An ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe

By

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DECLARATION

In accordance with Rule G 4.6.3, I, Theo Tsokota with student number 212213342, hereby declare that the above stated thesis for the degree Doctor of Philosophy: Information Technology is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for any other qualification.

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　16 January 2017

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ABSTRACT

This research sought to develop an ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe. The Government of Zimbabwe has identified ICT and tourism both as strategic industries and pillars for economic revival. The tourism sector was identified as an essential source of foreign exchange earnings and as a means to drive the economy to greater heights and reduce poverty through direct employment in down-stream and up-stream industries. Despite being endowed with rich natural resources that include five World Natural Heritage sites, exquisite flora and fauna. Zimbabwe is not performing well in the world tourism sector. The Southern African country continues to be ranked low on World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. Despite the country's strengths, in terms of endowments, the low Tourism and Travel Competitiveness Index suggests weaknesses in related areas. There is currently no clear strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

Despite huge investments and advances in ICT, services in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe continue to be delivered manually and in traditional ways. Therefore, this research sought to propose a strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. However, this strategy had to be informed and supported by an empirical study of the shortcomings in the existing situation in the tourism sector. In order to achieve this objective, this research, which is a comprehensive case study on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, deployed semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observations and netnography to collect data. The case study was carried out in accordance with the steps for conducting a case as outlined by Yin guided by an interpretive paradigm. The entities and organisations that formed part of the case study were purposefully chosen to provide a representative sample of the tourism role-players in Zimbabwe. The samples were based on sample variation and feasibility (taking into consideration factors such as geographical location, organisational thrust and size). Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with various role-players in the tourism sector. The role-players interviewed included officials from the government, the regulator and from the service providers. The interviews were held in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Matopos, Hwange and Victoria Falls.

A Zimbabwe annual premier tourism expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair, was also attended in order to interact with various players and to conduct formal and informal interviews. The questionnaires, which were completed by tourists, were

administered in Harare, Hwange, Victoria Falls, Matopos, and the Beitbridge and Kazungula border posts. An online version of the questionnaire was also administered. The questionnaire link was e-mailed to tourists, as some of them did not have enough time to complete them during their stay in Zimbabwe and agreed to do so via email. The data was analysed in two phases - structured coding and thematic analysis. . Key factors were identified through structural coding and thematic analysis. Country-specific, sector-specific and organisational-specific factors were identified for tourists, the government, the regulator and service providers.

After a further analysis of the results, those that pointed to the same factors were grouped together and a deduction was made as a diagnosis of the problem was identified. The identified problems were synthesised into seven diagnostics: (i) lack of infrastructure and enabling services; (ii) e-customer relationship management; (iii) lack of collaboration and poor systems integration, (iv) policy and regulation; (v) lack of financial resources; (vi) poor ICT governance and (vii) poor human resource development.

A guiding policy was then identified for each of the diagnostics, leading to a set of coherent actions. The research also showed the implementation of this set of actions that consisting of three layers, namely, government, regulator and service providers.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a clear strategy formulation model and showing how the implementation will be rolled out. The ICT-related challenges were diagnosed, guiding policies formulated to address the situation and required coherent actions suggested. This research is deemed to be significant for understanding the future of ICT use in developing countries like Zimbabwe.

KEYWORDS

Strategy, Information and communication technologies, sustainability, tourism, Zimbabwe

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PUBLICATIONS BY AUTHOR

The author presented two peer-reviewed papers at two conferences. These papers were a direct result of this research report.

Tsokota, T., & von Solms, R. (2013). *ICT and the turning-around of the Zimbabwean Economy*. Paper presented at the International Conference on ICT for Africa Harare, Zimbabwe.

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Tsokota, T., von Solms, R., & van Greunen, D. (2017). An ICT Strategy for the Sustainable Development of the Tourism Sector in a Developing Country. A Case Study of Zimbabwe. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries, 78*(5), 1-20.

ABBREVIATIONS

CCS   Central Computing Services

GNU   Government of National Unity

HIFA   Harare International Festival of the Arts

ICT   Information and communication technology

ITU   International Telecommunication Union

ICT4D   Information and communication technology for development

MICE   Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions

MICTPCS   Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and
                 Courier Services

NMMZ   National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe

RBZ   Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

TRAS   Tourism Receipts Accounting System

UNWTO   United Nations World Tourism Organisation

WEFTTC   World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness

ZIMASSET   Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

ZCT   Zimbabwe Council of Tourism

ZPWMA   Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

ZTA   Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has become key to the efficient running of virtually all facets of the national economy, transcending every industry and service (Posthumusa & Von Solms, 2005; Rizk & Kamel, 2015; Shanker, 2008). According to Hamelink (1997), ICT "encompasses all those technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication among human actors, between human beings and electronic systems, and among electronic systems". The proliferation of e-commerce has seen ICT becoming the harbinger and epicentre of global socio-economic transformation, in addition to being a strategic resource and foundation of every economic activity (Bedi, 1999; Garaba, 2015; Kabanda, 2011). Further, ICT can accelerate economic activities, such as consumption, investment, government service delivery and export competitiveness (Appiah-Adu, Blankson, & Boakye, 2015; Bedi, 1999; Krishnan, Teo, & Lim, 2013).

Rapid advances in ICT and globalisation have resulted in the gradual integration of national economies into the global market. The result is a closer integration of countries and people of the world which has resulted in tourism emerging as a lucrative and one of the most rapidly-growing industries in the world (Ali & Frew, 2014; Berne, Garcia-Gonzalez, & Mugica, 2012; Law, Buhalis, & Cobanoglu, 2014). The number of tourists travelling outside their countries grew by 4.4% in 2015 to reach 1.2 billion in the process generating USD$1.2 trillion in export earnings. It is projected that the industry will grow by a further 4% in 2016 (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2016). On the other hand, 43% of the world population estimated to be 3.2 billion people is using the internet and the number continues to grow (ITU, 2015). The tourism sector has been influenced by ICT to the extent that it has been embedded into the business, thereby contributing to the massive growth of the sector. The tourism sector has virtually become an information industry, as tourists' decisions are now based on the information available to them before experiencing the product. No sector has been more affected by the "technology revolution" than tourism (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Staab et al., 2002). The use of ICT has radically revolutionised the way in which tourism companies conduct their business in terms of economic activities such as the distribution of tourism information and sales. Therefore, ICT

has a direct impact on the tourism sector which can be improved by using suitable electronic business systems (Hojeghan & Esfangareh, 2011). These technologies have become a "functional equivalent of electricity in the industrial era" (Castells & Development, 1999). Interestingly, the Government of Zimbabwe has identified ICT and tourism as strategic industries, as pillars for economic revival (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). The tourism sector has been identified as an essential source of foreign exchange earnings and a means to drive the economy to greater heights and reduce poverty through direct employment in down-stream and up-stream industries. ICT can help to streamline the tourism supply chain for better delivery of services and the improvement of interactions in the tourism ecosystem. It can also facilitate access to information for tourists thereby improving their decision-making (Balandin & Laizane, 2013; Chung, Han, & Joun, 2015).

1.2 THE DECLINE OF THE ZIMBABWEAN ECONOMY

In the years 2000 to 2008, Zimbabwe was embroiled in an economic and political crisis (Hammar, McGregor, & Landau, 2010; Kararach & Otieno, 2016; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). The economy shrank by 40% in eight years (Biti, 2009) and suffered unprecedented inflation which peaked at 231 million per cent in July 2008 (Gono, 2012). This resulted in a massive brain-drain and a decline in all sectors of the economy with tourism being the biggest casualty (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). There was a definite decline in tourism development during this period of economic and political crisis (George 2013). This was further compounded by the perceived high country risk profile, inadequate working capital, poor domestic services, negative media publicity and crumbling infrastructure. The situation deteriorated further around 2008 when major source markets, such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany issued travel warnings to their nationals against travelling to Zimbabwe, describing the country as an unsafe destination (Karambakuwa et al., 2011; Mkono, 2010; Rusike & Chitambara, 2012).

With the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) from 2009 to 2013, as well as the introduction of the multi-currency system in 2009, improved prospects for political and economic stability, critical factors for the tourism sector and the development of ICT. During this period, the Government of Zimbabwe (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012) identified ICT and tourism as some of the pillars for economic revival. These two sectors were identified as being of immense importance in stimulating and supporting the economy

to perform better and overcome the period of stagnant development (Qiang, Rossotto, & Kimura, 2009). Massive investments in the tourism and ICT sectors have been made by both the government and the private sector (Chibaya, 2013; Karambakuwa et al., 2011; Muzapu & Sibanda, 2016). These investments include a terrestrial link and an optic fibre cable en-route to the undersea cable in the Indian Ocean which grants high speed access to the rest of the world. This project has enabled reliable, high-speed internet access and enhanced voice services, in addition to data services at affordable prices. This has also been complemented by other similar projects to upgrade all the airports, road infrastructure, refurbishment of hotels and other tourism operations. In addition, the government has waived duty on ICT and tourism capital equipment. These measures were meant to create and support an enabling environment for industry, government, service delivery, education and the communications sector (Biti, 2011). Thus, it is plausible to assert that the basic foundations for sound tourism and electronic communication within Zimbabwe are in place.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM AREA

The problem area is structured around the following three subsections which comprise tourism and ICT, poor international competitiveness and a lack of access to international markets. The problem statement for this project will follow in section 1.4 of this research.

1.3.1 Tourism and ICT

The ever-increasing use of ICT has revolutionised the way the tourism sector worldwide competes and thus ICT has become a vital tool for the survival of tourism organisations (Evans & Wurster, 1997). Buhalis (1998) argues that information is the life blood of tourism because ICT is becoming pivotal in the sector. This is supported by Stiakakis & Georgiadis (2011) who point out that the tourism sector is becoming a fiercely information-intensive and competitive business. In the tourism business, worldwide competitive advantage is no longer natural, but man-made and driven by advances in science, modern technologies, information and innovation (Hojeghan & Esfangareh, 2011). In this regard businesses that do not sufficiently adopt ICT risk being gradually driven out from global markets (Hoarau & Kline, 2014; Ollor, 2015; Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011). However, simply owning ICT assets does not generate business value in terms of gaining competitive advantage, improving business processes or reducing costs, but it can ironically worsen the competitive position of an

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organisation (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011). Genuine value from the utilisation of ICT only occurs when key stakeholders use ICT effectively to deliver economic value.

1.3.2 Poor international competitiveness

Despite being endowed with rich natural resources, five World Natural Heritage sites, rich flora as well as abundant wildlife, Zimbabwe is not competing well in the world tourism sector. Zimbabwe has been ranked 115 out of 140 countries according to the 2015 World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (Blanke & Chiesa, 2015). Despite its strengths in terms of endowments, the low Tourism and Travel Competitiveness Index suggests weaknesses in other areas. Consequently, it can be argued that Zimbabwe is competing below capacity from a travel and tourism competitiveness point of view.

1.3.3 Lack of access to international markets

Another serious problem facing the Zimbabwe tourism sector is the marketing products and services aimed at overseas markets. A major weakness is the failure to advertise and market online, which has forced several companies to continue using traditional and largely out-dated ways of marketing (Ruhode, Owei, & Maumbe, 2008; Zanamwe, Bere, Zungura, Nyamakura, & Muchangani, 2012). It is important to point out that the internet is the potential solution to the problem of inaccessible information as it can be used to provide access to information such as application forms, tourist information and virtually all information that the public needs to access (Ruhode et al., 2008).

Despite the massive investments that have been made by both the Zimbabwe government and the private sector in the tourism and ICT sectors, there is still a lack of institutional mechanisms and structures, as well as clear guidelines and strategy for ICT integration into the country's economic development strategies (Mhlanga, 2006). With the exception of a few services, the citizens, tourists and businesses in Zimbabwe have to obtain services in the traditional and fragmented way. They have to wait in queues to obtain multiple documents from different sources to satisfy the requirements of a specific transaction, repeating the process again and again (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012; Ruhode, 2016). This method of interaction is cumbersome, as it is time consuming and causes dissatisfaction. The challenges above are the result of duplication, information redundancy and the lack of, or poor, system integration.

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Lack of collaboration, poor networking, inefficiency and ineffectiveness on the part of service providers result in considerable loss of opportunities to attain the full benefits of ICT infrastructure and the optimal use of the available resources (Matavire, Chidawanyika, Braa, Nyika, & Katiyo, 2013; Ruhode, 2013, 2016; Ruhode et al., 2008).

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Zimbabwe as a tourist destination is endowed with a variety of spectacular scenic landscapes, exceptional biodiversity and abundant wildlife, as well as a broad range of tourist products and services suitable for a variety of travellers (Gandiwa & Gandiwa, 2012; Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013; Muzvidziwa, 2013). However, being in possession of a good product does necessarily mean you can sell it, particularly if the target market is not aware of the product or does not know how to reach it.

ICT usage has become indispensable in developing, reaching, managing and distributing tourism products worldwide. It exists as a source of information and confidence booster since the ultimate choice of preferred tourist destination depends on the available information and not the actual destination itself (Hsu & Li, 2015; Park & Jang, 2013; Staab et al., 2002). The rapid developments in ICT has revolutionised tourism operations and the way companies and countries lure tourists, thereby resulting in stiff competition in the global tourism industry. Prospective tourists now have more information and a variety of options (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012). Since the tourism sector has become important in driving the economies of many countries, it is imperative to examine how ICT resources are being leveraged in contributing to and driving the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Although it is generally known that ICT could play a pivotal role in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and assist in its revival, there is dearth of knowledge on the integration, impact and extent of ICT utilisation in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the problem for this research could be stated as follows:

> **There is lack of any apparent and clear strategy for the effective usage and integration of ICT to enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe after its initial adoption.**

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective may be stated as follows:

> **To devise a strategy for ICT integration and utilisation in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.**

The following sub-objectives will be addressed to achieve the main research objective:

- To examine the current usage of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe as well as user experiences and perceptions thereof.
- To identify the factors that determine the effective utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe in order to establish the key components of an ICT strategy.
- To draw lessons from countries which are successful in utilising ICT in the tourism sector.
- To suggest how ICT can be effectively utilised and integrated to further enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfil the above research objectives, the methodology employed to address the objective above is based on an extensive, comprehensive case study carried out in the tourism sector involving the deployment of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The research was conducted out in accordance with the case study steps as outlined by Yin (2014). According to Yin (2014, p. 14), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context *"when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used"*. In this case, the real-life phenomenon is the impact of ICT on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The advantage of using the case study as a research strategy is that it allows for the study of "how" and "why" questions "being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has no control" (Yin, 2014, p. 13). This is particularly useful in studying the impact and integration of ICT on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe where little is known. The eventual case study provided a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the use of ICT in Zimbabwe's tourism sector. A detailed discussion of the research approach is included in Chapter 4.

1.7 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Data collection was done using semi-structured interviews with various role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The role-players ranged from the national government, the regulator and service providers. A questionnaire was also administered to non-Zimbabwean tourists. Additionally, tourists' message postings, reviews, compliments and complaints on

social media were also analysed. Furthermore, the annual premier tourism expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair, was attended to appreciate and interact with various role-players in the sector. Hence, this research mixed various data collection methods, commonly referred as data triangulation. Data triangulation uses multiple data generation techniques to look at the phenomenon of interest in a variety of ways (Oates, 2006). It also allows findings from one method to be substantiated or questioned by comparing data from another method. This makes triangulation across various data collection methods particularly beneficial in theory generation because it provides multiple perspectives on an issue. It also supplies more information on emerging concepts, which allows cross checking and yields stronger substantiation of constructs (Orlikowski, 2002). The case study methodology allows for multiple sources of data collection, which helps to test the construct validity of the case. Therefore, the data to be collected will include both primary and secondary data and will be qualitative in nature. Further primary data consists of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and participant observations. The secondary data comprises existing documentation and archival analysis.

1.8 THESIS STRUCTURE

This research is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research, and provides an outline of the research project. It offers an outline of the problem, the research objectives and the research methodology. Chapter 2 discusses the nexus between ICT and tourism, while Chapter 3 gives a background to the various role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The research design is discussed in Chapter 4 and provides the theoretical base for the research. Chapter 5 presents the data collected from the tourism sector. Data analysis is presented in Chapter 6, while Chapter 7 presents the development of the strategy from a theoretical point of view and how the strategy was formulated. Chapter 8 serves as the conclusion to the research. It also argues the contribution made by the research to the already existing body of knowledge, as well as suggesting possible areas for future studies. Figure 1.1 shows the outline of chapters.

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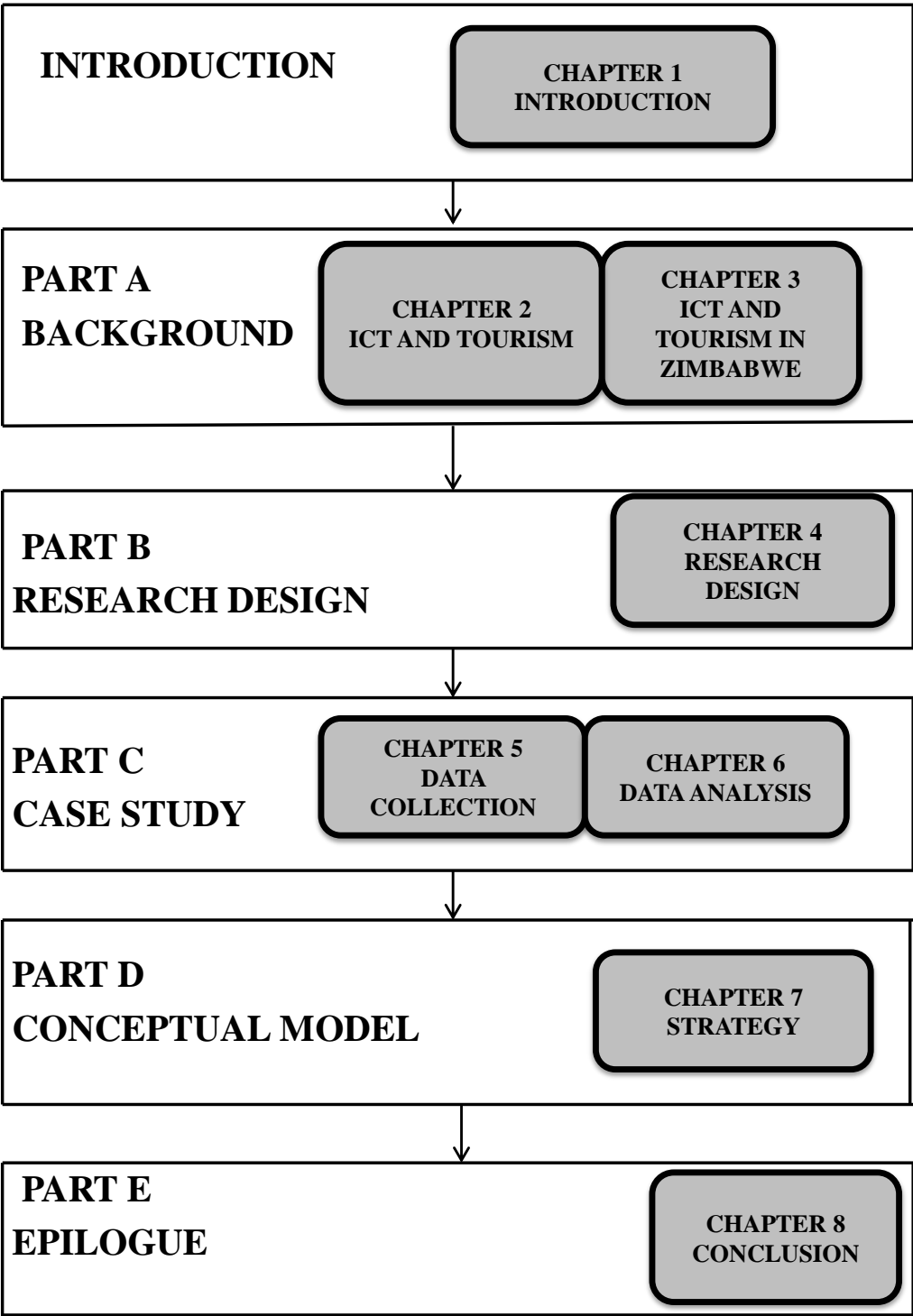
Figure 1.1 Outline of chapters

Stage	Chapter	Subsections
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CHAPTER 2: ICT AND TOURISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to give an overview of the concept of tourism and explore the ICT and tourism landscape. The chapter also examines the relationship between ICT and tourism. To elaborate on the role of ICT in tourism the chapter presents case studies of India and Rwanda, two countries that are doing well in the application of ICT in tourism. In the exploration of these issues the chapter first presents an introduction in Section 2.1 and an overview of the term 'tourism' in Section 2.2 whilst Section 2.3 explores the nexus between ICT and tourism. This is followed by a description ICT usage in tourism in Section 2.4 and a description of the modern use of ICT in Tourism in Section 2.5. The case studies of India and Rwanda alluded to above follow in Section 2.6. Finally, Section 2.7 presents the conclusion to the chapter.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF TOURISM SECTOR

This Section presents a brief description of various tourism related concepts, as it is prudent to define the key concepts before an empirical research of ICT and tourism can be undertaken. Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes (UNWTO, 2008). These people are generally referred to as visitors (who may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure (Hristov, 2015; Odunayo, 2014; Tobora et al., 2014).

The literature suggests two categories for definitions of tourism; these are demand-side and supply-side definitions (Cooper, 2013; Fletcher, Fyall, & Wanhill, 2013; Holloway & Humphreys, 2012; Inkson & Minnaert, 2012; Torkildsen & Taylor, 2012). The two categories of definitions can, according to a number of scholars (Cooper 2013; Inkson & Minnaert 2012; Taylor 2012), be distinguished as follows:

1. Demand-side definitions can be defined by encapsulating conceptual definitions and by the development of technical definitions (for measurement and legal purposes).

2. From a conceptual point of view, tourism can be defined as "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" (Guliani, 2016, p. 120; Smith & Stewart, 2014, p. 3).

The technical definitions of tourism alluded above attempt to isolate tourism trips from other forms of travel for statistical purposes. Technical definitions require that an activity has to pass certain tests before it counts as tourism. Such tests include that the minimum duration of stay cannot be less than one night while the maximum duration cannot be more than one year. The purpose of stay is also a vital component of the test.

However, the supply-side definitions have two approaches which are conceptual or descriptive and technical. From the conceptual point of view, tourism is regarded as any sector that consists of firms, organisations and facilities which are intended to serve the specific needs and wants of tourism. The technical approach, on the other hand, relates to the fact that there are a variety of organisations and businesses that serve tourists and those which also serve the residents and other markets. For the purposes of this research, a definition that encompasses both the supply-side and technical definitions will be adopted. "Tourism is viewed as the sum phenomena and relationship arising from the interaction among tourists, business suppliers, host government, origin government, community colleges and non-governmental organisations in the process of attracting, transporting, hosting and managing these tourists and other visitors" (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000, p. 3). This definition reveals the following essential attributes of tourism:

Tourism is defined in terms of specific activities voluntarily chosen in various destinations. It involves a journey and stay of people outside their normal residence. Furthermore, tourism movement is temporal; it can be less than a day up to a year for other purposes, save for employment or permanent residence. Additionally, it is also a multi-sectorial activity which involves different role-players cutting across the whole spectrum of the economy. The next section will look at the role and purpose of tourism.

2.2.1 Role and purpose of tourism in an economy

The tourism sector has immense poverty alleviation potential and a multiplier effect on the economy and the supply chain (Davidson & Sahli, 2015; Ladkin & Szivas, 2015; Rogerson,

2013). Tourism has the potential to be the major driver of economic wealth in the 21st century. It contributes significantly to the national economy through wealth creation, employment creation and foreign currency generation. It also contributes to export earnings and national gross domestic product (GDP) (Davidson & Sahli, 2015). Tourism is arguably a smokeless, multi-billion, multi-sectorial and multi-dimensional sector which has both a direct and indirect impact on an economy (Sundar, 2016). 'Direct impact' refers to economic activities generated by businesses that deal directly with tourists, whilst indirect impacts are economic activities which are enabled by the vibrancy and the multiplier effect of the tourism sector.

The importance of tourism to the economy is testified by the fact that in some economies such as Rwanda, it is now a major foreign currency earner as compared to traditional industries such as tea and coffee. In Europe, tourism's contribution to the GDP is twice the size of the auto manufacturing industry (Baker, 2015).

On the basis of the above, it is arguable that tourism generates significant government revenue. Such revenue is generated from airport taxes, visa applications, hunting licences, entrance fees, and the use of public utilities. Tourism is the only export business in which consumption takes place in the home country, while being subject to domestic value-added tax (Finlands Tourism Strategy, 2011). When carefully managed, tourism is a non-extractive sector that can support conservation measures, raise incomes, and provide employment without denuding the country of its resource base (Finlands Tourism Strategy, 2011). Additionally, tourism acts as a catalyst for development and growth in terms of the sustainable benefits to national economies (Fjelstul & Fyall, 2015; Piekarz & Callanan, 2013). The infrastructure required for tourism, which includes roads, information and communication technologies and electricity, can also benefit local economies. Other indirect impacts include capital investment. Apart from the foregoing, the tourism sector is a labour-intensive industry and as such it is a key employer. The benefits of this for the economy and citizens' livelihoods are undoubted.

The tourism sector also has strong links with other services in the economy thereby enhancing broader economic development. Tourism plays an important role in the development of remote areas, environmental conservation and in promoting social integration

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(Mowforth & Munt, 2015). It is now being considered as an agent of social change bridging gaps among nations, regions and people and helping them to open up. It is a promoter of development material and spiritual development at both macro and micro level (Haseena, 2014). After looking at the benefits of tourism, the next section will discuss the different types of tourism.

2.2.2 Types of tourism

There is no universally accepted typology of tourism, since this varies from country to country. The lack of scholarly consensus stems from the fact that there are no universally accepted criterions for defining types of tourism. Tourism can be classified by many criteria, hence choosing the appropriate classification is important for three main reasons. It enables the researcher to make informed decisions about the overall configuration of the research. Holloway & Humphreys (2012) classify tourism services into five broad categories: firstly, motivation for the trip, that is, whether it is business, social or other; secondly whether the trip is domestic or international; thirdly, the mode of the tourism organisation, that is, whether it is independent or package; fourthly, the composition of the tour elements, whether road, sea or rail; and lastly, the characteristics of the tourist, for instance holidaymaker or business traveller. Scholars such as Pearce (2011) and Schneider and Vogt (2012) classify tourism into three categories by wonder list, demographic or psychological. In addition, other scholars (Chubchuwong, Beise-Zee, & Speece, 2015; Marzuki, 2016; Mehmetoglu & Normann, 2013) classify tourism by its nature, for example into nature-based tourism, adventure tourism, sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism, mass tourism, geo-tourism and eco-tourism.

In addition to the criteria mentioned above, there are other categories for classifying tourism which include product, nature of activity, location preference, motivation of trip and lastly purpose. While the different criteria were considered in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the types of tourism, they were of little use to this study which focuses on coming up with an ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in a country. For the purpose of this study, tourism was classified as either domestic or international. This ensured that the study was broad enough to include all tourism categories.

2.3 ICT AND TOURISM LANDSCAPE

There is a significant body of literature that systematically explores the ways in which ICT and the tourism sector relate (Balandin & Laizane, 2013; Bethapudi, 2013; Law et al., 2014; Martínez-Martínez, Cegarra-Navarro, & García-Pérez, 2015; Mihajlović, 2012; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2014). Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) refers to various sets of technological tools and resources for the production, analysis, storage, search, dissemination and management of information (Belagra, Benachaiba, & Guemid, 2012; George, 2015). ICT encompasses a combination of hardware, software, telecommunications, Netware, groupware and humanware (Waghmode & Jamsandekar, 2013). Several scholars (Bethapudi, 2013; Law et al., 2014; Mihajlović, 2012) agree that ICT is central to the tourism, travel and hospitality sectors of an economy in the following ways: (i) it has become critical for the survival of tourism organisations, (ii) it facilitates individual access to tourism products, and iii) it enhances operational, structural, strategic and internal processing efficiency.

