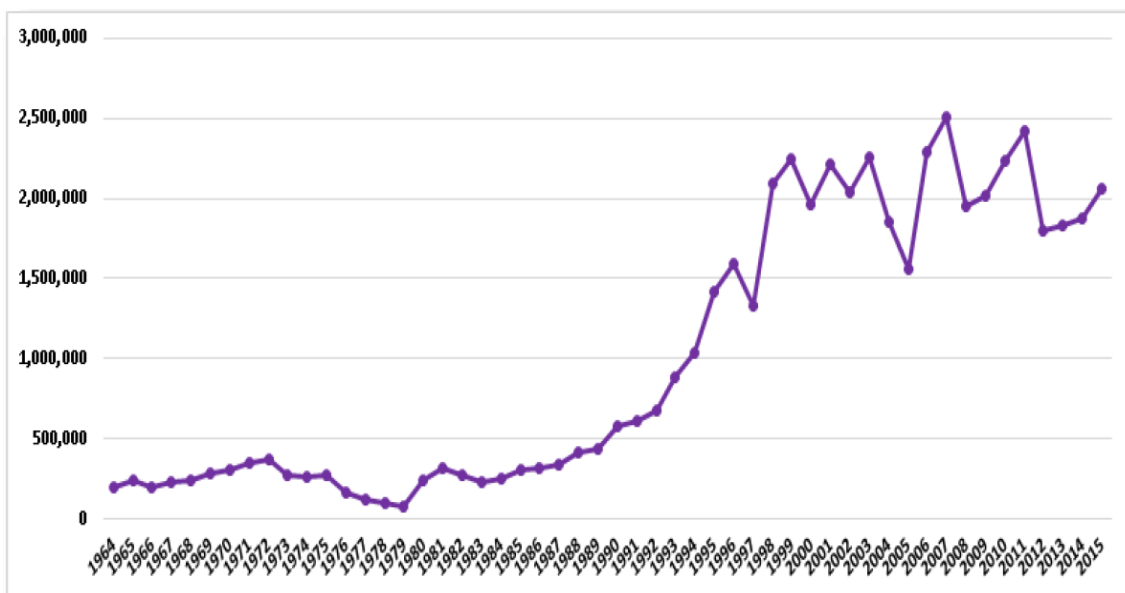
Figure 2.5: Tourist arrivals at a glance from 1964 to 2015 (ZTA, 2015:19)

Andriotis (2001:41) reports that the development stage is associated with maintaining the existing market as well as attracting new customers away from other competitors. In this stage, the destination can implement cost-conscious strategies to try to sell the tourism product at a price that is attractive to tourists to lure them from the already established competitors in a bid to increase their own market share (Andriotis, 2001:41). Based on Porter's 1980 generic strategies, once the market share is improved the destination may opt to adopt the differentiation strategy to add something extra to the existing tourism product (Hussin, 2014:162). As the market share

continues to grow, the destination can also use the focus strategy, implementing the segmentation process on the niche market that brings more revenue.

It is at this stage when tourists begin to flow into the destination. Tourists start to feel that their desire to travel can be satisfied by visiting a particular destination. This can be best understood from the SET, where it states that tourist can engage in an exchange if they benefit from the exchange (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006:128). In this regard, their anxiety will be satisfied by visiting the destination because all the infrastructure will be developed, and the attractions have been well marketed and are well known worldwide, hence the tourists will only need to value the costs incurred in visiting the destination versus the experience to be enjoyed (Weaver & Lawton, 2014:24). Similarly, if the benefits outweigh the costs they will start to travel to the destination, which is a characteristic of this phase of Butler's 1980 TALC.

2.6.2.4   Consolidation stage

This stage is characterised by slower tourism growth (low tourism developments) but the number of tourists continues to increase. This is the stage when the destination starts to reap the benefits from investments in the development stage. According to Kusumah and Nurazizah (2016:32), this is the stage when the destination cannot attract new visitors but gets repeat visitors as the tourism product at this stage is well known and is no longer attracting new tourists to the destination. This is the stage where aggressive marketing, advertising, and positive word of mouth recommendations would increase tourist numbers to the destination.

According to Ferreira (2004:305), the Victoria Falls tourism product was at this stage but due to external forces like the political instability that put the whole country into turmoil in 2000 through the "Land and Agrarian Reform Programme", sanctions, and high rate of inflation, the tourism product could not progress to the stagnation stage and went into a decline.

In the consolidation stage the tourism product will be competing with other destinations to maintain market share. In this stage of the TALC the product should meet the expectations of the tourists. Tourist trends must be researched and monitored to maintain market share. Moreover, this stage is associated with stiff competition, as tourists will have a wide range of destinations from which to choose. Hence, the destination that offers the best value for money will be able to withstand the competition (Cooper, 2011:9).

2.6.2.5   Stagnation stage (maturity)

The word stagnant means not flowing or immobile or something that is standing still (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017). This means the tourism product is no longer attracting new tourists and the

destination is mainly getting repeat visits. At the same time, the tourism product is no longer being developed. Like the consolidation phase, this stage is also associated with seasonality where tourists will visit the destination again in a specific season (Kusumah & Nurazizah, 2016:32; Park, 2006:16). Cooper (2011:4) explains that visitor numbers have reached their peak at this stage. The carrying capacity has been reached or exceeded, the resort becomes divorced from its geographic environment, artificial tourism attractions now supersede the original primary attractions. The area has a well-established image but is no longer fashionable. This is the stage when new strategies must be implemented to attract new tourists to avoid the decline of the product out of the tourist market.

2.6.2.6   Decline stage

The tourism product at this stage is unable to compete with newer tourism products because tourists will be looking for a new experience. Accommodation establishments could become white elephants as tourists abandon the destination. Hotels could be turned into retirement homes or residential flats (Cooper, 2011:6). Eventually, the tourist destination may become a tourism slum or drop out of the tourism market completely. This situation has once happened in Zimbabwe and affected the tourism product, succinctly described by Ferreira (2004:308) as "tourism dries up in Zimbabwe … political instability is frightening potential visitors away". This is the period when the tourism product of Zimbabwe lost its value in terms of market share and other destinations like South Africa capitalised on that. However, through effective marketing and advertising the product is becoming rejuvenated and is once again on the world map (Colman, 2017).

Andriotis (2001:42) states that at this stage the destination can be easily replaced by other destinations, therefore, the options are to harvest the product, to withdraw the product, or to rejuvenate the product. Harvesting the product can be done if sales are dropping and there is no hope of maintaining the market share and all the profits will be withdrawn from the product before a complete shutdown (Andriotis, 2001:42). Withdrawal happens when the product/destination shows no signs of making any profits in future, possibly due to bad reputation or a completely change in tourists needs. This is when the tourism product will be removed from the market as it will not generate any future income (Andriotis, 2001:42). At this stage the product is referred to as a dog on the BCG portfolio matrix (Enz, 2009:245).

2.6.2.7   Rejuvenation stage

Butler (2006:8) proposes that this stage cannot be reached without a complete rejuvenation of the attractions on which the tourism offering is based. A discerning eye could identify previously obscured tourism resources for development to rejuvenate the current tourism offering. When the

tourism product is at this stage it requires aggressive repackaging of the tourism product to make it attractive to tourists once more. If the destination planners fail to implement exciting strategies, the tourism product will automatically enter the decline stage, which effectively means the cessation of the tourism product.

2.6.2.8   A comprehensive analysis of the TALC model

Even though the TALC model shows the stages through which a tourism product passes, it is criticised for lacking clarity on how long the transition periods are to move from one phase to another. Park (2006:18) asserts that destination life cycle of the evolutionary pattern is not inevitably or even frequently going to follow a biological pattern from birth, growth, decline, and death. The tourism product undergoes a pattern based on the marketing techniques applied to it. For example, some attractions, like the Victoria Falls waterfall, has no record that it once went through the decline stage and has remained the same despite the decrease or increase of visitor numbers. This means the model cannot clearly state the actual elements that go through the whole life cycle. Cooper (2011:10) claims that researchers such as Choy (1992), Biachi (1994), Prideaux (2000) and McKercher (2006) have criticised the model for lacking validity and that it is more theoretical than practical. The models discussed in this section have not been able to identify the tourism resources that give a tourism product a competitive advantage over other tourism products. This therefore is a positive from the point of view of tourists, considering the resource-based approach to strategy analysis proposed by Grant (2002).

2.6.3   A resource-based approach to strategy analysis

For a tourism product to have a competitive advantage over other tourism products, it is crucial to understand the tourism resources that make up the tourism product. Competitive advantage is defined by Christensen (2010:21) as:

> ...whatever value a business provides that motivates its customers to purchase its products or services rather than those of its competitors and the poses impediments to imitation by actual or potential direct competitors.

Tourists are attracted by the resources that are packaged in a tourism product, which enable them to decide on the destination to visit based on the available resources. This is termed freedom of choice on the generic tourism product (Smith, 1994:589). Consequently, the identification of tourism resources at a destination alone will not bring about the desired competitive advantage that results in attracting tourists to visit a destination, but the capabilities of the identified resources need to be combined for the tourism product to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. The model proposed by Grant (2002), even though mainly used at business level, can be a useful tool in identifying the core competencies of a destination based on the strengths and weaknesses of

the tourism product, which result in attracting more tourists (Rodriguez-Diaz & Espino-Rodriguez, 2007:4).

Figure 2.6 below illustrates the model proposed by Grant (2002) which helps in the development of a strategy that can lead to a competitive advantage of a firm based on the internal resources a firm has. This model has been adapted for this study to identify the resources that build up the tourism product of Victoria Falls, as well as identifying the resources that form the draw card for tourists to visit Victoria Falls. The perspectives of tourists can be more easily understood if the resources that influence their choice of destination are better understood.
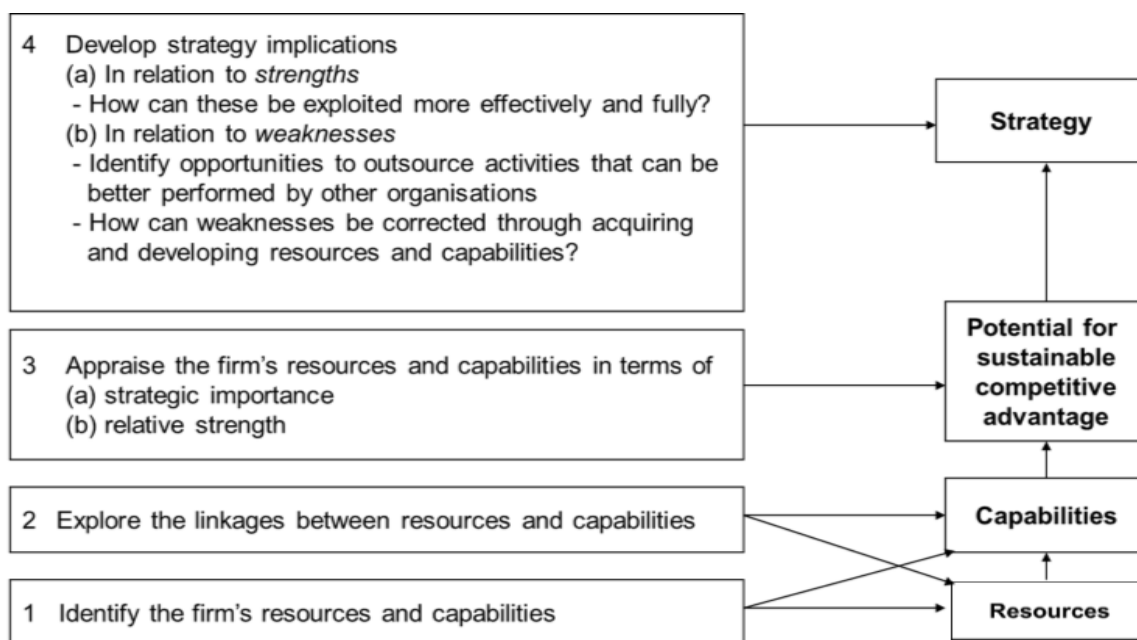
Figure 2.6: A resource-based approach to strategy analysis (Grant, 2002).

2.6.3.1   Resources and capabilities

Resources can be defined as what the organisation has in order to function and can be categorised into tangible resources, intangible resources, and human resources. On the other hand, capabilities involve the process of applying those available resources to the fullest potential to create a sustainable competitive advantage. Hoskisson, Hitt, Ireland and Harrison (2012:115) define capabilities as "…the firm's capacity to deploy resources that have been purposely integrated to achieve a desired end state". Capabilities can be better understood as how the available resources at a destination are combined to give the tourism product a competitive advantage. Barney (1991:99) posits that resources must be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable.

Looking at Figure 2.6 above, the model requires the identification of the firm's resources and in this case, these are the destination's resources. After an inventory of resources is done, there is a need to look at what resources contribute to one destination gaining a competitive advantage over other destinations. Based on the resources contained in Barney's (1991) valuable resources criteria, the capabilities of the destination (tourism product) are explored and linkages established of what creates a competitive advantage that elicits a positive perspective from tourists. Table 2.2 below lists the resources of the Victoria Falls destination.

Table 2.2: The resources that build the Victoria Falls tourism product

Resource	Examples
Tangible	Attractions (The Victoria Falls waterfall, The Famous Bridge, The Victoria Falls Rainforest National Park) Accommodation (hotels, lodges, backpackers, guesthouses, camping, self-catering, bed and breakfast) Activities (bungee jumping, white water rafting, game drives, zip lining, diving) Infrastructure (airport and roads) Facilities and amenities Location (accessible by road, rail and air)
Intangible	Good image and reputation (Victoria Falls is a safe destination) Pleasant climate Technologically advanced
Human resources	Skilled workforce (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority) Training Institutions (Victoria Falls Municipality)

Barney (1991:99) asserts that valuable resources must be rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable. This means that although a tourism product can comprise many resources, only the resources that differentiate a particular tourism product from other tourism products (resources that elicit a positive perspective from tourists), should be the core focus of the destination. Capabilities then need to be developed based on the unique resources that are imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable. Marais, du Plessis and Saayman (2017:4) refer to these resources as the key success factors of a destination.

2.6.3.2   Linking resources and capabilities

The Victoria Falls tourism product has a number of resources. However, by looking at the resources that can elicit a positive perspective from the tourists, it is intrinsically clear that not all the resources mentioned in Table 2.2 above are unique, imperfectly imitable and non-

substitutable. This is because some of the resources identified in Table 2.2 can be easily found elsewhere, can be imitated, and are easily substitutable. Nonetheless, the waterfall (one of the Seven Wonders of the World), the pleasant climate, the famous bridge and the good image and reputation the tourism product have, are the major draw cards for tourists visiting Victoria Falls. For tourists to experience all these resources they will only have to go to Victoria Falls, and therefore the destination has a competitive advantage over other destinations.

Marvell (2006:101) emphasises that the landscape of a destination plays a paramount role in attracting tourists. The Victoria Falls waterfall in particular is part of the landscape that lures tourists to Victoria Falls. Chinyamakobvu (2012:27) reports that a trip to southern Africa is incomplete without visiting Victoria Falls. This means that the tourists' perspectives are centred on seeing the spectacular waterfall. Therefore, tourism planners and marketers need to sell the Victoria Falls tourism product based on the fact that it is has a unique feature in the waterfall, which cannot be imitated or substituted by any other destinations. This will create a positive perspective from the tourists, which will result in an increase in the visitor numbers. However, the price charged to see this attraction would need to be considered as tourists may decide to visit other destinations like Cape Town in South Africa to see Table Mountain, which is also one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Climate is defined as "the measure of atmospheric conditions, such as temperature, sunshine and rainfall, that are based on yearly or monthly averages over a period of not less than years" (Marvell, 2006:101). This is another resource that is crucial and that cannot be imitated or substituted. Therefore, destination management organisations need to package the Victoria Falls tourism product with emphasis on the pleasant climate, to differentiate the product from other products. The tourism product of Victoria Falls should be branded as a pleasant climate destination, thereby attracting tourists from Europe where the weather conditions are usually cold. This will increase visitor numbers to Victoria Falls.

Uysal *et al.* (2012:271) assert that tourists seek to visit destinations that are safe. This means the tourism product they buy has a good image and reputation, which is another unique resource that the Victoria Falls tourism product has. The Victoria Falls tourism product is characterised by warm local people and a welcoming culture. Murray (2016:107) shares the same sentiment, that the local people of Zimbabwe are welcoming, courteous, and friendly. Therefore, this creates a good image of the Victoria Falls tourism product because tourists want to visit safe destinations where they do not have to fear for their lives. The tourism marketers and promoters of Victoria Falls need to capitalise on selling the tourism product as a safe destination and by so doing the destination

will attract more tourists and their perspectives towards the product will be positive which results in the repeat business.

2.6.3.3 Strategy development implications

The strategy implications in relation to the strengths of resources is that there is a need to continue practising responsible tourism in Victoria Falls by reducing environmental damage to the rainforest. In addition, with the new Victoria Falls International Airport that has been recently refurbished, the infrastructure needs to be maintained so that the tourism product continues to attract tourists. Lastly, the local people may need continuing education on the benefits of tourists as well as involving them in the tourism system so that they grasp the concept that they are part of the tourism product.

In terms of the weakness of the tourism product, Murphy *et al*. (2010:617) postulates that the Victoria Falls tourism product is perceived to be expensive so there is a need to consider the prices charged on the different elements of the tourism product. Moreover, there is a need to bundle the elements of the tourism product to be sold as a package and not individually. This offers tourists a range of activities included in one price, which is more cost effective for them than individually priced items.