ICT can be seen as the umbilical code of tourism as its use has become crucial for the survival of tourism organisations (Evans & Wurster, 1997). This is because information is the life-blood of tourism (Buhalis, 1998; Grotte, 2013; Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2013). As (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011) observe, the tourism sector is an information-intensive competitive business. ICT, for example, enables an individual to access information about tourism products anywhere with minimum obstacles (Bethapudi, 2013). In other words ICT enables would-be travellers and tourists to have access to timely, reliable and accurate travel information at lower cost (Bak, Borkowski, & de Stasio, 2014; Giannopoulos, 2004; Pronello & Camusso, 2015). In addition, through ICT, transportation in destination areas is made convenient through timeous choice of airlines, buses and taxis to destination points.

ICT has also been used to enhance operational, structural, strategic and internal processing efficiency and the distribution of information in the tourism sector. It thus can be viewed as an essential "raw material" for tourism; a raw material that has led to irreversible developments in the tourism sector's structure and strategy (Anandkumar, 2015; Bagherinia & Zali, 2013). On the basis of the above observations there is no doubt that ICT and the tourism sector are intricately intertwined. There is abundant literature available across the globe (Ali & Frew, 2014; Alitany, Redondo, Fonseca, & Sanchez Riera, 2013; Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014; Balandin & Laizane, 2013; Beirman, Ritchie, & Campiranon, 2014; Sigala,

2014) confirming the intimate relationship between the two. For example scholars such as (Mihajlović, 2012), argue that the use of ICT in the tourism sector is indispensable. Such a view is also shared by Bethapudi (2013), who contends that ICT allow customer relations and supply chain management to be combined into a single source that facilitates a variety of operations. In essence, ICT is said to have also led to changes in demand and supply in the tourism sector (Ali & Frew, 2014; Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014; Berne et al., 2012; Buhalis & Inversini, 2014; Chakravarthi & Gopal, 2012; Guo, Ling, Dong, & Liang, 2013).

Before embarking on the research with a focus on Zimbabwe, it is necessary to understand the use of ICT in the various segments of the tourism sector. The role of ICT tools in the tourism sector is widely known (Pawłowska, Matoga, & Stach, 2015). The next subsection explores the relationship between ICT and tourism in detail.

2.3.1 The relationship between ICT and tourism: a global perspective

The following subsections will discuss and demonstrate the nexus between ICT and tourism in detail under the following subheadings: nature of the tourism product, characteristics of the tourism product, uses of ICT in the tourism sector, tourism destination as a hybrid of the virtual and physical representation and, lastly, the tourist journey. The next subsection will discuss the characteristics of the tourism product in order to explore the nexus between ICT and tourism.

2.3.2 Characteristics of tourism product

This subsection discusses the nexus of ICT and tourism in relationship to the characteristics of a tourism product. The characteristics of a tourism product are intangibility, perishability, heterogeneous, inseparability and demand.

2.3.2.1 Intangibility

Tourism is an intangible product (Chon, Pizam, & Mansfeld, 2012). This means that a tourism product cannot be touched, felt or seen. It consists of experiences, actions, performances and memories. Owing to the nature of the product, trust between the seller and the tourist must prevail (Holloway & Humphreys, 2012; Wang, Law, Hung, & Guillet, 2014; Wang, Weaver, & Kwek, 2015). The intangibility of a tourism product means that it cannot be physically displayed or examined before purchasing; there is separation between purchase

and consumption. However, some components of the tourism products are tangible. These include mountains, sea shores, historical sites and other man-made features, such as monuments (Benur & Bramwell, 2015; Hoan, 2015; Tigu, 2012; Van der Merwe, 2012). Linked to this, Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, and Preciado (2013) argue that the tourism experience can be made tangible through symbols, such as passport stamps, souvenirs, post-cards and photographs. Thus, tourists value their experiences and memories of a destination. Bad memories can spoil tourists' experiences (Weidenfeld, 2013). Bad memories are caused by a variety factors such as poor ICT services that lead to unanticipated delays and hassles. Poor ICT may deter visitors from visiting a destination, thereby working to the disadvantage of the tourism destination (Chhabra, 2012).

ICT can be used create images that reflect the intrinsic qualities of the tourism product, its design, quality and style of attractions, and its built and social environment (Mishra, 2015). These images are then used to market the destination and to adapt and influence potential tourists' expectations (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). The use of ICT thus becomes pertinent in the tourism sector, where the products are intangible and difficult to evaluate before consumption (Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, & Manzari, 2012).

Advances in ICT have enabled tourists to take photos to enable them to share their memories with others and to remember events. This has resulted in the creation of online communities, especially using social media. Tourists interact with each other using various social media platforms. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking social book marking, social curation and Wiki's are among the different types of social media available (Nadda, Dadwal, Mulindwa, & Vieira, 2015; Noti, 2013; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

2.3.2.2 Perishability

The tourism product is highly perishable in nature, which means one cannot store the product for future use (Ivanov, 2014). Production and consumption take place at the same time, whilst the tourist is present. A travel agent or tourism operator who sells a tourism product cannot store it. Production can only take place if the customer is actually present and consumption is then experienced at the same time. Once consumption begins, it cannot be stopped, interrupted or modified. This calls for robust service recovery strategies when things go wrong as the experience can easily be posted on social media. This is supported by the fact

that tourism service providers are an essential part of the tourist's service experience, as providers cannot be easily differentiated from the services they offer. However, advances in in ICT can enable separation of tourists in time, space and production (Hall & Page, 2014).

2.3.2.3 Heterogeneous

The heterogeneous nature of tourism means that the standards and quality of tourism products vary over time as well as circumstances. Services cannot be constantly uniform as they are a by-product of human interaction. Heterogeneity can also result from the fact that no two tourists are precisely alike. Each has unique demands and experiences service in a distinctive way. It is indeed challenging to provide service in a heterogeneous manner as some factors may be beyond human control. However, ICT can be used to develop standardised and pre-designed services to overcome some challenges of service inseparability and non-standardisation. This was not previously possible in most services (Hong & Miyazaki, 2013). For example, the use of the internet does not alter services as would happen in services where human involvement is intensive. ICT ensures that services are automated and similar for all tourists. A notable example is the process of booking a bus on Intercape's website, which is the same for all customers regardless of location or status.

Whilst ICT is effective in reducing inconsistencies from service providers, it is still susceptible to tourists' variability. Tourists can co-create services and this may result in challenges unless the technology is user friendly. In addition ICT can be used to avoid substitution by creating switch costs mechanisms (Matzler, Strobl, Thurner, & Füller, 2015). However, service heterogeneity is not completely negative, as it is sometimes necessary. Service providers can vary services according to the ability of tourists to pay, resulting in service differentials. ICT can be used to ensure that each tourist is served according to his/her expectations through the co-creation of, and do-it-yourself services (Korneliussen, Prebensen, Chen, & Uysal, 2014).

2.3.2.4 Inseparability

Tourism service experiences are produced and consumed at the same time. More often than not, the tourist has to be present when the service is being produced and can even co-produce the service. Consequently, inseparability means that the tourist has to interact with others while the service is being offered. This may positively or negatively affect others. Another

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outcome of inseparability is the fact that there is no separation between service provider and the services being provided. Hence, service providers are an essential ingredient of the tourism product itself (Hall & Page, 2014).

ICT can be used to customise and decentralise services to provide convenience to tourists. On the other hand, advances in ICT have enabled the separate production of tourists' services in both time and space.

2.3.2.5 Demand

Tourism demand is influenced by various factors such as political, social, economic and seasons (Jarvis, Stoeckl, & Liu, 2016; Mishra, 2015; Serra, Correia, & Rodrigues, 2014). Political stability may affect tourists' decision-making since they may consider safety and security prior to their departure (Chung et al., 2015; Fuchs & Reichel, 2011; Sigala, 2013). For example, in Zimbabwe during the run up to the 2013 harmonised elections, most tourists lost interest in Zimbabwean destinations (Mugobo & Wakeham, 2014; Zibanai, 2013). Factors in the economic environment, such as an increase in tourist product prices caused by inflation, may affect the travelling intention (Abel & Mudzonga, 2016; Mason, 2015; Tribe, 2015). There are also times of the year during which the environment may not allow tourists to visit. For example in Europe, tourists from Africa may not like to visit countries like Russia during winter because of the cold weather. In the winter, tourists from Europe like to visit Africa and other countries that are experiencing summer.

ICT can be used to advise tourists on changes in their bookings, delay notices, and to offer deals in addition to location-based advertisements. On the other hand, ICT can be seen as a threat to destinations and organisations that remain traditional and fail to take advantage of new tools (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The next subsection discusses the nature of the tourism destination and how it relates to ICT.

2.3.3 Nature of the tourism destination

Tourism activities take place within a destination. For a tourist destination to be attractive it must be characterised by 6 'As', which are attraction, amenities, accessibility, activities, available packages and ancillary services (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013; Lee & Huang, 2014; Lesić, Ružić, & Pavlović, 2015; Mohamad, Abdullah, & Mokhlis, 2012b). This

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partially ties in with Middleton and Clarke (2012) assertion that destination as a product of tourism is characterised by five components, three of which are attraction, amenities, and accessibility, with the other two being image and the perception of a destination, and the price. This subsection describes each of these components and how they relate to ICT.

2.3.3.1 Attraction

Attraction is the primary object and catalyst for a tourist who wants to see and experience what the destination offers (Albrechtslund & Albrechtslund, 2014). An attraction can be natural, artificial or cultural (Wu, Wall, & Zhou, 2014). It is essential for attractions to integrate technology such as smart techniques in their development and to become technologically competent as well as being eco-efficient (Wang, Li, Zhen, & Zhang, 2016).

2.3.3.2 Accessibility

Accessibility refers to a destination's entire transport system, available routes and transportation technology (Sharma & Nasreen, 2015). ICT offers an ideal medium through which to provide services to ensure that tourists find information about transport in a particular destination. They can also book and pay for transport through ICT (Polo Peña, Frías Jamilena, & Rodríguez Molina, 2013). Using ICT, tourists have the freedom to select and access suitable transportation in a destination, therefore, ICT enhances tourists' convenience by reducing unnecessary hassles and the costs of travel (Chakravarthi & Gopal, 2012). Thus, ICT plays a critical role in enhancing accessibility by reducing costs, improving convenience and speed (Haghtalab, GharibTarzeh, & Nabizadeh, 2012; Kim, Chung, & Lee, 2011). However, ICT can be a problem if the network is poor and internet access is not reliable. As a result, tourists may fail to access the information they need, thereby compromising cost saving, speed and convenience.

ICT also plays a crucial role in providing early warning systems in the event of risks in a destination. For instance, through the use of ICT, visitors are able to obtain information on impending natural hazards such as volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, excessive high temperatures, wind and dust storms, as well as snowfalls. Even in high seas, tourists are able to avoid heavy seas which may be hazardous to shipping.

2.3.3.3 Activities

Activities represent all the possible events or actions at the destination that may prompt tourists to visit. Potential tourists search for information about the activities a destination offers online before deciding to visit it. Potential tourists, both leisure and business travellers use blogs, social media, reviews and online travel videos to search for information on a destination's activities (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Sigala, Christou, & Gretzel, 2012). They use ICT for inspiration, ideas and recommendations for things to do, 'must sees' and events, as well as to check the weather.

ICT also offers potential tourists specific information through interactive activity searches and booking information, as well as payment details whilst they are in the comfort of their homes (Rodríguez, Molina, Pérez, & Caballero, 2012). The information on activities available to potential tourists and its representation influence the way tourists view and are influenced by the place and destination (Chen, Shang, & Li, 2014). Service providers use ICT platforms with internet-based applications that link users across the globe in order to share and exchange information and ideas (Nicoletta & Servidio, 2012). Accordingly, ICT is key to providing tourism-related information like opinions, experiences, activities, interests, photos, videos in real-time or at defined time intervals (Law et al., 2014). With the advent of telecommunication and mobile devices, the number of tourism service providers that have begun to make use of social media websites has increased (Chen et al., 2014). These include Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Most of social media websites enable tourists to post and share their travel-related information. This includes opinions, comments and personal experiences (Amaral, Tiago, & Tiago, 2014). On the other hand, advertising on websites occur when an advertiser pay to place promotional content on another website (Devece, Lapiedra, & Palacios, 2014; Law et al., 2014). Several sites can be used to drive traffic to the website being promoted (Maswera, 2006; Sigala, 2009; Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011; Xiang, Wang, O'Leary, & Fesenmaier, 2014). Hence, it can be argued that any website is an advertising platform since it can be used to inform, persuade as well as remind would-be tourists about the services and activities being provided by a tourism service provider. There are several approaches to online advertising like banner advertisements, paid search advertising, pop-ups and e-mails (Doostar & Mohammadi, 2014; Hsin Chang, Rizal, & Amin, 2013).

2.3.3.4 Amenities

Amenities are services and facilities that ensure convenience and comfort for a tourist's stay at a destination (Lee, Chen, & Huang, 2014; Mensah & Dei Mensah, 2013; Rajović & Bulatović, 2014). These include accommodation, tourism supporting infrastructure and leisure activities. The amenities required in a destination depend on the nature of the destination (Reisinger, Moufakkir, Nassar, & Mostafa, 2015). ICT can provide timely, accurate and appropriate information about the amenities, facilities and activities a destination offers before and upon arrival of a tourist in a destination (Chung et al., 2015; Mistilis, Buhalis, & Gretzel, 2014; Sigala, 2013). ICT is therefore critical in the development of a destination. Amenities in a destination, including ICT-enabled services, are critical and can determine a tourist's choice of a destination (Dunne & Hanrahan, 2015; Mussalam & Tajeddini, 2016).

2.3.3.5 Available packages

These are tourist packages prepared by tour intermediaries and tourism service providers or agencies (Constantinescu & Nistorescu, 2013; Mohamad, Abdullah, & Mokhlis, 2012a). Tourist packages consist of discounts on pre-arranged tours to a destination (Wong & McKercher, 2012). These packages are designed by tourism service providers who charge a single price for services like accommodation, transport and activities (Pompurova, Marakova, & Simockova, 2015). Since, various role-players are involved in the provision of packages there is a need for the players to collaborate, cooperate and promote the packages (Buhalis & Law, 2008). In addition, the involvement of various role-players in the provision of packages brings challenges in ensuring product quality and consistency (Chen, Mak, & Li, 2013). A problem with one role-player generally adversely affects the other role-players.

2.3.3.6 Ancillary services

Ancillary services are supporting services within an economy, such as banking and postal services and health facilities (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015; Byrd, Canziani, Hsieh, Debbage, & Sonmez, 2016; Estêvão, Carneiro, & Teixeira, 2014). Although these services are not primarily aimed at tourism, they support tourism activities. While these support activities do affect the attractiveness of a destination, they are not necessarily controlled by the tourism sector. This calls for high-level government involvement in the development of a strategy at national level (Hall & Page, 2014; Mistilis et al., 2014; Pastras & Bramwell, 2013;

Ruhanen, 2013). Advances in information technology have also enabled tourism organisations and their stakeholders to be dynamically interconnected using various technological information-sharing platforms. Thus, a unified platform with multiple points accessible through a variety of end-user devices that support, create and facilitate real-time tourism experiences is a prerequisite for a national tourism strategy (Lu, Geng, & Wang, 2015; Mandler et al., 2013).

2.3.3.7 Images

An image typically reflects the intrinsic qualities of the tourism product; its design, quality, style of attractions, and its structure and social environment (Ashton, 2014; Middleton & Clarke, 2012). In conceiving the total tourism product from a consumer's viewpoint, the natural focus moves to images of products. Images are, in fact, significant in the sense that they affect the buyer's behaviour (Chon et al., 2012). Tourism product images are not based on personal experience but on the information gathered from the tourism service providers and the tourists who have experienced them earlier (Chen et al., 2014). Images are, indeed, very potent in influencing holiday destination choice (Chon et al., 2012; Middleton & Clarke, 2012). These are thus the logical focus for tourism product marketers in upholding, adapting or creating fitting images to influence potential tourists' expectations.

2.3.3.8 Price

Price is a function of the attractions and facilities provided, with a range of prices according to the needs of the target visitor segments (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). Price is the total cost of elements such as travel, accommodation and involvement in a range of selected services and activities at the destination. The price of the tourism product or products is not always fixed but changes as a result of the physical distance the tourist has travelled, the nature of accommodation, season of the year, and the types of activity chosen or the purpose of the visit (Carlisle, Johansen, & Kunc, 2016). What makes the tourism sector formidable for the tourists is the tourism sector is fragmented in nature, in terms of control and ownership, which makes the organisations at various levels coordinate in marketing and planning (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). Moreover, the interdependence of the components within the tourism products highlights the need for collaboration.

2.3.4 Uses of ICT in the various tourism subsectors

This subsection describes the nexus between ICT and the tourism sector by looking at the application of ICT in the various tourism subsectors. The subsectors include accommodation, travel, attraction and heritage, as well as destination marketing.

2.3.4.1 Uses of ICT in the accommodation sector

ICT has transformed the way how accommodation service providers market and sell their services. The increase in the number of people using internet applications has led to accommodation service providers using ICT in their marketing strategies (Anwar, Carmody, Surborg, & Corcoran, 2014). Another advantage of ICT in the accommodation sector, like all other tourism sectors, is that it allows service providers to interact directly with their customers globally at a low cost (Guo et al., 2013; Rahman, Reynolds, & Svaren, 2012). Similarly, the production and distribution of marketing material can be done at a far lower cost (Christou & Nella, 2012).

Apart from the above, the convergence of ICT with media technologies allows the audio-visual presentation of information that out-performs the "glossiest and most colourful print" media (Dasgupta, 2011, p. 209). It is thus arguable that apart from the low cost associated with production and distribution of marketing material through ICT, the audio-visual capabilities of ICT is also crucial in making the message more appealing. ICTs combine all the previous disparate media platforms such as print, radio and television into one gadget; the computer. However, it is important to note that audio-visual capabilities of ICT will count for nothing if the presentation of the marketing message is poor. This is because the quality of the presentation is critical in the tourist's choice of accommodation (Dasgupta, 2011; Huertas-Garcia, Laguna García, & Consolación, 2014). However, although ICT is an advantage for tourists, facilitating their travel and booking arrangements, it has negatively affected accommodation intermediaries who used to book accommodation for tourists. These intermediaries have been pushed out of business by ICT as tourists can now book directly (Berne et al., 2012; Guttentag, 2013).

2.3.4.2 Uses of ICT in the travel sector

ICT has enabled travellers to search, reserve, purchase and amend their itineraries and get instantaneous confirmation (Fountoulaki, Leue, & Jung, 2015; Miocic, Vidic, & Klarin,

2014; Petříček & Sochůrková, 2015). This however, means that service providers are no longer guaranteed that a reservation made will be filled. On the other hand, service providers in the travel business have to increase internal efficiency through the adoption of advanced ICT systems to better manage their capacity and yields (Ivanov, 2014; Shcherbina & Shembeleva, 2014). They should be able to adjust prices in response to fluctuations in demand so as to maximise profitability (Petříček & Sochůrková, 2015). Moreover, ICT can enable tourists to choose translators, as it can be used to provide information on available translation services. Furthermore, ICT can enable tourists and travellers to identify menus and those who are allergic to some food items are timeously made aware and adjustments made to menus.

The developments in ICT enable would-be travellers and tourists to have access to timely, reliable and accurate travel information at a lower cost (Bak et al., 2014; Giannopoulos, 2004; Pronello & Camusso, 2015). In addition, through ICT, transportation in destination areas is made convenient through the timeous choice of airlines, buses and taxis to destination points. Furthermore, ICT enables transparent and easily comparable travel information as well as giving real-time prices and availability (No & Kim, 2015b; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2015). This, however, increases the bargaining power of travellers (Neuts, Romão, Nijkamp, & Van Leeuwen, 2013). It transfers power from tourism service providers to tourism consumers and it further increases competition within the sector thereby reducing sales margins (Neuts et al., 2013).

2.3.4.3 Uses of ICT in attractions and heritage

ICT applications are critical for heritage management (Alitany et al., 2013; Gogolou & Dimopoulou, 2015; Ioannides et al., 2014). They can be used to preserve, protect and popularise heritage sites and monuments (Ippolito, 2015). The critical element in heritage management is the documentation of heritage resources (Ippolito, 2015). This involves documenting national monuments, such as physical sites and objects in museums, which are referred to as collections (Georges, Logghe, & Schuurman, 2015). Documentation is critical in the sense that heritage itself has the challenge of possible theft, especially of heritage objects (Aydin, 2014; Vargas, 2014). A country is only in a position to manage its collection if it is known and if it can be defended before a court of law that a particular object belongs a particular country (Vargas, 2014). Therefore, ICT becomes extremely important in providing

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and managing proper documentation. Such documentation may be in the form of a film or any other digital method (Guidi, Micoli, Gonizzi, Rodriguez Navarro, & Russo, 2013). Documentation also applies to monuments (Doerr et al., 2014) and it is important to use ICT in the documentation of monuments (Brizard, Derde, & Silberman, 2007; Doerr et al., 2014). Digital images can show the condition of a monument at a particular day. The image is then stored and after a period of say two or three years, the extent of deterioration can be determined (Ortiz et al., 2014). ICT can also help in the conservation of the heritage and this also applies even to objects in museums (De Masi, 2014; Katsoni & Dologlou, 2016). ICT applications can also be used in the marketing of heritage sites and monuments (Lee & Chhabra, 2015; van Leeuwen, Kourtit, & Nijkamp, 2013), as well as in educational programmes and in making exhibitions in museums more interactive (Eiserman & Hushlak, 2013; Ray & van der Vaart, 2013).

ICT program can be used to ensure that all collections are documented using the available technology, especially multi-media documentation programmes where sound and visuals can be used to capture the uniqueness of individual objects. It can therefore be concluded that ICT can be used in a robust way to address the core business of heritage management.

2.3.4.4 ICT and national tourism marketing

Destination management systems (DMS) amalgamate and give out comprehensive tourism information using multiple channels and platforms (Buhalis & Law, 2008). A DMS is a customer-centric collection of holistic computerised information about attractions and facilities in a destination (Sigala & Marinidis, 2010). It typically provides comprehensive information and real-time reservations in addition to other destination management tools (Llodrà-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015). Destination management is the co-ordinated management of all the elements that make up a destination including locally available attractions and products in order to stimulate visitation (Pike & Page, 2014). A DMS integrates data from various role-players in order for tourists to find information about the accommodation, restaurants and attractions in a certain location (Farsari, 2012). Hence, ICT facilitates partnerships and collaboration towards a collective destination vision. ICT has enabled destinations to manage communication internally as well as acting as an information hub for external parties. A DMS helps to increase tourist engagement and satisfaction by providing easily accessible destination information (Jacobsen

& Munar, 2012). It employs a customer-centric strategy to manage and market a destination holistically, usually by using strong destination-related information, reservations and destination management tools (Sigala, 2009). Using ICT as a platform, tourists can view a destination, book accommodation, flights as well as other modes of transport (Morrison, 2013). ICT is now the primary source of destination information in major markets (Morrison, 2013) and has overtaken traditional sources of information on tourist destinations (Llodrà-Riera et al., 2015).

2.3.4.5 The benefits of the use of ICT in tourism organisations

This subsection explores the benefits of the use of ICT in the tourism sector by firstly looking at the benefits for tourism organisations and secondly for the tourists.

ICT has become integral and central to the development of modern tourism (Molz, 2012). It has enabled the provision of modern tools that facilitate new distribution channels, consequently creating a new competitive business environment (Énalan & Soteriades, 2012; Molz, 2012; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2014). ICT tools have transformed, dynamically interconnected trading partners and altered the distribution of services and the provision of information for tourists across the globe (Sigala, 2014). The advances in ICT have radically revolutionised and varied the day-to-day operations of tourist organisations (Hjalager, 2015). Technologies have drastically altered the operations, structures and strategies in organisations, bringing in new innovations (Baum, 2015). They have also enabled cooperation between different role-players in the sector, both locally and globally (Berné, García-González, García-Uceda, & Múgica, 2015; Magadan & Rivas, 2015). ICT has helped both in the generation and processing of information. ICT in this sector consists of many components that include computerised reservation systems, teleconferencing, video, video brochures, management information systems, airline electronic information systems, electronic funds transfer, digital telephone networks, smart cards, mobile communication, e-mail, and internet (Eraqi, 2014; Poon, 2003; Teruel & Viñals, 2012). These various communication technologies are being used in all sectors of the travel and tourism industry and its related sectors. Therefore, ICT has a direct impact on the tourism sector which can be improved using electronic business systems (Hojeghan & Esfangarech, 2011). For example, through applications such as artificial intelligence and data mining, ICT can be used to identify activities that appeal most to tourists and to changes in preferences and trends

(Alzua, Gerrikagoitia, & Rebón, 2014; Marrese-Taylor, Velásquez, Bravo-Marquez, & Matsuo, 2013).

Besides the foregoing, ICT facilitates superior data processing and communication to organisations, as well as providing tourists with enormous capabilities (Berné et al., 2015). Stimulated by ICT, the world is rapidly becoming integrated into a global market through the liberalisation of international trade as well as efficient transport and communication systems. The result is high competition in the flow of goods, services, capital and people including tourists across boarders (Yuhn & Park, 2010). However, it is also important to note that using ICT, the tourism sector and service providers can enhance their effectiveness through collaboration and sharing expertise, resources, costs and risks (Carlisle, Kunc, Jones, & Tiffin, 2013).

Concomitantly, ICT can play an integral role in ensuring that various role-players collaborate and promote their packages (Akoumianakis, 2014). Through collaboration, service providers join skills to offer an integrated and aggregated service to take advantage of a business opportunity (Getz & Timur, 2012). By cooperating and interacting using ICT, tourism service providers can form virtual organisations (Ammirato, Felicetti, Della Gala, Aramo-Immonen, & Jussila, 2015; Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014). Virtual organisations can be permanent or temporary (Murthy & Eldredge, 2013; Song, Gao, Zhang, & Lin, 2012). When service providers cooperate, they can be more responsive to changes in the market. This, in turn, enables them to provide comprehensive services. Moreover, ICT can be used to provide information about available packages as well as the needs of tourists before, during, and after their package tour.

However, ICT services can cause upheaval with a negative effect on the image of a service provider if ICT equipment fails to work according to expectations or if the system is continually down as a result of load shedding or hacking. This coupled with the widely publicised cases of security and confidentiality breaches and rapid advances in technology, especially those that allow virtual access from practically anywhere, has seen ICT being branded as an impediment to the tourism sector. These security problems have resulted in some tourists being hesitant to give their credit cards details online. However, security

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breaches can be minimised if service providers constantly improve their security through firewalls, encryption, a good information security culture and employee practices.

It is crucial for employers in the tourism sector to integrate their employees in their ICT programmes. This is because employees may, rightly or wrongly, be reluctant to integrate ICT in their work for fear of losing their jobs to ICT. Besides the increasing replacement of human beings by machines that the workers are worried about, it is argued by some scholars (Husain, Altameem, & Gautam, 2013; Morris & Kazi, 2014; Sabiote-Ortiz, Frías-Jamilena, & Castañeda-García, 2016) argue that ICT can lead to the loss of the human touch. This is because face-to-face interaction would have been replaced by ICT. However, most ICT-mediated technologies provide online help and post-service purchase assistance through the provision of telephones, instant messaging services and SMS. There are also new methods such as video conferencing, for example Skype, where service providers can speak to tourists in real-time.