2.7 Summary

The tourism product comprises a number of elements which can influence the decision of tourists to choose a particular destination over another. The elements discussed are very influential and powerful in the decision-making of tourists when choosing a destination to visit. Literature confirms that for a destination to be competitive, the tourism product should have the aforementioned elements. However, because tourists' economic backgrounds, behaviours, and tastes differ, their perspectives on each element can differ significantly. This is highlighted in the data analysis section in Chapter Four

Informed by the SET, this chapter looked at different models to gain and understanding of tourist perspectives on a tourism product. The models used were explained and the link between each model and tourist perspectives was shown. Tourists' needs and wants change constantly; all the resources encapsulated in a tourism product need to be integrated to create an overall attractive tourism product that will draw tourists. After the tourism product has been well developed, a social exchange takes place when the tourists develop the desire to visit the destination. The tourism product needs to be developed to the maturity stage and this is achieved by marketing it into the correct niche market and focussing on resources that are not easily imitated by other destinations.

Therefore, it is important to consider the "generic tourism product model" to understand the main elements that constitute a good tourism product. Application of the "tourism area life cycle model" to determine where the destination (tourism product) is at in terms of development, as well as considering the "resource-based approach to strategy analysis", will assist in identifying the resources that build up a strong tourism product.

Lastly, the SET, which informs this study, helps in understanding the stage or period, as well as the quality of service to be offered for an exchange interaction to happen. The integration of all these models and theories can result in the creation of a pleasing tourism product.

The following chapter presents the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The core focus of this study was to investigate tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe. The previous chapter provided an understanding of the theoretical framework of the subject under investigation. This was articulated by reinforcing the available concepts with the relevant literature to justify the objectives of this study.

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed to achieve the objectives of this study. The research questions and objectives of the study are stated. Population and sampling technique, data collection, and data analysis are addressed, as well as the ethical considerations that were applied during the conduct of the research.

Merriam (2014:3) defines research as inquiring into, or investigating something in a systematic manner. Tranfield *et al*. (2003:207) have also defined the same term as a process of using scientific methods to broaden knowledge in a specific study area. When undertaking research, research design and methodology are pivotal to the success of any research (Khan, 2011:69; Kumar, 2008:30; Mills & Birks, 2014:13).

In an attempt to understand the tourists' perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product, there was a need to formulate research objectives which determine what needs to be achieved by the research and research questions which would provide insight into the topic under investigation.

3.2   Research questions

Punch (2009:5) argues that research questions are the backbone of experiential processes and they are the organising principle for the report. It was important to set research questions for this study because they were the guide to achieving the study objectives. The setting of the research questions helped in creating variables that were useful in the investigation of tourists' perspectives on the tourism product of Victoria Falls. The research questions served a crucial role in determining the parameters of this study.

The research questions that guided this study were:

   a)   What is the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls?
   b)   What are the main elements that influence a tourist's decision to visit Victoria Falls?
   c)   What are the expectations of tourists from the Victoria Falls tourism product?

d)	What is the level of tourist satisfaction of the Victoria Falls tourism product?

e)	What are the areas of improvement for the Victoria Falls tourism product?

## 3.3	Research objectives

Research objectives are statements determined to identify the aim researchers plan to achieve when undertaking a study (Creswell, 2012:4; Ivankova, 2014:105). Setting research objectives is an important aspect of every successful study as they guide the researcher through the research process towards achieving the research aim. Research objectives help in the evaluation of the aim of the study (Ivankova, 2014:105). It was important to set research objectives for this study so that an assessment of the outcome of this study could be done.

To achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives were pursued:

a)	To ascertain the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls;

b)	To determine the main elements that influence a tourist's decision to visit Victoria Falls;

c)	To understand the expectations of tourists from the Victoria Falls tourism product;

d)	To determine the tourists' levels of satisfaction on the Victoria Falls tourism product; and

e)	To identify areas of improvement on Victoria Falls tourism product

## 3.4	Background to the study area

This study was conducted in Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe in December 2016. As mentioned in Chapter One, Victoria Falls is a major international tourism destination in southern Africa and the most successfully developed town in terms of tourism facilities as well as the fastest growing urban centre in Zimbabwe (Masocha, 2006:839). As stated by Chinyamakobvu (2012:27) a trip to southern Africa is incomplete without visiting Victoria Falls. The researcher was stationed at the entrance/exit gate to the Victoria Falls waterfall and the Rainforest. This was deemed a suitable area where to approach respondents to collect data as most visitors to Victoria Falls visit the waterfall. The following section gives a background to Victoria Falls as a tourist destination.

In one of the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, Matebeleland North Province, is a gem of a tourist destination—Victoria Falls. This tourist destination is located on the southern banks of the mighty Zambezi River, which is the fourth longest river in Africa after the Nile, Congo and Niger Rivers. In the eastern part of the town is the famous "The Falls" and the "Bridge" as well as the Rainforest, whereas located in the western side of the town, about 70 kilometres away, is the busy Kazungula border post which is also a gateway to Zambia, Botswana and Namibia from Zimbabwe. Its

location in the African continent context has been described by Michler (2007:10) as easily accessible as it is almost exactly in the middle of the southern half of the continent and close to where Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia and Namibia meet. Victoria Falls is located 875 kilometres from Harare, the capital city, as well as 440 kilometres from Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe.

The area of Victoria Falls is said to have initially been the settlement of the Stone Age people about three million years ago (Victoria Falls Guide, 2017). However, the Khoisan hunter-gatherers with their iron tools expelled the Stone Age people and settled in the area themselves, but they were in turn displaced by the Southern Tonga people, now known as the Batoka tribe, whose people still live in the Victoria Falls area today (Victoria Falls Guide, 2017). Later, more tribes such as the Matabele and the Makololo arrived and are also still present in the area. According to Victoria Falls Guide (2017), the members of Makololo tribe are the ones that escorted David Livingstone, the first European ever to see the falls, down the river on the 17th November 1855. By then the Falls was called *Mosi oa Tunya* by the native people. However, David Livingstone was so impressed by the view of the Falls that he later renamed it Victoria Falls in honour of his queen in England (Cavendish, 2005:1).

According to McCrea and Pinchuck (2000:186), Victoria Falls town came into existence during the 1890s, a century after the anticipated gold rush failed to yield good results. This was the time when the prospect of using the waterfall for hydro-electric power was considered, and prolonged when the railway from Bulawayo reached the town just before the Victoria Falls Bridge was opened in April 1905, connecting Zimbabwe to Zambia (McCrea & Pinchuck, 2000:186). The town is set on a flat plateau and is regarded as one of the oldest towns in Zimbabwe. Victoria Falls was well known as the centre for traders, travellers and hunters in the 19th century (McCrea & Pinchuck, 2000:186). McCrea and Pinchuck (2000:186) and Gray (2007:43) share a similar sentiment, that in the 1890s only a store and a hotel was built but due to the outbreak of malaria and blackwater fever, the settlement was moved away from the banks of the Zambezi River to Livingstone town in Zambia. In addition to the history behind this tourist destination, McCrea and Pinchuck (2000:186) report that:

> The town on the Zimbabwean side (Victoria Falls) came back into its own in the late 1960s, when hotels, banks and, most importantly, an airport were built. At the end of 1991 the airport was upgraded to international standards—for the benefit of visiting leaders coming "on retreat" at the conclusion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. With the rapid influx of tourists, the town continues to expand. New facilities and accommodation have sprung up in the fertile entrepreneurial grounds around the Falls.

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This is the town that is now regarded as the African continent's undisputed adventure capital (Gray, 2007:43; McCrea & Pinchuck, 2000:186). As discussed in Chapter One, Victoria Falls has many tourism elements that are combined to make a single saleable tourism product. Most of the elements of the tourism product of Victoria Falls (accommodation, activities, accessibility, attractions, facilities, image, price, and tours) are in proximity to each other and are easily accessible. Figure 3.1 is a map of Victoria Falls town showing hotels such as The Victoria Falls Hotel, Ilala Lodge Hotel, The Kingdom Hotel, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Sprayview Hotel and many other accommodation establishments. The map also shows the famous Victoria Falls waterfall and the bridge where activities such as bungee jumping, zip-lining, bridge swing and many more water activities take place. At the entrance to the Falls is where data were collected, using a self-administered survey questionnaire on a face-to-face basis with the tourists.

Figure 3.1: Map of the study area – Victoria Falls (Google Maps, 2017).

3.5   Research design

Kumar (2008:30) defines research design as "a logical and systematic plan prepared for conducting a research study". In other words, it is a written plan for a study. Khan (2011:69) and

Taylor (2006:173) concur with Kumar's definition and state that research design maps the complete research plan and the direction which the research will take. Essentially, this is the framework of the research that shows the whole research plan. Business Dictionary.com (2015a:174) defines research design as the blueprint of how an investigation will take place. In furthering the explanation, Business Dictionary.com (2015a:174) also highlights that a research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analysing data collected. Kothari (2004:31) shares a similar view in articulating that the term refers to the concrete structure where research takes place, and it includes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.

This study was quantitative in nature as it was aimed at gathering statistical information from the final consumers of the product, which are the tourists, for assessing the tourism product of Victoria Falls. George (2011:117) concurs with Shields and Twycross (2003:24), Sukamolson (2007:4), Tewksbury (2009:39), and Hoy (2010:97) that the quantitative research approach collects numerical data and factual information that is analysed using mathematically based methods to explain a social and cultural phenomenon. To achieve the desired objectives of this study, both primary and secondary sources were used.

3.6   Research methodology

Kothari (2004:8) defines research methodology as "a way to systematically solve the research problem". It is a methodical procedure whereby the researcher starts from the identification of the problem and proceeds to the final stage of the conclusions, and involves general activities such as identifying problems, reviewing the literature, formulating research questions, data collection and analysis of data, interpreting results and drawing of conclusions (Singh, 2010:156).

The use of secondary research was pivotal to this study. Several authors, such as Cowton (1998:423), Brotherton (2015:14), Cleare (2016:330), Bayley, Tullett, Oliver and Wainwright (2016:115), and Stewart, Warburton and Smith (2017:96), argue that secondary research involves the use of information that was researched for other purposes and is already available. It is part of the literature review as it includes books, journals, articles, magazines, theses and the Internet. Literature review is fundamental to the success of academic research (Booth, Papaioannou & Sutton, 2012:3; Hart, 1998:13; Paul, 2012:1). Hart (1998:13) further defines literature review as:

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

Fink (2013:3) defines literature review as:

> …a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners.

In this study, the researcher conducted a literature review by focusing on the elements of a tourism product, the various perspectives of tourists on a tourism product, as well as the SET and how it links to the study under investigation. This was done to establish what has been done before on the research area under investigation, as well as identifying the gaps. Furthermore, literature on the current tourism product offering in the study area was investigated. This helped the researcher to familiarise himself with the topic as well as to determine the parameters of the research. The researcher conducted the literature review to glean existing available information related to the objectives of this study. Paul (2012:1) and Fink (2013:3) confirm that the review of literature will help to anchor already-available information with the proposed new ideas. Additionally, Helen (2014:5) states that a literature review gives an overview of research in a specific area by summarising available literature on any topic under research.

The search for information can be done in two ways—through primary or secondary research. Primary research refers to fresh research, which is done to answer precise issues or questions (George, 2011:117). Bryman (2012:212) postulates that primary research involves the use of questionnaires, surveys, or interviews with individuals or small groups. In this study, the tourists visiting Victoria Falls were the primary source. Face-to-face interviewer-administered questionnaires were conducted with tourists on a voluntary participation basis. This method ensures it is easy for the respondents to understand the questions since the interviewer is present and can explain if necessary. Moreover, Norton (2008:100), Kumar (2010:110), Harrison, Cupman, Truman and Hague (2016:156) support this notion, stating that the interviewer can get a deeper understanding of the validity of the response as the researcher can develop an understanding with the respondents by engaging with the respondents in conversation as opposed to interrogation. The interviewer can also take note of the respondents' body language, which helps in the deeper understanding of the response. Harrison *et al.* (2016:156) summarise the benefits of conducting a face-to-face survey, positing that the interviewer will gain depth of information from the respondent because respondent feels comfortable with the interviewer. In addition, there is greater accuracy as the respondent has time to reflect on the question and can ask for clarity if necessary.

As previously mentioned, a survey questionnaire was used to collect primary data. There are a number of definitions of a questionnaire. George (2011:144) defines a questionnaire as a chain of

questions put to respondents to provide answers to the stated research objectives. Dornyei (2014:15) states that:

> A questionnaire is structured data collection instrument, with most of the items either asking about very specific pieces of information or giving various response options for the respondent to choose from, for example by ticking in the box.

Researchers have mixed views on the different methods that are used to collect data. Patten (2017:1) claims that all the methods used for collecting data have their advantages and disadvantages. On comparing the benefits of using questionnaires over other methods of collecting data like structured telephone interviews or in-depth semi structured personal interviews, Patten (2017:1) states that questionnaires provide an efficient way to collect data as they can be administered simultaneously, unlike structured telephone interviews or in-depth semi-structured personal interviews. Moreover, questionnaires produce responses that are easy to present, and the resultant statistics are easy to examine (Mitchell & Jolley, 2009:263; Patten, 2017:1). Because questionnaires are administered anonymously, they provide more accurate information on sensitive issues, opposed to telephone interviews or in-depth semi-structured interviews in which the respondents usually identify themselves, which may make the respondent hesitant to give truthful information (Patten, 2017:2). Gillham (2008:1), Mitchell and Jolley (2009:263), and Patten (2017:2) argue that the greatest advantage of using questionnaires is that they are cheap and easy way to get honest responses as well as giving a quick answer for the research methodology.

Cohen and Manion (1994:143) state that there are two main types of survey questionnaires—structured and unstructured questionnaires. The difference between these two types of questionnaires is that a structured questionnaire has content that is organised in advance and the respondent can choose from the pre-defined options in the questionnaire, whereas an unstructured questionnaire is more qualitative in nature and gives flexibility and freedom in an open interview (Cohen & Manion, 1994:143). A structured survey questionnaire was used and because the research method used was quantitative, the questionnaire only comprised closed-ended questions (see Appendix C). Closed-ended questions are easier and quicker to answer for the respondent, and easier to code and statistically analyse for the researcher (Naoum, 2013:67). Furthermore, closed-ended questions yield results that are easily comparable between respondents and there is less confusion in responding to the questions as the answers or options are given (Demkin, 2004:63).

In order to elicit the right information that provide answers to the research questions, the researcher categorised the questions on the questionnaire in to four sections under the headings

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section A - D. Section A was to give tourist information in relation to their accommodation while visiting Victoria Falls, the mode of transport used, the country of residence, visiting history, primary reason for visiting as well as how they booked their trip. This information was crucial to understand the profile of the tourist visiting Victoria Falls town. Section B was to understand the tourist perspectives on the Victoria Falls tourism product, hence, statements in relation to the importance of the seven main elements of tourism product (accommodation, activities, accessibility, attractions, facilities, image and price) that could have influenced the tourists to visit the town were included. The tourists had the options to choose whether the elements where important or unimportant in their decision to visit. This was also followed by statements that focuses on each tourism product element and the tourists had options to either agree or to disagree with the statements. Section C was aimed at collecting data on the expectations, satisfaction and pointing the areas of improvement on the tourism product. On this section, statements on whether the tourists' expectations were met or not, the main tourism element they liked the most, if they will visit again or not in future as well as the element of the tourism product that requires special attention were included. Lastly, was section D which contained questions on the demographic information of the tourists. Questions included the age of the tourists, their highest qualification, occupation as well as gender and racial category were included under this section.

3.7   Quantitative research

The quantitative nature of this study is aimed at obtaining factual and statistical information on tourists' perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product. Nykiel (2007:55) opines that there is more than one definition for quantitative research. The term quantitative research is defined by George (2011:117) as research that enables the researcher to ascertain how many respondents agree or disagree with a statement, but it is not likely to provide insight into why respondents have answered as they have. Nykiel (2007:55) defines quantitative research as a method of research that aims to establish factual information, deduce predictions, and test hypotheses that have been already stated. Nykiel (2007:55) further explains that quantitative research is best understood in the marketing context by its ability to gather useful measurable information which can be pursued over time. Aliaga and Gunderson (2000:15) describe quantitative research as "…explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)". The main advantages of using quantitative research, according to Nykiel (2007:55), are that it yields results that are statistically reliable and the results from quantitative research are projectable to the population.

3.7.1 Types of quantitative research

According to Nykiel (2007:56) there are four main types of quantitative research designs: descriptive, experimental, quasi-experimental (causal-comparative), and correlational. This study follows a descriptive design as it is aimed at describing a phenomenon that will help in answering the research question. The research question in this study is "What are the tourists' perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product". Taylor (2006:173) posits that descriptive designs mainly focus on the experience of a phenomenon as opposed to the objective analysis of a phenomenon. This study focuses on statistics to describe phenomena. Taylor (2006:173) asserts that descriptive design is best understood in the sense of using numbers to explain a phenomenon.

Nykiel (2007:56) avers that descriptive design enables the generalisation of the results from the sample, which is crucial for validity and reliability. According to Nykiel (2007:27), validity refers to "how well the experiment measures what it claims to measure, whereas reliability refers to the stability or consistency of the experiment's outcome". Levy and Lemeshow (2013:25) define validity in terms of how accurate an estimate can be, whereas reliability is how imitable the results are when the same process is repeated. Reliability is defined by Thyer (2010:356) as the possibility to which other researchers performing similar study in the field and analysis would produce comparable understandings and results. This means that reliability has to do with the consistency of the results over a period of time (Golafshani, 2003:598).

3.8   Population and sampling

According to Oliver (2004:127), population is the total number of individuals to whom the results of the research are intended to apply. Levy and Lemeshow (2013:11) define population as the entire group of individuals to which results of the survey are to be generalized. The individual members that make up a population are called elementary units (Levy & Lameshow, 2013:11). Kothari (2004:41) describes research population as the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. The population for this study was the domestic and international tourists who visited Victoria Falls in the year 2015. The total number of the population was determined by statistics showing the number of tourists who visited Victoria Falls in 2015.

With regards to sampling, Oliver (2004:127) states that it is possible to collect data from the whole population but sometimes it is not possible, especially when the population is too big, or when the population is geographically isolated, or when the total number that constitute the population is unknown. A sample is defined as a subsection of the population that is used as a representation of the population. Sampling is best understood under two broad main classes that are probability and non-probability sampling (Levy & Lameshow, 2013:14). According to Levy and Lameshow

(2013:14), a probability sample is one in which every element in the population has a chance of being selected in the sample and each element has a non-zero probability. The converse is that a non-probability sample is based on the sampling plan which does not have a non-zero probability and there is no stable method to test the validity or reliability of the results (Levy & Lameshow, 2013:14).

Systematic sampling was used to collect data from the tourists. Levy and Lameshow (2013:14) describe this type of sampling with "individuals are selected who are considered to be most representative of the population as a whole". Business Dictionary.com (2015b:177) defines systematic sampling as a technique of selecting a random sample from the bigger population in order to get the representation of the population from the sample. This process typically involves the selection of a permanent beginning point in the larger population and then getting subsequent observations by using a constant interval between samples taken. In this study, the researcher posed questions to every fifth person at the entry/exit point of the Rainforest of Victoria Falls and if the person refused to complete the questionnaire, the next person was asked. Both domestic and internationals tourists were included in the population and sample of this study. Questions included, amongst others, rating the main elements of a good tourism product, perceptions of the tourists on the main elements of the tourism product of Victoria Falls, and overall level of satisfaction with the service offering of Victoria Falls tourism product.

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA, 2016) noted that 257,043 tourists arrived in Victoria Falls during the period January to December 2015 with an average of 21,420 per month. For this study, the population N = 21420 was based on the 2015 average tourist arrivals per month. From the population, the sample was *n = 377.* This was deduced from recommendations suggested by Isaac and Michael (1981:193) to achieve a 95% confidence level.

3.9   Pilot study

A pilot study is the preliminary step in research aimed at identifying possible problems that might affect the quality and validity of the estimates (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2006:114). Additionally, van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001:289) define pilot study as:

> ...a mini version of a full-scale study as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule.

Cargan (2007:116) claims that a pilot study is designed to answer the following questions:

- Are there enough directions for those conducting the survey to administer it, collect it, code it, and report it?

- Are the procedures summarised?
- Is the necessary information being provided?
- Are the questions being asked appropriate for the people being surveyed?
- Is the information being obtained consistent?

The main advantage of doing a pilot study is that it might flag danger that lies ahead about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001:289).

The questionnaire was distributed randomly to students and staff in the Tourism and Events Management Department at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Five of the questionnaires were given randomly to lecturers and following the same procedure, the other five were given to post-graduate students to complete. The researcher considered the feedback from the people who completed the questionnaire in terms of the time spent to complete the questionnaire, the relevance of the questions to the subject, objectives of the study under investigation, as well any comments or suggestions to improve the study. The supervisor assisted with suggestions on how best the statements were to be structured and based on the feedback obtained from the pre-tested sources, the questionnaire was improved and used in the field to collect primary data.

3.10   Data analysis

Bano, Ansari and Ganai (2016:113) define data analysis as "the act of transforming data with the aim of extracting information". Bano *et al.* (2016:113) describe the importance of data analysis as that data is raw facts and if not processed will not make sense to the reader. Data therefore needs to be systematically synthesized to provide useful information. Data collected from the fieldwork was analysed, interpreted and synthesised into useful information and presented in graphical format.

The IBM23 Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used as the instrument to analyse the data collected during the fieldwork. SPSS provides in-depth, faster and accurate data analysis. SPSS allows the comparison of data sets and each field has a unique ID for each record captured and helps in the elimination of any discrepancies. Furthermore, the fact that there are no formulas required when inputting data on SPSS eliminates potential costly errors since the software only requires coding of the data to be captured. SPSS has been used in similar studies, hence the researcher deemed it suitable for the current study.

3.11   Ethical considerations

When conducting research, it is very important for the researcher to be aware of any relevant ethical issues. Walsh and Wigens (2003:106) emphasise that ethical issues such as protection of rights of participants, potential risks inherent in questioning, and the voluntary participation principle need to be observed for a research study to be successful. Confidentiality of participants is of paramount importance. Participants should be assured that any information they share will not be communicated to any other person who is not directly involved in the study (Verhoef & Hilsden, 2004). There is a potential risk that certain question could cause emotional distress. The researcher must ensure that questions posed to participants do not raise emotions and causes distress (Walsh & Wigens, 2003:106). Voluntary participation is when respondents are not forced or bribed to participate in a survey.

"Research ethics involve requirements on daily work, the protection of dignity of subjects and the publication of the information in the research" (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011:4). Ethical considerations involve the disclosure of procedures and methodology involved in the research process and making the respondents aware of their exact role in the study (Sanjari *et al.*, 2014:7). In this study, the researcher first obtained a letter of permission from ZPWMA to conduct the survey in Victoria Falls (see Appendix A) in compliance with terms of this study, which requires permission letters from the relevant bodies involved. Respondents' privacy was ensured and they were advised in the opening section of the questionnaire that the survey was being conducted anonymously. In addition, the study was granted ethical clearance by the CPUT Ethics Research Committee (see Appendix B). This is confirmation that this study conforms to the standards required for research fieldwork to be undertaken. In addition, the researcher applied the following ethical elements:

- Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary.
- The objectives of the study were explained to the participants prior to commencement of the survey.
- The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was given to respondents.

3.12   Summary

This chapter discussed the research methods applied in this the study, highlighting the reasons for choosing the research instrument (questionnaire) and sampling approach (systematic sampling method) over other methods. Interviewer-administered questionnaires were used to gather data from the tourists. Ethical considerations are presented as pivotal in preserving the integrity of the study from the initial stage to the final stage of the research. The research findings of this study are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the data gathered from the 377 questionnaires administered by the interviewer on a face-to-face, voluntary participation basis to tourists during the period 16th – 24th December 2016 as mentioned in the previous chapter. Kumar (2002:171) and Flick (2015:77) underscore that data analysis is one of the most fundamental facets of research. Barry and Zikmund (2015:70) define the process of data analysis and interpretation as "the application of computation, summarising, and reasoning to understand the gathered information". Kumar (2002:171) succinctly posited that data analysis is incomplete without interpretation. This is because data, figures, and facts have complexities which require systematic analysis which helps in breaking down the complex structures of data into meaningful information that can be used for the generalisation of the results (Kumar, 2002:171). Data were analysed and the results presented in an easily understood format. This was done to establish trends and relations between the variables based on the study objectives, as noted by Khan (2011:192). However, in doing so relevant literature was consulted to match the similarities or highlight the differences between the results of the current study versus results from similar studies previously conducted. Ridley (2012:3) opines that a literature review helps in the analysis and interpretation of data as it allows a comparison between the secondary and primary data.

This chapter presents an analysis of the research findings from the survey questionnaires administered to gather the perspectives of tourists of a tourism product in a selected Zimbabwean town, being Victoria Falls. The IBM24 SPSS version 24 was the data analysis instrument applied to data collected during the fieldwork. Findings, in relation to the research questions and objectives, are presented graphically in the format of tables, graphs, and pie charts, and comprehensible descriptive summaries. The following section discusses the key findings in relation to tourist perspectives on the Victoria Falls tourism product.

4.2   Tourist profile

To achieve the objective of this study it was necessary to gather data on the profiles of tourists who visit Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe. This data will inform the tourism bodies and relevant authorities in Victoria Falls of the type of tourists who buy the tourism product and visit the destination. This will enable them to modify the tourism product based on the profile of the tourists. The tourists who were included into this study comprised both domestic and international tourists

who visited Victoria Falls as day visitors or as overnight visitors. The tourist survey questionnaire is contained in Appendix C.

The following sub-sections present the findings on the tourists' demographic information in terms of gender, historical racial classification, age, education level, employment status/occupation, type of visitor, type of accommodation and nights spent, mode of transport, place of residence, group composition, visiting history, primary reason for visiting, and how the trip was booked.

4.2.1 Gender

Results in terms of gender reveal that from 377 respondents who visited Victoria Falls 203 (53.8%) were males, in comparison to 174 (46.2%) females. Figure 4.1 below depicts the gender profile for tourists who visited Victoria Falls. This outcome shows that men still dominate the travel market which correlates with Zhou's (2018:10) study "visitor satisfaction at Victoria Falls Rainforest" noted more males than females visited. However, the current study reveals a significant increase in the number of women tourists when compared to Morachat's (2003:136) study on destination attractiveness, where males were 62% compared to 38% females.

This could indicate that the socio-economic imbalance between men and women is generally changing and women are now able to travel, despite their domestic responsibilities (Wight, Bianchi & Hunt, 2013:394).
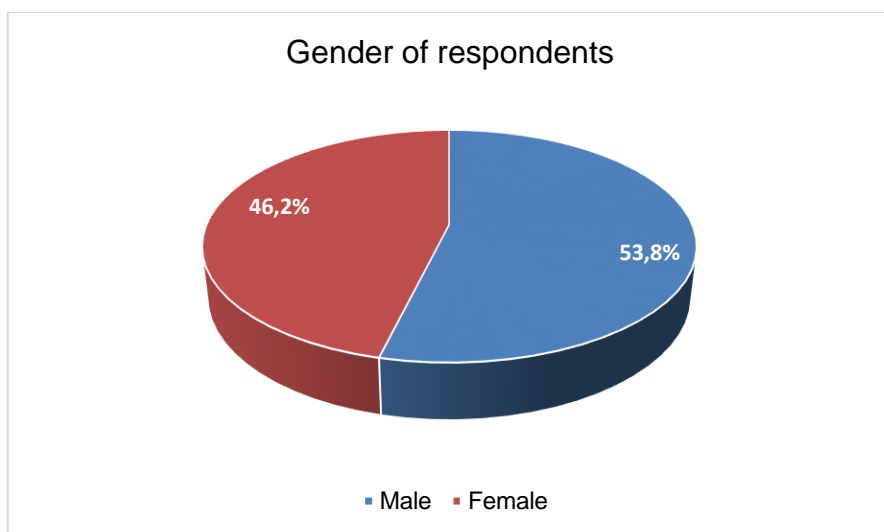
Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.2 Historical racial classification

Statistics from the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA, 2013:15) show that the majority (85.7%) of tourist arrivals in 2013 were from Africa while only 14.3% were from overseas. Moreover, in the

years 2014, 2015 and 2016 the statistics show that again the majority (86%) were from Africa and only 14% came from overseas (ZTA, 2016:6, 17). In terms of racial categories of the respondents, the results indicate that the highest proportion of the visitors were Whites (42.6%), followed closely by Africans (40.4%), while Coloureds and Asians trailed with 10.7% and 6.3% respectively. These results are graphically represented in Figure 4.2 below and it is apparent that the destination is more appealing to Whites in comparison to other historical racial groups. Statistics published by the ZTA (2016:6) indicate that Africans comprised the majority of visitors for the years 2013 to 2016. From a price perspective, it could mean that this destination is more affordable to Whites when compared to other racial groups because they have more disposable income and fewer domestic responsibilities, a reason noted by Wight *et al.* (2013:395).
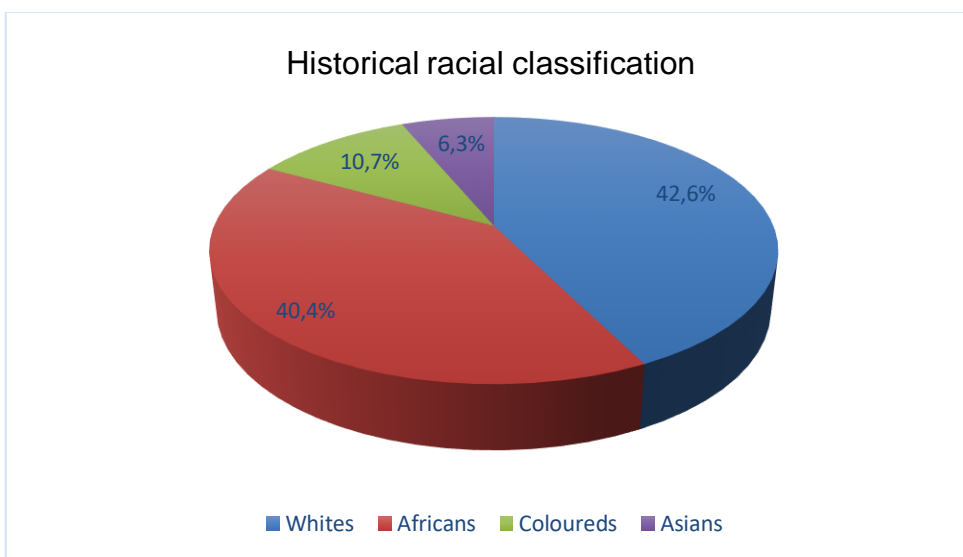
Figure 4.2: Historical racial classification (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.3   Age of respondents

It was important to investigate the age categories of the tourists who utilised this destination so that the tourism product, including activities and tours, could be modified accordingly to meet the requirements of the age groups which were the main visitors to the tourism product in Victoria Falls town.

Figure 4.3 below illustrates the age groups of the respondents. Although the ages of respondents ranged between 18 to 70 years, only 3% fell within the 18-20 years category. Most respondents (40.6%) were between the ages of 31-40 years, with the second highest grouping being 28.6% in the category 21-30 years, followed by 13.8% in the 41-50 years group. Only a few respondents were aged between 51-60 years (9.8%) and 61-70 years (4.2%). These results show that the tourism product of Victoria Falls mainly appeals to the young generation between 21 to 50 years

of age who want to partake in the adventure activities offered in this town as it is regarded as the adventure capital (Rough Guides, 2015:1). The results are in line with Saha and Rowley's (2015:91) notion that young people are more interested than older persons are, in visiting adventure destinations. However, the older age groups have high disposable incomes and more time to travel as they have fewer home responsibilities and must be targeted when planning a sustainable tourism product (Gade & Ankathi, 2016:425). In further analysing the results, correlation of variables between the age of the respondents, their accommodation type as well as their occupation was performed. The results showed that the age groups from 31-70 years were staying in hotels as opposed to the age group between 18-30years who stayed in backpacker's accommodation. This could reflect the view that the age groups between 31-70 years has better disposable income as it is dominated by people with professional carriers and retired whereas the those between the age groups 18-30yrs prefer cheaper accommodation and would want to mix and mingle as well as partaking more on activities than spending more money on accommodation, this group was dominated by students and self-employed people. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between the type of accommodation selection and the age group as well as the occupation of the traveller. This is very important when marketing the tourism product as there is need to segment the product along these variables.
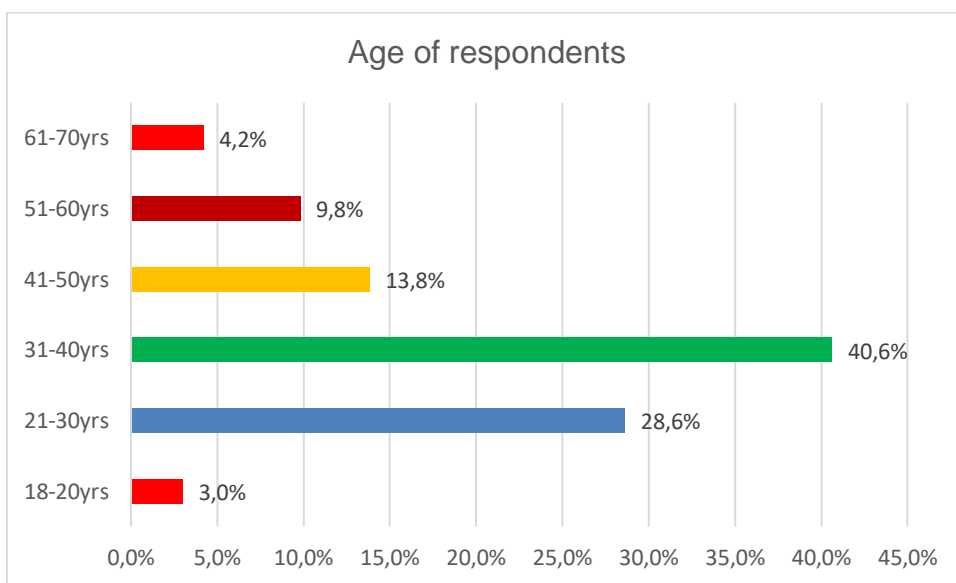
Figure 4.3: Age of respondents (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.4 Education level of respondents

The level of education of the respondents plays a pivotal role when conducting a research as it can determine whether respondents understand the questions or not. Generally, the level of education of the respondents was high with almost 80% of the respondents having at least a

diploma on tertiary education. The results reflect that most of the respondents (39.3%) had bachelor's degrees. A considerable number (31.3%) had diploma certificates and 11.9% held higher national certificates. Only 3.2% of the respondents had Doctoral degrees, while 6.1% had master's degrees. The respondents with the lowest education level comprised 1.3% who had Grade 7 certificates. These results mean that the respondents would have understood the questions asked and were able to respond knowledgably. Figure 4.4 below depicts the educational levels of the respondents.
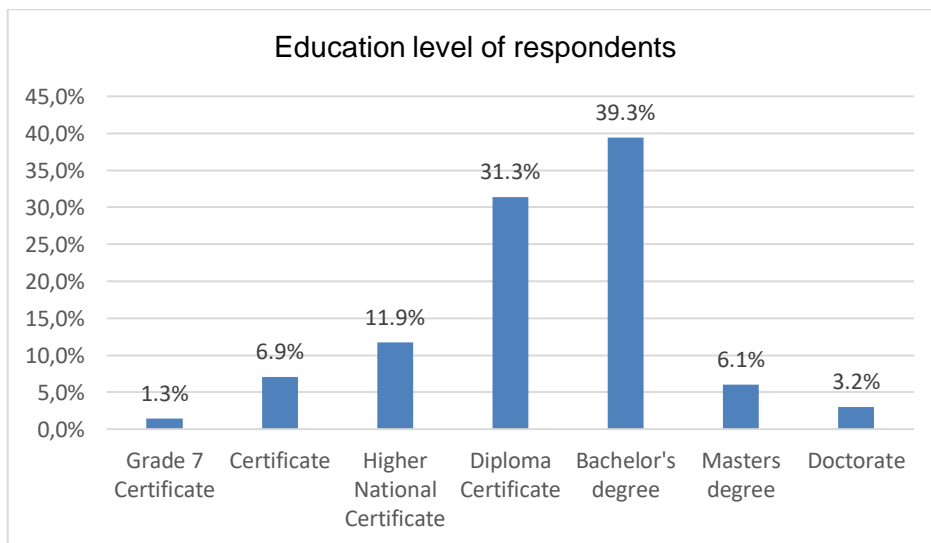
Figure 4.4: Education level of respondents (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.5   Employment status/occupation

Understanding the nature of employment of respondents can help in determining their spending patterns in the travel industry. Most travellers use their disposable income to purchase a tourism product and the level of disposable income can be determined by the respondents' occupation. "Disposable income is the amount of income left to an individual after direct taxes (such as PAYE, income tax) have been deducted and essential expenses (such as food, clothing, shelter) have been paid" (BPP Learning Media, 2009:22). According to Lickorish and Jenkins (2011:52), this money is likely to be spent on travel and tourism. Moreover, BPP Learning Media (2010:22) emphasise that during economic hardship people will spend mainly on essentials, reduce unnecessary spending, and increase savings. This could mean that only those who are employed and earning good salaries are able to travel since tourism is viewed as "a leisure industry or activity" (Canwell & Sutherland, 2003:7; Crouch, Perdue, Immermans & Uysal, 2004:171; Sharma, 2005:140; Timothy, 2005:12).