The other advantages of virtual methods over traditional methods include being ubiquitous and being available everywhere all the time (Ulmer & Freeman, 2014; Yovcheva, Buhalis, & Gatzidis, 2013). Furthermore, virtual methods can be accessed by a greater audience on a global scale, without the constraints of time and space (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014; Dickinson & Peeters, 2014). They also offer large amounts of quality information globally to all markets, which can easily be customised and personalised (Han & Cheng, 2013; Neuhofer, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2014; Xu & Deng, 2014).

However, if the information is negative, virtual methods have the disadvantage of spreading the adverse information quickly. Pictures and videos can be easily posted in real-time. This has also been exacerbated by the convergence of media. Any person with smart mobile phone can post information, images and videos online (Andén-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013; Mortensen & Keshelashvili, 2013; Örnebring, 2013). International media can share such stories and provide both pictures and videos (Castillo, El-Haddad, Pfeffer, & Stempeck, 2014; Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013; Lee & Ma, 2012). It is however argued that such negative publicity and representations can be successfully turned into positives given that many people will become aware of the destination (Carter, 2014; Michalkó, Irimiás, & Timothy, 2015; Shakeela & Weaver, 2014). It is arguable that the positives outweigh the

negatives especially considering that destinations are now using celebrities and respected bloggers with huge followings to endorse destinations and pass on positive statements which can easily make international news headlines (Davies & Cairncross, 2014; Ho, Chiu, Chen, & Papazafeiropoulou, 2015; Kim, Lee, & Prideaux, 2014; McCartney & Pinto, 2014; Tan & Chang, 2013). In other words, ICT is now being used by destinations to elicit positive coverage in the mainstream media. Similarly, the hosting of big world events can positively alter the virtual image. South Africa's image greatly benefitted from the virtual presentations made after hosting of the World Cup in 2010 (Kim, Jun, Walker, & Drane, 2015; Knott, Allen, & Swart, 2012; Lohmann, Virkki, Cardoso, Zouain, & da Silva Pacheco, 2015; Walker et al., 2013).

2.3.4.6 The benefits of the use of ICT for tourists

The use of ICT in the tourism sector does not benefit organisations only but also the tourists. Dasgupta (2011) observes that advances in information technologies have afforded potential tourists an opportunity to access pre-tour services such as booking facilities. This is in agreement with Stiakakis and Georgiadis (2011) who argue that ICT can assist in finding destination information as well as for making bookings for tourist facilities and auxiliary services such as accommodation and transportation. Hung (2012) further argues that ICT has enabled potential tourists to personalise their itineraries which has a strong effect on the potential tourist's purchase intention. Online bookings enable potential tourists to co-create their itinerary by choosing and assembling their personalised and unique tour components and create their own flexible itineraries (Sigala, 2012). Tourists can also make payments for booked facilities through ICT, making it convenient for them, as they do not need to travel and make payments before the day or have the hassles of paying on the actual day of the visit. Thus, ICT can help tourists to transact. At the destination, access to reliable internet can enable tourists to instantly upload, share stories and photos with others in real-time (Carreras & Mancini, 2014; Durrant et al., 2011; Mancini, 2014; McGillivray, 2014). It can also enable tourists to learn and research during their stay at a destination. Through self-services, the tourists can also effectively serve themselves. Tourists can seek information through a variety of sources such as websites, ICT facilities like chat rooms, virtual tours, online ratings, and complaints websites.

Whilst ICT in the tourism sector presents opportunities, there are also negative consequences for the customer. There may be concerns about issues of privacy and confidentiality especially where service providers interact with tourists on the internet. Not all tourists may be interested is using ICT as a means of interacting with service providers. Some tourists may not be ready or interested in using technology.

Through the use of ICT the tourist can also seek redress, or make complaints about the service provider when they are unhappy with their experience. It is also important to note that some of the customer complaints on social media platforms can have a damaging and negative effect on the service provider's reputation. It is critical to note that it is not only tourists' complaints that may damage the reputation of a service provider. Sometimes a picture on a website can offend other classes of tourists, for instance a picture of hunting can offend tourists who are interested in animal rights.

On the other hand, tourists can use ICT to widen potential choices to select, choose and book packages. Tourists can choose activities they want in their packages, their prices and availability (Anishya & Kumar, 2015). ICT can also be used in co-creating packages. Furthermore, tourists can update, amend or even cancel packages online.

It is apparent from the above observations that information and ICT is the key elements in tourism; the prerequisite, life-blood and cement of the tourism sector because of the intangibility of the tourism product (Grotte, 2013; Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2013; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2012; Smirnov, Kashevnik, Balandin, & Laizane, 2013). Information is critical for the delineation of boundaries for the current and proposed tourist sites (Lowry, Cartier, Back, & Delconte, 2015; Mohammed, Guillet, & Law, 2015; Zhou, Xu, & Kimmons, 2015b) as well its adjoining areas. Tourists also require information about transport to attractions, timetables and the availability of other utilities like water, power and weather (Draper, 2015). Tourists use ICT to search for maps, search for airfares and schedules, accommodation and activities to do at the destination. Potential tourists use e-mails and telephones to contact service providers.

2.3.4.2 Digital divide challenges in tourism

There are significant differences caused by disparities in geographical locations or demographical groups that 'have' and those that 'have no' access to up-to-date technologies. These disparities in access to technology are referred to as the digital divide. Thus, places and destinations not connected through ICT can be left behind in technological developments and information arrives late in these remote areas as compared to the globalised and advanced world (Burt, Kleiner, Nicholas, & Sullivan, 2014; Janta, Cohen, & Williams, 2015; Lee, Harindranath, Oh, & Kim, 2015; Nugroho, Putri, & Laksmi, 2012). Destinations that have not benefitted from developments in ICT is in danger of remaining in the digital shadows and not being visible on a global scale, thereby failing to attract a significant number of tourists annually. Thus, the digital divide can hinder economic development.

However, tourists may not access information where there is absent, poor or lack of accessibility to ICT infrastructure. In developing countries, this may be due to erratic power and internet connectivity. (Moyo, 2013) argues that inconsistent power supply and connectivity may be a result of a country's poor financial condition. This may consequently affect the planning and decision-making process of the tourist. Thus, ICT and the availability of the necessary infrastructure to support ICT usage play a vital role in enhancing the accessibility of a destination. Problems are experienced where the instantaneous flow of information is disrupted as a result of intermittent internet connections, in the process affecting tourists visiting a destination who then fail to access information (Neuhofer, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2015).

The advances in ICT have resulted in tourist destinations being a hybrid of virtual and physical representation (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014; Govers & Go, 2009; Ružić & Dukić, 2013). A tourist destination thrives on its image (Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). The virtual image comprises the representation and the visibility created and shaped by its online presence (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014; Govers & Go, 2009). The image of a destination is determined by its representation online and this can have either positive and negative consequence for the physical image (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014; Huang, Backman, Backman, & Chang, 2015). Pucciarelli, Sabiescu, and Cantoni (2013) and Turin (2012) lament a situation in some destinations, especially in developing countries, where orality and printed material dominate digital material, as many such destinations do not have

content online. The other challenge in these destinations is that outsiders are the ones who define and interpret the digital images of a place (Carter, 2014; Li, Zhang, & Cai, 2013; Tebeau, 2013). Hence, online presence plays a prominent role in promoting a destination. Virtual representations must complement and congruent with physical representations. Both traditional methods and virtual space must be used to promote a destination. This may explain why many destinations and service providers have adopted various online media like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, video promotions, testimonials and online photo albums (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Roque & Raposo, 2015; Sotiriadis & van Zyl, 2013).

Other destinations are said to be in digital silence over and above the digital shadow (Miller, 2013). Invisibility manifests itself in many ways which include a lack of online content for a destination, resulting in its voice not being audible on a global scale. Many destinations in Africa still do not have access and connectivity (Chetty, Sundaresan, Muckaden, Feamster, & Calandro, 2013; Ferreira, Kostakos, Beresford, Lindqvist, & Dey, 2015; Gupta et al., 2014).

2.4 HISTORICAL USAGE OF ICT IN TOURISM

This section traces how ICT has transformed the tourism sector from the point ICT was introduced into the sector to the present.

2.4.1 Central reservation systems

Central reservation systems (CRSs) are computerised systems operated by tourism service providers that enabled the distribution of tourism. They consist of mainframes and extensive networks to support several terminals in several tourism role-players (Sismanidou, Palacios, & Tafur, 2008). CRSs enable instantaneous updates of information and the purchase of a wide range of tourism products. Although central reservation offices originally appeared in the 1960s, it was not until the growth of airline CRSs and the recent IT developments that hotels were driven to develop hotel CRSs in order to increase their distribution and efficiency, facilitate control, empower yield management, reduce labour costs and enable rapid response time for both customers and management requests (Buhalis, 2000; Eraqi, 2014). After the airlines, international hotels and other tour operators followed suit by developing centralised information and reservation systems (Bulhalis, 2003). However, CRSs have several disadvantages which include high installation costs and poor user experience

because of a lack of user friendliness (Kalish, Uras, & Page, 2001; Pollock, Benjamin, & Bowstreet, 2001).

2.4.2 Global distribution systems

The merging of airline computer reservations systems resulted in global distribution systems (GDSs) (Xiang, Magnini, & Fesenmaier, 2015; Xiang et al., 2014) and thus an extensive assortment of services and products for the entire industry. GDSs offer all types of tariffs and tourism services to subscribers, enabling users to make, amend and cancel reservations, in addition to printing tickets.

Buhalis (2003) argues that CRSs and GDSs were the key facilitators of change within the tourism sector before the advent of the internet. The two systems established an extensive travel marketing and distribution system. GDSs enable consumers to easily access transparent and comparable information from a variety of tourist services about their availability and actual prices (Candela & Figini, 2012). They also provide consumers with instant confirmation and speedy documentation about their reservations (De Santis, 2013). Service providers use CRSs and GDSs to manage, control, promote and distribute their products internationally (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Examples include Amadeus, Sabre and Galileo. However, the owners charged commissions, participation fees and transaction costs which are sometimes too high for small operators.

2.4.3 Destination Management Systems

Destination management systems (DMS) amalgamate and give out comprehensive tourism information using multiple channels and platforms (World Tourism Organisation, 2001). A DMS is a customer-centric collection of holistic computerised information on a destination as regards the attractions and facilities in that destination (Waghmode & Jamsandekar, 2013). It typically provides comprehensive information, real-time reservations and other destination management tools (Estêvão et al., 2014; Waghmode & Jamsandekar, 2013). Destination management is the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a destination including locally available attractions and products in order to stimulate visitation (Sigala, 2013). DMS integrate data from various role-players in order for tourists to find information about, for example, accommodation, restaurants and attractions in a certain location. ICT has enabled destinations to manage communication internally as well as acting as information

hubs for external parties (Pike & Page, 2014). In summary, DMS help in tourist engagement and satisfaction by providing easily accessible destination information.

2.5 MODERN USAGE OF ICT IN TOURISM

This section discusses the modern uses of ICT in the tourism sector. The section will discuss blogs, websites, social media, online advertising, search engines, collaborative filtering and video conferencing.

2.5.1 Blogs

Blogs are used in marketing tourism destinations. These blogs are websites set up by individuals or groups that produce and distribute information or news on a variety of topics that may include but are not limited to politics and tourism (O'Leary, 2013). Blogs are also known as weblogs. These are also described as online journals and may include feedback comments from other websites. The frequency of updates can be hourly, daily or weekly. The content on a blog is usually arranged in reversed sequential order (Bankole, Chigona, & Bankole, 2012). A blog enables the sharing of information among people for a variety of purposes in accordance with their own interests (Chen et al., 2014). As a result, information can be obtained from different categories that include personal, group, company or even social and public blogs. Globally, sources of information for tourists may be obtained from blogs, as these include pictures, videos, audio, maps and other related travel information (Banyai & Glover, 2012; Chen et al., 2014). Unlike commercial adverts, blogs provide full information on a destination, including the good and the bad side (No & Kim, 2015b).

2.5.2 Websites

Websites are also crucial in tourism marketing both locally and globally. No and Kim (2015a) classify tourism-related websites into four types: personal or travel blogs, tourism-related public agency websites, tourism-related business or company websites, and social media websites. A public website is a site owned and managed by a national tourism organisation which provides tourism information (No & Kim, 2015a). Such websites provide tourists with information on where to go, what to do, what to see and where to stay. This information is provided in multi-lingual form so as to provide information to both locals and foreigners (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Pike & Page, 2014). Most of the information on public websites is gathered and managed by government-related organisations. This has led to them

being viewed as images of their national governments. As a result, the perception is that they are government entities that represent the wishes and will of that particular government. If the government is viewed as good, information from the public website is trusted and authentic (Duffy, 2015). However, if the government is not trusted, that would reflect on its associated public website. The level of trust given to a public website depends on the level of trust given to the government. No and Kim (2015b) note that a good public website should have the following features: ease of navigation, accessibility and good content presentation.

A company website is a site owned or operated by a tourism service provider, providing information about its specific products and services (Niu, Wang, Yin, & Niu, 2015). It reflects information about the tourism service provider in terms of its products and services (Buhalis & Inversini, 2014; Pai, Xia, & Wang, 2014; Vrontis & Melanthiou, 2013). These organisations also provide commercial services on their websites in the form of portals where tourists can transact and pay for services (No & Kim, 2015a).

The essential features for a company website include contact details, prices charged for products and services, checking availability, online reservations, presence of travel schedules and plans, maps, and transport information (Huang & Benyoucef, 2015; Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). Therefore, tourists use the information on these websites to make decisions.

2.5.2.1 Social media

Tourists interact with other tourists using various social media platforms consequently social media is a very useful tool for tourism marketing. The term 'social media' is defined as a "group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Delerue, Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2012, p. 101). Social media can include text, audio, video, images and other multimedia communication. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking social book marking, social curation and Wikis are among the different types of social media (Ollier-Malaterre & Rothbard, 2015). Social media enables users across the globe to interact and communicate, share and exchange information and ideas. The information they share includes tourism-related information like opinions, experiences, activities, interests, photos, and videos in real-time or at defined intervals. However, it should be noted that it is not only the tourists who use social media as many

tourism service providers have taken advantage of the advent of the same social media websites to market their products and to get feedback from tourists. Most of these websites also assist tourists in posting and sharing their travel-related information, which may include opinions, comments and personal experiences.

2.5.3 Online advertising

The tourism sector has embraced online advertising, through social media and weblogs, among other online platforms. Advertising online occurs when an advertiser pays to place promotional content on another website (Xiang et al., 2015). Several sites can be used to drive traffic to the website being promoted. It can be argued that any website is an advertisement since it can be used to inform, persuade, as well as remind the would-be tourists about the services being provided by a tourism service provider. There are several approaches to online advertising, such as banner advertising, paid search advertising, pop-ups, and e-mails (Turban, King, Lee, Liang, & Turban, 2015)

Online advertising is media-rich, dynamic and interactive (Dinner, Van Heerde, & Neslin, 2014; Isfandyari-Moghaddam, 2012). It has several advantages over traditional forms of advertising, including the ability to update online advertisements any time at little cost. Furthermore, online advertising is able to reach large numbers of potential tourists across the globe, and it is cheaper than print, radio, or television advertising. In addition, online advertisements are usually interactive and targeted at specific groups or individuals. However, the online advertising medium's effectiveness and cost justification is difficult to measure (East, 2013; Sridhar, Germann, Kang, & Grewal, 2016).

2.5.4 Search engines

Search engines are the main method for finding information on tourism service providers and their products. Search engines offer an index of content on websites that can be searched with a keyword. If a tourism service provider is not prominent on search engines, sales will depend on the strength of the provider's brand and offline communication to drive visitors to its website (Ho, Lin, Yuan, Chen, & Alvares, 2016; Law et al., 2014).

2.5.5 Knowledge-based software

Using data mining software on the customer database, it is easy to identify customers with similar interests, preferences and travel patterns based on previously acquired customer knowledge (Ammirato et al., 2015). Examples include Amazon.com and skyMal. This data mining software tracks and monitors the preferences and purchasing behaviours of consumers and performs direct marketing. This software takes the criteria set by customers and then goes into digital databases to identify the choices available to them, while also narrowing down the choices (Sigala & Chalkiti, 2012).

2.5.6 Virtual reality and web casting

This facility enables three-dimensional displays of tourist destinations. Web casting provides online live videos and events. Virtual tours have been widely used in the promotion and selling of tourist sites and experiences, especially within the context of governmental tourism websites (Tavakoli & Mura, 2015).While some of the virtual tours are image-based photographic representations of sites with descriptions or 2D panoramic images, others are videos of actual places. Virtual tourism aims to reduce limitations by recreating real tourism venues on computers as 3D models. However, virtual tourism is always pre-made or pre-recorded.

2.5.8 Word of mouth

Word of mouth (WOM) consists of all informal communications focused on tourists and would-be tourists through internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of certain goods, services or service providers (Luo & Zhong, 2015). WOM involves communication between service providers and tourists over and above communication between tourists themselves (Filieri, 2015; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Pritchard & Stinson, 2015; Sotiriadis & van Zyl, 2013). It usually contains emotional messages that can influence other would-be tourists both negatively and positively (Pritchard & Stinson, 2015).

2.6 CASE STUDIES

This subsection provides an analysis of the two emerging economies that are doing well in the development and use of ICT in the tourism sector. The two countries are Rwanda and India. The reason for choosing these two particular countries is that the two countries are doing well in ICT development and usage in their economies including in the tourism sector.

2.6.1 Rwanda

Rwanda is a landlocked country in East Africa. Its economy is predominantly based on agriculture. Unlike most African countries, which rely predominantly on primary commodities, Rwanda has no major natural resources. Despite this lack, the country has a population density of 340 people per square kilometre (Rubagiza, Were, & Sutherland, 2011; Weldegiorgis & Ali, 2016). Furthermore, its population is growing at 2.6 per cent per year (Acharya, Rathod, & Upadhyay, 2016; Rutebuka, Zhang, & Pang, 2015). The country decided to turn itself into a knowledge economy using ICT as an alternative economic development paradigm in order to diversify its economy. After the 1994 genocide, the country totally refocused its economy on ICT (Lacity, Willcocks, & Rottman, 2008; Mann & Nzayisenga, 2015). Prior to 1994, Rwanda was one of the most technologically deficient countries, but within a short time the country has transformed into a country where government business is conducted online and wireless internet is available throughout the country (Mwangi, 2006). Rwanda has become a shining model of ICT deployment in Africa. In spite of its traumatic history, the country has transformed itself into the technological hub of East Africa (Mwangi, 2006; Rubagiza et al., 2011).

After carefully studying the successful examples of Singapore, Rwanda decided to focus its attention on improving its ICT infrastructure as well as providing ICT education to its citizens. In 2001, the government of Rwanda launched the National Information and Communications Infrastructure plans. These were rolled out in four successive five-year plans, which have been subsequently developed into Vision 2020, championed by President Paul Kagame (Das, Chowdhury, & Seaborn, 2016; Mwangi, 2006). This Vision aims to transform the country's economy by 2020. As a result, the Rwandan Development Board was established, the telecommunication sector was deregulated, and ICT equipment imported duty free. In line with this vision, high-speed fibre optics has been laid across the country linked to the Indian Ocean submarine fibre-optic. The technological advances in the country have transformed the daily lives of Rwandans in terms of how they communicate, do business, trade, and pay for goods and services (Mann & Nzayisenga, 2015; Tafirenyika, 2011; Uwamariya, Cremer, & Loebbecke, 2015). To enable electronic payments, VISA is linking businesses, shops, and cash machines with its extensive global network.

In its quest to transform the national economy through ICT, the Rwandan government considers the education sector to be pivotal in developing the necessary human capital (Acharya et al., 2016). Since 2000, there has been a concerted effort to introduce computers in all schools, and to integrate ICT into the education curriculum (Orodho & Bizimana, 2014).

After a decade of national ICTD strategies, the government of Rwanda shifted its focus from infrastructure and institutional development to leveraging ICT usage across all sectors of the economy including tourism. After the 1994 genocide the image of Rwanda was dented internationally, however the country has successfully transformed its image to one of the safest destinations in Africa. The image change can be understood as a result of successful marketing and rebranding using ICT. Consequently, the country revived gorilla tourism successfully. ICT was also used to contribute to poverty reduction and involve communities in the conservation of the gorillas. In addition to gorilla reserves, Rwanda has two more national parks with diverse flora and fauna. However, the tourism sector in Rwanda has largely depended on gorilla tourism as the main source of tourism revenue with contribution of over 90 per cent of the sector's earnings (Maekawa, Lanjouw, Rutagarama, & Sharp, 2015). Tourism in Rwanda tourism also has a vibrant meeting, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) segment, which attracts thousands of business tourists.

The successful development in the tourism sector is based on the successful leveraging of ICT in the tourism sector and the successful use of ICT in processing tourist visas online by the Department of Immigration and Control, as well as the conduct of government online (Chirisa, Dirwai, & Matamanda, 2015). The government's commitment to the development of the ICT sector has succeeded because it involves all stakeholders including private investors and local communities. The private sector is involved before, during and after the implementation of the ICT policies.

2.6.2 India
India is an emerging economy and is one of the countries that use ICT extensively especially in the tourism sector as ICT is expedient for all tourist activities at various levels. Berné, García-González, García-Uceda, & Múgica (2015) state that the Indian government,

entrepreneurs, management and employees in the tourism sector are the major contributors to the development of ICT in the tourism sector.

The driving force behind the emergence of India as a hub of ICT is a culmination of several factors such as having the world's second largest English-speaking population, a large pool of highly experienced IT professionals, greatly improving infrastructure, government support and, more importantly, comparatively lower human resources and operation costs relative to other Information Technology Enabled services (ITES) destinations (Brashear Alejandro, Javalgi, Benoy Joseph, Granot, & Gross, 2013; Johansson, 2009). The development of the use of ICT in the tourism sector may be traced to the development of the ITES sector (Hurn & Smith, 2016; Kerrigan, Shivanandan, & Hede, 2012; Rishi, Singh, & Misra, 2013; Sharma, 2015). In the 1960s, the Indian government devoted a lot of resources to high-level scientific and engineering education. It also had an inward-oriented, state-directed and controlled development strategy that was closed to external competition and investment. This policy discouraged private investors and players in manufacturing activities (Gupta, 2005). Foreign direct investment (FDI) was hampered by the licensing system and government regulation of companies' market share. In 1973, after the promulgation of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, many foreign companies opted to disinvest in India after being forced to dilute their shareholding and managerial appointments (Henley, 2006). Consequently, there was industrial stagnation and limited career opportunities for the science and engineering graduates, resulting in the migration of highly skilled manpower to the United States and the United Kingdom. Once in these countries they began to go up the corporate ladder and these facilitated further flows of talent. Some investors began to circumvent regulatory burdens in the manufacturing industry by turning to the software sector where there were no regulations. Johansson (2009) states that after 1980 the Indian government started opening up its economy and allowing foreign investment, alliances and technology transfer.

Before 1995, internet access was scant and poor in India. Tourists depended on printed flyers and leaflets from Indian embassies, a small number of published guides and feedback from those tourists who had visited the country before.

Internet was launched in India on 15 August 1995 (Gupta, 2005). During this period the internet was minimally adopted. The reasons given for this were attributed to a lack of ICT

knowledge as well as fear of technology that kept people away from its adoption. Henley (2006) notes that the ITES was helped by the liberalisation and deregulation of the telecommunication sector in 1999, which encouraged private investment. This in-turn helped connectivity, which further fuelled the growth of the ICT sector. As if that was not enough, internet access was deregulated in 1998 in addition to international bandwidth provision enactment in 1999 and this enabled integrated voice and data operations.

The Ministry of Tourism has two websites, namely, www.incredibleindia.org and www.tourism.gov.in. The former provides information about India which is intended for travel agents, media and visitors (Mamhoori, 2015). It also gives information about fairs and festivals as well as current updates on the tourism sector. There is an abundant body of literature which shows that the 'Incredible India' promotional campaign by the Indian national government has contributed immensely to enhancing the country's international image (Hurn & Smith, 2016; Kerrigan et al., 2012; Rishi et al., 2013; Sharma, 2015). This enhanced international image has helped generate a positive perception of the country and its tourism offerings. However, this image has been negatively influenced by incidents of terrorism which is why some scholars argue that India currently faces many challenges in improving its marketing of its rich cultural heritage (Ranga & Pradhan, 2014; Sandeep Munjal & Durgamohan, 2015; Suri, 2012). The other website www.tourism.gov.in, provides information for research scholars. It gives statistics on India and also provides links to other resources where information on India can be found (Singh, 2015).

2.6.3 Lessons from the case studies

The case studies discussed here have shown the role that government plays in ICT development and the importance of political will, stakeholder involvement and leveraging ICT in tourism in particular and development in general. These factors will be briefly discussed in this subsection. However a detailed description and their applicability to Zimbabwe will be further discussed Section in 6.2.1.2.

Government plays a pivotal role in developing potential policies and strategies for the effective use of ICT in the tourism sector. ICT development does not happen by chance but has to be clearly and deliberately thought out and accompanied by strategic government policies. Both the government of Rwanda and India had clearly thought-out policies and

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made deliberate efforts to support the use of ICT in the tourism sector in particular and the economy in general. The implementation of well-planned ICT policies transformed both Rwanda and India from technological laggards to technological leaders.

The success of Rwanda illustrates how strong political will and commitment at the highest level of government can help transform an economy. The top echelon of the government should be committed not only in terms of rhetoric, but also in action. Political will is important in the development of an ideal environment, infrastructure, human resources and deregulation of the economy – elements which are critical for the successful leveraging of ICT in tourism and the economy at large. Stakeholder involvement is also vital in devising policies and in their implementation. All the important stakeholders were involved in the development of both Rwandan and Indian tourism and ICT sectors. The tourism sector requires well-coordinated policies hence neither government nor the private sector can undertake development alone without the involvement of the other.

In the two cases, it was clear that the tourism sector leverages on already existing ICT infrastructure. It was clear that the infrastructure set up to develop and support the whole economy can be successfully leveraged to develop the tourism sector. When the ICT infrastructure is firmly in place, the tourism sector can grow at a higher rate all things being equal.

ICT can be seen as a development enabler which can bring about the economic and social revolution that is fundamentally reshaping the globe (Blake & Garzon, 2012; Pham, 2014). ICT alters or augments the way tourism destinations are perceived in the virtual realm (Guttentag, 2010; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2015). Bad publicity often results where what is perceived online differs from what is actually happening. On one hand, Rwanda successfully used ICT to correct the images created by the 1994 genocide and the many misconceptions tourists had about the country (Carvalho; Okello, 2014; Stauffacher, 2005). On the other hand, in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack India successfully transformed the perception that it was not a safe destination. Hence, ICT can be successfully used to rebrand a destination. Therefore, it is important for tourism strategies to encompass and interconnect both the physical and the virtual promotion methods.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, literature on ICT and tourism was analysed. The literature shows that there is a strong relationship between ICT and tourism in terms of the characteristics of tourism product, the nature of tourism destination and the uses of ICT in the various segments of tourism. Lessons were also drawn from India and Rwanda in view of the fact that the two countries are doing well in the use of ICT in the tourism sector. The next chapter explores literature on tourism and ICT in Zimbabwe in order to put the research into context and to get pertinent insights that may inform the research.