Because this was an open-ended question, a number of occupations were cited by the respondents. For better understanding and analysis of the results, the researcher combined and categorised the different types of jobs into the main occupational categories. It is evident from Figure 4.5 below that the biggest segment had professional careers (18%). This could be because this tourism product (destination) is expensive and people with professional careers have a high disposable income. Respondents who are employed as artisans or technicians, as well as administrators or managers, follow those with professional careers with 15.1% and 14.6% respectively.

Victoria Falls is a well-known holiday destination and most travel operators such as travel agents and tour operators would want this destination (if not already) on their itineraries for their clients, hence this could be why 11.9% of the respondents were from sales or marketing occupations. Students/scholars comprised 9.5% but this could be influenced by the fact that the data collection was done in December and that students were on holiday and possibly travelling with their parents. Eight percent was noted for those who are self-employed and 6.6% for business persons.

Respondents who were retired comprised 5.7%. Gade and Ankathi (2016:425) opine that retirees spend more money at tourism destinations because they do not have many domestic responsibilities and have time for travelling, as they are no longer working. Five percent of respondents were employed in banking or financing areas and those in the uniformed law enforcement/soldier category comprised 3.9%. The least number of respondents were unemployed and labourers/unskilled at 1.4% and 0.3% respectively. This could be because this destination is expensive and only affordable to people with high disposable incomes.

The analysis of results reveals that this tourism product appeals mostly to people who are employed and who have a professional career. This could be because Victoria Falls is an expensive destination and the prices of services in this town are considered high.

However, it is interesting to note that students, the self-employed, business persons, and retirees are also visitors to Victoria Falls. This shows that this town is a drawcard to all types of people, as long as they can afford it. The statistics indicate the numbers for people in these categories are relatively low. The high prices, limited time to travel, and possible health complications of the elderly, especially in retired people, could account for the lower tourist numbers in these categories.
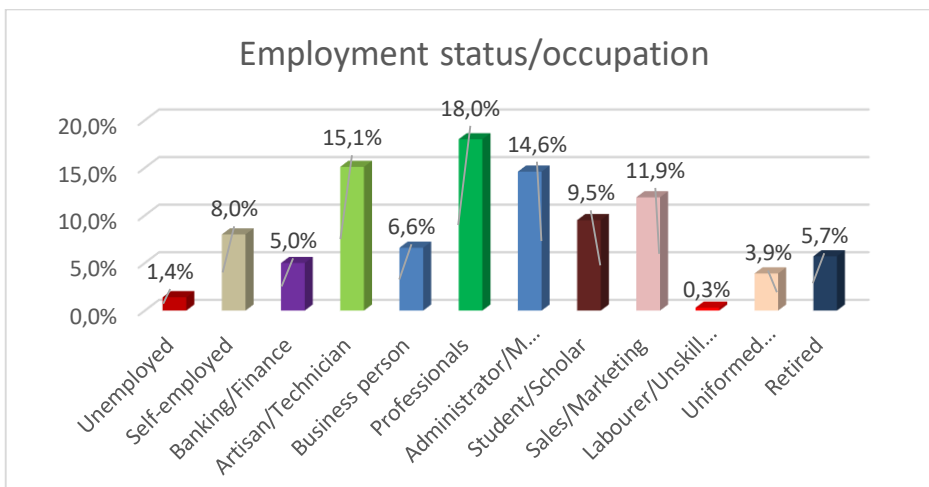
Figure 4.5: Employment status/occupation (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.6   Type of visitor (if staying in Victoria Falls or not)

Mak (2004:59) postulates that an overnight tourist spends more money at the destination than a day visitor does. Mak believes that they have a better understanding of the tourism product as he/she probably has a holistic view of the tourism product as compared to a day visitor who normally visits only one aspect of the tourism product.

The respondents were asked if they were staying in an accommodation establishment during their visit to Victoria Falls. Surprisingly, the results were almost tallying half to half between overnight visitors and day visitors. As shown in Figure 4.6, the results revealed an almost equal split between those who stayed in Victoria Falls accommodation establishments (50.7%) and day visitors (49.3%) to Victoria Falls. However, Murphy *et al.* (2010:617) report that most tourists stay on the Zambian side of the Falls and only visit the Zimbabwean side for activities. The results from the current study show an increase in the numbers of tourists who stay in accommodation establishments in Victoria Falls, although Katunga (2016:1) reports that most of the tourists to Victoria Falls stay in the neighbouring countries of Zimbabwe (Zambia, Botswana and Namibia) because of the high prices charged by Zimbabwean accommodation establishments. This concern is addressed in the next chapter.

Figure 4.6: Type of visitor (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.7   Type of accommodation and number of nights stayed

In order to understand tourists' perspectives of a destination, it is important to ascertain whether the respondent was an overnight or a day visitor to determine the extent to which the respondent could have viewed the destination (Mak, 2004:59). A day visitor is defined as a person who takes a trip outside their usual environment and returns within the same day to their place of residence, whereas an overnight visitor is a person who travels and spends one or more nights away from their usual environment (SSA, 2013:7).

The results illustrated in Table 4.1 below show the types of accommodation used by overnight respondents and the number of nights they stayed. Of the 50.7% who indicated that they were overnight visitors, the majority (31.6%) stayed in hotel accommodation. An almost equal number of the respondents (5.6% and 5%) stayed in backpacker accommodation or with friends/relatives, respectively. A few stayed in guesthouses (2.9%), bed & breakfast establishments (2.7%), or camped (2.4%). Very few (0.5%) utilised self-catering accommodation. These results imply that despite the high prices charged by the accommodation sector, many tourists, especially those booked through travel agents (results of which are depicted in Figure 4.13) still stay in hotels.

In terms of the number of nights stayed by the respondents, most stayed for two nights. The results show that most of the respondents spent their two nights in hotel accommodation (28.9%), and of those who spent three nights, most of them (3.2%) stayed in backpackers' accommodation. This could be due to the high prices of accommodation in Victoria Falls. It is interesting to note that 2.9% of the respondents stayed with friends/relatives for two nights and 2.1% for three nights. This implies that commercial accommodation options such as hotels, backpacker establishments

and guesthouses could be losing money because some visitors are opting to stay with friends/relatives.

Apparent from these results is that tourists are still not staying for long periods at this destination, which has a negative impact on revenue generation. Mak (2004:59) avers that tourists spend more money when they stay for longer periods. This means that Victoria Falls is losing possible revenue due to shorter periods of stay because the majority of tourists only spend two nights in the town. Short stays of one or two nights do not allow tourists sufficient time to explore this tourism product fully. A longer stay would permit visitors to experience fully all that Victoria Falls and its surrounds has to offer, for example cultural tours, game drives, helicopter flips over the Falls, microlight flights and elephant back riding.

Table 4.1: Type of accommodation and number of nights (*n*=377, in %)

Accommodation type	Accommodation stayed in %	Number of nights in %			
		1 night	2 nights	3 nights	4 nights
Hotel	31.6	0.8	28.9	1.9	0
Backpacker	5.6	0	2.1	3.2	0.3
Friends/relatives	5.0	0	2.9	2.1	0
Guesthouse	2.9	0	2.1	0.8	0
Bed & Breakfast	2.7	0	1.9	0.5	0.3
Camping	2.4	0	0.5	1.9	0
Self-catering apartment	0.5	0	0.5	0	0
Not applicable is **49.3%**					

4.2.8   Mode of transport

The mode of transport used to arrive at a destination is important in determining its accessibility (Stopher & Stanley, 2014:320). In this regard, a question on how the respondents arrived in Victoria Falls was asked. As shown in Figure 4.7 below, 52.8% flew in, followed by car (37.1%), buses were used by only 8.8% and travelling by train was the smallest number of respondents (1.3%). This shows that Victoria Falls is accessible through three of the main four modes of transport, namely road, rail and air. As supported by Emmanuel (2017), the results show that, most tourists arrived by air, a fact which could have spearheaded the expansion of the Victoria Falls International Airport (VFA) in 2016. This allowed the landing of large aircraft such as Fastjet's

modern Airbus A319 jet aircraft, Kenya Airways' Embraer E190 craft, South Africa Airways' Airbus A330-200, and Ethiopian Airlines' Boeing 737, which eased the travel logistics of tourists to this town. In providing more meaning of the results, correlation of variables between the mode of transport used versus how the trip was booked was performed. Most of the respondents 52,8% indicated that they flew into Victoria Falls International Airport and the majority of these respondents were those who indicated that they booked their trip through their home travel agent as well as tour operator as shown on Figure 4.13. The reason could be that those who booked through tour operators and travel agents found the package cheaper and prefer to fly as it will be affordable as opposed to those who booked directly and they mainly arrived by car.
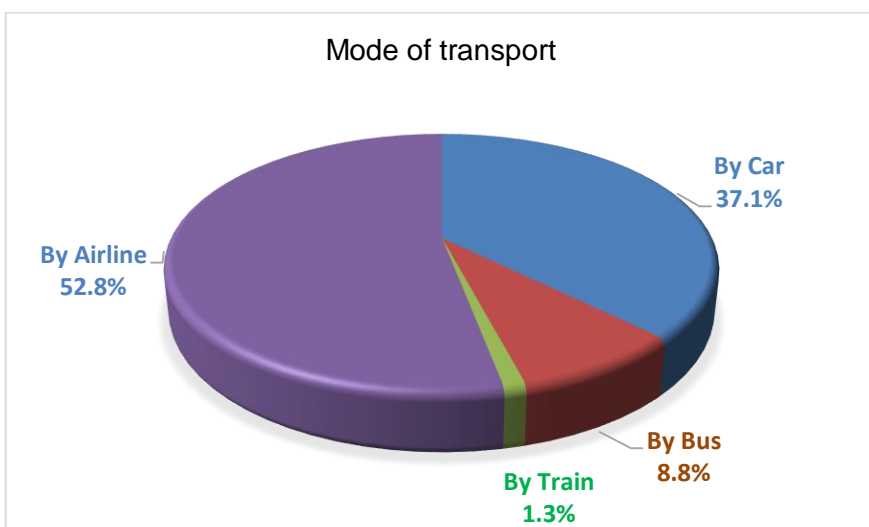
Figure 4.7: Mode of transport (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.9   Place of residence

In terms of the places of residence of the respondents, the results were combined into continents for easy analysis of data. The results as shown in Figure 4.8 below indicate that most of the respondents were from Africa (50.4%), followed by Europe (18.2%), and North America (16%). Respondents from Asia and Australia represented 6.5% and 6.1% respectively. South America at 2.8% had the fewest tourists. This shows that Africans in particular are now interested in travelling as compared to the traditional European and American market because the political environment of the country could be influencing the trends of these markets. The Asian market is increasing and perhaps concerted marketing will stimulate growth even more in the coming years. Market growth was noted from the national tourist arrivals statistics released by the ZTA (2016:6), indicating that 35 840 tourists arrived in 2015 and the number increased to 55 364 in 2016, which is a 54% increase. From the above discussion, the dominant emerging markets were Africa (South

Africa, 8.8%; DRC, 6.6%; Botswana, 5.8%); Europe (Germany, 4.2%; United Kingdom, 3.7%; Sweden, 2.7%); United States of America (North America, 13%; Mexico, 1.1%; Bolivia, 0.5%; Brazil, 1.3%; Argentina, 0.5%; Chile, 0.5%); Asia (China, 2.1%; Korea, 1.6%; Japan, 1.1%); Australia (4.8%) and New Zealand (1.3%).
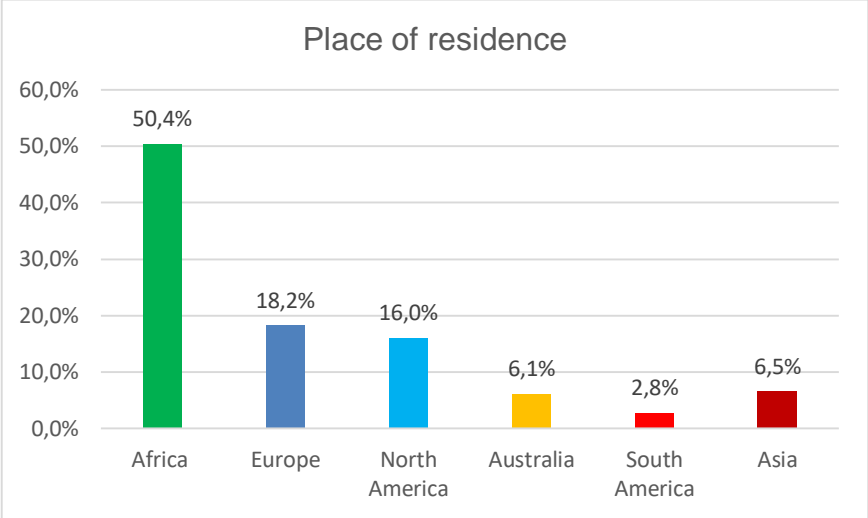
Figure 4.8: Place of residence (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.10 Group composition

The results in Figure 4.9 below illustrate that the majority of people who visited Victoria Falls travelled as family groups (48.3%), followed by groups of friends (36.3%). Some people visited as combined friends and family (6.6%). Very few groups were tour groups (3.4%), business associates (2.7%), travelling alone (2.4%) and the least being school groups (0.3%). This shows that the Victoria Falls tourism product is diverse but attracts more families than other group composition categories. These results align with Family Travel Forum (2016:15), which states that although well known as an adventure capital, Victoria Falls is also known as a family destination.
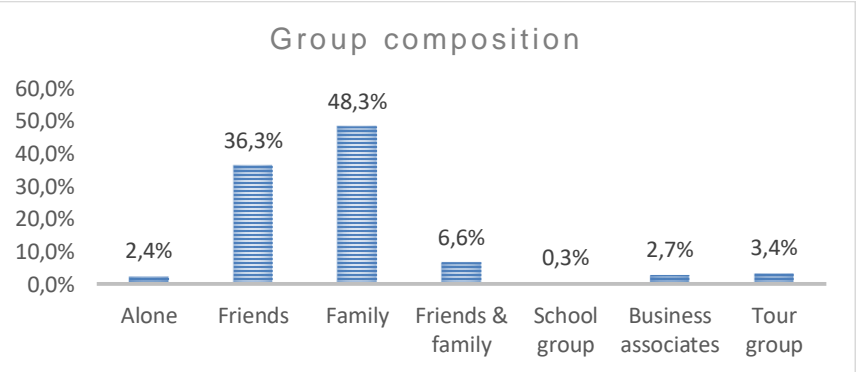
Figure 4.9: Group composition (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.11 Visiting history

Butler's (1980) tourism product life cycle indicates that the growth stage of a tourism product is characterised by an increase in visitor numbers to the destination, however, it will be mainly first-time visitors. The respondents were asked if they had visited Victoria Falls before or if it was their first visit. Figure 4.10 below reflects that the majority of the respondents (87.8%) were first-time visitors compared to only 12.2% that were returning visitors. This shows that the destination is not convincing most visitors to return, resulting in loss of repeat business for Victoria Falls. In addition, the researcher asked about the frequency of repeat visits to the destination. Table 4.2 below shows that of the 12.2% of returning visitors, 8.5% were returning for the second time and 3.2 % and 0.5% were returning for the third time and fourth time respectively.

Results indicate that most of the first-time visitors came from Africa (43.8%), while 17.3% came from Europe, 12.4% were from North America, 6.1% from Australia, 6.1% from Asia, and 2.1% from South America. Returning visitors were mainly from Africa (6.6%) as compared to the other continents.

These outcomes signify that the Victoria Falls tourism product is not yet sufficiently attractive to warrant return visits by tourists. Relevant bodies must relook the current tourism product and develop and improve it in such a way that tourists would want to visit again future.
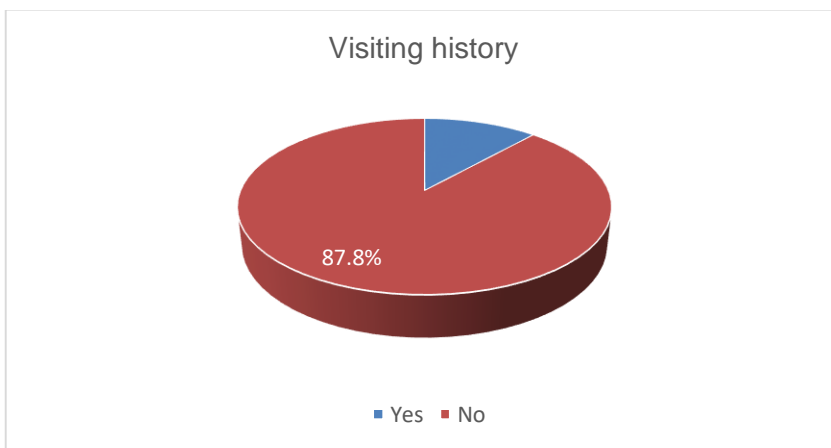
Figure 4.10: Visiting history (*n*=377, in %)

Table 4.2: Number of visits (*n*=377, in %)

First time visitors (87.8%)	Returning visitors (12.2%) how many times		
	2 time(s)	3 time(s)	4 time(s)
	8.5	3.2	0.5

4.2.12 Primary reason for visiting

According to van Vuuren and Slabbert (2011:295), it is crucial for tourism products like resort destinations to understand the travel behaviour and travel motivations of tourists. This understanding would drive the development of the tourism product, enhance service delivery approaches, and create a strong competitive edge for the product. This study investigated what motivated tourists to visit Victoria Falls and Table 4.3 below indicates the primary reasons of tourists for visiting the destination. The vast majority of respondents indicated that holidaying was the primary reason for their visit (90.2%). This result is backed up by Family Travel Forum (2016:15) who reports that most tourists visit this town for memorable holidays. Some respondents (4.5%) cited business as the primary reason for their visit, while 3.4% were visiting friends/relatives. A few respondents (1.1% and 0.8%) linked their visit to studies/training and site inspection respectively.

The results show that Victoria Falls is primarily recognised as a holiday destination, however, the number of overnight stays in this town is still very low (as seen Table 4.1). Relevant bodies need to investigate why tourists are not staying longer as it is contrary to their main reason for visiting.

Table 4.3: Primary reason for visiting (*n*=377, in %)

Primary reason for visiting (95.8%)		Primary reason for visiting (Specify) (4.2%)	
Holiday	90.2	Visiting friends/relatives	3.4
Business	4.5	Site inspection	0.8
Studies or training	1.1		

4.2.13 Possible future visit

Understanding if tourists will return to a destination in future is important as it helps in projecting the repeat business to be expected in time. Respondents were asked to indicate if they would

return to Victoria Falls or not. According to Meleddu, Paci and Pulina (2015:159), the connection between loyalty and repeated behaviour has been analysed in several studies. Polo-Pena, Frias-Jamilena and Rodríguez-Molina (2013:127) state that:

> First-time tourists are more likely to be attracted by major destination attractions, therefore satisfying their novelty-seeking motivations, while repeated visitors tend to engage in niche social and cultural activities.

The results shown in Figure 4.11 below reflect that the majority of respondents (77.5%) stated that they would return, while 22.5% indicated that they would not return. Repeat visits could be linked to satisfaction as it implies that a satisfied visitor is likely to visit again (Chen & Gursoy, 2001:31; Chen & Tsai, 2007:14; Marin & Taberner, n.d:8). This is encouraging news for Victoria Falls as the results show that the majority of visitors will return, which implies that further revenue will be generated from the repeat visits. The respondents who indicated that they will return in future were mostly from Africa (39.8%), followed by North America (19.6%) and Europe (15.6%). Conversely, respondents who indicated that they would not return in future for various reasons were from Africa (10.3%), North America (4.5%), and Australia (2.7%). The researcher was also interested in the relationship between repeat visiting and qualification and the results indicated that the majority who stated that they will visit again in future had bachelor's degree and diploma certificate (39.3% and 31.3%) respectively - as indicated in Figure 4.4.

The researcher was concerned why 22.5% of the respondents stated they would not return as this could negatively affect the destination. The reasons are discussed in the following section.
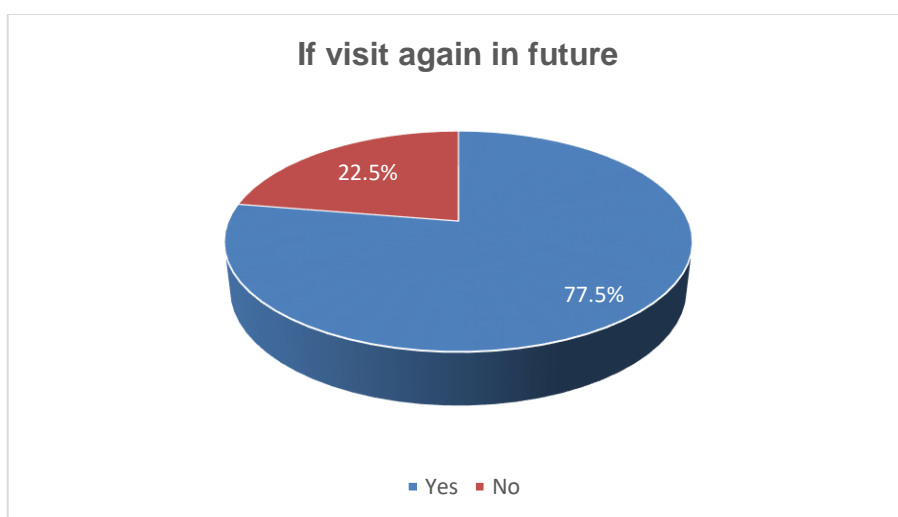
Figure 4.11: Possible future visit (*n*=377, in %)

4.2.13.1   Reasons for not visiting again in future

It is vital to understand why some respondents decided not to return to the destination as this could have been triggered by dissatisfaction. Determining the reasons will assist relevant bodies to remedy the problem areas that were the cause of the non-returns. Taks, Chalip, Green, Kesenne and Martyn (2009:123) argue that understanding why tourists return to a destination or not helps in future planning at the destination.

Table 4.4 below summarises the reasons identified by the respondents for not visiting again. Two main reasons emerged and based on 22.5% who mentioned that they will not return (Figure 4.11 above), 20.7% stated that they want to visit other places, whilst 1.8% noted that it was too expensive to visit Victoria Falls again. According to Tiefenbacher, Daya and Walton (2000:301), distance to a destination is a barrier to repeat visits and tourists return less frequently to remote destinations that entail long distances to travel. In addition, travel costs, security concerns, time factors, as well as poor health and disabilities, especially for senior travellers, could also be why tourists elect to visit other places rather than the current destination (Marin & Taberner, n.d:8; Tiefenbacher *et al.*, 2000:301).

Table 4.4: Reason for not visiting again in future (*n*=377, in %)

Reason	Percentage
To visit other places	20.7
Expensive to visit again	1.8
N/A (Not Applicable)	77.5

4.2.13.2   Recommend relatives or friends to visit

"Tourism loyalty to a certain destination is a key issue in tourism management because repeated visitors represent an important business opportunity for tourist destinations" (Oppermann, 2000:78). Positive word of mouth referrals from friends or relatives as well as comments on travel blogs or social media like Facebook and Instagram play a huge role in influencing the decision on the tourism product to purchase and visit (Murphy, Pritchard & Smith, 2000:44). This has become an essential base where tourists first check the comments posted by other tourists on the Internet about a certain destination. A tourist who has had a bad experience can obviously share the experience and chances are high that the same person will not recommend other tourists to visit the particular destination (Pavesi, Gartner & Denizci-Guillet, 2015:422). This has an adverse impact on the destination's image, which could cause a decrease in tourist numbers (Murphy *et*

al., 2000:45). Respondents were asked whether they would recommend the destination to their relatives or friends and these results are shown in Figure 4.12 below.

Recommending relatives or friends to visit

2.4%

97.6%

■ Yes ■ No
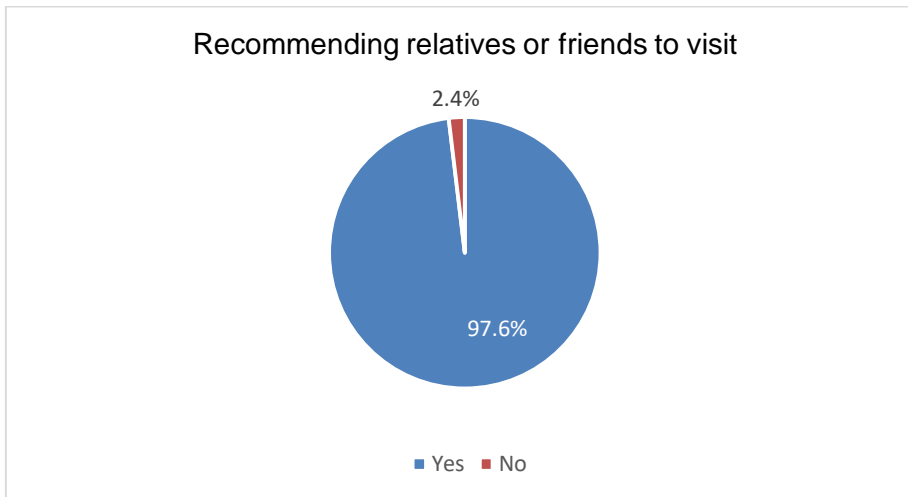
Figure 4.12: Recommending relatives or friends to visit (*n*=377, in %)

The results show that the overwhelming majority of respondents (97.6%) would recommend the destination to relatives/friends but 2.4% would not. These results can be used by the destination to leverage the outcome of the study on possible future visit (as seen in Figure 4.11) where 22.5% of the respondents indicated that they would not return to the destination. Even though these respondents would not return to the destination, they could influence future visitation through their experience. In providing more meaning to the results and in understanding the relationship between satisfaction and recommending relatives and friends, the results of the study showed that there was a great correlation between the satisfaction of the visitor and recommending to the relatives and friends as 97.6% of the respondents who indicated that they would recommended relatives where mainly those whose expectations were met and at the most exceeded. Those whose expectations were not met also indicated that they will recommend their relatives and friends. This means the tourism product should at least satisfy its customers so that they will recommend others to visits. From the 2.4% of the respondents that indicated that they would not recommend relatives/friends, the results are explained in section 4.2.13.3 below.

4.2.13.3 Reasons for not recommending relatives or friends

The only reason cited for not recommending relatives or friends was that the respondents had a bad accommodation experience (mainly backpacker, 2.4%). Pavesi *et al.* (2015:422) and Tsiotsou and Goldsmith (2012:323) are of the same opinion, that bad touristic experiences of a destination are quickly spread by word of mouth, which impacts negatively on return visits. Tsiotsou and Goldsmith (2012:323) further posit that tourists who had bad experiences at a destination may

even "oppose or contest destinations and the marketing and management values of tourism and travel firms". However, about 25% of the respondents who stated that they would recommend relatives/friends, elaborated to say they would advise their relatives/friends that this is an expensive destination. In addition, they mentioned the cash shortage problems at this destination and that tourists who did not have USD in small denominations were unable to purchase souvenirs, as there was no cash available to receive change

4.2.14 How trip was booked

There are many ways tourists can book their holidays, such as through websites, tour operators, travel agents, or directly. The respondents were asked how they booked their trip to Victoria Falls and the results are presented in Figure 4.13. Results indicate that almost half of the respondents (46.9%) booked their holiday to Victoria Falls through a travel agent in their home country, followed by 21.8% who booked directly. Of the balance of respondents, 17.8% booked online—which shows that this destination is up to date with technology—and 13% booked through a tour operator. Very few of the respondents (0.5%) indicated that they booked through a friend.

It would have been cheaper for respondents to book their Victoria Falls visit through a travel agent in their home country compared to booking directly. This notion is supported by Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001:2) who report that both travel agents and tour operators not only offer lower prices than a direct booking but they also participate in the distribution channels and supply information. In addition, this study noted that of the 77.5% respondents who indicated that they would visit again (see section 4.2.13, possible future visit), about 45.6% had booked through travel agents and tour operators in their home country.
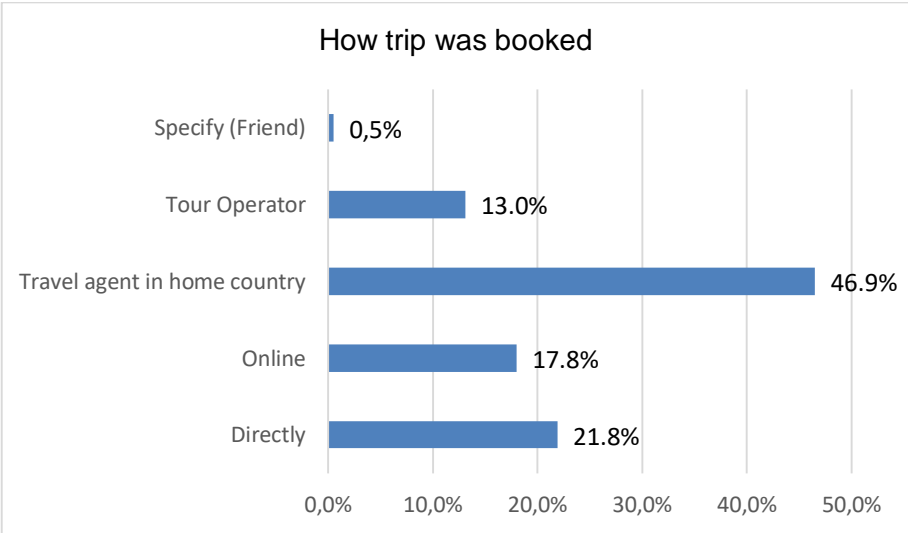
Figure 4.13: How trip was booked (*n*=377, in %)

4.3   Tourist perspectives on elements of the Victoria Falls tourism product

In assessing the tourists' perspectives on the elements of the Victoria Falls tourism product, a twofold approach was taken. On one hand the study assessed how important were these elements in influencing their decision when choosing a destination, while the assessment was based on their perceptions of the tourism product elements.

To understand the importance of tourism elements from tourists' perspectives, a number of statements were put forward to gather data on this aspect. The traditional 5-point Likert-type scale was used with the following response options: CU = Completely Unimportant; U = Unimportant; N = Neutral; I = Important; and VI = Very Important. Due to the close relationship between CU and U, as well as I and VI, the results were grouped for greater clarity.

Table 4.5 below presents the frequency distribution in the form of percentages for all responses (according to the level of agreement or disagreement in terms of importance). The benefit of this is that at a glance, it is clearly seen to which statement in each grouping respondents felt most strongly. A summary of the findings in relation to the importance of each tourism element that may influence the decision to visit a tourist destination are presented in this section.

Table 4.5: Importance of tourism product elements (n=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	CU	U	N	I	VI
How important was accommodation when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	26	15.1	9.3	12.5	37.1
How important was activities and tours when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.5	2.7	8.5	30.6	57.7
How important was accessibility when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.3	1.1	8.2	33.4	57
How important was attractions when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0	0	4	28.9	67.1
How important was facilities when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.8	4.3	21.5	25.3	48.1
How important was image when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.5	1.6	15.9	34.7	47.3
How important was price when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0	1.6	7.7	20.4	70.3

4.3.1 Influence on tourist decision-making when choosing a destination

4.3.1.1 Accommodation

When looking at the importance of accommodation as shelter and a home away from home for tourists, surprisingly, the results indicated that only half of the respondents (49.6%) viewed accommodation as important to very important. This could be because accommodation in Victoria Falls is perceived as expensive as noted by Murphy *et al.* (2010:617). Of the respondents, 41.1% felt that it was unimportant or completely unimportant to consider accommodation in this town because they could stay in relatively cheaper accommodation in Zambia or Botswana and still visit the Falls on a day trip. Only 9.3% of respondents remained neutral on the importance of this tourism element.

4.3.1.2 Activities and tours

In terms of activities and tours there was an overwhelming majority of the respondents (88.3%) felt that it was important or very important to consider activities and tours. This might be attributed to the ages of most respondents who were between 21-50 years (representing 86% of the respondents, see - Figure 4.3) and most people in this age category want to partake in adventure activities like bungee jumping, ziplining, bridge swing, white water rafting and many more activities that are offered in this adventure capital of Africa. As noted earlier by Ritchie and Crouch (2003:60) and Anuar *et al.* (2012:65), activities and tours are crucial elements and a destination that does not offer competitive activities and tours would not attract many people since tourists seek to visit tourism products that allow physical exercise. Some respondents (8.5%) were neutral on the importance of activities and tours and only 3.2% viewed this element as unimportant or completely unimportant. These results mean that this tourism product would need to be developed based on this element so that tourists are offered what they want, which stimulates satisfaction.

4.3.1.3 Accessibility

Accessibility is another the important tourism element, as noted by Zhou (2005:29) and an overwhelming 90.4% of respondents felt that it was important or very important to consider this tourism element before visiting the destination. The results in section 4.2.8 above on the mode of transport to Victoria Falls show that the majority of tourists used air and road transport modes of travel, with only a few arriving by train (Figure 4.7). This shows that a good tourism product must have more than one mode of transport to reach the destination as tourists look at different transport options based on cost, time, experience, and efficiency. Some respondents remained neutral (8.2%) while only 1.4% considered accessibility as unimportant or completely unimportant.

4.3.1.4 Attractions

Attractions was the main element which respondents considered when electing to visit Victoria Falls. Ninety-six percent agreed that it was important or very important to consider attractions before purchasing the tourism product. This emphasises that a tourism product must have attractions because this is the main element which is considered by tourists before choosing a tourism product. Smith (1994:587) describes attractions as the nucleus of the tourism product and this is what drives or pulls tourists to a destination. Morachat (2003:43) opines that attractions are valuable and have the ability to pull tourists to a destination. Very few respondents (4%) were neutral on the importance of considering attractions before buying the Victoria Falls tourism product. However, most of them did visit the attractions even though this was not their principal reason for visiting Victoria Falls. These results are supported by Bhatia (2006:310), Lubbe (2013:109), Patel and Nayab (2014:62), and Gupta *et al.* (2015:50), who all maintain that attractions are the principal component of a tourism element and do influence a tourist in selecting a tourist destination.