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CHAPTER 3: TOURISM AND ICT IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the literature on tourism and ICT in Zimbabwe. The objective of analysing the literature on ICT in the country is to establish the gap that needs to be addressed in order to ensure the success of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. A perusal of this literature is important in order to develop a strategy for the successful use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Accordingly, Zimbabwe tourist attractions are presented along with role-players in the tourism sector in country. Section 3.1 briefly gives an introduction. Section 3.2 gives a brief description of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination, this followed by Section 3.3 which details the geographical location of Zimbabwe whilst Section 3.4 gives a brief description of the Zimbabwean economy. An overview of the tourist attractions in Zimbabwe are described in Section 3.5. The major role-players of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe are dealt with in Section 3.6. Section 3.7 presents the historical and current usage of ICT in the tourism sector while Section 3.8 discusses the challenges faced by the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Section 3.9, includes a PESTEL analysis of the ICT and tourism sectors in Zimbabwe, follows this and a conclusion is presented thereafter in Section 3.10.

3.2 ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Zimbabwe tourist product is made up of natural resources, people, history, culture, amenities and super structures with an array of activities and sightseeing (Makuvaza & Makuvaza, 2014). The country has five World Heritage Sites, namely, Great Zimbabwe Ruins, Khami Ruins, Matobo Hills, Victoria Falls, and Mana Pools (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). A total 11% of Zimbabwe's land area is designated as national parks, with a variety of flora and fauna that include 550 bird and 100 mammal species (Gandiwa, Heitkönig, Lokhorst, Prins, & Leeuwis, 2013).

3.3 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in southern Africa with a total area of 390 759 square kilometres (Svubure, Struik, Haverkort, & Steyn, 2015). It shares a border with Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana (Mutandwa, Sigauke, & Muganiwa, 2013). Figure 3.1 shows a map of Zimbabwe and the geographical locations of tourist attractions.

Figure 3.1 Map of tourist attractions in Zimbabwe

Source: http://www.mapsofworld.com/zimbabwe/tourism/

3.4 THE ECONOMY OF ZIMBABWE

The Zimbabwean economy is dependent on agriculture, mining and tourism (Ncube-Phiri, Ncube, Mucherera, & Ncube, 2015). The country subsists on rain-fed agriculture and the faces a regular cycle of rainfall variability (Kuri, Murwira, Murwira, & Masocha, 2014; Masikati, Manschadi, Van Rooyen, & Hargreaves, 2014). The traditional industries, namely, agriculture and mining do not bring in much in terms of returns, thus invoking the need for diversifying the economy (Biti, 2009; Shangahaidonhi & Gundani, 2014). To date, however, there has been no augmentation of traditional sources of foreign currency and employment. The tourism sector is one of the strategic economic sectors that contributes heavily to employment creation, government revenue in terms of taxes, foreign currency generation as well as infrastructure development (Jenkins, 2015a). In addition, it contributes 10.3 per cent to the gross domestic product (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2014). Consequently, ICT and tourism have been earmarked as crucial pillars for growing the country's economy (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). The next section describes the tourist attractions in Zimbabwe.

3.5 TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

Generally, tourism in Zimbabwe relies heavily on natural and heritage resources. There are various types of tourist attractions in Zimbabwe, which include museums, monuments, game parks and natural features. Traditionally, the country relies on wildlife, historical monuments

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as well as other tourism products like boating and sailing activities (Chibaya, 2013; Manwa, 2007; Mugobo & Wakeham, 2014; Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). However, the main problem with traditional based tourism products is that they are easy to substitute (Mkono, 2010). Wild life is abundant in southern and eastern African countries such as Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya (Christie, Fernandes, Messerli, & Twining-Ward, 2014). In addition, the major tourist attraction in Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls, is also marketed in countries like South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia, with tour operators providing day trips to the Victoria Falls (Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013). These neighbouring countries took advantage of Zimbabwe's post-2000 political-economic crisis and its attendant negative media coverage which portrayed Zimbabwe as an unsafe tourist destination. This has resulted in lower income for Zimbabwe. The next subsection briefly describes the categories of the Zimbabwean tourist attractions. These include monuments, game parks, natural features, sports and cultural activities.

3.5.1 Monuments

Most of Zimbabwe's tourist attractions are monuments (Makuvaza & Makuvaza, 2014). These include Great Zimbabwe, the Khami Ruins, the National Heroes Acre, the statue of Dr David Livingstone at Victoria Falls and Cecil John Rhodes' grave at Matopos. In addition to Great Zimbabwe and the Khami Ruins, Zimbabwe has more than 300 dry stone walled structures scattered all over the country (Mawere, Mubaya, & Sagiya, 2013). The Great Zimbabwe Ruins is the largest ancient stone construction south of the Sahara (Huffman, 2014). The other monuments include rock art, ancient religious sites and historical buildings within the cities (Ndoro & Wijesuriya, 2015).

3.5.2 National parks

Zimbabwe has eleven national parks, which offer vastly distinct and fulfilling wilderness experiences (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). The parks are located around the country and they offer the visitor a wide variety of scenic, cultural and wildlife activities. All the national parks are strategically located to ensure that the numbers of visitors are equally dispersed (Vutete & Chikosha, 2016). The parks are located in Ecological Regions Four and Five or rugged mountainous areas which do not have much alternative economic use (Guerbois, Dufour, Mtare, & Fritz, 2013). However, the rugged mountains and terrains make it difficult to

establish ICT infrastructure (Dalvit, Siebörger, & Thinyane, 2012; Kim & Anderson, 2012; Manohar, Rao, & Mellam, 2010)

3.5.3 Natural features

The country has a sparse, scenic landscape with undulating plateaus and mountains (Mkono, 2012c). Zimbabwe is endowed with a unique landscape and waterfalls like the Victoria Falls, and uniquely shaped hills with precariously balancing rocks in Matopos and Epworth (Mawere & Tevera, 2015). The Eastern Highlands present a completely different Zimbabwe, with beautiful scenery, spectacular waterfalls and mountain lakes and a cool temperate climate that is perfect for hiking, fishing and birding (Makuvaza & Makuvaza, 2014).

3.5.4 Sporting activities

According to Hinch and Higham (2011), sport involves people travelling to a place to engage or watch a particular sport. In Zimbabwe, soccer, cricket, rugby and tennis are the major types of sports (Durden, 2014). These sports attracts thousands of local and international visitors annually (Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013).

3.5.5 Cultural Activities

Zimbabwe has diverse cultures and varied traditions and ceremonies. Traditional ceremonies including rain making at Mathojeni, Bulawayo (Makuvaza & Makuvaza, 2014), Shona Mbende-Jerusarema dance (Scovazzi, 2015), Ndebele Isitshikitsha dance (Ngara, 2014) and Makishi dance at Victoria Falls (Makuvaza & Makuvaza, 2014; Phiri, 2014). The country also hosts several festivals like the Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA), the Harare Agricultural Show (Gleeson, 2013) and the Harare Carnival (Mkono, 2013). Tourists are also able to see and buy traditional Zimbabwean arts, crafts and curios (Nyahunzvi, 2014).

In addition, a new tourism phenomenon, religious tourism, has developed through the rise of spiritual healing through prophets such as Johane Masowe, Emmanuel Makandiwa and Walter Magaya. Thousands of believers visit Zimbabwe to attend spiritual events and during annual pilgrimages hosted by such prophets. The next subsection discusses the organisation of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

3.6 OVERVIEW OF THE TOURISM SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

The tourism sector in Zimbabwe is led by the government and driven by the private sector (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013). It is largely fragmented consisting of many role-players in which include: Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, the Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Information Media and Broadcasting Services, and finally the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as shown in Figure 3.2. Moreover, there are no clear mechanisms and strategies to coordinate and integrate the activities of these different role-players through ICT. In practice, these role-players act independently without regard for the way their activities affect other players, which makes it difficult to coordinate and support tourism activities. There is also lack of a clear ICT strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This is despite the fact that the Government of Zimbabwe has identified ICT and tourism as key pillars for the country's economic revival. Tourism is a multi-sectorial activity that requires the involvement and participation of many stakeholders, including service providers in the economic, social, cultural and environmental realms (Beirman et al., 2014). This section describes the role-players and their functions in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.
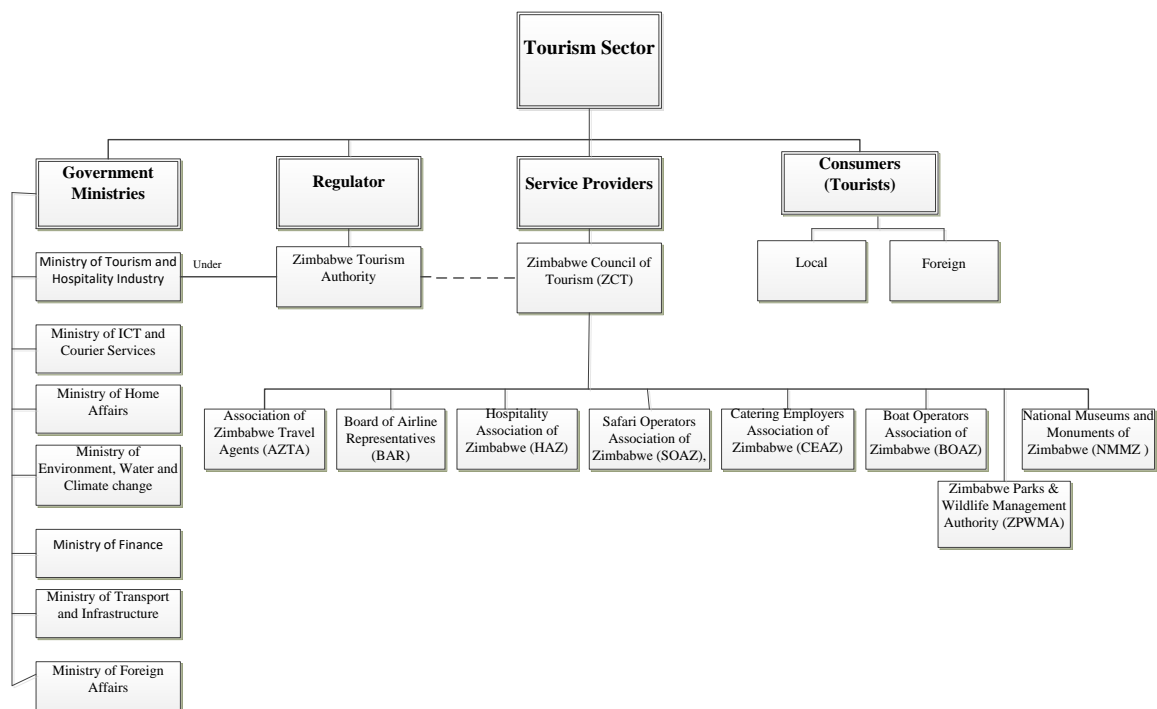
Figure 3.2 The organisation of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe Source: Researcher's design

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3.6.1 Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Tourism activities in Zimbabwe fall under the remit of the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry. This ministry provides the policies, strategies and regulations that direct and guide the tourism and hospitality sector. In 2009, following the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), the government created a standalone Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Munjoma, 2012), with the main objective being to focus national attention on tourism development. The ministry issued the Zimbabwe National Tourism Policy in 2012 and the Strategic Plan in 2013 respectively.

3.6.2 Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) is a statutory body that falls under the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry which was set up by the government of Zimbabwe through an Act of Parliament, Tourism Act Chapter 14:20 of 1996. ZTA is mandated by the government to carry out tourism promotion, planning and development, research and the enforcement of standards and services. In essence, it is responsible for implementing policies of the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry and is the only statutory board under the Ministry.

The ZTA is the regulator of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and is also responsible for destination marketing (Chigora & Zvavahera, 2015; Zibanai, 2013). In its destination activities, the authority manages and markets the country as a leading tourist destination in Africa and the world at large. The mandate of the ZTA is to promote the sustainable development and growth of tourism in Zimbabwe. The authority promotes the sustainable development of tourism by setting and monitoring standards and marketing activities using its own staff as well as strategic partners (Makwanda & Woyo, 2014; Nyahunzvi & Njerekai, 2013). It also makes extensive use of ICT and has established a network of its officers in all Zimbabwean embassies to augment its local officers in tourism cities and towns in Zimbabwe (Chibaya, 2013; Zibanai, 2014). The ZTA is also mandated to manage and promote the hotel grading system (Manwa, 2011; Muchenje, 2011). Within the ZTA, the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) division is responsible for the promotion of MICE tourism (Abel & Mudzonga, 2016).

However, it has been argued that current ZTA efforts are centred on tourism attaches, brand ambassadors, tourism exhibitions and carnivals as well as inviting prominent musicians to visit Zimbabwe (Chibaya, 2013; Matiza & Oni, 2013; Zengeni & Zengeni, 2014a). It can therefore be argued that there is a need for an ICT strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in tourism sector. This research seeks to develop such a strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

3.6.4 Zimbabwe Council of Tourism

The Zimbabwe Council of Tourism (ZCT) which was formed in 1988, is the umbrella body for tourism service providers in Zimbabwe. Its mandate is to create an enabling business environment for its members to speak with one voice. It represents the tourism sector at all levels of society, including the government agencies. It influences opinions, policies and planning and works for the creation of a favourable legislative, fiscal and physical environment for tourism operators. Membership of ZCT includes corporate businesses, tourism associations and organisations involved in tourism. Associations which are members of ZCT include the Association of Zimbabwe Travel Agents (AZTA), the Board of Airline Representatives (BAR), the Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe (HAZ), the Safari Operators Association of Zimbabwe (SOAZ), the Zimbabwe Vehicle Rental Association (ZIVRA) and the Catering Employers Association of Zimbabwe (CEAZ). These associations unite the various stakeholders and accord them a crucial single voice in negotiations with regulator and policy makers. The associations also define the standards and rules necessary for the smooth running of the sector.

However, it appears that members of the ZCT have not been quick to employ ICT in their marketing or in using other ICT-enabled capabilities. Those who have websites receive no customer feedback and are not using the platform to handle reservations.

3.6.5 Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority

The Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) is a statutory board that resides under the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate. It operates in terms of an Act of Parliament, the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975. The Authority has a mandate to manage the entire wildlife population of Zimbabwe, whether on private or communal lands. Private landowners can utilise the wildlife on their land, but are still accountable to the Authority for

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the welfare of the animals. In line with the ZPWMA's mandate to protect, manage and administer the wildlife of Zimbabwe, it endeavours to preserve the unique flora and fauna heritage of Zimbabwe. The Authority also provides visitors with leisure and accommodation facilities such as lodges, chalets, cottages, caravan sites, camping sites and picnic areas.

Zimbabwe has eleven national parks, each of which offers vastly contrasting and fulfilling wilderness experiences. Darkey and Alexander (2014) argue that the game parks in Zimbabwe are underfunded. Muboko and Murindagomo (2014) further state that the parks face operational challenges in terms of delivering their mandate effectively.

3.6.6 National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe

The National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament; The National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia Act (1972), which is now called the National Museums and Monuments Act (Chapter 25:11). The Act established a Board of Trustees to provide for the establishment and administration of museums' and to provide for the preservation of ancient, historical and natural monuments, relics and other objects of historical or scientific value or interest. NMMZ is funded through a grant by the central government. The NMMZ falls under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The NMMZ deals mainly with important museums and monuments. Sinamai (2014) and Mawere et al. (2013) state that national monuments and museums form an integral part of the Zimbabwean tourism sector.

3.6.7 Publicity associations

Publicity associations are voluntary non-profit organisations established in cities to promote tourism and investment and publicise them nationally, regionally and internationally (Dondo, Bhunu, & Rivett, 2002). Publicity associations promote all aspects of the respective city's commerce and industry, tourism, sport, arts and culture. Their promotional activities include exhibitions, workshops, print and electronic media. In addition, publicity associations provide a personal information service, responding to enquiries regarding accommodation, tours, and places of interest and transport directions. In addition, they act as a place of first contact for visitors to cities.

3.6.8 Other government ministries

The other government ministries involved in tourism related activities include the Ministries of Water, Environment and Climate, ICT, Finance, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Sports and Culture. These ministries affect directly or indirectly the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry. It is important to note that the ministries also have statutory bodies that implement government policies spread across several different sectors, which also directly or indirectly influence the tourism sector. These statutory bodies include the RBZ, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management, National Museums and National Monuments, and the Department of Immigration and Control. These organisations either provide services directly to tourists or make policies which affect the tourism sector. Outside the government, the private hospitality sector is owned by a variety of players that ranges from large multinational companies to relatively small family ventures (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). Although characterised by a number of players small to medium enterprises constitute a larger share (Nyahunzvi, 2015).

This section showed that many role-players in the tourism sector fall under the jurisdiction of diverse ministries. This means that although sub-policies (for instance on tourism training and education, on zoning of tourism development areas) may be made, they require the cooperation and goodwill of other government ministries and agencies to implement. This then raises the issues of institutional structure and inter-ministerial cooperation. The next subsection will now briefly describe the factors affecting the ICT and Tourism sectors in Zimbabwe.

It can be noted that there are multiple ministries with overlapping jurisdictions that operate independently within the tourism sector. This effectively means that there are statutes and regulations emanating from different ministries, which affect the tourism sector. Therefore, effective coordination is required within this sector. Some of the key ministries and statutory bodies affecting the ICT and Tourism sector were presented above.

3.7 HISTORICAL AND CURRENT USE OF ICT IN THE TOURISM IN ZIMBABWE

There has been scant literature on the historical uses of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. However, the development of the ICT sector can be traced to 1888 when Robert

Moffat established the telegraphic communication and in 1896 when the telephone system was initiated (Mazango, 1998). The use of ICT in the tourism sector is however, a relatively new phenomenon. The e-readiness report of 2005 noted that there is significant use of ICT in the tourism sector in areas like flight and hotel bookings (Zimbabwe e-readiness survery report 2005)

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority continues to use traditional and largely out-dated strategies of marketing (Muzapu & Sibanda, 2016; Ruhode et al., 2008; Zanamwe et al., 2012). The strategies adopted by ZTA from 2009, are largely on-the-location marketing strategies which include inviting celebrities, guest tourism ambassadors and musicians from countries like Jamaica and US. It also includes tourism hosting international journalists as well as travel expos and festivals such as Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair and Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA). This supported by Zengeni and Zengeni (2014b) who argue that the use of information technology in marketing destinations is not yet fully developed as manual methods and systems are mainly being used in Zimbabwe. Where ICT is functioning there is normally inadequate, out-dated or obsolete equipment (Migration and Tourism Sector Statistics Plan Report, 2012). Ruhode (2013) asserts that Zimbabwe does not have systems which are adequately powerful and rich to support the information needs of tourists. Reason for this being that different types of information are dispersed and reside on different depositories in different organisations like the ZTA or immigration that are not interconnected. However, the absence of voluntary collaboration amongst players in the sector negatively affects the effectiveness and use of ICT in the tourism sector. The only collaboration that happens is mandatory (Charleen, Kumbirai, & Forbes, 2014; Ndlovu & Heath, 2013) and that does not augur well with the growth of ICT use in the tourism sector as IT systems are unable to produce accurate statistics and useful information for management and to aid decision making (Gono, 2006).

The majority of small players in the sector established company websites, most of which are out of date and difficult to navigate (Govere, Tsokota, Chikuta, Mukwembi, & Chinofunga, 2013; Mupfiga, 2015). However, large companies like hotel chains have developed and adopted a range of e-commerce platforms on which they are able to transact online (Mupfiga, 2015; Muzapu & Sibanda, 2016). Internet booking systems generates a booking in email format rather than integrating it into the hotel's reservation online system (Mupfiga, 2015). This obviously limits the usefulness of these systems. Tourism players such as hotels

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have embraced social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube for the purposes of marketing their services (Basera, 2013; Matikiti, 2015). For example, a number of hotels such a Meikles, African Sun, Rainbow Tourism Group Hotels are now using social media.

3.8 CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TOURISM SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

The available literature (Moyo, 2009b; Ndlovu & Heath, 2011; Thram, 2006; Zibanai, 2014) strongly points out that ICT, especially the internet, and hostile government policies and economic refugees have contributed to the denting of the Zimbabwean image, reputation and identity on a global scale. This has had an adverse effect on the growth of the tourism sector in the country.

There is a significant body of literature submitting that the ICT sector has contributed immensely to the demise of the tourism sector in post-2000 Zimbabwe through a negative portrayal of the country (Buiter, 2007; Glaeser & Shleifer, 2005; Mkono, 2010; Ndlovu & Heath, 2011; Zibanai, 2014). The rapid depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar and unprecedented inflation sparked by the huge and un-budgeted pensions of the liberation war veterans in 1998 led to the defeat of a government draft constitution in a referendum in February 2000 (Thram, 2006; Zamchiya, 2011). The rejected draft constitution contained a clause, which allowed the government to expropriate land without compensating commercial farmers. Veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation war consequently began violent invasions of the commercial farms and the government did not stop them. Hence, some scholars such as Chavunduka and Bromley (2013), Kriger (2003) and Raftopolos (2013) argue that the government sanctioned the violent land invasions. During the same period an opposition party, the Movement of Democratic Change (MDC) was gaining popularity and there were violent clashes between the ruling party, ZANU PF and opposition supporters in the period leading to elections in June 2000 (Fielding, 2015; LeBas, 2006; Makumbe, 2006; Raftopoulos, 2000). The violent land reform programme, the invasion of tourist attractions, operation Murambatsvina, hyper-inflation, corruption, State-sponsored violence, inconsistent policies by the government, among other activities, were the major source of bad publicity (Antonio, 2015; Chigora & Vutete, 2015; de Jager & Musuva, 2015; Ndlovu & Heath, 2011; Peters-Berries, 2002). These developments gained the country extensive negative publicity in

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local private media and foreign media; a development that led to tourists shunning the country. The situation was exacerbated by western governments, for example the USA, Britain and Australia, issuing travel warnings to their citizens with regards to Zimbabwe.

Economic refugees have also played a significant role in fuelling bad publicity about Zimbabwe. Although, there might have been genuine cases of political persecution, the majority of the people who fled the country during this period made false representations to gain asylum (Lipton, 2009; Maharaj, 2002; Maunganidze, 2016; Parsons, 2007; Pasura, 2009; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012; Sibanda, 2010). These economic refugees went to the source markets of Zimbabwe's tourism sector and gave negative information about the prevailing situation. These claims gained wide coverage on the internet and in foreign newspapers.

In 2007, the country suffered a cholera epidemic that further attracted bad publicity (Chibaya, 2013; Chigora & Zvavahera, 2015), rendering the country no longer attractive to regional and international travellers. Zimbabwe as a tourist destination was subsequently perceived as more dangerous than war-torn countries (Chibaya, 2013). The year 2008 ushered in a very unstable environment which was characterised by the global economic crisis, and for Zimbabwe, hyper-inflation, price controls, severe shortages of electricity, fuel and foreign currency and political violence (Chibaya, 2013; Chikanda & Crush, 2014; Mawowa, 2013; Mufudza, Jengeta, & Hove, 2013). This caused a decline in demand for travel for both regional and international tourists, forcing foreign airlines to withdraw their services/flights into Zimbabwe.

More recently, the increase in internet access has given Zimbabweans a platform to publicise negative material about their country (Mpofu, 2013, 2015; Mutsvairo & Sirks, 2015; Ollier-Malaterre & Rothbard, 2015). From 2004, the concept of 'online newspapers' began to inspire a number of vibrant projects. NewZimbabwe.com was Zimbabwe's first news website and discussion forum. Zimbabweans began to use new media as an alternative to the government controlled public media. These new media offered audiences the possibility of being both consumers and producers of content. Whereas the public media offer biased coverage of events (Mhiripiri, 2013; Mpofu, 2013; Otteng, 2014) and systematically barred voices critical of ZANU PF from being heard, new media offer those counter-hegemonic and excluded voices access to a platform to debate issues of common public interest.

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Many of the media house are now available online which has given people the opportunity to play the role of citizen journalism. This enables almost anyone with a smart mobile phone and internet access to publish content and images online using information technologies such as SMS, emails, social media, micro blogs and video sharing platforms (Mutsvairo & Sirks, 2015). Apart from posting news that might be false, readers can also comment on such news further damaging the image of the country since they can be accessed by source markets (Moyo, 2009b). Many Zimbabweans use hate speech and insult each other and make derogatory statements about their country, its leaders and its citizens as a strategy to be accepted and survive (Deane, 2013; Mutsvairo & Columbus, 2012; Pretorius & Blaauw, 2015).

Bad publicity negatively influences the image of a destination in the tourism source market. Players in the tourism sector acknowledge that negative publicity in the international media has played a major role in hampering growth in the sector. It has resulted in travel insurance charges, especially for American visitors, making Zimbabwe an expensive destination in the region. Other source markets, especially the USA and the UK issued travel warnings to their citizens (Chipanga & Mude, 2015; Jenkins, 2015b; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Mamdani, 2009; Mkono, 2010; Muzvidziwa, 2013; Van Amerom, 2006) whilst some international tourism websites excluded Zimbabwe from their holiday packages in southern Africa, marketing Victoria Falls as a South African destination. Bad publicity also made it difficult to access funding from multilateral and bilateral institutions, leading to a shortage of funds for the revival and refurbishment of tourism facilities (Chipanga & Mude, 2015; Karambakuwa et al., 2011).

After the forming of the Government of National Unity in 2009, the travel warnings were lifted and economic and political stability was restored (Karambakuwa et al., 2011). However, the tourism sector is still affected by both the physical and digital realities. This research seeks to come up with an ICT strategy, which combines both digital and physical methods to promote tourism in Zimbabwe.

While Zimbabwe was getting adverse publicity in the early 2000s largely based on allegations of gross human rights abuse emanating from the land reform programme and disputed elections, its image temporarily changed around 2009. The formation of the

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Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009 saw the Southern African country slowly winning back international goodwill and investor confidence. However, the end of the GNU in 2013, which saw ZANU PF regaining virtually total control of the government, brought mixed perceptions locally and internationally. It is this context of the shifting socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe, which makes this research necessary, since the socio-economic environment has a bearing on the ICT and tourism sector in any country.

3.9 THE PESTEL ANALYSIS OF ICT AND TOURISM IN ZIMBABWE

To be able to fully appreciate and understand the situation in Zimbabwe's tourism and ICT sectors a Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) analysis was undertaken. PESTEL generally covers all of the factors, that will have an impact on the market and can help to describe the external business environment (Sun, Guo, Ma, Li, & Dang, 2014). Mkude and Wimmer (2015) argue that a PESTEL analysis can show independencies as well as relations between PESTEL factors, thereby providing a holistic picture. Such an analysis will help to understand the situation in Zimbabwe's ICT and tourism sectors. Chong (2014); Mayaka and Prasad (2012) used the PESTEL analysis to describe and analyse the situations in Malaysia and Kenya respectively. The following subsections look at these factors in detail.

3.9.1 Political factors

Political factors significantly influence ICT and tourism in Zimbabwe (Mkono, 2012c). All the final decisions of ICT and tourism revolve around the government (Takavarasha & Makumbe, 2012). It is the government that formulates and implements policies at the highest level (Mwangi, 2006). The Government of Zimbabwe has established standalone but connected ministries of ICT as well as the Tourism and Hospitality Industry to spearhead development in their areas of responsibility (Nkala, Ngulube, & Mangena, 2012). This was an important step in recognising the significance of the two ministries in making a positive contribution to the economy (Karambakuwa et al., 2011). Accordingly, the government has formulated a number of policies, frameworks and has enacted laws to promote ICT and tourism (Karambakuwa et al., 2011). However, these laws and policies have a many loopholes because most of them have not been fully implemented according to global standards (Takavarasha & Makumbe, 2012) .

In addition, new policies are formulated randomly and replaced without their predecessors having been fully implemented (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012), thus negatively affecting both the ICT and the tourism sectors. Furthermore, policies originate from different line ministries and statutory bodies without considering the impact of the other related sectors (Rajah, Rajah, & Jerie, 2012); hence, there is no coherence or policy coordination. In addition coordinated mechanisms, clear guidelines and a strategy for ICT integration in the country's developmental strategies have been neglected (Mhlanga, 2006). One example is the contradictions that revolve around the issue of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the indigenisation policy; the country on the one hand desperately needs to attract FDI, while on the other hand its indigenisation policy appears to drive away foreign investors.

Mkono (2012c) argues that politics has significant implications for the tourism sector, especially where source markets are of the perception that visiting Zimbabwe would be an implicit way of legitimising the government of President Robert Mugabe, which is seen as autocratic, violent and disregarding human rights and the rule of law. This gave rise to negative publicity in both print and online news sources and ultimately the tourism sector declined. The violent land reform programme, invasion of tourist attractions, operation Murambatsvina, hyper-inflation, corruption, state-sponsored violence, inconsistent policies by the government among other activities were the major source of bad publicity (LeBas, 2014; Matiza & Oni, 2013) which led to a negative perception in source markets, resulting in tourists shunning the country (Mugobo & Wakeham, 2014).

3.9.2 Economic factors

Tourism and ICT are significantly affected by macro-economic factors (Ali & Frew, 2014; Kennedy Nyahunzvi, 2013; Sadr, 2013). On a global scale an unstable environment, such as the global economic crisis, hyper-inflation, price controls, severe shortages of electricity, fuel and foreign currency as well as political violence adversely affect the tourism business (Chibaya, 2013). Economic factors can also result in a drop in travelling demand for both regional and international travellers (Chung et al., 2015; Grotte, 2013; Hristov, 2015). This view also resonates with Eugenio-Martin and Campos-Soria (2014), who argue that macroeconomic factors can result in a tourist destination being regarded as expensive for tourists leading to a decline in the number of tourist arrivals.

Zimbabwe suffered a decade of economic and political instability resulting in deterioration of tourism facilities and ICT infrastructure (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). There were no lines of credit to upgrade tourism facilities (Karambakuwa et al., 2011) and high interest rates were prohibitive for tourism and ICT service providers. Consequently, the failure to access finance resulted in poor services and infrastructure deterioration.

3.9.3 Social factors

Kamal and Qureshi (2009) emphasise that social factors can either support or undermine economic development, including ICT and tourism. Social factors are considered to be important in understanding the socio-technical view of ICT. The unstable political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the accompanying droughts resulted in high unemployment and shortages of food (Gandiwa et al., 2013). They also has other undesirable consequences, such as the illegal poaching of wild animals, wood poaching (Muboko et al., 2014) and vandalism and destruction of ICT infrastructure. The most prevalent type of vandalism was theft of electricity transformer oils and cables (Chirisa, 2009). Schools and other buildings that accommodate computers were also prime targets of vandalism (Nkala, Dube, & Sithole, 2012). The destruction of ICT infrastructure impedes economic growth, the competitiveness of a destination and the delivery of ICT services.

In 2007, the country experienced a cholera epidemic, which added to the adverse publicity (Chibaya, 2013; Mkono, 2012c), thus rendering the country un-attractive to local, regional and international travellers alike.

A number of media houses available online give people the opportunity to play the role of citizen journalism. This enables almost everyone with a mobile phone and internet access to publish content and images online using information technologies, such as SMS, emails, social media, micro blogs and video sharing platforms (Mutsvairo & Sirks, 2015). Apart from posting news that might also be false, people also comment on them which further damages the image of the country since they can be accessed by source markets (Moyo, 2009a; Moyo, 2009b; Mutsvairo & Sirks, 2015; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012).

3.9.4 Technological factors

Zimbabwe is working towards integrating ICT in tourism with the aim of being connected to the whole world so that tourism is more marketable than before (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). Karambakuwa et al. (2011) noted that the internet plays a crucial role in bookings, marketing, e-commerce and also in creating competition among destinations. Chikafu, Mirimi, and Hurombo (2014) share this view, arguing that the internet can be used in marketing tourist destinations. However, Zengeni and Zengeni (2014b) state that the use of information technology in marketing destinations is not yet fully developed as manual systems are still in use in Zimbabwe. Where ICT is functioning there is inadequate, out-dated or obsolete equipment is being used (Migration and Tourism Sector Statistics Plan Report, 2012). To further worsen the situation, in some cases the requisite skills and human resources are not available to manage equipment (Nyahunzvi & Njerekai, 2013). In some organisations there are archaic technologies and inadequate capacity to produce meaningful information, which is important for successful tourism (Newfarmer, 2015).

The information mentioned above indicates that there is still need for more research as the success of tourism using ICT needs a holistic approach. In Zimbabwe, most of ICT processes are fragmented and haphazard, with a great deal of redundancy and duplication (Ezeuduji, 2015). Moreover, the use ICT such as GPRS and electronic payment platforms is limited (Chaterera, 2012). The government of Zimbabwe has identified ICT and tourism as pillars of economic revival among other sectors (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). However, the current government's efforts are uncoordinated and have failed to transform service delivery. In addition, a number of ministries and government departments are still using manual processes, despite the possibility of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness through the use of ICT (Chaterera, 2012). Consequently, this research is very important as it can provide new insights into solving some of the problems associated with ICT in tourism in the country. There is a void which needs to be filled so that there is seamlessness in the tourism sector in using ICT. However, very little academic research has been done on these two important areas - ICT and tourism - combined in Zimbabwe, thus this research is not only important for Zimbabwe but also to the body of knowledge in general. This research may also be useful to other developing countries in similar circumstances, particularly in Africa and Asia.

3.9.5 Environmental factors

Environment is a cross-cutting sector that interacts with various role-players in using, managing and monitoring natural resources. The tourism sector is one of the stakeholders that is heavily dependent on the natural environment in which most tourism activities interact with the natural environment. Any factors that affect natural environment like natural disasters, man-made disasters adversely affect tourism (Zhang, Zhang, Zhang, & Cheng, 2014). Environmental challenges being faced by the country include extinction of forest and wildlife species. A closer look at the soils, lands, waters, air, plants and animals reveals a picture with troubling signs of overuse and diminishing quality and availability of natural resources. This threatens the tourism sector which is heavily reliant on these resources. The deterioration of the environment can act as a barrier to the growth and development of tourism (Chubchuwong et al., 2015; Holden, 2016). This is because tourists generally shun areas with intense environmental degradation and prefer areas kept in their natural state (Doran & Larsen, 2014; Packer, Ballantyne, & Hughes, 2014). Since Zimbabwe tourism products are mostly nature- dependent, they can be adversely affected by environmental degradation. This results from the interplay of the four major challenges of deforestation, siltation, all forms of pollution, and poaching of flora and fauna (Risiro, Tshuma, & Basikiti, 2013). A number of causes underlie these major environmental challenges in Zimbabwe. These challenges include deforestation, dwindling water supply, poaching and pollution. These challenges are further worsened by illegal mining activities, population pressure, unsustainable land use practices and poor waste management among others.

Furthermore, the unlawful occupation by some communities of designated forest and wildlife conservancies has also resulted in rampant and widespread poaching activities (Muboko et al., 2014). Poaching of both flora and fauna is one of the worst environmental and security challenges that Zimbabwe faces. There has been a general increase in poaching of wildlife by both foreign and local nationals since 2000 (Sibanda et al., 2015). Heavy poaching has been experienced countrywide on both Parks and non-Parks estates. Poaching has also shown itself in the illegal and unsustainable harvesting of forest produce from demarcated forests protected under the Forest Act (Mutekwa & Gambiza, 2016).

The Ministry of Environment is assisted in implementing environmental provisions by three departments, namely the Environmental Management Agency, the Forestry Commission, and

the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013; Mhlanga, Nyikahadzoi, & Haller, 2013). The major developmental issue in the environment sector in Zimbabwe is the reduced quality and quantity of natural resources (Milgroom, Giller, & Leeuwis, 2014).

Although the country has a number of laws governing the environment which include the Environmental Management Act, there are in some cases disregard of policy and regulatory provisions, lack of incentives for conservation, inadequate monitoring of policy and regulations and environment awareness gaps (Gutman, 2016; Marambanyika & Beckedahl, 2016; Nhundu, Mushunje, & Aghdasi, 2015). Key institutions often lack adequate budgets and limited institutional capacity.

Rapid developments in the tourism and ICT sectors can increase exploitation of natural resources creating significant pressures on the environment. Since Zimbabwe tourism products are nature-based, they can be adversely affected by climate change. ICT can also help in the conservation and mitigation of climate change effects (De Masi, 2014; Lobovikov-Katz et al., 2014; Vileikis et al., 2012). Tourism plays a significant role in the development of remote areas, environmental conservation and in promoting social integration (Mowforth & Munt, 2015). It is now being considered as an agent of social change; thereby bridging gaps among nations, regions and people and helping them to open up. It is a promoter of development both at macro and micro levels (Haseena, 2014). The deterioration of the natural environment can act as a barrier to the growth and development of tourism.

3.9.6 Legal factors
The need to achieve responsive (govern) use of ICT in Zimbabwe has resulted in five laws being formulated. These are Postal and Communications Act (2004), the Broadcasting Act (2001), the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (2002), the Interception of Communications Act (ICA) (2007) and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (Criminal Code) (2004). It is also important to note that there is convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting and media services causing an overlap in jurisdiction. Despite the developments of these policies and legislation it can be argued that the government of Zimbabwe lacks the political will to fully develop an ICT sector (Msongelwa-Njini & Dube, 2013). Msongelwa-Njini and Dube (2013) argue that there has been no

legislation, which deals directly with the use of ICT. An attempt to enact an ICT Act was thwarted in 2009 after it created tension in the government because the legislators did not want convergence and ICT issues to be coordinated by one ministry. The ICT Bill sought to address issues of convergence, cyber-security, electronic signatures, e-commerce and e-government (Mambo, 2012). It was also expected to act as a framework for governing the use of ICT resources across application.

Unfortunately, Zimbabwe also lacks the political will to enact regulations and laws pertaining to computer usage. This is further supported by Takavarasha and Makumbe (2012) who argue that all the laws affecting ICT were repressive. They were designed to thwart political activism through the telecommunication and broadcasting sectors. These authors go on to point out that the Zimbabwe government was also interested in getting the proceeds of the lucrative telecommunication sector. Hence, it did not want ICT power to be in private hands. The government also banned one of the mobile service providers from using Blackberry technology because it was not possible to intercept information sent via Blackberry phones. The lack of political will can be seen in the restrictive nature in which licences are given out as well as the allocation of telecommunication licences to politically connected individuals and companies. The other clear sign of the lack of political will was the failure of the government to set up a quasi-government organisation to oversee the deployment and usage of ICT in the economy despite the recommendation made in the first National ICT Policy in in 2005 (Zimbabwe e-readiness survery report 2005). Mkono (2012c) observes that in the tourism sector, Zimbabwe has not yet fully computerised to be able to collect and analyse tourist statistics. It still uses manual systems to record statistics and make forecasts.

The following policies were promulgated in the tourism sector; Tourism Act, the Tourism Strategic Plan and the National Tourism Policy. The Tourism Act deals with the establishment of the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and its governance structure. It also deals with the registration, grading, and licencing of tourist facilities (Tourism Act, 1996). The Strategic Plan is a two-year road map aimed at addressing the key strategic issues of the Ministry in pursuance of its mandate, which is to develop and manage policy programmes and strategies that enhance sustainable development and growth of the tourism and hospitality industry (Strategic Plan, 2013). The Tourism Policy (2012) envisages the sector achieving a target of $5 billion annually by the year 2020. The policy recognises the entire

country as tourism development zones and seeks to develop tourism opportunities in niche markets such as cultural, religious, medical, sport, township and mining to attract tourists and increase the sector's contribution to total revenue (Tourism Policy, 2012).

The success of the tourism sector in developing countries is largely associated with the use and application of ICT. It can therefore, be argued that ICT and tourism in Zimbabwe cannot be fully understood without a thorough understanding of the PESTEL factors.

3.10 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of and background to the ICT and tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The background information included an overview of Zimbabwe's economy and its tourist attractions. In addition, the chapter looked at the various government ministries, statutory bodies and service providers involved with the tourism sector. The chapter ended with a PESTEL analysis of both the ICT and tourism sectors. The following chapter provides the research design and motivate the research methodology followed in conducting this research.

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research approach, techniques, procedures and instruments used to carry out the research are highlighted. The overarching methodology for this research was a case study approach. A case methodology, as expounded by Yin (2014), was used to build a single extensive embedded case study, consisting of case design, conducting the case and analysing the case evidence. The data was predominantly qualitative in nature and both inductive and deductive logic were used. The chapter highlights the way in which the research was planned, the methods used and the steps that were taken in conducting the data analysis. The validity of these procedures, methods and research instruments was also analysed.

The objective of this chapter is to design and motivate the research methodology followed. In order to achieve this, the introduction is presented in Section 4.1. Section 4.2 highlights the purpose of this research and the research objectives. Section 4.3 briefly summarises the research methodology. Section 4.4 describes and motivates the research philosophy. Section 4.5 reveals the chosen research approach for this research endeavour. Section 4.6 fully details the research logic. From Section 4.7 to Section 4.12 the research strategy is comprehensively described and motivated. This is followed in Section 4.13 by a description of the data collection techniques applied. Thereafter, data analysis follows in Section 4.14. Finally, the chapter closes with research evaluation in Section 4.15 and ethical issues are addressed in Section 4.16. The conclusion is then presented thereafter in Section 4.17.

4.2 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research was to devise a strategy for ICT integration in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The strategy was based on feedback from an extensive and comprehensive single embedded case study in the tourism sector. The case study investigated various role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The specific objectives of this research were:

- To examine the current usage of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe as well as user experiences and perceptions thereof.
- To identify the factors that determine the effective utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe in order to establish key components of the ICT strategy.

- To draw lessons from countries which are successful in utilising ICT in the tourism sector.

- To suggest ways in which ICT can be effectively utilised and integrated to further enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research methodology model by Ruhode (2013) was applied to achieve the afore-mentioned objectives appropriately. Figure 4.1 graphically illustrates and summarises the research methodology that was adopted. The four pillars in Figure 4.1 showing the various philosophical paradigms, frameworks and methods, with the red boxes and arrows show the chosen path for this research. The following sections discuss the philosophical paradigms of the research and the subsequent research approaches, strategy and methods.

Research Philosophy	Research Approach	Research Strategy	Research Methods
Positivism	Quantitative	Experiment	Documents Analysis
interpretivism	Qualitative	Case Study	Interviews
			Netnography
		Survey	Direct Observation
Critical Realism	Mixed Methods	Historical	Questionnaires
			Archive
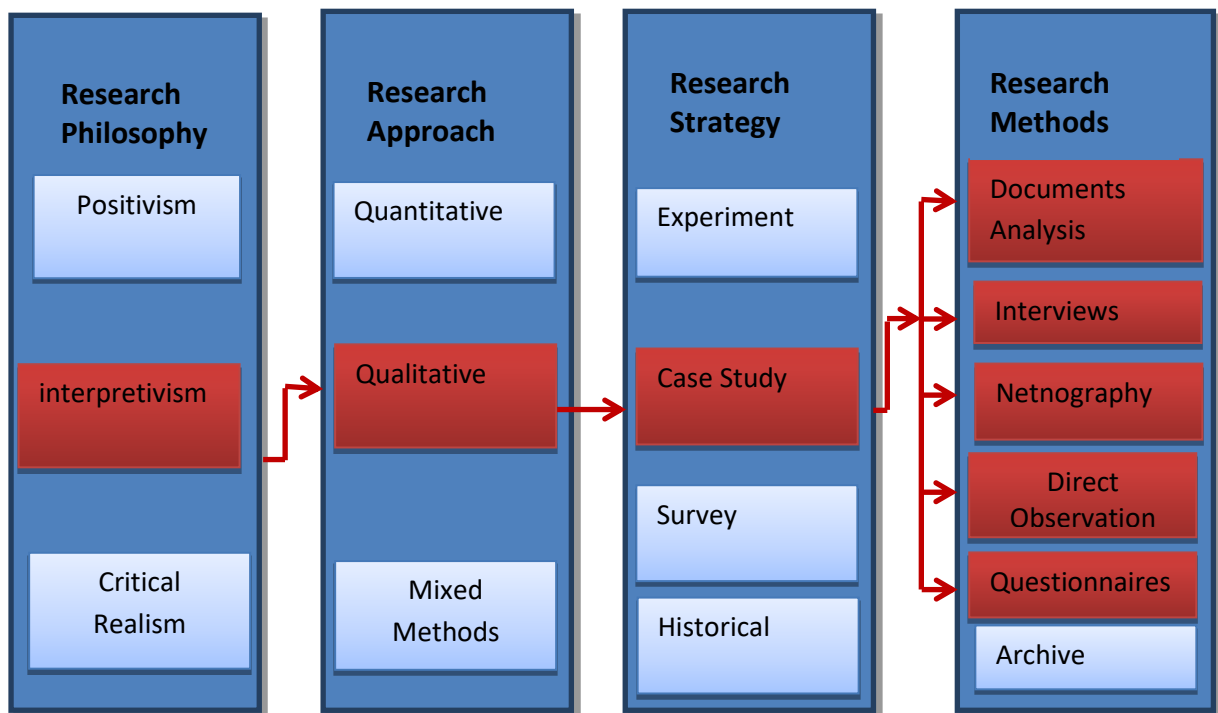
Figure 4.1 Research methodology model Source: Adapted from (Ruhode, 2013)

4.4 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research paradigms are a set of shared beliefs or assumptions of how to conduct research and acquire knowledge (Oates, 2006). Similarly, Leavy (2014) defines a research paradigm as an overarching perspective that guides the research process. Therefore, the research paradigm guides the research process in terms of the research methods and strategies used. Oates

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(2006) postulates three main research philosophies, namely positivism, interpretivism and critical research. These paradigms are distinguished by their underlying philosophical assumptions. A methodology is governed by the principles of research entailed in a paradigm.

A discussion of the three philosophical assumptions is presented in order to determine the most suitable paradigm for the research and the resultant methods and strategies.

4.4.1 Positivism

Positivist research is a paradigm commonly used in the natural sciences and tends to use objective quantitative measures (Leavy, 2014). Positivism applies scientific methods to human affairs as belonging to a natural order open to objective enquiry (Grix, 2010). Positivists believe that reality can be observed and that the tools used to conduct the research can produce empirical data that is precise and accurate if collected under similar conditions (Jandric, 2013). In this research paradigm, positivity and objectivity are prioritised and the general belief is that the interactions and effects of the researcher on the subject matter should be minimised. Pre-existing theories, called hypothesises, are stated first and then tested experimentally (Oates, 2006).

The outcome of the investigation may result in the hypothesis being rejected or accepted for a particular set of measurements. Research findings are achieved following a systematic, conventional and scientific approach in data accumulation and analysis which leads to deductive reasoning of the observed trends (Grix, 2010). This philosophy is however, limited in that findings from one setting cannot be applied to another and the results of a particular context cannot be generalised as a whole since culture and socialisation can shape reality.

Applying the positivist paradigm allows determinism in which researchers have to show the causal relationships between the independent and dependent variables which have to be statistically proven (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, 2014). For instance through positivism one is able to show the strength or weakness of the alleged association between the stated independent and corresponding dependent variable thus researcher is able to make focused conclusions. Consistent to this is the work of Olivier (2009) who argues that positivism equates with pure science and scientific methods which are measured statistically outside human interactions. However, it is important to note that positivist paradigm has

received a fair share of criticism and questionable assumptions. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013), Johnson and Christensen (2013) and Neuman (2013) argue that positivist social scientists assume that social reality can be explained in rational terms because human beings always act rationally. Moreover, Babbie (2015) further states that human beings do not always act rationally instead man's rational behaviour could be rationally understood and predicated.

Furthermore, in positivism, the researcher is independent from the research and there are no provisions for human interest, culture as well as gender in the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). The role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation through objective approaches (Creswell, 2013).

The objective of this research was to develop a strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe therefore positivism was not appropriate for this research. Positivists favour rigorous and precise quantitative measures. However, a strategy development is subjective and related to the various opinions and experiences of role-players. These opinions and experiences are not governed by any scientific laws. Development of a strategy therefore requires a philosophy that comprises a qualitative approach to solve the identified business needs.

4.4.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism involves the study of social practices in the context of an information system (Doolin & Mcleod, 2005; Oates, 2006). It supports the notion that reality and knowledge are social products that are related and dependent on the social actors that construct and make sense of that reality (Doolin & Mcleod, 2005). Reality is a social construct, according to interpretivism, as it looks at how people perceive the world in which they live and tries to understand phenomena without proving or disapproving a hypothesis (Jandric, 2013). This paradigm deals predominantly with qualitative data, employing an inductive reasoning strategy in order to infer conclusions about the research findings. The researcher sets up a platform to interact with the respondents in order to understand behaviours and meanings attributed to them. The researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and let it develop with the help of respondents (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Furthermore, interpretivism is important in research by allowing researchers to explore complex social

phenomena with a view to gaining deep understanding and interpretation of events, experiences and social structures as well as the values that people attach to these phenomena (Babbie, 2015; Collis & Hussey, 2013; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The importance of the interpretivism philosophy can also be seen from the work of Luton (2010) who argues that if you want to understand people and their world, you have to talk to them. The implication of Luton (2010)'s assertion is that interpretivism allows researchers to interact with the people who have the experience with the phenomenon, hence researchers will be able to employ interviews and focus groups discussions to obtain views, experiences and perceptions. Moreover, interpretivists argue that the social world cannot be understood through application of scientific objects and measurements only but also through research paradigms that recognise people and their experiences of how they interact and perceive the world around them. According to Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2011) there are three basic principles of interpretivism are firstly, social world is constructed and given meaning by people where human beings are subjects that have consequences or a mind while human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world which exists in relation to human beings. Secondly, the researcher is part of what is observed and lastly, research is driven by interests. The importance of interpretivist philosophy can also be understood from the work of Leavy (2014) who explains interpretivism as a method that seeks the social world as something that can only be produced and reproduced on a daily basis by people. This philosophy fits well in the research about people who can express their views, experiences and challenges. Blumberg et al. (2011) are also advocates for interpretivism as necessary to understand subjective realties and to offer explanations and narrations which are meaningful for the research and to make sense of what is happening.

According to Oates (2006), interpretivism has the following attributes; multiple objective realities, dynamic social constructed meaning, researcher flexibility, the study of people in their natural social setting, qualitative data analysis and multiple interpretations. The multiple subjective concept asserts that there is no single version of truth and that reality and knowledge are a construction of people's minds. Different groups perceive the events or occurrences in the environment differently. In this research, it was recommended to select various role-players in the tourism sector in order to get multiple and diverse perspectives. Dynamic socially constructed meaning characteristically infers that the knowledge which a group or individual has can only be passed to another through yet more social constructions

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and these differ across groups and over time. In interpretivism, researcher reflexivity denotes that the researcher's beliefs, values and actions affect the research process (Doolin & Mcleod, 2005). The approach of studying people in their natural settings is aimed at understanding the respondents in their natural environment and not in an artificial environment, where their perceptions are controlled (Oates, 2006). In interpretivism, data is preferably analysed qualitatively since this philosophy concerns the context in which people use words and construct images. The other characteristic of interpretivism is that of multiple interpretations. In this case, the results of the research do not have one fixed explanation.

The research is therefore grounded in an interpretive research paradigm. In this research, a qualitative approach was used as it is recommended where meanings and interpretations are sought (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Accordingly, this type of philosophical paradigm was applied to the research mainly because it allowed for an exploration and in-depth understanding of the context and the environment in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe where the action took place.

4.4.3 Critical research

Critical research is concerned with identifying power relations, conflict and contradictions and empowering people to eliminate them as a source of alienation and domination (Oates, 2006). This paradigm, like the interpretive paradigm, supports the notion that social reality is conditioned and cannot be understood independent of social actors (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). Saunders et al. (2015) further argue that social reality has characteristics that tend to dominate experiences and the way the world is viewed. Critical researchers believe that social research is a product of the history and social structures that create the phenomena under study. The main focus of critical research is on the power relations, oppositions, conflict and contradictions that are present in society. Critical researchers challenge traditions and seek to identify and eliminate sources of alienation and conflict. According to Oates (2006), critical researchers reject projects aimed at improving managerial efficiency and control. Accordingly, this research aims to come up with an ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe. Hence, a critical paradigm goes against the nature of this research and was therefore rejected as being inappropriate for this research. Secondly, Oates (2006) points out that critical research requires people to shape the technology and not the other way round. This is also contrary to the aims of this research.

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Blaikie (2009) stresses that critical research involves human beings criticising and challenging the nature of existing societies through reasoning. Consistent to the views of Blaikie (2009) is Patton (2002) who argues that critical research is undertaken when the research does not simply seek to study and understand the society but more importantly to critique and change society. Furthermore, using critical research allows the researcher to understand and explain the phenomenon and their inter relationships in non-numeric terms and have the liberty to employ qualitative data collection and analysis methods such as observations, interviews, focus groups discussions as well as textual and visual data analysis. Moreover the use of critical research enables the researchers to enquire against the 'grain' to question the conceptual and theoretical bases of knowledge and methods as well as asking questions that go beyond prevailing assumptions and understanding as well as acknowledging the role of power in social positions (Babbie, 2015).

This section described the three main research philosophies, namely; positivism, interpretivism and critical realism. Subsequently, an interpretivist philosophical paradigm was chosen as being the most appropriate because it allowed for an exploration and in-depth understanding of the context and the environment. The next section will now look at the research approach for the research.

4.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

When carrying out research, it is vital to make a decision on which research approach to use. The research approach is largely dependent on the type of research questions or problems and the field of research in question. The research approach can take the form of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. These approaches are explained briefly below.

4.5.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research produces numerical data that can be converted into numbers. It mainly emphasises the counting and classifying of occurrences and the creation of statistical models and graphical representations to illustrate the phenomena being observed (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). The key characteristic of quantitative data is the use of formal and systematic measurements. Quantitative research looks for patterns in the data and draws conclusions. These are mainly generated by experiments and surveys (Oates, 2006). Quantitative research is mainly rooted in the positivist paradigm although it can also be used

in the interpretive and critical realism. It is based on scientific principles and well-established techniques and not on subjective interpretations. It also predominantly uses statistics. In quantitative research, data on non-quantitative aspects which is important may be missed and therefore this research will not follow this research approach. In other words, the research will not develop or test any hypotheses.

4.5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research generates non-numerical data and centres mainly on gathering primarily verbal data rather than making formal measurements. The data gathered is then analysed in an interpretative manner and is not quantified by the use of statistical analysis. Creswell (2013) describes this kind of research as a way of discovering and methodically realising the meanings attributed to a human problem by either individuals or groups. It is not simply a series of interactions, but offers prospects for interactive communication and relationship building with informants. It also offers a close relationship between the researcher and what is studied (Luton, 2010) in order to achieve the goal of understanding the phenomena under investigation. The major aim of qualitative research is to offer a complete, comprehensive narrative of the research topic (Punch, 2013). Qualitative research mainly uses inductive methods while at the same time being open to exploring and seeking a deeper understanding of intricate social interactions (Kaczynski, Salmona, & Smith, 2014). The qualitative approach offers multiple perspectives from different role-players in the tourism sector and their interactions. This research approach uses a variety of qualitative methods to study one phenomenon within a single study. In qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures are used in the research design (Saunders et al., 2015). In view of the fact that tourism is a complex industry and therefore no one qualitative method alone would adequately address the complexities of the sector, an appropriate method for this research should combine a variety of qualitative methods before reaching the main conclusion.