4.3.1.5 Facilities

As noted by Kozak (2004:92), facilities at a tourist destination play a crucial role in making a holiday experience memorable. The majority of respondents (73.4%) agreed that it was important or very important to consider the facilities when they made the decision to visit Victoria Falls. A considerable number of respondents remained neutral (21.5%) and only 5.1% considered facilities as unimportant or completely unimportant. This could be because they did not have enough time to experience and make use of the facilities and services in the town. Zimbabwe is currently on the brink of a cash shortage crisis where banks and ATMs run dry, which can have negative effect on tourists' experiences and perspectives. The facilities element must be up to standard and running smoothly as the majority of the respondents considered the facilities before making a decision to visit the destination.

4.3.1.6 Image

According to Sun, Chi and Xu (2013:447), destination image and perceived value are two important elements to tourist satisfaction and are likely to influence a tourist's destination choice. Respondents were asked if the image of the destination influenced them. Most (82%) concurred with Sun *et al.*'s (2013:447) view and considered the element of image to be important or very important before visiting Victoria Falls. A good image of a destination has the ability to influence a tourist's decision to visit, whereas a bad image can deter the tourist from visiting (Sun *et al.*,

2013:448). It is crucial for a tourism product to have a good image as this element is considered by tourists as one of the most important factors when choosing a tourism product to buy.

The good image of the destination can be a combination of factors such as politically stable, economically favourable, climatically conducive, socially welcoming and technologically advanced, but cannot only be limited to these factors. These factors can help in shaping the image of the tourist destination, which also has an impact on the tourism product that is available for the tourists to purchase. Some respondents who were neutral (15.9%) in terms of importance of considering the image of the destination before visiting, while only 2.1% indicated that it was not important or completely unimportant. The latter group of respondents were mainly from Africa (representing 1.6% of the emerging tourists market of Africa's 50.4%, Figure 4.8). They felt that the destination is peaceful and welcoming to everyone and there was no need to consider the element of image.

4.3.1.7   Price

Tourists visit destinations that offer value for money thus considering the element of price is very important. According to the results from this study (see Table 4.5), 90.7% of the respondents felt that it was important or very important to consider the element of price when making the decision to visit Victoria Falls, a sentiment supported by George (2011:285) and Mutori (2016:1). Price, like image, can influence the decision of a tourist when selecting a tourism product to buy and visit. Most tourists are price sensitive and would prefer to visit affordable destinations rather than expensive ones. However, based on the quality and type of experience, some tourists prefer to opt for an expensive tourism product over the cheaper option. George (2011:285) and Mutori (2016:1) argue that price could override all other elements as it will determine which destination to visit based on the available budget. The price of the tourism product needs to be considered as this element can be used simultaneously in the marketing mix and for revenue generation (George, 2011:285; Mutori, 2016:1). Therefore, it is important for a destination to price their tourism product accordingly, since the majority of respondents indicated that they considered price before selecting the destination. Some respondents remained neutral (7.7%) on the price element and only 1.6% considered the price as unimportant.

4.3.2   Tourists' perspectives of Victoria Falls tourism product

Tourism services are intangible and can only be consumed at a tourist destination. Hence, to understand the level of service rendered to the consumers at any tourist destination it is important to gather the information from the tourists. They are the end users of the tourism product and the relevant respondents to express their views on the level of services. It can be easily deduced from

the tourists' views whether the tourism product is still competitive or not, based on the experiences of the tourists which help in understanding their level of satisfaction.

The satisfaction of tourists at a destination plays a significant role in the future growth of visitor numbers to that particular tourist destination since positive word of mouth can be spread as well as positive comments on travel blogs like TripAdvisor. In this regard, a panel of statements was set on the questionnaire in a 5-point Likert-type scale to determine the level of satisfaction of the tourists from all the main tourism elements and the respondents had the option to agree or disagree with each statement. Similar to the above section, the traditional 5-point Likert-type scale was used with the following options and responses: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N= Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree. Similarly, because of the close link between SA and A, as well as SD and D, the results were grouped for greater clarity. A summary of the results in relation to tourists' perspectives on each tourism element of the Victoria Falls tourism product is illustrated in the following tables.

4.3.2.1   Tourists' perspectives on accommodation

As highlighted earlier, accommodation is one of the most important tourism elements which has the ability to influence a tourist to choose one destination over another. This is because the tourist will require somewhere to sleep during their vacation period and a positive home away from home accommodation experience usually triggers the decision to choose one destination over others. The results pertaining to the tourists' experience on Victoria Falls accommodation are presented in Table 4.6 below.

For a true representation of how tourists felt about the accommodation in Victoria Falls, data from respondents who stayed at least one night in the town was used. Generally, the results show that 50.7% of the respondents stayed in accommodation in Victoria Falls. Most of the respondents liked the accommodation and they agreed with almost every statement presented in Table 4.6 below. The respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff/employees act professionally (38.7%), accommodation was very clean (37.1%), well maintained (35.3%) and met their expectations (34.5%). Almost half (25.5%) of the respondents who stayed in Victoria Falls agreed or strongly agreed that accommodation is world class. These results reflect that the tourists who stayed overnight in this town were satisfied with the level of service they received in the various types of accommodation in which they stayed, based on the elements investigated.

Table 4.6: Tourists' perspectives on accommodation (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Accommodation is world class	2.4	4.2	18.6	14.9	10.6
Accommodation met my expectations	1.9	2.9	11.4	21.8	12.7
Accommodation was very clean	1.3	2.7	9.6	24.9	12.2
Accommodation is well maintained	0.8	2.7	11.9	23.6	11.7
Staff/employees act professionally	0	0.5	11.5	23.1	15.6
N/A (Not Applicable) **49.3 %**					

4.3.2.2   Tourists' perspective on activities and tours

As indicated in section 4.3.1.2, tourists consider tourist destinations that offer activities and tours in which tourists directly or physically participate. The results show that most of the respondents (76.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that the destination offers world-class adventure activities and (70.9%) agreed to strongly agreed that the variety of activities increased their desire to visit. This could be the main reasons that influenced most of the respondents (representing 88.3% of the respondents, see Table 4.5) to choose Victoria Falls as a tourist destination over other tourism products. A mixed response (neutral - 61.2%) was noted on the statement "additional transport costs are relatively low". This could be because most of the tourists (representing 90.7% of the respondents, see Table 4.5) indicated that they considered the element of price before deciding to travel and most would visit a destination offering affordable prices. The responses from tourists mostly agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in Table 4.7. The results show that tourists still view this tourism product as the adventure capital of Africa, as noted by Rogerson (2004:184).

Table 4.7: Tourists' perspectives on activities and tours (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
The variety of activities in this town increased my willingness to visit	0	5	24.2	37.1	33.7
Destination offers world class adventure activities	1.1	2.6	19.9	43.8	32.6
Making a tour booking was not easy	14.3	22.3	49.6	11.1	2.7
Only adventure tours are offered at this destination	6.6	11.2	45.1	20.4	16.7
Additional transport costs (e.g. transfers) are relatively low	3.2	11.7	61.2	20.7	3.2

4.3.2.3   Tourists' perspectives on accessibility

Accessibility plays a crucial role in the tourism product as it creates the link between the generating source and the destination. It is principally important for a tourist destination to be accessible to tourists (Tiefenbacher *et al.*, 2000:301). Most of the respondents (72.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to get to Victoria Falls. However, many respondents remained neutral to statements like "making a booking by telephone was very difficult" (78.8%), "making a booking online was very difficult" (71.9%), "access is supported by necessary infrastructure" (63.1%), "generally, the infrastructure is of good standards" (55.7%), as well as "roads are well maintained" (53.6%). It is important to note that the majority of the respondents (90.4% in Table 4.5) indicated that they considered the element of accessibility before visiting the town. However, it is interesting that most of the respondents remained neutral on the statements in Table 4.8. This means that these areas of this tourism product need to be improved as a neutral response may cause a negative evaluation of the destination in future. Some respondents (58.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that says "it is very complicated to travel around this destination". This indicates that over half of the respondents did not struggle to travel from one point to another while in the town and this is a positive reflection on the destination. Table 4.8 below shows the results of the tourists' perspectives on the element of accessibility.

Table 4.8: Tourists' perspectives on accessibility (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Getting to this destination was not a problem	2.7	10.8	13.8	37.2	35.3
It is very complicated to travel around this destination	20.2	38.2	30.2	9.8	1.6
Roads are well maintained	4.0	12.4	53.6	22.6	7.4
Access is supported by necessary infrastructure	2.4	3.7	63.1	23.9	6.9
Making a booking online was very difficult	7.2	16.1	71.9	4	0.8
Making a booking by telephone was very difficult	3.4	10.9	78.8	6.4	0.5
Generally the infrastructure is of a good standard	1.1	5.5	55.7	34.5	3.2

4.3.2.4   Tourists' perspectives on attractions

Attractions are viewed as the cornerstone of every tourist destination (Patel & Nayab, 2014:62). They are the core of the tourism product that pulls the tourist to a destination. As noted in section

4.3.1.4, tourists consider the importance of attractions at a destination when selecting which one to visit. This means there are certain expectations from the tourist that need to be fulfilled while the tourist is at the destination. As shown in Table 4.9 below, the results of the tourists' perspectives on attractions indicated that most respondents agreed with almost all the statements. The respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in Table 4.9 that "natural attractions are well maintained and managed" (85.4%), "attractions in this town were the most convincing factors in the decision to visit the town" (80.9%), "the Falls/Waterfall is the only interesting attraction to see at this destination" (72.1%), and "attractions in this town are appealing" (71.4%). These results correlate with the responses noted in section 4.3.1.4 and Table 4.5, that most of the respondents considered the attraction elements of Victoria Falls tourism before they made their decision to visit. In addition, as shown by the results above, it is interesting to note that the appeal of the attractions in this town could be due to the good maintenance and management of the attractions, which in turn resulted in influencing the decision of the respondents to visit the Victoria Falls tourism product. This mutual relationship could have been a crucial factor why the majority of the respondents (representing 96%, section 4.3.1.4) considered visiting Victoria Falls. Therefore, it is important to maintain the available tourism resources as their maintenance and management attracts tourists to the destination.

There were many neutral responses (64.2%) to the statement "as compared to natural attractions, man-made attractions are better maintained and managed". This could be because some of the respondents did not visit the man-made attractions like the bridge, the lookout café, crocodile farm and many more, for them to have a better analysis.

The results reflect that most of the tourists were only attracted by the Falls/Waterfall and this could be because most stayed for only two nights maximum (as shown in Table 4.1 in section 4.2.7) and may not have had time to visit other surrounding attractions, like the Stanley and Livingstone Private Game Reserve, cultural village tours and other attractions.

Table 4.9: Tourists' perspectives on attractions (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Attractions in this town are appealing	2.7	6.3	19.6	32.9	38.5
The Falls/Waterfall is the only interesting attraction to see at this destination	7.2	15.1	5.6	16.9	55.5
Attractions in this town were the most convincing factors in the decision to visit the town	0.5	2.4	16.2	45.1	35.8

Natural attractions are well maintained and managed	0.3	1.8	12.5	48.8	36.6
As compared to natural attractions, man-made attractions are better maintained and managed	0.8	9.3	64.2	18.8	6.9

4.3.2.5   Tourists' perspectives on facilities

Facilities at a destination are thoroughly considered when tourists make decisions on the destination to visit, as noted in section 4.3.1.5. It is very important to understand the tourists' views on the facilities in Victoria Falls. The results, as presented on Table 4.10 below, show that generally the facilities in this town are not convincing enough to guarantee return visits. Many respondents remained neutral on most of the statements like "generally, the standard of facilities in this town is high" (65%), "this town offers a wide range of facilities to cater for different tourist needs" (63.7%), "dining facilities in this town are poor" (55.7%), "signage in this town is very poor and needs to be improved and maintained" (49.6%). On the other hand, 58.6% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "the transport network in this town is very functional". When considering the importance of this tourism element, there is need to revisit all the aspects on which respondents remained neutral. These elements require improvement before further damage is done to this tourism product. Most people share bad experiences more often than good experiences and that will certainly tarnish the image of the tourism product.

Table 4.10: Tourists' perspectives on facilities (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Transport network in this town is very functional	0	3.7	37.7	39.5	19.1
Dining facilities in this town are poor	10.1	26	55.7	6.3	1.9
Signage in this town is very poor and needs to be improved and maintained	7.4	15.9	49.6	24.4	2.7
This town offers a wide range of facilities to cater for different tourist needs	1.3	6.4	63.7	24.6	4
Generally, the standard of facilities in this town is high	0.8	2.6	65	27.1	4.5

4.3.2.6   Tourists' perspectives on image of the destination

This tourism element has a strong correlation with other elements that build up the tourism product and easily tarnished if one of the other tourism elements underperforms. Table 4.11 lists the outcomes of the respondents' perspectives on the image of Victoria Falls. The respondents agreed

or strongly agreed with each of the statements listed in Table 4.11, overall a positive perspective of this destination. The respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this destination has a unique image (82.8%), this destination is considered safe (82.2%). Equal results of 71.9% was noted on the statements "I will spread a good word-of-mouth" and "I will leave this town with good impressions". The respondents furthermore expressed their views on how the image of this destination is portrayed negatively in an international context. They agreed with the statement that more should be done to promote the image of this destination (62.1%). However, some of the respondents (61.5%) were not happy with the political situation in the country and they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "the political instability in Zimbabwe might affect the image and appeal of this destination". In section 4.3.1.6, this tourism element is considered extremely important when tourists decide on which tourism product to buy and visit. Hence, Victoria Falls needs to maintain the good image it has but extensive marketing and promotion is needed so that this brand is recognised positively in an international context.

Table 4.11: Tourists' perspectives on image of the destination (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
This destination is considered to be safe	0	0.3	17.5	39.5	42.7
This destination has a unique image	0	0.8	16.4	43.3	39.5
The political instability in Zimbabwe might affect the image and appeal of this destination	2.9	6.4	29.2	28.9	32.6
More should be done to promote the image of this destination	2.1	3.7	32.1	40.1	22
I will leave this town with good impressions	0	0.8	27.3	50.1	21.8
I will spread a good word-of-mouth	0	1.3	26.8	53.3	18.6

4.3.2.7   Tourists' perspectives on price

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the tourism element of price is the most complicated one and requires much consideration before implementation. Tourists are very sensitive to price and can reject a destination due to its pricing strategies. Section 4.3.1.7 indicated that tourists consider this tourism element as important because it determines whether a tourism product is within their budget. Table 4.12 below reports the tourists' perspectives on the element of price.

The results show that the price of this tourism product is not favourable to tourists as the majority of respondents remained neutral on the statements. A neutral response of 58.1% was noted on the statement "generally, the price of tourism products is reasonable", whereas 25.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 16.7% agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement. These results reflect that the price of this destination is considered expensive.

As noted by the researcher through interaction with the tourists, some tourists do not mind paying high prices to visit a destination. However, the experience must be exceptional, not compromised, and they can even bend their budget. Arunmozhi and Panneerselvam (2014:33) support this sentiment in confirming that travel is a costly product and consumers expect a quality vacation since they save up for it over a considerable period. Based on that, respondents were asked to respond to the statement "the quality of service delivery at this destination is worth the price paid". However, again 52.2% remained neutral, 27.9% agreed or strongly agreed, whilst 19.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Another high neutral response (49.1%) was returned for the statement "for the price I pay I always get value for my money", 25.7% agreed or strongly agreed and 25.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Lastly, on the statement "prices charged for tourism products are likely to discourage locals", there was again a high neutral response (44.8%) compared to 44.7% who agreed or strongly agreed while only 12.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These results show that tourists are displeased with the price of the Victoria Falls tourism product. This could result in a decline in tourist numbers or if they do decide to visit, they will not stay overnight in Victoria Falls due to the price factor. This notion is supported by Katunga (2016:1) who found that most tourists only visit the Zimbabwean side for a day because of the high prices charged for the tourism services.

Table 4.12: Tourists' perspectives on price (*n*=377, in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
For the price I pay I always get value for my money	3.7	21.5	49.1	19.3	6.4
The quality of service delivery at this destination is worth the price paid	1.1	18.8	52.2	23.1	4.8
Prices charged for tourism products are likely to discourage locals	1.9	10.6	44.8	20.7	22
Generally, the price of tourism products is reasonable	5.6	19.6	58.1	14.0	2.7

4.4   Tourist expectations

It is very important to maintain good results but bad responses require more attention than the good ones. Meeting or exceeding tourists' expectations can encourage future repeat business. However, it is imperative to address respondents' concerns about their experiences because if they post negative comments online they can tarnish the image of the product (Shahrin *et al.*, 2014:1).