4.5.3 Mixed methods

Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the types of questions used, the research methods, data collection and analysis procedures as well as inferences (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

In a mixed methods study, the researcher collects and examines data, triangulates the findings and makes inferences using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). The use of multiple approaches helps to capitalise on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and to compensate for their various weaknesses (Grafton, Lillis, Malina, Nørreklit, & Selto, 2011). It helps to answer research questions comprehensively and attain objectives beyond the weakness of a single approach thereby increasing credibility and confidence in the research (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods has the advantage of using a variety of data sources and exploiting multiple meanings and perspectives. The proper integration of quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques and procedures helps to probe and unearth overt aspects where one method, technique and procedure may be insufficient to explore and obtain an overall picture as well as a fine-grained analysis. The mixed methods approach can be used to explore a problem in-depth, while at the same time maintaining the voices of the respondents to map the intricacy of the situation and showing multiple views of the respondents (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The use of a variety of methods, techniques and procedures in a single study results in the methods complementing each other in order to produce convincing and compelling findings. Bryman (2015) argues that quantitative and qualitative data must be analysed and interpreted together before reaching the main conclusion of a study.

However, the use of this method is susceptible to potential design problems (Kaczynski et al., 2014). Creswell and Clark (2011) assert that by quantitatively examining many individuals the understanding of an individual is diminished. At the same time when few individuals are qualitatively examined the ability to generalise the results to many is lost.

A mixed methods approach will be used for this research in order to gather rounded and reliable data. Mixed methods are highly appropriate for this research because tourism is a complex industry and therefore no single method would adequately address the complexities of the sector.

This section looked at the three primary research approaches namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. The qualitative approach was chosen as the most appropriate because the use of multiple methods within the qualitative approach helps to compensate respective

weaknesses in each of the methods used. It helps to comprehensively answer research questions and objectives beyond the weakness of a single method thereby increasing credibility and confidence in the research. The next section will espouse the research logic for this research.

4.6 RESEARCH LOGIC

The research design guided the research approach that was used. Saunders et al. (2015) postulate that a research approach can be either deductive or inductive. A deductive approach can be used to develop a theory or hypothesis and, in the natural sciences, the research strategy is designed predominantly for hypothesis testing. On the other hand, an inductive approach builds a theory by analysing the collected data. Research that uses this approach is most likely to be qualitative and concerned more with understanding the research context rather than with precise definitions. In a deductive approach, the research begins with an abstract, logical relationship among concepts, and then moves towards concrete empirical evidence (Neuman, 2013). Meanwhile, using an the inductive approach, the researcher begins with detailed observations of the world and moves towards more abstract generalisations and ideas (Bryman, 2015; Neuman, 2013). In practice, most researchers use both approaches at various points in their studies. This research project therefore employs both deductive and inductive approaches.

An inductive process will be used to draw conclusions from the case study research findings. Inductive reasoning involves being "open to the unknown while exploring, seeking to discover or enhancing a deeper understanding of certain phenomena" (Kaczynski et al., 2014, p. 2). The researcher will not attempt to fit the data into any pre-existing theory but will allow the data to speak for itself. A deductive approach, on the other hand, is driven by pre-existing theories in order to draw a conclusion from the data (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). The use of a deductive approach implies that the research is built on theories that already exist in the domain that is being researched (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Choosing the appropriate research approach is important for three reasons. Firstly, it assists the researcher to determine the best overall architecture for the research in terms of the strategy, the type of the questions and the best way of answering them (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012; Hall & Kothari, 1999). Secondly, it can influence the researcher's

choices with regard to determining which research strategy and tactics will work and which will not (Sackett & Wennberg, 1997). Thirdly, the knowledge of diverse research approaches assists the researcher to deal with constraints. After choosing the relevant research philosophy, tactics, strategy and approaches a plan for the data collection was then devised.

During the early stages of a research the deductive research approach can be used to explore the use of ICT in the tourism sector while an existing theoretical framework can be used to formulate the research objectives and questions. On the other hand, an inductive research approach is appropriate in the later stages of the research when analysing the data. An inductive approach makes it possible for additional factors, in addition to those factors already derived from the existing literature, to be identified.

It therefore follows that the research logic used in this research was both inductive and deductive.

4.7 RESEARCH STRATEGY

To adequately answer the research questions outlined in section 4.1, an appropriate research strategy had to be formulated. For this purpose, several alternatives exist. According to Saunders et al. (2015), these alternatives include experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory ethnography and archival research. In the current research, the overarching methodology chosen was the case study method. Johnson and Christensen (2013) consider a case study to be a comprehensive account and detailed analysis of one or more cases. Accordingly, a case study explores real-life contemporary phenomena and evidence using multiple sources like questionnaires, interviews and observations, as well as other secondary sources.

According to Yin (2014, p. 14), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; *"when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used"*. The advantage of using the case study as a research strategy is that it allows for the study of 'how' and 'why' questions 'being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has no control' (Yin, 2014, p. 13). In order to answer such questions, adequately, multiple data need to be grouped and triangulated. Saunders et al. (2015, p. 147)

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defines triangulation as the use of 'different data collection techniques within one study in order to ensure that the data are telling you what you think they are telling you". This is particularly useful in studying a phenomenon where very little information is known. The case study provides a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the area under study.

4.7.1 Unit of case analysis

The unit of analysis is the critical factor of the case (Rowley, 2002). It defines the level at which the phenomenon occurs and is studied (Yin, 2014), and demarcates the boundaries of the case. A clearly and correctly specified unit of analysis therefore facilitates the transferability of assessments.
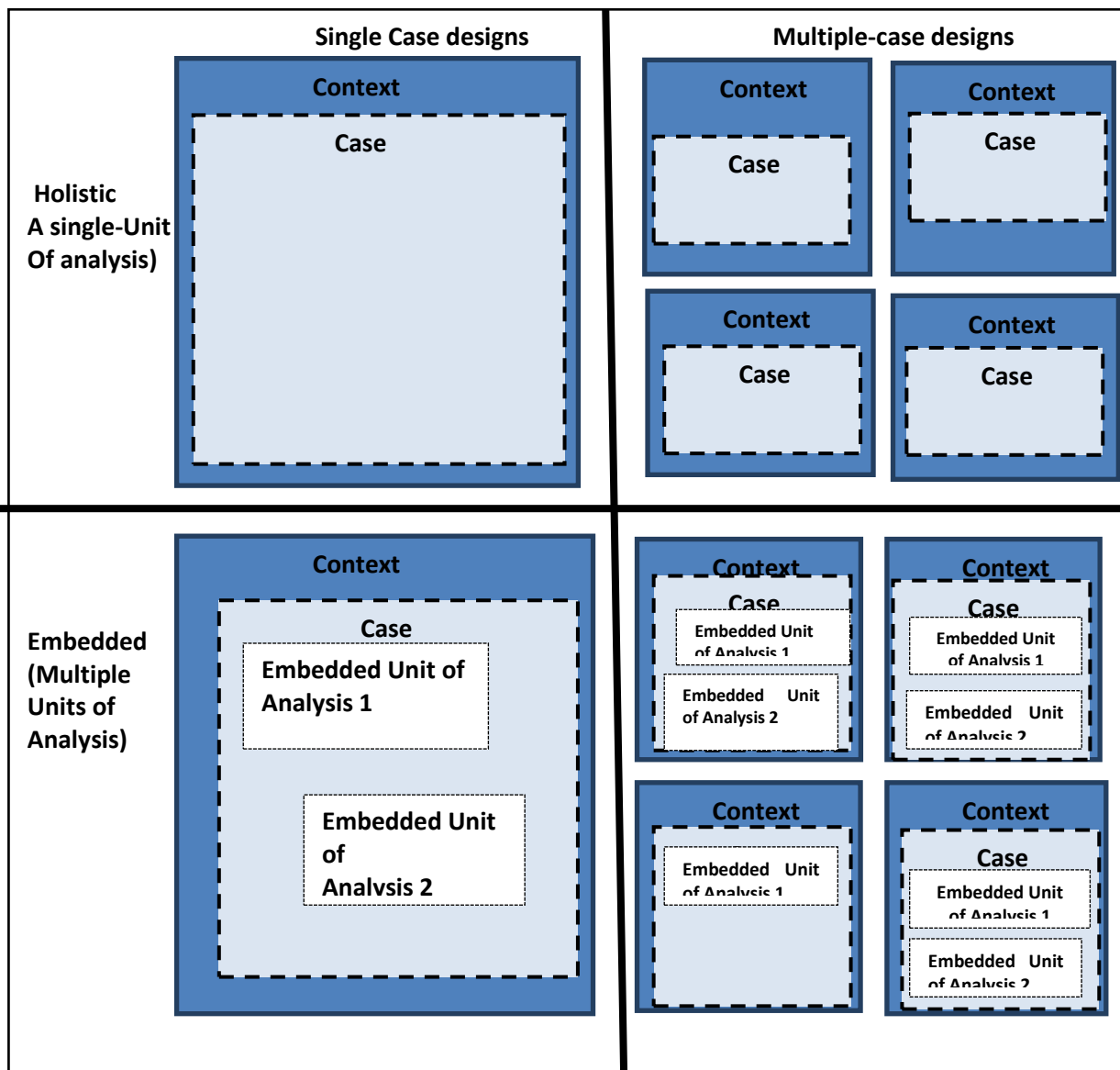

Figure 4.2 Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies Source: Yin (2014)

Yin (2014) splits the case study strategy into primarily single and multiple case designs. If a case study investigates a single case it is called a single case study design. On the other hand, multiple case studies occur when a single study has more than one case study. Case studies are further sub-divided into holistic and embedded case studies. A holistic case, as its name suggests, explores the case represented as a whole.

The embedded dimension likewise treats the single case as a whole, and explores individual sub-units within the case. Therefore, there are basically four case study designs, namely, single case holistic designs, single case embedded designs, multiple case holistic designs and multiple embedded case designs as shown Figure 4.2.

This research adopted the single case embedded dimension as the units of analysis. A single embedded case study was selected because this method enables an in-depth study to be carried out. In this case, the real-life phenomenon was to find out how ICT was being used in the tourism sector for survival and growth. The next section discusses the specific types of case study.

4.8 TYPES OF CASE STUDIES

This section discusses the specific types of case study, namely; explanatory, descriptive and exploratory.

4.8.1 Explanatory

The explanatory type of case study aims to provide comprehensive explanations for the occurrences of a social phenomenon. The description of what is taking place is followed by attempts to explain the concepts within the account; accordingly the explanatory type goes further than mere narrative or description. In this type of case study, it is of paramount importance to be accurate in matters of detail to provide adequate evidence. This type of case study is suitable for seeking to explain the underlying links between real-life phenomena that are too intricate for the survey or experimental strategies (Yin, 2014). It also explores those situations where the phenomenon being investigated has no clear or single set of outcomes (Yin, 2014). Explanatory research must answer 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'where' questions (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). Explanatory cases are purposefully designed, using inductive methods to create a theory by means of hypothesis testing. The problem addressed

in this research is apparent lack of any clear guidelines and ICT strategy for sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe after its initial adoption. The research sought to understand why most tourism services continue to be provided manually despite massive investments in ICT. These challenges still exist despite the fact that by 2005 all sectors of the economy, including tourism had registered significant progress in the deployment and application of ICT (Zimbabwe e-readiness survey report 2005). The research also sought to understand why despite being endowed with rich natural resources, five World Heritage sites, rich fauna and abundant wildlife, Zimbabwe is not competing well in the world tourism sector. An explanatory case study may therefore be used to explain and shed more light on these questions, which relate to the social phenomenon at stake. Since this is an inductive research design, selection of the cases was based on empirical considerations (Mills et al., 2010). It was hoped that an explanatory case study would help in understanding the current environment prevailing in the tourism sector, as well as helping to come up with appropriate building blocks for the overall strategy.

4.8.2 Descriptive

The descriptive case study type is used to comprehensively portray a phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurs (Yin, 2014). A descriptive case study attempts to provide an intricate description of a phenomenon within its natural context. The case is expected to produce new insights into, and an in-depth and detailed understanding of, the phenomenon under examination (Hill, 2012). A descriptive case study describes the characteristics, mechanisms, qualities or features prior to examining the situation. In order to get a detailed and an elaborate account of the key phenomena, the carefully chosen cases should provide comprehensive information about the detailed features and characteristics of a specific social phenomenon (Mills et al., 2010). Descriptive case study may result in a multiple case study design, where a variety of cases with similar characteristics are examined. The examination then focuses on describing the cases individually rather than merely observing (Yin, 2014). Descriptive case studies provide rich insights about a particular case and they look at revelatory cases, exemplary cases and even common patterns and explanations (Mills et al., 2010). Descriptive cases are theory driven (Klenke, 2008). As this research sought to develop an ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, it required more than simply a description of the factors that influence the use of ICT in the sector. This type of case study was therefore not deemed appropriate for this research. The appropriate solution was a

method that looks at many cases and then observes common patterns before coming up with explanations of the factors that help to come up with building blocks of a strategy.

4.8.3 Exploratory

Exploratory case studies seek to understand a phenomenon as it happens and to draw some lessons (Olivier, 2009). Exploratory case studies generally take the form of field-work and data collection precedes research questions or precise methodology. Such research can take an intuitive path as no structured methodology is required (Olivier, 2009; Yin, 2014). This approach is suitable where there is little or no previous research on the phenomenon under examination (Klenke, 2008) because it offers prospects for understanding key concepts, asking further pertinent questions and better understanding the phenomenon under investigation (Hill, 2012). It is often used as a pilot study to preclude a larger study of the phenomenon later.

Exploratory case studies help to refine the research questions to be used in a later study or to assess the feasibility of research techniques (Hartley, 2004). Exploratory case study designs can also establish how events occur by examining their cause and effect relationships. An exploratory research design was carefully considered and then deemed the most appropriate approach because the use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe is underrepresented in the literature with little having been published about the situation. Furthermore, the phenomenon of interest, the use of ICT, is very dynamic and is changing rapidly. There has been limited research dedicated to this area (Maswera, Dawson, & Edwards, 2005, 2006, 2008; Maswera, Edwards, & Dawson, 2009). Maswera, Dawson and Edward's research conducted in southern and eastern Africa looked at four countries, namely; South Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe but did not specifically target Zimbabwe. The other research that has been conducted does not deal directly with ICT in the tourism sector.

Since it was clear that there has been limited research in this area, a pilot study was necessary. The interview questions should be pre-tested on at least one tourist organisation and the questionnaire should be pre-tested online aimed at carefully selected respondents. This has to be done to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the interview questions and the questionnaires regarding question format, wording and order. The respondents should be informed about the pre-test and asked to answer the survey questions and make comments on

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the question format, wording, ambiguity and order. After the pre-test, feedback from the answers and recommendations from the respondents, some questions can be reformulated, adjusted, reordered, and incorporated into the final interview questions and questionnaire. This is based on the recommendations of Mills et al. (2010) who argue that exploratory cases can help to refine the research questions of the later research or to assess the feasibility of research techniques.

Three specific types of case study namely; explanatory, descriptive and exploratory were discussed in this section. It was noted that an exploratory case study will be appropriate for the early stages of the study and explanatory for the stages of the study. The explanatory case study type looks at many cases and then observes common patterns before coming up with explanations for the factors that help identify building blocks for a strategy.

4.9 PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING A CASE STUDY

Mazango (1998) states that in Zimbabwe, access to public information and public enterprises is not constitutionally guaranteed making access to officials and public documents very difficult. This was further expanded by Takavarasha Jr, Bednar, and Adams (2011) who state that conducting ICT4D research in Zimbabwe was very risky because of the likelihood of being mistakenly perceived as an undercover journalist, spy or opposition activist. This made the researcher anticipate difficulties in obtaining permissions and access to the research population. The other integral part of the research population was the international tourists, as this class of people can generally be considered hard to reach. The hard-to-reach segment therefore requires special methods and care that differs from ordinary research (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). Faced with this situation, it was necessary to seek permission in line with the advice of Reeves (2010) and Stake (1995) who state that to conduct field research one has to negotiate with both formal and informal gate keepers.

Access to the population can be achieved in many ways: writing letters and e-mails to the organisations and government ministries responsible for tourism and ICT seeking permission to conduct the case study. The second method would be to attend tourism exhibitions and national events as these meetings afford an opportunity to meet face to face high-level executives who are ordinarily difficult to meet at their workplaces. The third way of

achieving access is being referred by other respondents, who took part in the research, a method which is commonly called snowballing.

4.10 RESEARCH POPULATION

The research population in this research include most players in the tourism sector. According to (Pizam, 2009), the tourism sector comprises an array of businesses that offer goods and services to tourists; the hospitality industry on the other hand consists of business organisations that offer accommodation, food and beverage as well as meetings for tourists, local residents and travellers. He further states that the travel industry consists of all businesses that transport people from one place to another, using different modes of transport.
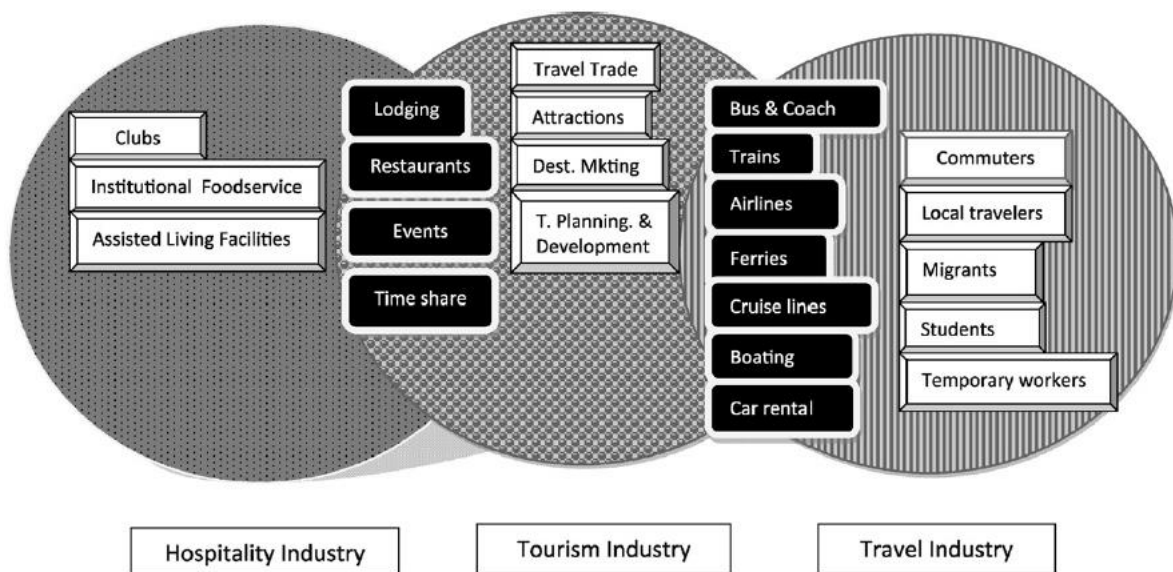
Figure 4.3 The relationship between the travel, tourism and hospitality industries
Source: (Pizam, 2009)

This research must only be limited to the tourism sector as indicated in the middle circle in Figure 4.3.

4.11 SAMPLING

In an interpretivist paradigm, qualitative researchers recognise that some potential respondents are in a better position to provide greater insight and understandings than others (Abrams, 2010). Therefore the use of arbitrary sampling research techniques is neither necessary nor preferable (Klenke, 2008). The selection of cases must be done in a way that maximises what can be learnt (Tellis, 1997). Therefore, the organisations selected for the case

study must be purposefully chosen to provide a proper representative sample of the tourism sector and the purpose of the research. Using purposeful sampling, a sample is selected with a pre-defined purpose to answer specific research questions that have been identified (Abrams, 2010; Castillo et al., 2014). The logic, strength and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases which produce deep insights and in-depth understanding instead of empirical generalisations (Patton, 2002).

The selection of the cases was done to maximise what can be learnt. The entities and organisations that formed part of the case study were purposefully chosen to provide a proper representative sample of the tourism sector. The samples were based on sample variation and feasibility, taking into consideration factors such as geographical location, organisational thrust and size. In line with the recommendations of Travers (2008) and Rowley (2002) for in-depth qualitative studies a sample of between four and ten cases must be selected. The role-players chosen must be drawn from the national government, regulator and service providers. In addition, a questionnaire must be administered to tourists both personally and online in order to obtain their experience about the usage of ICT before and during their stay. The questionnaires to be completed by tourists may be administered in resort areas, at border posts and at international airports. Tourists could also complete the questionnaire whilst waiting for their flights. As argued by Walliman (2005), personal delivery has the advantage of being able to help clarify questions to respondents. Secondly, it has the advantage of the researcher being able to persuade respondents, which can help to get a higher response rate. Persuading prospective respondents to complete a questionnaire requires good skills related to building rapport and persuasion. An online version of the questionnaire can also be administered. The questionnaire link may also be e-mailed to tourists, as some tourists may not have sufficient time to complete the questionnaires during their stay.

The tourists would be expected to give valuable knowledge and insights on their real experiences and expectations of the way ICT was used or could have been used to enhance their experience. Experience is something remarkable and noteworthy that occurs to an individual that cannot be directly accessed, hence researchers are only able to deduce what their respondents have expressed in words, or writing as well as through their behaviour (Rageh, Melewar, & Woodside, 2013).

4.12 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Meyer (2001) quoting Hartley (1994), emphasises the need for a theoretical framework to ensure a solid theoretical base for guiding data collection and avoiding the collection of data that is without meaning. The following two major theories were used to establish factors that could influence the use of ICT in the general economy; these factors were also assumed to inherently affect technology adoption in all the other sectors of the economy including tourism. The two theories used were, firstly, the factor category of e-commerce adoption decision and The key areas of bench-making ICT theory. Since tourism is a complex sector no single theory would have adequately addressed the complexities of the sector. Therefore the two theories complemented each other to build more dimensions, as they emphasise different aspects that affect ICT adoption in the tourism sector. The theories will now be briefly discussed. The first theory is the factor category of e-commerce adoption decision by Selim (2008) who categorised and classified the factors that hinder or encourage the adoption of e-commerce by firms into two categories, namely, internal and external factors.
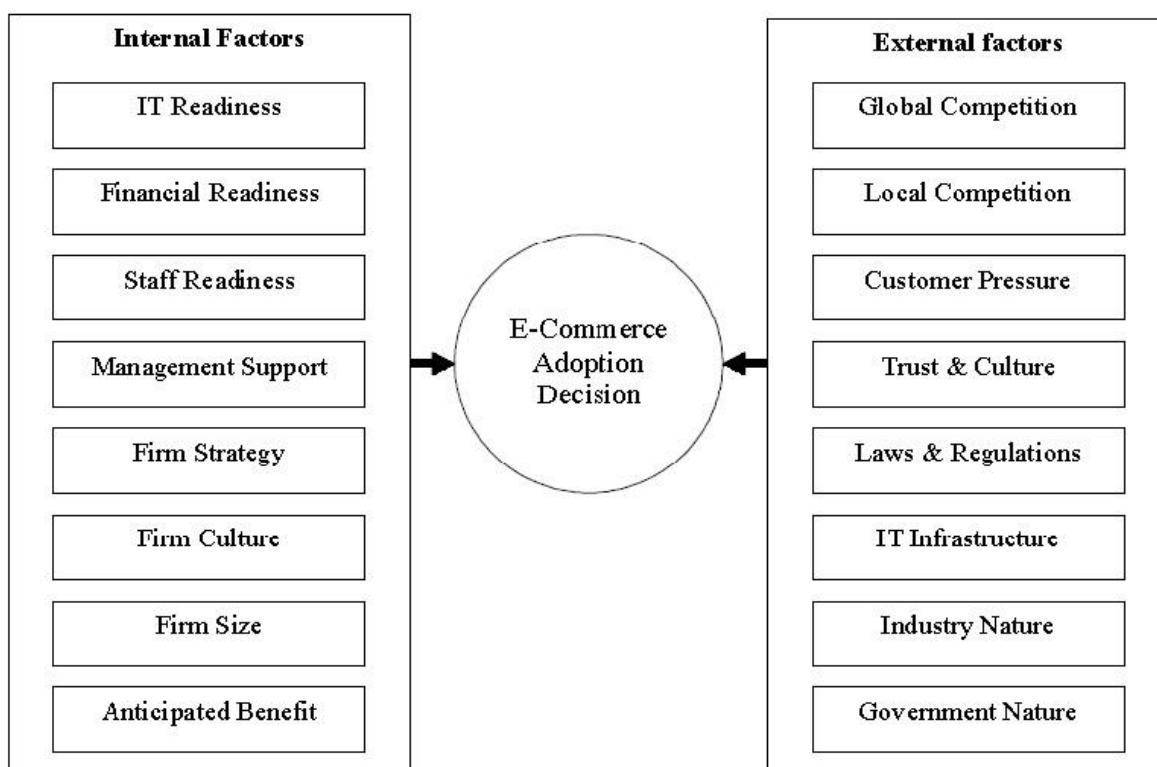

Figure 4.4 Factor category of e-commerce adoption decision Source: Selim (2008)

Internal factors are factors within the organisation that are a pull force for ICT adoption and use, whereas external factors are those outside the control of the organisation that are a push force for the adoption of ICT. The factors are graphically shown in Figure 4.4.

IT readiness refers to the current level of ICT usage within the organisation. It looks at issues such as system integration, hardware and software compatibility and the ICT infrastructure. The second factor is financial readiness, which refers to the level of support, commitment and willingness of top management to fund ICT adoption. This category includes such factors as cost of training and imparting new skills in ICT to employees. The third factor is staff readiness, which refers to the ICT literacy level within the organisation. The fourth factor is management support, which refers to the extent to which top management recognises and leads in the adoption and usage of ICT. The implementation of a well-defined firm strategy is a key success factor for the adoption of ICT. The other factor is whether the organisation has an ICT strategy or not. If the organisation has a strategy in place, it will be examined to see how it is aligned to the overall corporate strategy. In addition, firm culture looks at collaboration and styles among different managerial levels as well as dedication to the business process. The next factor relates to whether the size of the organisation has influence of ICT adoption.

The external factors will include pressures exerted by competitors on the organisation. The greater the competition exerted by competitors on both a local and a global scale the greater the need for ICT adoption. Customer pressure and expectations can also exert pressure on the organisation to adopt ICT and other new ways of doing business. The other major external factor is the role of the government as a regulator in setting policies and its role in creating an enabling environment for ICT adoption.

The second theory used in this research to ensure a solid theoretical base is the key area of benchmarking ICT, which was adapted from Crag (2002) by Wainwright, Green, Mitchell, and Yarrow (2005). A graphical representation of the theory is depicted in Figure 4.5. The key areas of benchmarking ICT theory point out two valuable factors for the adoption and utilisation of ICT, that is, functional, and managerial sophistication.

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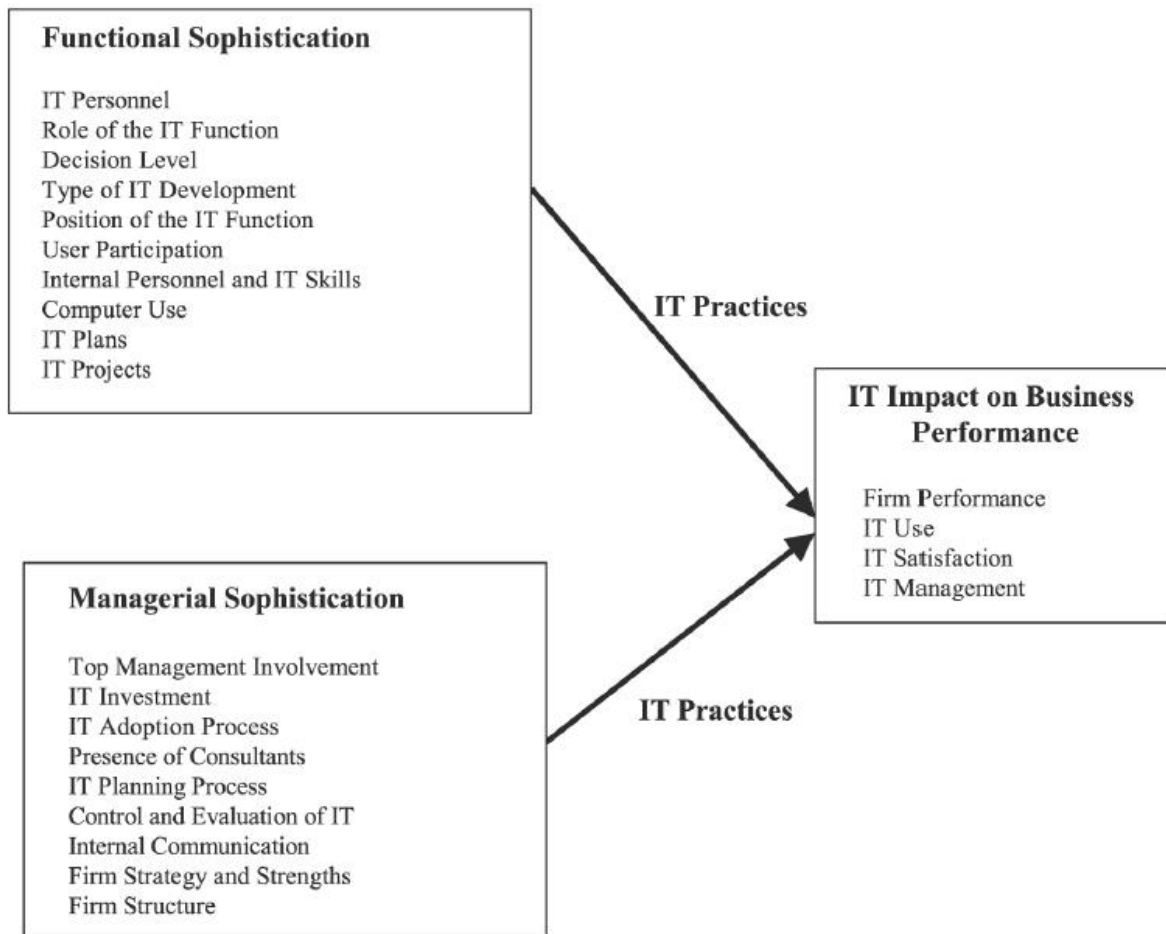
Figure 4.5: The key areas of bench-making ICT Source: Wainwright et al. (2005)

The functional sophistication category emphasises the technical skills, knowledge and complexity of the ICT function; these determine the organisation's capacity to adopt and deploy ICT efficiently and effectively. Effective and efficient adoption and deployment leads to greater innovation and firm performance (Korac-Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2001). Managerial sophistication looks at the involvement of top management, strategic alignment and the governance of the ICT function. Thus, the use of the existing knowledge base would ensure the aspects of relevance and rigour.

This section discussed the two theories namely, factor category of e-commerce adoption decision and the key areas of bench-making ICT theory. Since tourism is a complex industry no single theoretical approach would adequately address the complexities of the sector. These theories were chosen because they complement each other to identify dimensions and perspectives that affect ICT adoption in the tourism sector. The next section discusses the data collection techniques.

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4.13 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The case study methodology allows for multiple sources of data collection, which help to test the construct validity of the case. Therefore, the data was collected using both primary and secondary methods and was qualitative in nature. Primary data consisted of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, participant observations and focus groups whilst secondary data consisted of existing documentation and archival analysis. This research also uses data triangulation, by combining more than one data collection techniques. Triangulation makes use of multiple data generation techniques to look at the phenomenon of interest in a variety of ways (Oates, 2006). It also allows findings from one method to be substantiated or questioned by comparing data from another method. This makes triangulation across various data collection methods particularly beneficial in theory generation because it provides multiple perspectives on an issue. It also supplies more information on emerging concepts which allows cross checking and yields stronger substantiation of constructs (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Orlikowski, 2002).

4.13.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews are guided, purposeful discussions between two or more people that involve questioning the interviewee(s) in a structured, in-depth, semi-structured or unstructured way (Yin, 2014). According to Saunders et al. (2015) semi-structured interviews have a list of themes and questions to be covered and questions may be added or omitted from interview to interview. The semi-structured interviews are recommended for this research. The interview questions have to be drawn from the theoretical framework explained previously as well as from research objectives and research questions. The interviews should cover four sections comprised of demographic information, functional sophistication, and managerial sophistication, as well as aspects related to organisational websites as drawn from the theoretical framework.

The semi-structured interviews should target ICT practitioners, executive management, finance and operations in all the organisations selected for the case study. Additional interviews should be added where there is need to get further information. In order to achieve a high level of depth and detail, the research interview should have main questions, as well as probing questions and follow-up questions (Klenke, 2008). The main advantage of semi-structured interviews is that specific responses can be given to specific questions. This is

especially useful when time is very limited. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews explore the phenomenon of ICT adoption, integration and utilisation in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. At the beginning of each interview, respondents need to be reminded that the information to be collected is for study purposes only. The interviewees should be assured that their contributions are confidential. Open-ended questions can be used to initiate and keep interviews focused. These can act as leads to interesting lines of inquiry. All the interviews need to be audio recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. By audio recording the interviews, the researcher can listen to and concentrate more attentively on what is being said, as well as the expressions and other non-verbal cues the interviewees give when responding. It is also helpful to make brief notes as well in order to maintain focus. This is important because, although audio recording can capture the tone of voice and hesitation, it does not record facial expressions and other non-verbal cues (Saunders et al., 2015). However, not all the interviews can be audio recorded as some respondents may request that they not be recorded.

4.13.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaires can be personally administered to willing tourists in the resort towns and the international airports in Zimbabwe. The questionnaire seeks the experiences of the tourists relating to the availability, usage and effectiveness of ICT before and during their visit. The tourists were expected to give valuable knowledge and insights on their real experiences and expectations the way in which ICT would have been used to enhance their experience in Zimbabwe. Persuading potential respondents to take part requires good communication skills, especially the skills of building rapport and persuasion. An online version of the same questionnaire can also be administered, as some of the tourists may not have enough time to complete the questionnaires during their stay in Zimbabwe. A brochure, describing the research, will be given to the tourists before they are requested to indicate if they are willing to participate in the research. An email with the questionnaire link will then be emailed later to those who would have provided their names and e-mail addresses so that they complete the survey in the comfort of their homes. The rationale for this is to ensure that some tourists who cannot complete the surveys whilst in Zimbabwe because of tight schedules can also take part in the research.

4.13.2.1 Questionnaire design

The physical appearance and layout of a questionnaire is very important. It must be attractive and eye-catching (Cohen et al., 2013). Cohen et al. (2013) also mention that compressed and cluttered questionnaires uninviting and discourage respondents. Thus, they recommend large questionnaires with plenty of space for questions and answers which will. entice and attract respondents.

The questionnaire must be designed following a detailed review of the literature. The questionnaire must, firstly, capture the respondent's demographic information and secondly, seek to understand how the tourists chose to visit Zimbabwe and the information sources they used. Thirdly, the methods used for booking and payments and the challenges faced before, during and after their stay must also be captured in the questionnaire. Hojeghan and Esfangareh (2011) argue that in the tourism business worldwide competitive advantage is no longer natural, but man-made driven by advances in science, modern technologies, information and innovation. Lastly, the questionnaire should also ask respondents to recommend ways in which the tourism sector could use ICT effectively.

According to Cohen et al. (2013) in order to entice the respondents to complete the questionnaire and thereby generate a high response rate, a covering letter should be included that guarantees the respondents that their responses will be used for academic purposes only and that their identity will not in any way be linked to their responses to the questions. The researcher's contact details must be provided for use by the respondents if they have any questions or queries. In order to give the respondents an opportunity to make additional comments, a blank space should be provided at the end of the questionnaire for any other comments that add to the research.

4.13.3 Observation

Observation involves the systematic recording, description, analysis and interpretation of human behaviour (Saunders et al., 2015). Observation techniques generate additional data, for cross checking and substantiating or questioning data from other data collection methods. Observation can capture events that cannot be represented on paper, such as the observation of the physical venues, cause-effects, interactions and the organisations operations. It is imperative for the researcher to make field visits to the major tourist destinations in

Zimbabwe. The major aim of observation is to get first-hand information in order to understand and appreciate what is actually happening and not what people reported. This method allows the researcher to see how ICT is being used by each tourism organisation and who is involved. Observation was used in an iterative cycle by combining data from a variety of sources. The researcher should observe how ICT is being utilised and the key problems that are being faced, which would have been revealed by the interviews and literature study.

4.13.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis consists of the perusal of written material, ranging from memorandums and newspaper clippings to formal reports (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987). Stake (1995) urges researchers to examine newspapers, annual reports, formal correspondence and other documents just like they do for interviews. The researcher should collect secondary data from a number of sources including statistical reports and surveys conducted by international organisations, such the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), national records, and critical reviews from newspapers and magazines. The websites and Facebook pages of organisations used in the case study can be analysed in addition to the videos uploaded on YouTube by the same organisations. One advantage of including secondary data in data collection is that it reduces the subjectivity that can occur during primary data collection. Another advantage, according to Saunders et al. (2015), is that secondary data provide comparative and contextual data. This enables the researcher to compare the findings from the primary data with those from the secondary sources which improves the generalisability of the research findings. Yin (2014) argues that these documents are now increasingly being made available on the internet. Chaterera (2012) asserts that government websites in Zimbabwe generally offer inadequate information and are normally only partly functional. She further states that the websites were out-dated and lack authoritative information. In Zimbabwe, the government relies mainly on a traditional paper-based system. Mazango (1998), on the other hand, postulates that private organisations tend to be secretive about their plans and documents; therefore, it is unlikely that the organisations would put sufficient information on the website fearing that competitors will get hold of it.

4.13.5 Physical evidence

Physical artefacts are any physical evidence that is gathered during a field visit (Tellis, 1997). These may be gathered during a case study, however Yin (2012) cautions that these

artefacts have no relevance to most types of case study.

4.13.6 Netnography

Kozinets (2007) defines netnography as a novel, innovative and unobtrusive qualitative research methodology that adapts and applies ethnographic research techniques to the study of computer-mediated communications. Mkono (2012b) argues that the rapid developments in social networking technologies have seen internet users posting messages, reviews, compliments, complaints and comments on message boards. These message boards provide a hunting ground for researchers in an unobtrusive and anonymous way to gain in-depth understanding into internet users' thoughts, opinions, motivations and concerns (Elliott, Shankar, Langer, & Beckman, 2005). Mkono (2012b) notes that the use of pseudonyms and the anonymous nature of the online interactions allow for unsolicited comprehensive, rich and candid accounts of internet users. The use of netnography can enhance understanding of the tourist markets (Wu & Pearce, 2014) as tourists are also turning to the internet to upload their experiences at destinations, give online reviews and post their complaints, compliments and comments in their own terms. Kozinets (2002) argues that netnography is the most suitable method for examining tourist experiences because tourists typically write their reviews after their stay. Therefore, netnographic research involves analysing computer-generated data to address identified research questions (Mkono, 2012a). Compared with other qualitative data collection methods, netnography is less time consuming, unobtrusive and generally less costly (Elliott et al., 2005).

For this research, netnography can be adopted as part of non-participant observation to triangulate with data collected from questionnaires completed by tourists. The main reason for choosing non-participant observation ensures that the researcher does not want in any way to influence the tourists. Accordingly, the online reviews complement the data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires. An intensive review of the most prominent websites offering online tourists travel reviews, i.e. www.tripadvisor.com must be carried out. Tripadvisor.com is a very influential website for would-be travellers in their decision-making in terms of where to go, what destination to choose, where to stay or what to do at a destination. It almost acts like word of mouth because it gives first-hand accounts of travellers' experiences and advice for other travellers. The website allows travellers to rate

their experience on a Likert-type scale with five categories; Excellent, Very Good, Average, Poor and Terrible.

Purposeful sampling can be used for selecting online threads, which look at the challenges tourists experienced in using ICT before and during their stay in Zimbabwe. The reviews within the categories Average to Terrible for the entire list of tourist establishments and the comments, made from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2014, can be considered for the research.

However, Mkono (2012b) cautions on the use of netnography for three reasons: firstly researchers do not have direct control over the content of respondents' text; secondly, the authenticity of the respondents' claims cannot be verified and thirdly, the researchers have no access to non-verbal communications and this tends to limit the richness of the data. Lastly, the websites may be manipulated to portray a certain required image. To counteract these concerns many reviews from different entities were used to reduce manipulation and the research concentrated only on those threads which had ICT-related concerns.

4.14 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to the process of examining, categorising and interpreting the empirical data collected to uncover underlying meaning to address the propositions of a research (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). In order to analyse the data and answer research questions effectively, data had to be broken down into meaningful themes, patterns and relationships in order to understand it (Creswell, 2013). In this research, data was analysed qualitatively using a two-stage coding process. The first stage comprised structural coding and the second stage thematic coding.

4.14.1 Structural Coding

MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, and Milstein (2008) define structural coding as the use of question-based codes as opposed to theme-based codes. Question-based codes "act as a labelling and indexing device, allowing researchers to quickly access data likely to be relevant to a particular analysis from a large data set" (Saldana, 2012, p. 85). Such questions can be related to a particular research question. This type of coding follows a question-by-question approach. The coding is built and driven by a specific topic and research questions without imposing a particular direction for the themes (Thompson & Zaitchik, 2012). This

type of coding has the advantage of including the participant's responses as well as responses from the interviewer's questions, subsequent probes and follow-up questions. This type of analysis fits well with the semi-structured interviews, which were used in this research. Structural coding also has the advantage of allowing co-occurrence where two or more codes can be assigned to a segment of data from a particular respondent. Furthermore, structural coding helps in the simplification of large amounts of qualitative data thereby helping the researcher not to lose focus when dealing with the rich, descriptive and expressive qualitative data (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008). The structural codes from this process were then used to inform thematic analysis. One of the effective methods of breaking down large amounts of qualitative data before applying thematic analysis is by developing and applying a series of structural codes to the data (Namey et al., 2008).

4.14.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a systematic process of identifying, analysing and reporting themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It helps to analyse, classify and present patterns that pertain to the data (Alhojailan, 2012). Namey et al. (2008) summarise thematic analysis by saying that it goes further than just counting words or phrases by identifying and describing intrinsic latent and explicit salient ideas. Codes identified for ideas and themes are then applied to the raw data as summary indicators for later analysis. The analysis compares frequencies of themes, code concurrences or the graphic display of code relationships with the researcher interpreting text to apply the codes. According to Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013), thematic analysis can be considered appropriate for detecting and identifying factors in seemingly unrelated materials and providing possible explanations.

4.14.3 Application

The first step was to gather all the data and audio recordings that were transcribed. The data for this research includes summaries and notes from unrecorded interviews, field notes and the transcribed interviews, as well as questionnaires completed by tourists. The data can be grouped into four main categories, namely, tourists, government, regulator and service providers. Each respondent was given a unique identifier according to one of the above category into which they fall. This protects the identity of the respondents. Data analyses for the interviews, field notes and observations are informed by the six phases of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). These include familiarisation with data,

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generation of codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, naming themes and producing a report.

4.15 RESEARCH EVALUATION

The next step was to evaluate the quality of this research to ensure its credibility and integrity. The criterion used is detailed below.

4.15.1 Trustworthiness

Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2010) define trustworthiness as the soundness, appropriateness and correctness of the research design being used. Research studies with high validity accordingly produce accurate and meaningful results (Oates, 2006). In this research, theoretical frameworks must be identified in order to achieve credibility for the research. During data collection, the triangulation of data sources and viewpoints from various role-players in the tourism sector must intended to increase trustworthness. During the research questionnaires must be distributed to international tourists in resort towns, border posts and international airports. The tourists must be completely aware of the meaning of the questionnaire and be given the opportunity to clarify any issues they may not understand with the researcher and this assures the credibility of the findings. The findings from the tourist questionnaires should be validated against the findings from comments of other tourists on tripadvisor.com. In addition, Interviews should be held with all the representatives from the sub-sectors within the tourism sector and information gleaned from the interviews validated to ensure correctness and accuracy. This is supported by Yin (2014), who encourages the use of multiple sources and a chain of evidence during data collection. He also encourages the use of pattern matching during data analysis. This was done and is detailed in the next chapter.

4.15.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency or reliability of a measurements or the results of the research over time or across settings (Yin, 2014). To ensure dependability in research, a case protocol can be used which details all the steps taken in a research and allows other researchers to come up with similar results. Secondly, all the participants must be made aware of the purpose of the research and be given an opportunity to ask questions before the interviews or completing the questionnaire. This ensures that the respondents answer the questions as correctly as possible. The respondents must also be assured that their responses

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will be treated in confidence and hence they could answer as honestly as possible. In this research, all audio recordings should be made after the consent of the respondents. Finally, the data should be gathered and analysed using the research methods outlined in this chapter to ensure accuracy and dependability.

4.16 ETHICAL ISSUES

Traianou (2014) notes a number of ethical issues in qualitative research; these include informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and minimising harm to the participants. These must be taken into consideration for the purpose of this research. Letters requesting permission to do research must be written to the headquarters of identified organisations. These letters should include a supporting letter from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University detailing the aim of the research and to assure the organisations that confidentiality and integrity would be maintained at all times as the data would only be used for research purposes. In line with the advice of Dawson (2005) the letters should give the name of the research, the university and how the results will be used. The respondents should be informed that their participation is completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the research at any point. Moreover, no compensation will be offered for participation. Subsequently, only the respondents who would have consented will be considered for inclusion in the research. This research follows conventional scientific procedures to reach the conclusions and devise the strategy.

4.17 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed the research design and methodology followed by the researcher and the key research paradigms applicable to the research were discussed with the being grounded in the interpretivist paradigm. The research approach comprised mainly mixed methods with a qualitative bias. To ensure that answers to the questions could be found, the appropriate strategy was chosen as a single embedded case study design. This design allowed for various sources of data collection. The reasons for choosing these particular approaches were provided, as well as the characteristics and limitations of the methods associated with the instruments used to carry out the research. In the next chapter, the results of the research will be discussed as a basis for the subsequent analysis that follows.

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PART B RESEARCH DESIGN	**CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

PART C CASE STUDY	**CHAPTER 5 DATA COLLECTION**	**CHAPTER 6 DATA ANALYSIS**

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CHAPTER 5: DATA COLLECTION AND FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research approach, as well as the techniques, procedures and instruments that were used in carrying out this research. A case study approach was the overarching methodology chosen for this research. This chapter describes the process by which data on ICT use was collected in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. It outlines the data collection techniques applied and presents the data collected and the results thereof. The purpose of the data collection was to gain insight into factors affecting ICT usage into tourism, as well as the level of ICT integration in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The data collection followed the case study approach, as propounded by Yin (2014). Yin suggests six linear but iterative steps for conducting a case study. These six steps include; plan, design, prepare, collect, analyse and share. This chapter looks at the first four steps and Chapter 6 will present the last two steps.

The layout of the chapter follows the first four steps of the case study approach as outlined above. Section 5.1 introduces the chapter and outlines the purpose of the data collection. Section 5.2 describes the <u>planning</u> of the data collection process. The planning processes enabled the identification of the target population and determine the sources of data and the selection of a sample. Section 5.3, discusses the data collection procedures and how the data collection instruments were <u>designed</u>. Subsection 5.3.1 identifies the instruments used and subsection 5.3.2 describes the design of the instruments. The <u>preparation</u> for data collection and how this was done is presented in Section 5.4. The data <u>collection</u> will be explained in section 5.5. Subsection 5.5.1 describes the data collection plan, subsection 5.5.2 describes the data collected and subsection 5.5.3 presents some of the raw results of the data collected. The chapter concludes in section 5.6.

## 5.2 DATA COLLECTION PLANNING

Data collection, as explained as the first step above, was conducted in accordance to the Yin (2014) case protocol (see Appendix A for the detailed case protocol). The case protocol for this case study highlighted the following major aspects: brief overview of the study, data collection procedures, the data collection questions and the guide for the case report.

The protocol worked as a plan to guide the data collection processes. The plan gave an overview of the case study, identifying the objectives, the purpose of the case study and the pertinent information about the case study. The plan also identified the target population, the sampling frame and the methods for contacting the sampled entities as well as the preparation of the budget.

5.2.1 Overview of the case study

The purpose of the data collection was to get an in-depth and holistic understanding of the situation and the relationships that exist in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe as they relate to the way the various role-players use ICT. Between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2014, the researcher embarked on a field trip to Zimbabwe with the aim of obtaining first-hand information and increase understanding of the current situation by observing what is happening in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the aim was to establish how ICT is being used and see where ICT could be further utilised. On this field trip, the researcher visited tourist destinations and service providers to interview tourism entrepreneurs, management and workers including ICT practitioners and to administer questionnaires to international tourists. The aim of the interviews and the questionnaires was to solicit the views, perceptions and knowledge of the diverse groups of role-players in order to understand their current situations. These visits took the researcher to government, the regulator and the service providers involved with tourism, as well as to number of prominent tourist attractions in Zimbabwe. The purpose of the research was to establish and observe what is happening in the tourism sector, by talking to personnel and management as well as to collect related tourism documents where necessary. The data collection exercise was also intended to interact and solicit the experiences of international tourists on how they were using ICT and the challenges they were facing. Thus, an extensive data-collection exercise was conducted over a period of four months which was completed in the form of a case study which was conducted with the most relevant role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe tourism sector. The rest of this chapter will discuss the preparation and execution of the case study.

Tourism role-players in Zimbabwe vary by type, size, nature, ownership and location. The role-players in the tourism sector identified in this research were classified into four categories: Government, regulator, service providers and, lastly, tourists.
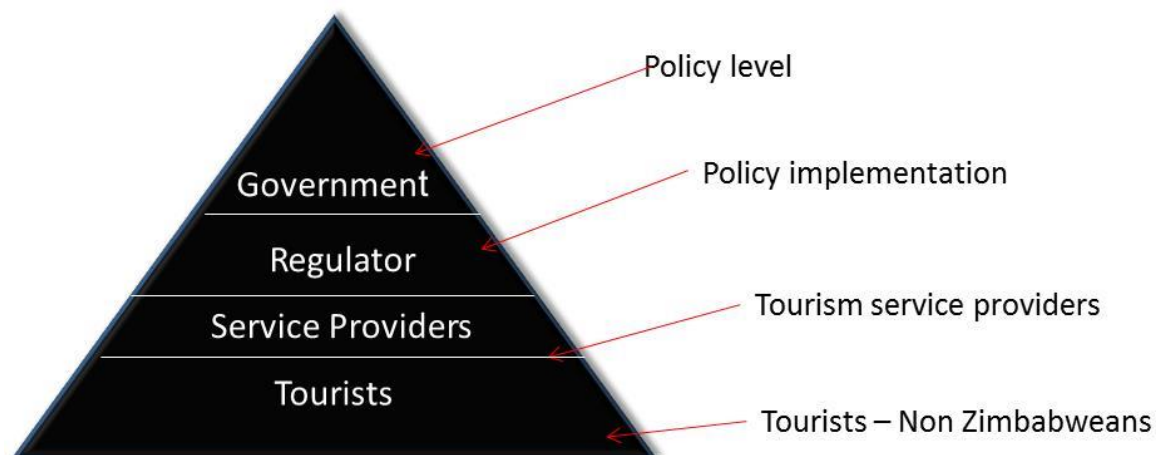
Figure 5.1: The categories of sample population Source: Researcher's design

These categories represent the various layers of the sector, as depicted in Figure 5.1. The first layer represents the government as the policy-makers in the tourism sector. The second layer represents regulator and the third layer represents the service providers that offer commercial services to tourists, service providers' representatives, as well as trade associations that also act as service providers' representatives. Finally, the fourth layer represents the non-Zimbabwean tourists.

Each of the categories required a customised data collection instrument to solicit information in order to satisfy the research objectives. Table 5.1 lists the objectives for each of the categories. The next section deals with the sampling techniques employed in this research.

5.2.2 Sampling

The identified entities and organisations that were solicited to participate in the case study were purposefully chosen to provide a proper representative sample of the tourism role-players in Zimbabwe. Purposeful sampling enabled the identification and selection of information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). The organisations were clustered into the three layers; government, regulator as well as service providers as shown in Figure 5.1. There was also a cluster of non-Zimbabwean tourists. This purposeful sample was chosen in order to provide a proper representative sample of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This helped the researcher to identify participants that were most likely suitable to be suitable and appropriate parties for the research.

Table 5.1: Objectives for each of the categories

Category of Respondents	Objectives for data collection
Government	Senior government officials were targeted to obtain information on policy directions, policy implementation mechanisms and the way government uses ICT. The interviews sought to understand the attitude of government officials towards the use of ICT as well as their challenges and enablers.
Regulator	The interviews sought to understand the perception of how ICT was being used by the regulator in the execution of its mandate and see how ICT has been embedded in its everyday operations as well as their challenges and enablers.
Service providers	The interviews sought to understand the perception of how ICT was being used by the selected organisations in the execution of their mandate and see how ICT has been embedded in the everyday operations of the organisations as well as the challenges and enablers.
Tourists	Tourists' opinions were solicited to give valuable knowledge and insights on their real experiences and expectations on how ICT was used or could have been used to enhance their tourism experience.

5.3 DESIGNING THE DATA COLLECTION

This section, the second step in Yin's case study approach, describes the research instruments used and their design and layout. As outlined in Section 4.2, the research used a case study approach. Such an approach provides multiple perspectives which enables the triangulation, substantiation and questioning of findings by comparing them with data obtained from other methods. The study used both primary and secondary sources.

5.3.1 Research instruments used

The primary data was collected by way of questionnaires completed by international tourists, semi-structured interviews and observation while secondary methods of data collection consisted of netnography and document analysis. The case study methodology allows for multiple sources of data collection (Yin, 2014). The purpose of the data collection in this study was to observe and establish what is happening in the tourism sector, by talking to members of staff and management. The data collection exercise also involved interacting

with international tourists to solicit their views. The research endeavoured to keep the identities of participants anonymous to protect their identity in order to avoid any personal harm, bias or interest in addition to avoiding conflict among the respondents. Taking all the above into account, the following instruments were identified for use: questionnaires, a brochure, semi-structured interviews, netnography and document analysis. A discussion on exactly how these instruments were used will follow later.

5.3.2 Designing of the instruments

This subsection explains the design of the research instruments used. The instruments consisted of a questionnaire completed by international tourists as well as interview guides for the interviews conducted with the various role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The next subsection briefly discusses the way in which questionnaires and interview guides were designed for each of the four categories namely, tourists, government, regulator and service providers.

5.3.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed to elicit information from tourists. The questionnaire sought to understand tourists' experiences relating to the availability, usage and effectiveness of ICT before and during their visit. The questions were drawn from an extensive literature review and their structure was guided by the research objectives.

Eighteen questions were included in the questionnaire and were divided into four parts; the first part solicited demographic information about the respondents. The second part focused on the respondent's tourism experience before and during their stay in Zimbabwe. This part sought to ascertain how many times the respondents had visited and why they had chosen Zimbabwe as a destination. This part also included questions on the payment methods and sources of information used by the tourists. The third part sought to understand the ICT challenges faced by the respondents before and during their visit while the last part gave the respondents the opportunity to make recommendations on how Zimbabwe could use ICT effectively in its tourism sector. In summary, the tourists were expected to give valuable knowledge and insights on their real experiences and expectations of how ICT was used or could have been used to enhance their experience in Zimbabwe. The questions were

deliberately made short and precise in line with the advice of Dawson (2005) who encourages short questions that are not double-barrelled.

Of the 18 questions in the questionnaire, there were nine multiple choice and nine free response questions. The respondents were requested to tick appropriate answers. The other nine questions were open-ended questions where respondents were asked to fill in the blank spaces provided. In order to give the respondents an opportunity to make additional comments, a blank space was provided at the end of the questionnaire.