Respondents were asked if their trip to Victoria Falls met their expectations and as shown in Figure 4.14, most of the respondents' agreed that their expectations were met (71.4%) and the expectations of 15.1% were exceeded, which is a cumulative 86.6% of respondents whose expectations were met. Although the majority of the respondents' expectations were met, 13.5% indicated that their expectations were not met. This is a cause for concern and is discussed in detail in the following section 4.4.1.
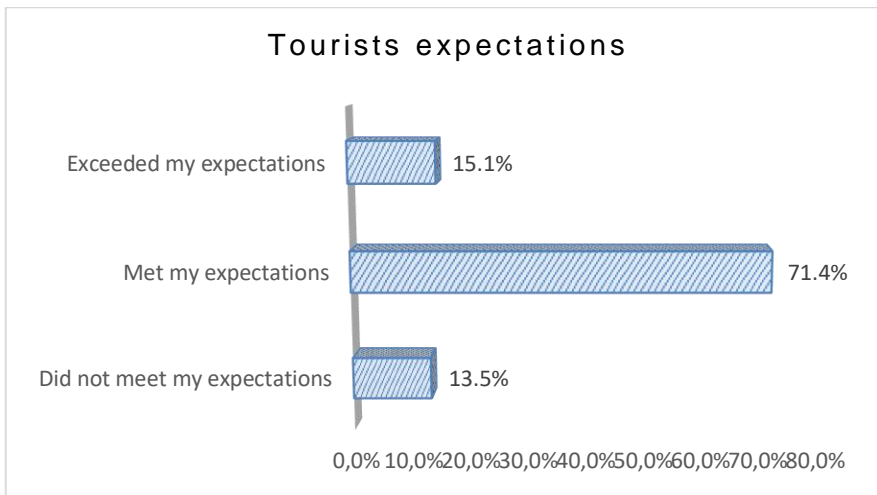
Figure 4.14: Tourists' expectations (*n*=377, in %)

4.4.1   Reasons for not meeting the expectations

It is very important to understand why the expectations of the respondents were not met. If not understood, and addressed, dissatisfied tourists can spread bad experiences by word of mouth and post negative comments on platforms such as TripAdvisor, resulting in damage to the image of the tourist destination. Therefore, it essential to know the reasons for dissatisfaction so that these can be rectified. However, this can only be done if the cause for disappointment is known. Anon (2017:1), in the article *The Source*", postulated that over 40% of tourists interviewed in the Visitor Exit Survey said they were not happy because the services in the country were overpriced. This was supported by the Vice-President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa,

speaking at the national launch of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, that "exorbitant prices scare away tourists". In the same speech he further mentioned that the excessive number of police roadblocks on the roads was frustrating tourists (Anon, 2017:1). The Home Affairs Minister, Obert Mpofu in a *Newsday* newspaper article, shared the same opinion as Vice President Mnangagwa, that the high number of police roadblocks and immigration delays do not give the country a good image as a tourist destination (Zwinoira, 2017:1). These were some of the concerns that were reported in the first quarter of 2016. In terms of this study, Table 4.13 below illustrates reasons cited by respondents as causes for their unhappiness during their visit to Victoria Falls.

The results indicate that of the 13.5% who felt that the trip did not meet their expectations, similar to the reasons noted by Anon (2017:1) the main cause was too many police roadblocks (3.7%), which caused them to arrive late. The second source of displeasure was the high price of accommodation (3.5%). Substandard accommodation and dirty rooms was reported by 2.2% of respondents as the cause of their dissatisfaction—mainly noted in the backpacker accommodation. Some respondents indicated that dining and tourism facilities were expensive (1.3%) and the mosquito infestations and no repellent in the backpacker accommodation (1.1%) was a source of displeasure. High prices for activities and tours (0.6%) was a further reason for their unhappiness and some respondents informed the researcher that they had to pay an extra $20.00 per person for a guided tour of the falls. Some respondents (0.5%) indicated that they had to land at Livingstone Airport from the Kruger National Park, and the price of transfers was quite high. They recommended that there should be direct flights from Kruger National Park in South Africa to Victoria Falls. A minimal number of respondents cited no entertainment in the town (0.3%) and limited vegetarian meals (0.3%) as other reasons for expectations not being met.

These results show that the same issues that were raised at the beginning of 2016 are still pertinent, as they were also mentioned in this study that was conducted in December 2016. This contradicts the suggestion of Vice-President Mnangagwa, that the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality should meet to determine how best safety and free movement of tourists could be achieved (Anon., 2017:1). It is crucial for a tourism product to offer seamless services if it is to continue attracting tourists and recommendations are formulated in the next chapter.

Table 4.13: Reasons for not meeting expectations (*n*=377, in %)

Reason(s)	Percentage
Too many police roadblocks, was delayed, arrived late	3.7

Price of accommodation is too high	3.5
Accommodation (backpacker) not up to standard and room was dirty	2.2
Dinning and tourism facilities are expensive	1.3
Too many mosquitoes in the room and no repellent	1.1
Price for activities and tours is too high	0.6
Should be direct flight from Mpumalanga in South Africa	0.5
No entertainment in the town	0.3
Limited vegetarian meals	0.3
N/A (Not Applicable)	86.5

4.4.2   Tourism element that was liked the most

The respondents were asked to indicate from the list of tourism elements, which they liked the most. This will help tourism planners to understand what they are doing best so that they can maintain this good service, and also capitalise on the most-liked tourism element and use it as a draw card for visiting Victoria Falls. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.15 below.

The results show that the respondents liked attractions the most (66.8%), activities and tours (24.2%), accommodation (5%), image (2.7%), facilities (0.8%). and accessibility (0.5%). This shows that this destination can capitalise on attracting tourists through the attractions, and in particular, the waterfall which forms the strength of the destination. According to Smith's (1994) generic tourism model, this is the physical plant of the tourism product that acts as a pull factor for tourists to the destination. The other tourism elements can be used as supporting elements but should be improved to the extent that they are stand-alone magnets to attract tourists. Smith (1994:588) in his generic tourism product model categorised these supporting elements under the headings service and hospitality as they complete the experience of satisfaction for the tourists.
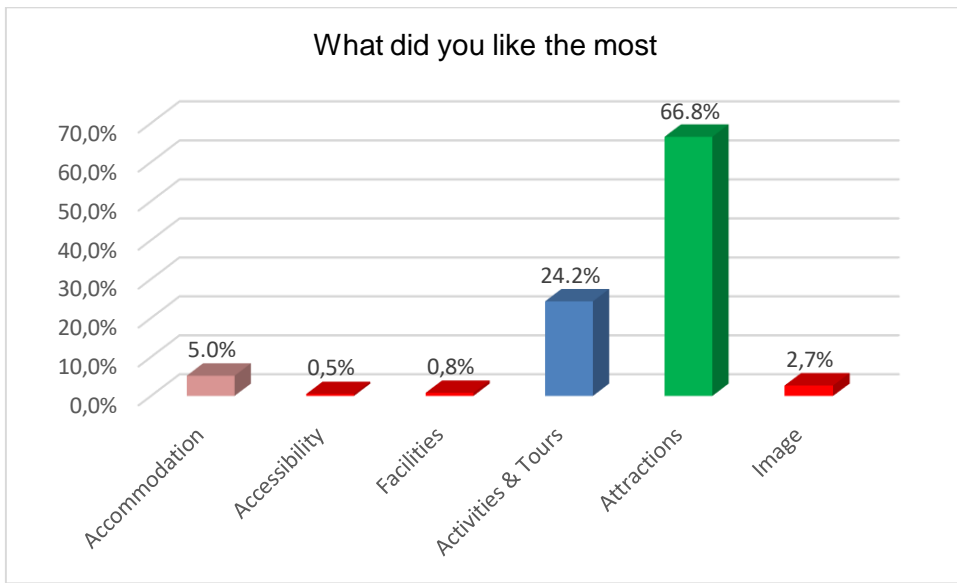
Figure 4.15: Tourism element that was most liked (*n*=377, in %)

4.4.3 The element that needs special attention is the one that could have caused the dissatisfaction of the respondents and that element need to be addressed by relevant authorities as it can continue to deter the possible benefits Victoria Falls should enjoy. Moreover, this is the critical element which also manipulates the perspective of tourists towards the tourism product, hence, should be treated as a matter of urgency as it may cause more harm to the reputation of the tourism product.
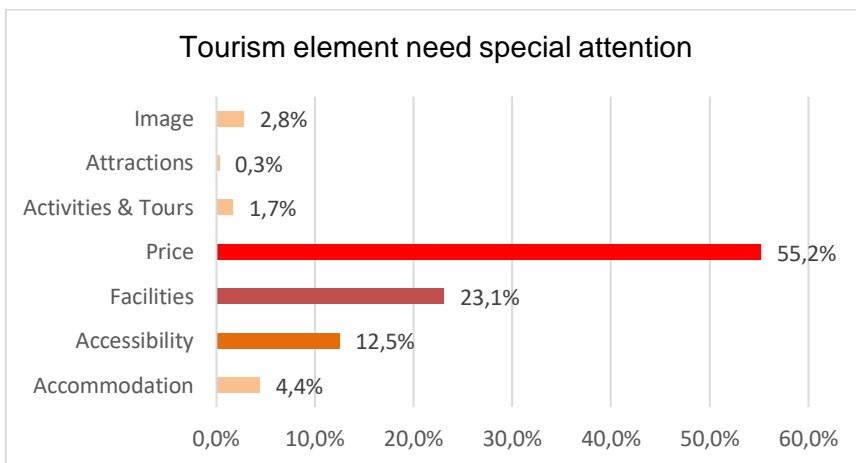
Figure 4.16: Tourism element need special attention (*n*=377, in %)

The results illustrated in Figure 4.16 above show that price (53.1%) is the main element that needs to be addressed urgently as this could be the reason why 49.3% of the respondents were found to be not staying overnight in Victoria Falls during the time of this study (see section 4.2.6, Figure 4.6). Moreover, this tourism element of price was not mentioned in section 4.4.2 and Figure 4.15, where respondents were asked to name the tourism element they liked most. This clearly indicates that price was the reason for their dissatisfaction. In addition, this could be why only 12.2% of the respondents (see Table 4.2) were on return visits to Victoria Falls. According to Lamp (2009:165), most tourists will return to a destination that offers value for money. It should be noted that some respondents specified that price for accommodation (3.5%), price for dining and facilities (1.3%), and price for activities and tours (0.6%) was too high.

Facilities is an element that needs to be improved. It is noted in section 4.3.1.5 that this element had a significant number of neutral responses (22.5%) and clearly respondents were unhappy with facilities. Moreover, the facilities element only attained 0.8% in section 4.4.2 (see Figure 4.15) where the respondents rated the tourism element they liked the most.

Accessibility is another tourism element that was noted as an area that needs special attention (11.4%). As noted in section 4.4.1, concerns were raised about the excessive number of police roadblocks, which caused delays and the late arrival of visitors. In section 4.4.2 (see Figure 4.15), only 0.5% of respondents liked the element of accessibility. Tiefenbacher *et al.* (2000:301) highlight that "travel that is slow or arduous is an impediment for many tourists". These results indicate that this element requires improvement, and this is articulated in detail in the next chapter.

All the above issues require attention and improvement for holistic betterment of the tourism product.

Other tourism elements that were mentioned as areas that need special attention as shown on Figure 4.16 were accommodation (4.2%), image (2.7%), activities and tours (1.6%) and attractions (0.3%). However, these results reflect that these areas are not as critical as the elements of price, facilities and accessibility.

This section of the study identified tourist perspectives on the Victoria Falls tourism product. The information highlights which elements tourists consider as most influential in their decision to choose a particular destination over others and reveals their expectations of the chosen destination.

A comparison of the respondents' expectations of the tourism product versus the current standard of services rendered in Victoria Falls reveals and prioritises some of the main elements of the tourism product that require development to meet the expectations of the tourists.

4.5   Summary

Chapter Four presented a quantitative analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the survey questionnaires administered to 377 tourists in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The analysed data were presented in the form of tables, pie charts, graphs and descriptive summaries. Key findings indicate that despite the increasing number of females visiting this destination, males still dominate the tourist numbers. The majority of tourists fell within the age bracket of 21-50 years. The findings further show that availability of attractions, price of the tourism product, and accessibility of the destination play a paramount role in influencing tourists to visit the destination. Most tourists' expectations were met, and they would visit again in future and recommend the destination to friends and relatives. The most satisfactory results were noted on the attractions, activities, tours, and tourist accommodation. Despite these positive results, tourists felt that prices of accommodation, activities, tours, as well as dining, was too high. Furthermore, too many police roadblocks and unnecessary fines were noted as being detrimental to the tourism product. The researcher noted all concerns and made recommendations to overcome these negative aspects on the next chapter which presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

The study investigated tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in a selected Zimbabwean town, being Victoria Falls. This final chapter summarises the study by drawing conclusions from the primary and secondary findings of this study as well as suggesting recommendations for the relevant tourism authorities/practitioners and future research. This chapter establishes whether the objectives of the study were attained. The general conclusion of this study is that the Victoria Falls tourism product is relatively successful, based on tourist numbers that are steadily increasing, but there are aspects that need attention before it can reach its full potential.

Recommendations on how to remedy the shortcomings of the tourism product are discussed in section 5.3.

5.2   Research objectives attainment and conclusions

The experiences of tourists at a destination emanate from a range of different elements that make up the tourism product. The elements that were assessed in this study included accommodation, activities, accessibility, attractions, facilities, image, price, and tours. The results of the study were analysed and guided by the objectives listed below.

- To ascertain the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls;
- To determine the main elements that influence tourist's decision to visit Victoria Falls;
- To understand the expectations of tourists on Victoria Falls tourism product;
- To determine the tourist's levels of satisfaction on Victoria Falls tourism product; and
- To identify areas of improvement on Victoria Falls tourism product

5.2.1   Attainment and conclusion for Objective 1

The first research objective of establishing the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls was met. Information on the following aspects was gathered, analysed and interpreted: gender of the tourists, historical racial classification, age, level of education, employment status/occupation, overnight or day visitors, type of accommodation and number of nights stayed, mode of transport used, country of residence, group composition, visiting history, primary reason for visiting, and how they booked their trip.

The majority of respondents were tourists seeking a memorable holiday experience, with males being the dominant gender. However, female numbers are increasing. Most of the respondents fell within the 21-50 years age category. This age group comprises predominantly employed persons who have the disposable income to spend on travel. Students on school holidays were also part of the tourists visiting this destination. In terms of the main education qualification of the respondents, most had at least a bachelor's degree. This suggests that these people have well paid jobs, have disposable income and can afford to visit this destination.

Results show that not all visitors to Victoria Falls stay overnight and there was an approximate 50/50 split between those who stayed overnight and day visitors. This indicates that tourists have a negative perspective of the available accommodation and most of those who stayed overnight only stayed for one or two nights. Although Africans made up the majority of tourists to this destination, it was noted that they were predominantly day visitors. The Europeans and Americans were the ones who spent at least one to two nights in this town.

In terms of the mode of transport, most of the respondents used airlines and road transport. The Victoria Falls tourism product appears more appealing to families and friends who are first time visitors. Very few were return visitors those who return will visit twice at most. The study found that most of the tourists booked their holiday through travel agents in their home country, they stated they would return, and also recommend the destination to relatives or friends (see section 4.2.14).

From the discussion above, it is evident that the study established the profile of tourists visiting Victoria Falls. The overall conclusion drawn from the results is that this tourism product is mostly attractive to well-educated African professionals who visit the town as day visitors, as well as European and American professionals with disposable income, who are mainly overnight visitors. Most respondents were between 21 and 50 years of age, seeking a holiday experience, and travelling as family and friends.

5.2.2 Attainment and conclusion for Objective 2

Research Objective 2 aimed to determine the main elements that influence a tourist's decision to visit Victoria Falls and the objective was achieved. This objective identified what the respondents considered as the most influential factors of a tourism product. The knowledge gained will assist tourism planners and relevant bodies involved in the development of the tourism product to focus on these factors and to understand why certain elements do not influence the decision of a tourist to visit a destination. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of each tourism element to determine what influence the element had on their decision to visit Victoria Falls.

The results on the accommodation element showed that despite how important this element was to some tourists, almost half of the respondents were not influenced by it. This is crucial and could have a negative impact on the accommodation sector in Victoria Falls as most of the tourists were only day visitors and others stayed with friends or relatives. Very little money will be generated by the accommodation sector, which should be the primary revenue generator for the destination. However, based on their responses, tourists who stayed overnight in Victoria Falls liked the accommodation.

There were positive results on availability of activities and tours, accessibility, availability of attractions, availability of facilities, image of the destination and price of the tourism product. This is important as they individually influence a tourist's decision to visit a destination. However, the top three elements which influenced a tourist's decision to travel were availability of attractions, price of the tourism product and the accessibility of the destination (see section 4.3, Table 4.5).

Overall, tourists were happy with the elements of activities and tours, accessibility, and image and attractions of the Victoria Falls tourism product. However, in general tourists did not like the price and facilities elements of the tourism product. Price was the main factor and may have contributed to the expectations of tourists not being met (discussed in the third objective below). There are many cheaper accommodation options in the area outside of Victoria Falls. If tourists feel that accommodation in town is too expensive, it is easy for them to opt for an out of town establishment from which they could still visit the attractions as a day visitor.

It is important to acknowledge that tourists to Victoria Falls are influenced mainly by attractions, price, accessibility, activities and tours, image, facilities and accommodation of the tourism product. A tourism product comprises a number of elements and it is a combination of these elements that influence the decision of a tourist to visit a destination.

5.2.3   Attainment and conclusion for Objective 3

Research Objective 3 sought to understand the expectations of tourists from the Victoria Falls tourism product and this objective has been met. This objective managed to gather information concerning the general information on the tourists' expectations and to state whether their expectations were met or not. The results reflect that an overwhelming majority of tourists' expectations were met and this suggests that the tourism product is doing well. However, a few tourists' expectations were not met and the reasons for their dissatisfaction are reviewed under research objective 5 below.

5.2.4 Attainment and conclusion for Objective 4

Research Objective 4 sought to determine tourists' levels of satisfaction with the Victoria Falls tourism product and this objective was met. Information was gathered on which tourism element respondents liked the most and satisfied them the most. Results indicate that respondents found that attractions, activities and tours, as well as accommodation, were the most satisfying tourism elements of Victoria Falls. As per objective 3 above, these elements could be the elements that contributed to the meeting or exceeding of tourists' expectations. The study also concluded that price could be the main cause for the dissatisfaction of tourists whose expectations were not met but it was not mentioned what satisfied the tourists.

5.2.5 Attainment and conclusion for Objective 5

Research Objective 5 endeavoured to identify areas of improvement needed on the Victoria Falls tourism product. This objective was achieved. Tourists were asked to cite the areas that need special attention and price (for accommodation, activities and tours, as well as dining) emerged as the primary tourism element that requires improvement. This creates the perception that the Victoria Falls tourism product is expensive. Facilities was another tourism element that was noted as an area for improvement. Respondents noted that there are inadequate facilities to cater for tourists in this town, for example, the ATMs run out of cash. Accessibility was mentioned as a primary area for improvement and concerns were raised about the excessive number of police roadblocks, especially by tourists who were self-driving. Other aspects raised were the lengthy visa processing time and there were no direct flights from Nelspruit (the closest town to Kruger National Park) in South Africa. Based on these results, the study concluded that price, facilities, and accessibility are the primary areas that need improvement to increase the tourist satisfaction.

The general conclusion is that tourist perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product vary from person to person, but the majority of tourists seem to be happy with the tourism product. However, there are certain areas that need improvement so that this tourism product will at least satisfy the visitors and at best, exceed their expectations.

5.3   Recommendations and implications

The following section presents recommendations induced from the research results in the previous chapter. The results of this study may afford the ZTA and ZPWMA an opportunity to understand the position of the Victoria Falls tourism product from the tourist's view and to determine ways of improving the product to enhance tourist appeal, which will grow future visitor numbers. In addition, the results could form a baseline against which similar future studies could be measured and assessed.

5.3.1 Price

Price was noted as the main element that was disliked by many respondents. This element is a major influencing factor in the purchase of a tourism product and tourists consider price before choosing a destination to visit, as shown by the results in Chapter Four. The high prices charged could be a result of the following factors and recommendations for each factor are suggested.

5.3.1.1 Government taxes

The high prices of tourism services in this destination could stem from the high taxes imposed by government, therefore government needs to revise the taxes imposed on the tourism product of Victoria Falls. Ethridge (2015:178) posits that high government taxes hurt the economy as business entities are strained to overcome these exorbitant taxes. This has a negative economic impact on tourism services as they are forced to charge high prices to the tourists, yet the tourists are very sensitive to visit destinations that charge high prices.

In addition, the government should market and promote other Zimbabwean tourist attractions such as the Great Zimbabwe, Eastern Highlands, Hwange National Park, and Mana Pools to relieve pressure on Victoria Falls and spread the taxes throughout the whole country's tourist destinations. The Sanganai/Hlanganani Tourism Expo is a mechanism that is currently helping to reach all the tourists' attractions in Zimbabwe but this only takes place once a year. It would be helpful if such initiatives were monitored and evaluated and based on the results yielded, possible improvements could be made. This would make the price of the Victoria Falls tourism product more reasonable as the tax to be paid would be reduced and tourists would spend more time in Zimbabwe because they would be paying more affordable prices.

5.3.1.2 Product bundle

Due to the many complaints about the high prices of the Victoria Falls tourism product it is important for ZTA and ZPWMA to bundle some of the activities and sell them at one price. In addition, accommodation should not be priced too high as it is not the sole influencing factor in the decision to purchase a tourism product. Hence, the price for accommodation should be kept reasonable but if it remains high then some extra services such as high-quality service delivery, complementary transfers, or a complementary meal could be offered to tourists as a value-for-money package (Lamp, 2009:165). Tourists compare the services offered at each destination and they follow where they see benefit, as explained in the SET (Ap, 1992:668).

5.3.1.3   Quality seamless services

It is recommended that the quality of the services rendered in Victoria Falls must be exceptional so that tourists will enjoy value for money. Tourists will not constantly complain about the price because the high quality of the services they receive will outweigh the price factor. This will enable the destination to increase its revenue and simultaneously encourage good reviews, which contributes to the building of a good image.

5.3.1.4   Local rates

African nationalities dominated the number of visitors to this town but generally did not spend at least one night in Victoria Falls and could be because accommodation is charged in USD. This currency is much stronger that other African currencies, hence it will be very expensive to spend even one night in this town. The ZTA and ZPWMA can look at various pricing strategies that are favourable to this market, for example the introduction of local rates during certain months of the year will help in attracting this market into spending some nights in Victoria Falls.

5.3.2   Diversify the tourism product

The results show that female numbers are constantly growing. It is recommended that the authorities who are directly linked to the planning of tourism services in this town should set up some interesting activities that attract females to the destination, such as the introduction of shopping facilities to the current tourism product. According to Timothy (2005:69), women are well known for shopping.

The Victoria Falls tourism product needs new activities over and above the traditional adventure activities of bungee jumping, zip-lining, bridge swing, rafting, cruising, and walking with lions. For example, a rotations wheel (such as the Cape Wheel at Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town) could be an opportunity to increase revenue as some tourists want to see the Falls and the surrounding areas from above but cannot afford helicopter or microlight flights.   The Cape Wheel is a giant observation wheel that offers a spectacular 360-degree panoramic view of Cape Town. The introduction of such a rotating wheel would offer tourists and locals alike an opportunity to this beautiful town from above. This added attraction could encourage more visitors to the destination, who could in turn recommend it to others.

5.3.3   Accessibility

Despite the accessibility to this destination receiving good reviews, the results show that some tourists were unhappy with the numerous police roadblocks on their way to or from Victoria Falls.

Some of the tourists were delayed and issued with spot fines for which they did not receive a receipt. The following article by Jakes (2017:1) explains the experience:

> At Gweru I stopped at a traffic light. A government vehicle drove straight through. A cop appeared and said to me my tyres were on the white line and this is illegal. He pulled me over, took my license and then got very clever, said he was going to take my licence and go see his Boss. At this stage I was running late for the border, which I explained to him. He demanded $20 and said if I don't hurry and move things are going to escalate and I could end up in jail. He never gave me a fine, just kept the $20 .... I did not want to take it further. He said these are just a few incidents he was told that his arm was not allowed to rest on the window $20. Please could you let this be known … we spent over R300 000,00 on this trip in Zimbabwe. Believe me, NONE of us will ever EVER go back to that country. I have written to all the travel agents that I am in contact with and 4 x 4 clubs, warning them and advising them to rather avoid Zimbabwe all together as it is so corrupt. Totally disappointed with the affairs in a once stunning country.

A report such as the above will tarnish the image of the destination. Hence ZTA, as it is the main marketing board for tourism services in Zimbabwe, should conduct workshops with the Zimbabwe Republic Police and train and educate them that the tourism industry does not work in isolation but is a number of different sectors that work together, including the police. This may create an understanding between all involved parties, which will result in the development of a better tourism offering.

5.3.3.1 Infrastructure

The results show that although Victoria Falls' infrastructure was generally rated as satisfactory, there were some concerns about potholes in the roads that lead to the town. It is important to understand that the success of the Victoria Falls tourism product is not centred only on the development of Victoria Falls tourism services but also involves all access routes to the town. It is important to maintain the roads as they link this tourism product with other destinations.

5.3.4 Marketing

The results indicate that most of the tourists had a positive view of the Victoria Falls tourism product before their visit and after their visit, their view was even more positive. This could mean that Zimbabwe has had bad publicity through international media—which needs to be mitigated. This can be achieved through marketing Zimbabwe on international media channels and travel channels, focussing on aspects such as the excellent climate of the country, the diverse attractions, the incomparable scenic beauty, very low crime rate and warm, friendly Zimbabwean people.

The results from this study indicate that although there were concerns on some elements of the Victoria Falls tourism product, generally tourists were happy. Government, the ZTA and ZPWMA

should use the positive perspectives of tourism elements as their main marketing thrust for this destination.

However, the negative comments made on certain tourism elements should not be taken lightly. They should be used as constructive criticism directed towards the improvement of the Victoria Falls tourism product.

5.4 Limitations of the study

Only one major limitation was identified which, if addressed, could have improved the results of the study.

5.4.1 Financial support

Every research requires financial support for the execution of the research. This is because the researcher will require money for transport and accommodation, especially if the research area is far from where the researcher stays. Unfortunately, this study only received funding from CPUT at a later stage, after data were collected. This limited the period for data collection to nine days instead of the suggested one month, based on the sample size calculation, because of the shortage of money to cover one month's accommodation. A company called Giltedge Travel helped the researcher by offering three complementary nights' accommodation. This helped the researcher greatly since there was no funding allocated to this study at the time of data collection.

In addition, due to lack of financial support during data collection, the researcher could not afford to pay field workers to assist with data collection and had to work throughout the day for nine consecutive days. The researcher had to complete an average of 40 questionnaires per day to achieve the sample size of 377. This was an immense strain on the researcher as this study was designed to have three field workers doing 10 questionnaires each per day, which would have greatly relieved the pressure on the researcher.

5.5 Future research direction

This study has laid a foundation for investigation of tourists' perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product. Due to the continuous change in tourist demands over time, it is important to monitor the tourists' perspectives of this tourism product to see if it still satisfies the tourists, and to develop it where needed.

This study only focused on Victoria Falls but Zimbabwe has many tourist attractions such as The Great Zimbabwe in Masvingo, Matopos Hills in Bulawayo, Hwange National Park, the Eastern

Highlands in Mutare, and Mana Pools, to mention a few. No similar research has ever been conducted in these locations. Future research may use this study as a baseline to venture into these various destinations and gather similar information. This would assist these tourism products to identify where development is necessary so that visitors to these destinations come away having had a fulfilling and satisfactory experience.

5.6   Concluding remarks

This study investigated tourist perspectives of the Victoria Falls tourism product, by considering their views on the current tourism product elements. The results of the study emphasised the importance of amalgamation of tourism services to produce a seamless tourism product. The outcome of the study showed that tourists are interested in the Victoria Falls tourism product but there is a need to consider a reduction in price of accommodation, elimination of excessive police roadblocks, and improvement of the facilities in the town. This is because these factors can deter tourists from visiting and could tarnish the other elements of the tourism product that are currently performing well.

It is of crucial importance that each of the seven elements of the tourism product discussed in this study must perform outstandingly as they each play an important role in influencing the decision of the tourist to visit. Therefore, for a good tourism product to prevail, the seven elements discussed in this study cannot operate in isolation, but should be combined and bolster each other to develop an excellent tourism product with a competitive edge.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM ZIMBABWE PARKS AND WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

APPENDIX B: CPUT ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

APPENDIX C: THE TOURIST SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX D: GRAMMARIAN LETTER

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM ZIMBABWE PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

ZIMBABWE PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Zambezi and Victoria Falls National Katombora Parks
P. Bag 5920,
Victoria Falls.

Telephone: 263 13 44352/44310
Bookings: 263-13 42294
E-Mail: ZAMBEZICAMP@zimparks.co.zw
All correspondence to be directed to the
"Area Manager

Head Office
Botanical Gardens
Cnr Borrowdale Rd/Sandringham Dr
P. O. Box CY140,
Causeway
Harare.
Telephone: 263 4 707624-9
Fax   : 263 4 708180

7 July 2016

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (MAKUZVA WASHINGTON - 212197436)

Dear Washington

Following your emails requesting permission to conduct research in Victoria Falls for your study "Tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in a selected Zimbabwean town", I am pleased to inform you that your request has been approved.

We look forward to reading your report when it is completed and will assist you should you need further support.

Kind regards

Edmore Ngosi Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife
Management Authority
Area Manager
Zambezi, Vic Falls, Katombora
Cell: +263-772 482 495
Direct line: +263-1344566

Board of Directors: Mr. T. E. Mundangepfupfu (Chairman), Mrs. L E. -Mupamhanga (Vice Chairman), -Mr. Mutinhima, Mr. C. Xludenda, -Mr.. N. Mutsvangwa, Mr. T. Mundoga, Mr E Chidziya (Ex Officio)

APPENDIX B: CPUT ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

P.O. Box 1906 ⬜ Bellville 7535 South Africa ⬜Tel: +27 21 4603534 ⬜ Email: majamanin@cput.ac.za
Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	**Faculty:** **BUSINESS**

At a meeting of the Research Ethics Committee on 21 November 2016, **Ethics Approval was**

granted to Washington Makuzva (212197436) **for research activities**

Related to the MTech/DTech: M TECH:TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT**at the Cape**

Peninsula University of Technology

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	TOURISTS' PERSPECTIVES OF A TOURISM PRODUCT IN A SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN TOWN Lead Researcher/Supervisor: Mr N Ntloko

Comments:

Decision: APPROVED

Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	21 NOVEMBER 2016 **Date**

Clearance Certificate No | 2016FBREC413

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

Tourist Survey Questionnaire

Good day and welcome to Victoria Falls town, Zimbabwe. I am pleased that you decided to visit our tourist destination and have utilised the tourism product(s) in this area. If you have spent at least one night at our destination I kindly ask you to participate in this survey. The completion of this interview questionnaire will take about 10 minutes and is conducted anonymously. This survey is about tourists' perspectives of a tourism product in a selected Zimbabwean town. **Thank you for your participation!**

A. TOURIST INFORMATION

1. Are you staying in any type of accommodation establishment in Victoria Falls?

If Yes, *(Please complete 1.1)*	
No	

1.1. What type of accommodation and for how many days are you intending to stay in Victoria Falls?

Type of accommodation	No. of days (please specify)
Hotel	
Self-catering apartment	
Guesthouse	
Backpack	
Camping	
Bed & Breakfast	
Friends/relatives	
Other (specify)	

1.2. How did you arrive in Victoria Falls?

By car	By bus	By train	By airline	Other (specify)

1.3. In which country do you live? _____

2. How would you describe the composition of your group?

N/A (alone)	Friends	Family	Friends and family	School group	Business associates	Tour group	Other (specify)

3. Have you been to Victoria Falls before?   Yes ☐   No ☐

3.1 If answered "Yes" on question 3, how many times? _____

4. What is your primary reason for visiting Victoria Falls?

Holiday	Business	Studies or training	Sports	Other (specify)

5. How did you book for your trip?

Directly	Online	Travel agent in home country	Tour operator	Other (specify)

B. TOURIST PERSPECTIVES ON VICTORIA FALLS TOURISM PRODUCT

1. Below are listed some elements of a tourism product that you might consider when choosing a tourist destination. How important was each of these elements to you when you selected to visit Victoria Falls (only one option for each item).

ELEMENTS OF A TOURISM PRODUCT	Completely Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
1 Accommodation at the destination					
2 Activities and Tours					

3 Accessibility (getting there/making a booking/infrastructure/ etc.)					
4 Attractions uniqueness					
5 Facilities (dining/ entertainment/amenities/services/transport/shopping/ etc.)					
6 Image of the destination (personal safety/friendliness or warmth of locals/ etc.)					
7 Price of the tourism products					

1.1 Please indicate on the scale your level of agreement on each of the STATEMENTS with an "X" in the right hand column. (Select one option for each statement)

ELEMENTS OF A TOURISM PRODUCT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Accommodation at the destination					
The accommodation is of world class					
The accommodation met my expectations					
The accommodation is very clean					
The accommodation is well maintained					
Staff/Employees act professionally					
Activities and Tours					

The variety of activities in this town increased my willingness to visit					
...stination offers world class adventure activities					
Making a tour booking was not easy					
Only adventure tours are being offered at this destination					
Additional transport costs (e.g. transfers) at this destination are relatively low					
Accessibility					
Getting to this destination was not a problem					
It is very complicated to travel around this destination					
Roads are well maintained					
Access is supported by necessary infrastructure					
To make a booking online was very difficult					
To make a booking by telephone was very difficult					
Generally, the infrastructure in this town is of good standards					
Attractions					
Attractions in this town are appealing					
The Falls/ Waterfall is the only interesting attraction to see at this destination					

Attractions in this town were the most convincing factors in your decision to visit the town					
Natural attractions are well maintained and managed					
As compared to natural attractions, man-made attractions are better maintained and managed					
Facilities					
Transport network in this town is very functional					
Dining facilities in this town are poor					
Signage in this town is very poor					
This town offers a wide range of facilities to cater for different tourist needs					
Generally, the standard of facilities in this town is high					
Image of the destination					
This destination is considered to be safe					
This destination has a unique image					
The political instability in Zimbabwe might affect the image and appeal of this destination					
More should be done to promote the image of this destination					

I will leave this town with good impressions					
Based on my experience I will spread a good word-of-mouth					
Price of the tourism products					
For the price I pay, I always get value for my money					
The quality of service delivery at this destination is worth the price paid					
Prices charged for tourism products are likely to discourage locals to participate in tourism					
Generally, the price of tourism products at this destination is reasonable					

C. TOURITS EXPECTATIONS, SATISFACTION AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT OF THE TOURISM PRODUCT

1 a) In general did your trip to Victoria Falls meet your expectations? (Choose from the following responses and mark with "X" where applicable)

Did not meet my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations

b) If answered **"Did not meet my expectation" on question 1a, please state why?** _____

_____

2. What did you LIKE the most during your visit to Victoria Falls? (Choose ONLY one option)

Accommodation	Accessibility	Facilities (Food)	Price
Activities and Tours	Attractions	Image	Other (specify)

3. Would you visit Victoria Falls again in future?

Yes	No (provide a reason)

3.1 Would you recommend relatives or friends to visit Victoria Falls?

Yes	No (provide a reason)

4. Which main element of the tourism product in particular do you think need special attention? (Choose ONLY one option)

Accommodation	Accessibility	Facilities	Price
Activities and Tours	Attractions	Image	Other (specify)

D. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. In which age category do you fall?

18-20yrs	21 – 30yrs	31 – 40yrs	41 – 50yrs	51-60yrs	61-70yrs	70yrs + (specify)

2. What is the highest qualification do you possess? (Please mark with X the correct variable)

Grade 7 certificate	Certificate	Higher National Certificate	Diploma certificate	Bachelor's Degree
Masters' Degree	Doctorate degree	Other (specify)		

3. Please indicate your occupation, e.g. Student

_____

4. INTERVIEWER TO NOTE

Gender of respondent		Historical racial category			
Male	Female	African	White	Coloured	Asian

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM GRAMMARIAN

22 Krag Street
Napier
7270
Overberg
Western Cape

14 September 2018

EDITING & PROOFREADING

Cheryl M. Thomson

TOURISTS' PERSPECTIVES OF A TOURISM PRODUCT IN A SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN TOWN

Supervisor: Dr. Ncedo Jonathan Ntloko

This is to confirm that I, Cheryl Thomson, executed the language and technical editing of the above-titled Master's dissertation of WASHINGTON MAKUZVA, student number 212197436 at the CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY in preparation for submission of this dissertation for assessment.

Yours faithfully

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