In order to encourage the respondents to complete the questionnaire and in so doing generate a high response rate several measures were taken. Firstly, a covering letter detailing the purpose of the questionnaire was designed and secondly, a guarantee that the responses would be used only for academic purposes was provided. Thirdly, the respondents were assured that their identity would not in any way be linked to their responses to the questions. Lastly, the researcher's telephone numbers in both South Africa and Zimbabwe as well as e-mail addresses were provided to the respondents if they had any questions or queries about the research. Examples of the different types of questions are shown below.

Figure 5.2 gives an example of a dichotomous question with only two possible responses:

1.   If you used electronic means to pay, was the payment made to a Zimbabwean organisation?

| YES | |
| NO | |

Figure 5.2: Example of a dichotomous question Source: Researcher's design

Figure 5.3 gives an example of a multiple choice question where more than one option was provided:

1. In which manner did you make your booking?

Website	
Email	
Travel Agents	
Friends or Relatives	
In Person	
Telephone	
Tour Operator	
Other, Please Specify	

Other, Specify: _____

Figure 5.3: Example of a multiple choice question Source: Researcher's design

Figure 5.4 shows an example of an ordinal question, which measures a variable without necessarily measuring intensity. This example also illustrates a closed question where responses were provided and the respondents could only choose one option.

1. Which age group do you belong to?

Age	
0-17	
18-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-55	
56-65	
66-75	
76 and above	

Figure 5.4: Example of an ordinal question Source: Researcher's design

Figure 5.5 shows an example of an open-ended question, which does not provide any standard answer.

16. What information and communication technology challenges did you face during your visit to Zimbabwe?

_____

_____
_____

17. What recommendations can you make on how Zimbabwe can effectively use ICT in the tourism sector?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Figure 5.5: Example of open-ended questions Source: Researcher's design

The full questionnaire is included in the appendix section as Appendix F.

5.3.2.2 Brochure

The other strategy used to generate a high response rate was to design a brochure for tourists who could not immediately respond to the questionnaire but opted to respond at a later stage. The brochure also acted as invitation to tourists to participate. The brochure introduced the researcher and outlined the purpose of the research. At the end, it requested the tourists to show willingness to participate in the research by filling in their names, surname, and e-mail address and any other comments they deemed necessary.

The front-page of the brochure showed the university logo, the title of the research project and the names and affiliation of the researcher. The brochure also provided the contact details of the researcher. (see Appendix D for the full brochure).

5.3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

Interview guides were drawn up to elicit the views of government officials, as well as management and workers from both the regulator and service providers from the whole entire spectrum of the tourism sector. The interview guides consisted of dichotomous, semi-structured and open-ended questions. The questions were drawn from the objectives stated in Section 4.1, the research questions and the theoretical framework as outlined in Section 4.11. The interview guides were designed and customised for each of the stakeholder categories. The government category consisted of three sections, namely; demographic information,

government as policy maker and, lastly, government as a user of ICT. The senior government officials were targeted to obtain information on policy directions, policy implementation mechanisms and how the government was using ICT. The interviews sought to understand the attitude of government officials towards the use of ICT as well as the challenges they were facing. An example of an open-ended question included a question like; 'What mechanisms and policies have been put in place to encourage the use of ICT in the tourism sector?' An example of the dichotomous question included 'Does your ministry have an ICT Strategic plan?' (see Appendix G for the full interview guide for the government officials).

An interview guide was used for the regulator (see Appendix E), the service providers (see Appendix H1), and ICT staff (see Appendix H2). The guides consisted of four sections, namely, demographics, functional sophistication, managerial support and a section on the organisational website and the use of social media. The interviews sought to understand the perception of the way ICT was being used by the selected organisations in the execution of their mandate and to see how ICT has been embedded in the everyday operations of the organisations as well as the challenges and enablers. (see Appendix E for the full interview guide for the regulator). The questions included dichotomous, open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. An example of dichotomous question is 'Does your board of directors have an ICT sub-committee?' Another example of a semi-structured question is;

> 4.13 How is ICT currently being applied to create relationships with your customers in terms of:
> 4.13.1 Customer service…………………..
> 4.13.2 Customer enquiries…….………….
> 4.13.3 Selling services……………………..
> 4.13.4 Providing after services……………..
> 4.13.5 Promoting new products……………

5.3.2.4 Netnography

After returning from the field visit to Zimbabwe, the researcher used the most prominent website in terms of travel reviews www.tripavisor.com. This was done in order to triangulate and compare data from both primary and secondary sources. The researcher used the search facility on the website to search for "Zimbabwe". The website classifies the search results into reviews of hotels, restaurants and attractions and also includes forum posts. The reviews

and posts were then sorted by date. The researcher looked at the posts, comments and reviews on all the listed tourists' establishments, which were made from January 2012 to June 2014 which was the research period when the research period for data collection. Purposeful sampling was employed in selecting online threads, which pertained to ICT-related challenges experienced by tourists during the planning and during their visit in Zimbabwe. Mkono (2012a) argues that the rapid developments in social networking technologies facilitate internet users posting of messages, reviews, compliments, complaints and comments on message boards. These message boards offer a happy hunting ground for researchers in an unobtrusive and anonymous way to acquire in-depth understanding of internet users' thoughts, feelings, motivations and concerns (Dancer, Filieri, & Grundy, 2014; Huang, 2016; Janzik, 2015; Podoshen, 2013).

5.3.2.5 Secondary sources

To complement and supplement the primary methods of data collection, the following sources of secondary data, were used namely; netnography (as discussed above), document analysis, government publications and policy statements and newspapers articles. The advantage of including secondary data in the data collection is that it reduces the subjectivity that can occur during data collection. Another advantage, according to Saunders et al. (2015) is that secondary data offers comparative in addition to contextual data thereby enabling the comparison of the findings of primary data with those from secondary sources which enhances the transferability of the research findings. Secondary data collection can help to clarify the research questions and usually precedes the primary research to help clarify the research focus. Secondary sources of data are generally advantageous because of the easy access to a variety of sources that include the internet.

5.3.2.6 Design for data storage

A scheme was developed for the easy storage of data and the management of data. Computer folders were created and labelled according to the respondent categories. All the responses from tourists were labelled numerically with the prefix T for example T1, T2, etc; the same labelling technique was used for the government with the prefix G. The prefix R was used to label responses from regulators while P was used to label service providers. The prefix and numerical number acted as a unique identifier for each respondent, the pseudonym for each respondent to protect their identity, as well as an aid in the storage and management of the

database for the research. The recorded interview audio files were also retrieved and stored in a computer folder.

The questionnaire data was mapped into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The second part of the tourist questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions was transcribed. Data from the summaries and notes of the unrecorded interviews as well as field notes were also transcribed into the word processing program. The data was stored in the same manner and treated like the recorded interviews. This included the naming format. All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher verbatim into a word processing program.

This section described in detail the preparation for field trip to Zimbabwe, the design of the instruments and data storage. The next section describes the preparations made for data collection.

5.4 PREPARATION FOR DATA COLLECTION

This section describes the preparations made for data collection in line with the third step of Yin's approach as detailed in Section 5.1. The preparations included seeking permission to carry out the research and a pilot study.

5.4.1 Permission to carry out research

An extensive literature review was undertaken to study and understand the structure and organisation of the role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, giving the researcher a clear understanding of this structure and organisation. The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) was identified as the organisation responsible for tourism promotion and planning, and it also acts as a regulator of the tourism sector. An e-mail detailing the purpose of the research and supporting letter from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University was sent to the ZTA requesting permission to carry out research (see Appendix B and Appendix C). This permission was subsequently granted.

The following step was to identify and solicit the government ministries most relevant for the research. The Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry and the Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services were identified as the most relevant ministries for this research.

The next step was to identify all the government agencies, mandated by Acts of parliament to manage and regulate areas directly related to the tourism sector. The other identified organisation was the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, a government board responsible for all the museums and national monuments. Sinamai (2014) and Mawere et al. (2013) state that national monuments and museums form an integral part of the Zimbabwean tourism sector. The organisation responsible for the management of all national parks and wildlife, the National Parks and the Wildlife Authority, was also selected for this research, as most of the natural attractions in Zimbabwe are found in the national parks and around the natural attractions. The Zimbabwe National Parks and the Wildlife Authority is the custodian of, for example, the Victoria Falls and much of the Zambezi River basin which are the major attractions in Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe and the mountains of the Eastern Highlands are also located within national parks. Consequently, most tourist activities in Zimbabwe are carried out within national parks and wildlife areas. The tourism sector in Zimbabwe is government-led and private sector driven (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Trade associations, which are private organisations founded and funded by businesses in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe to represent their interests and regulate their members, were also identified. The private sector umbrella representative body, the Zimbabwe Council of Tourism, was identified as well as the Safari Operators Association of Zimbabwe and a number of publicity associations.

Two government-owned institutions of higher learning, Chinhoyi University of Technology and Bulawayo Polytechnic School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, which have teaching hotels, were also included in the case study for three reasons. Firstly, higher learning institutions are very important as they are critical in training and producing the workforce for the sector, thus they are expected to impart critical skills which include ICT skills. Secondly, the institutions are centres of excellence in research and innovations. Lastly, the purpose of including these institutions was to understand how academia perceives the prevailing situation with regard to the use of ICT and try to understand to what extent ICT has been embedded in their curriculum. Training institutions provide a critical service in producing human resources for the tourism sector and thus have a bearing on the quality of human resources in the sector.

The sample also included two publicity associations. Publicity associations are non-profit making organisations that seek to promote the interests of their cities, tourist attractions as well as encourage industrial and commercial development in their cities. In Zimbabwe, publicity associations have different structures: some are run by elected boards' and others function as departments of city councils. The identified privately run publicity association was one of the oldest associations in the country; however, it was cited, in the media as facing some financial and viability challenges (Ncube, 2013). The researcher also met the acting chairperson of another publicity association, which had collapsed, but was in the process of being resuscitated during the Sanganaai/Hlanganani Travel Expo. Service providers were identified from the online directory on the ZTA website that classifies role-players by the different categories in the tourism sector.

E-mails were sent to these selected organisations to solicit their participation in the research. Fourteen days were allowed to elapse before a follow-up was done for those who had not responded, either by telephone or, in some cases visiting them in person. Five organisations refused to take part in the research and no reasons were provided. Suitable replacements were identified and letters soliciting their participation were also mailed.

The ZTA sponsored annual Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair and the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) week exhibition were identified as suitable meetings to attend. These meetings were deemed to be an opportunity to understand, network and interact with various stakeholders in the tourism sector. Thus, before embarking on any case study visit, a complete suite of visits was solicited from all relevant parties and role-players.

5.4.2 Pilot study

A pilot study that tested the clarity of the questionnaire was conducted, preceding the data collection. The pilot study was done to ensure that the questions were in the best order, to check for adequacy of the information to be collected and further ensure that all the questions were understood by all categories of respondents. During the pilot study, the researcher checked the recording equipment, refined what was to be observed and adjusted the questions. The interview questions were pre-tested on one tourist organisation in Gweru and two Zimbabwean academics. The two academics were drawn from the Department of

Tourism and Hospitality as well as Computer Science and Information Systems at the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. Prior to the pre-testing, the questions were discussed with two Information Technology doctoral students at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. In addition, a questionnaire was pre-tested online at www.surveypro.com with carefully selected respondents. This was done to establish the strength and weakness of the interview questions and the questionnaires regarding question format, wording and order. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 14 respondents, four of whom were Zimbabwean tourism professionals, three were doctoral students, six were from the researcher's contacts who had visited Zimbabwe before and one who had never been to Zimbabwe but had done tourism research in her country. The mixing of a variety people was meant to ascertain whether people from different backgrounds would understand the questionnaire easily.

The respondents were informed that it was a pre-test and they were asked to answer the survey questions and make comments on the question format, wording, ambiguity and order. After the pre-test, feedback from the answers and recommendations from the respondents were gathered. Subsequently, a total of five questions was reformulated, amended and reordered and incorporated into the final interview questions and the questionnaire. This was in line with recommendations of Mills et al. (2010) who argue that exploratory cases can assist in refining research questions for a later research or to assess the feasibility of research techniques.

Thus, in adhering to the third step of Yin's case study approach, all visits to all identified parties were planned and, in addition, all questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were tested and improved.

5.5 DATA COLLECTION

This section reports on how the data relating to ICT was collected from tourists, government, the regulator, and service providers in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This section represents the fourth step according to Yin's case study approach.

5.5.1 Data collection plan

To meet the tourists the researcher had to embark on fieldwork in the major tourist destinations in Zimbabwe, namely, Victoria Falls, Matopos, Hwange and Chinhoyi. During

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the fieldwork, questionnaires were distributed at three border posts, namely, Beitbridge, Victoria Falls and Kazungula. Beitbridge border post is on the border with South Africa, which is the main source of tourists for Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2012). The Victoria Falls borders on Zimbabwe and Zambia as these two countries jointly share the Victoria Falls. Kazungula border post is situated on the border between Zimbabwe and Botswana. Tourists who visit Chobe National Park near Kasane in Botswana often take a day trip to visit Victoria Falls, which is only 80 kilometres away. Interviews and observations were to take place in the places discussed as well as in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. The government and service providers' head offices are located in Harare.

5.5.2 Data collected

The role-players interviewed included two officials from the national government, eleven interviewees from the regulator and twenty nine interviewees from service providers. The interviews were conducted in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Matopos, Hwange and Victoria Falls. The semi-structured interviews lasted between 30 minutes to one and half hours. Furthermore, international tourists returned 60 questionnaires.

5.5.2.1 Tourists

Questionnaires were personally administered to tourists in the resort towns of Zimbabwe as had been planned and outlined in section 4.13.2. The screening criterion was that the respondents had to be non-Zimbabwean. As part of the screening process, the nationality was asked and, if the tourist status was Zimbabwean, then a questionnaire was not issued.

A total of 120 questionnaires and 100 brochures were printed to be distributed to international tourists in Hwange, Victoria Falls, Matopos, the Beitbridge and Kazungula border posts as well as international airports at Harare, Victoria Falls and Bulawayo. The brochures were used as a form of invitation to the tourists to participate. A total of 86 respondents filled in their names and emails address in these brochures. An e-mail with the questionnaire link was then e-mailed to these e-mail addresses to enable them to complete the survey in their own time. The rationale for this was that some tourists could not complete the surveys whilst in Zimbabwe because they were on very tight schedules. As claimed by Walliman (2005), personal delivery offers an opportunity to clarify respondents' questions and secondly, has the advantage of being able to persuade respondents, which can help to get a higher response

rate. Unfortunately, the researcher could not get the necessary permission to distribute the questionnaires and invitation brochures at the international airports, which are considered high security zones in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the questionnaires were administered in all other places except for the international airports.

The process of persuading prospective respondents required good skills related to building rapport and persuasion. As part of building rapport, the researcher even helped to take photographs of some of the tourists who had their cameras but had no one to photograph them and thereafter asked the tourists to complete the questionnaire. There were also isolated cases, where, after building rapport with tourists and informing them of the purpose of the research, they would tell the researcher that they were also undertaking masters or doctoral studies. Some commented positively on the importance of the study, but nonetheless refused to complete the questionnaire. Some tourists openly stated that they were on holiday to enjoy, relax and not answer questionnaires. The researcher had to ask for permission to record one respondent after she had related the challenges she encountered getting a visa to visit Zimbabwe.

The researcher had to use diplomacy so as not to disturb or bother tourists who wanted to relax and enjoy their holiday. Some tourists later told the researcher that they were uncomfortable to talking to strangers because of touts who harass tourists to buy their wares. The researcher consequently made sure that he was formally dressed and the university student identity card was prominently displayed. The researcher also had business cards, which he gave to the tourists who requested them.

 The government of Zimbabwe is very protective of its tourists and, as a result, the government has established a special police force called the 'tourism police', to ensure that no one 'harasses' or bother tourists. The police mainly operate in public places. On the other hand the tourist commercial service providers would want their tourists to experience 'their hospitality and services' as free as possible from any 'foreign' intrusions. Interaction with the intended population requires permission from multiple individuals and the tourists themselves.

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Some potential respondents appeared very eager to participate, but unfortunately they could not speak English. Ultimately, a total of 37 hard copy questionnaires were completed by tourists. A number of tourists wanted the researcher to read the questions out loud and gave the responses while the researcher filled in the questionnaire. One tourist told the researcher that he would complete the questionnaire as long as the researcher was not going to demand money later.

Some questionnaires were left with the tourism service providers for distribution to tourists. Of these, three questionnaires were received as e-mail attachments.

An online version of the same questionnaire was also administered at www.surveypro.com. A total of the 86 e-mail invitations were sent to those who had indicated willingness to participate in the study. Out of 86, 23 invitees responded positively by completing the questionnaire online, 31 e-mails bounced back because of address failure. Despite five attempts to encourage those who had not responded to do so, 55 did not respond. One questionnaire was considered unusable as the respondent only filled in demographic information. The response rate from the questionnaires was therefore 29.6 per cent. According to Oates (2006), it is very common to get a response rate of 10 per cent., though a 30 per cent or higher response rate is preferable. Thus, the response rate achieved in this research is slightly below 30 per cent., nonetheless, this response rate was deemed acceptable.

5.5.2.2 Government

Senior civil servants from the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality and Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services were interviewed to obtain government policy directions on ICT and tourism-related issues. In the first case, the researcher had requested to interview the Minister and the Permanent Secretary; however the researcher was informed that he could not see either party. The researcher was then referred to one of the directors in the Ministry. The director in turn referred the researcher to his subordinate who also sent the researcher to some junior members of staff. These were willing to answer the questions although they could not provide answers on some issues, which they indicated were beyond their scope. This was in agreement with Rogers (2011) who asserts that in Zimbabwe, it is not particularly difficult to get to meet low ranking officials, but it is very hard to meet the senior officials.

The experience encountered in the first ministry was in contrast with the situation encountered in the second ministry visited. The researcher was taken to the Permanent Secretary's office and had a brief discussion before being referred to a director. The Permanent Secretary informed the researcher that if there were any questions the director could not answer, he was available and willing to discuss and clarify the issues with the researcher later.

The researcher had to rely on the policy directions set out by the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality in the presentation to the tourism business forum during the 2013 Sanganaai/Hlanganani Travel Expo. The researcher also relied on the videos of interviews of the minister on www.youtube.com.

In the end sound feedback was received from both ministries.

5.5.2.3 Regulator

The regulator is non-commercial organisation, which implements government policy in the tourism sector.

Respondents

The researcher conducted interviews with representative of top management, middle management and members of other departments, as well as ICT practitioners. This was significant because members of Zimbabwean top management are usually very busy and would rather delegate to their juniors than talk to researchers. Four of the respondents were in senior management positions. The other three were in lower management two were middle management, and the rest were non-managerial positions. The respondents interviewed included ICT practitioners. In order to avoid any inconveniences to respondents, appointments were made via e-mail and a telephone call was made prior to the visits. In the end, a good combination of interviewees was visited, varying from executive-level to junior staff members.

5.5.2.4 Service providers organisations

The selected organisations in this research included organisations in the various subsectors of tourism. The sample included one large hotel group and one privately owned accommodation service company. It was also observed that the hotel group had diversified to provide a

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number of ancillary tourism services. A privately owned game park was also included in the sample as well as a professional hunter who his runs own private practice. The other organisation runs most of the tourism activities available in Victoria Falls. The majority of tour operators in Zimbabwe are largely small and medium enterprises with just a handful of the large corporates. A total of twenty-nine in depth semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 minutes to one and half hours with ten service providers in the tourism sector were conducted. There were also some informal interviews with the immigration department, civil aviation authority and Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to confirm or get clarifications on some issues raised by either tourist and/or other tourism role-players.

Thus, a sound and balanced feedback was obtained from a representative sample of service providers in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

5.5.2.5 Document analysis

The two government policy documents currently driving the country's economic direction and policy in the tourism sector will be briefly described. These are the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) and the Zimbabwe Tourism Policy.

- Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET)

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation is a socio-economic trajectory blueprint that guides and directs all government policies and programmes for the period October 2013 to December 2018. ZIMASSET is a result-based programme premised on four strategic clusters, namely, Food and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation. The cluster system groups together all the ministries with related mandates and functions for a number of reasons: Firstly, to facilitate easy and effective implementation; secondly, to guarantee horizontal and vertical linkages; thirdly, to enable greater synergies and collaborations and, lastly, to accelerate growth.

ICT was listed as part of the ten programme areas that integrate vertically and horizontally with programmes in other clusters. The ICT and tourism sectors were further identified as part of the key drivers for growth and employment creation.

ZIMASSET aims to promote the uptake of ICT at all levels of society through a number of interventions; these include revising the ICT policy and developing ICT legislation as well as internet policy. The blueprint also highlights the need to address issues like universal access, bandwidth connectivity, corporate governance principles and ICT literacy. In addition, the document identifies the need to invest in ICT infrastructure in collaboration with the private sector.

ZIMMASSET recognises the tourism sector, which is currently contributing tem per cent of the gross domestic product, as one of the country's major economic pillars. The contribution is envisaged to increase to 15 per cent by 2015. The blueprint further calls for aggressive marketing of the country to improve its image and perception of the country in the source markets. It further asserts that after successfully co-hosting the United Nations World Tourism Organisation conference with Zambia, the government of Zimbabwe intends to diversify the country's tourism product into a Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) niche market. The document clearly outlines government's new policy thrust to host international meetings, conventions and exhibitions.

- The Zimbabwe Tourism Policy

The policy is the culmination of extensive consultations between the government led by the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality and various players in the tourism and hospitality sectors as well as the academia. The policy explicitly states that tourism in Zimbabwe is government-led but private-sector driven.

The questionnaires completed by international tourists and an extensive series of semi-structured interviews with carefully selected interviewees, culminated in rich data collection. The two government policy documents anchoring the country's economic direction and policy in the tourism sector were also reviewed.

5.5.3 Results of data collected

This section presents the raw data gathered during data collection from tourists, government, the regulator and service providers in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

5.5.3.1 Results from tourist questionnaires

This subsection presents the results obtained from the questionnaires. The results will be presented as follows: firstly, general information about tourists will be presented; secondly, ICT-related concerns from tourists will be discussed and thirdly, the tourist' recommendations will be presented.

i) General tourist information
This subsection presents the general and demographic information about respondents.

Table 5.2: Country of residence of respondents

Country of residence of respondents	Number of respondents (N=60)	Percentage
United Kingdom	12	7
USA	10	6
Tanzania	2	1
Australia	8	5
South Africa	20	12
Botswana	5	3
Zambia	2	1
Belgium	5	3
France	3	2
Mozambique	3	2
New Zealand	2	1
Costa Rica	2	1
Namibia	5	3
Kenya	2	1
Italy	3	2
Switzerland	3	2
Lesotho	2	1
Germany	5	3
Spain	1	1
Canada	2	1
Angola	2	1
Netherlands	3	2

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The respondents were drawn from 20 different countries with the majority of the respondents coming from South Africa (12%), the UK (7%), the USA (6%), Australia (5%), Belgium (3%), Germany (3%), and Namibia (3%). The remainder came from Zambia (1%), Botswana (3%) and the rest from other countries like Tanzania, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Kenya, Italy, Lesotho, Spain, Canada and Angola, each contributing 1% of the respondents, shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.3: Findings from tourists

Number of Visits	Number of Respondents (N=60)	Number of Respondents as Percentage
Once	36	60
Twice	4	7
Thrice	3	5
More than Thrice	17	28

The respondents were asked to indicate how many times they had visited Zimbabwe. Table 5.3 shows that 60% of the respondents indicated that this was their first visit to Zimbabwe, while 7% stated that they had visited twice, 5% had visited three times, and a further 28% had visited more than three times. The high rate of first time visitors and the high rate of those who have visited more than three times may be indicative of successful marketing campaigns by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and the potential for repeat visits in the future. The mixture of first time visitors and those who have visited before gives multiple point of view and incorporate people with different experiences.

Table 5.4: Reasons for choosing to visit Zimbabwe

Reason for visit	Number of Respondents (N=60)	Percentage
Attractions	27	45
Activities	5	8
Overland	5	8
Recommendations	15	25
Family and historical ties	8	13

The respondents were asked to state the main purpose of their visit to Zimbabwe. The reasons given were holiday (72%), business (18%) and social (10%). The questionnaire also sought to

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examine why the respondents chose to visit Zimbabwe. Table 5.4 shows that most respondents chose to visit Zimbabwe because of its attractions (45%), activities (8%), overland (8%), recommendations by other tourists, family and friends (25%) and because of family and historical ties (13%).

Table 5.5: The sources of tourist information

Source	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Website	35	58
Travel Fairs	2	3
Word of Mouth	37	62
Magazines	5	8
Social Media	6	10
Tour Companies	2	3
Books	8	13
Tourism Ambassadors	1	2
Travel Agency	4	7
DVDs	0	0
Celebrity Host Programmes	0	0

Findings as shown in Figure 5.5 revealed that 58% of the respondents interviewed, used websites to get information about Zimbabwe. Traditional methods like travel books (13%), magazines (8%) travel agencies (7%), tourism companies (3%), travel fairs (3%) and tourism ambassadors (2%) still play a significant role in providing information to tourists. The vast majority of the tourists (62%) used word of mouth.

Table 5.6: Booking Methods

Booking Method	Number (N=60)	Percentage
Website	7	12
E-mail	6	10
Travel Agent	17	28
Friends/Relatives	9	15
In Person	15	25
Telephone	5	8
Tour Operator	7	12

Table 5.6 shows that in spite of the majority of respondents using websites as a source of information, when it comes to booking of services, only 12% used websites, 10% used e-mails, and 8% used telephone services. It is interesting to note that a significant number that

is 28% use travel agents and 12% used tour operators. The other respondents booked in person (25%) and 13% used friends and relatives to make the bookings on their behalf.

Table 5.7: Payment Methods

Payment Method	Number N = 60	Percentage
Credit Card	17	30
Paypal	0	0
Western Union	4	2
Wire Transfer/Local Bank	16	11
Cash	32	56

From the data obtained and shown in Table 5.7, the majority (56%) of payments for services was made in cash. Other methods that were used are credit cards (30%), Western Union (4%) and wire transfers (11%). Furthermore, the results show that 13% of payments were made outside Zimbabwe. The results revealed that 13% of the payments were made in South Africa whilst payments made in Australia, Zambia, Netherlands, Australia, UK and USA achieved 2% apiece.

ii) ICT-related challenges faced by tourists

The respondents were asked to state the ICT challenges they faced during their visit to Zimbabwe. The results of the survey, as shown in Table 5.8, reveal that tourists in Zimbabwe face an array of ICT-related challenges. The challenges include the internet, ATM and mobile related booking challenges, customs procedures, poor marketing strategies and website related challenges. Some organisations did not have websites and tourists experienced challenges in attempting to find information about those organisations.

a) Internet

The results of the survey showed that tourists in Zimbabwe face many ICT-related challenges. A total of 23 respondents (38%) identified internet-related challenges during their stay in Zimbabwe. The challenges were summarised by one respondent who said: "*Internet connectivity is very limited; internet bandwidth is very limited which makes the browsing experience very poor. The major national parks also have poor/limited telecommunication network coverage*" (T55). The internet-related challenges were divided into three categories, namely, exorbitant internet charges, intermittent internet connectivity and unavailability of internet connection.

Table 5.8: Challenges faced by tourists

ICT-related challenges	Respondents	Number (N=60)	Percentage
a) Internet			
Exorbitant internet charges	T38 T52 T58	3	5
Intermittent internet connectivity	T17 T33 T36 T38 T40 T42 T43 T45 T47 T48 T55 T56	12	20
Unavailability of internet connection	T5 T6 T21 T22 T24 T38 T43 T50	8	13
b) Mobile Networks			
Poor mobile network coverage	T8 T10 T30 T31 T32 T34 T38 T55 T56 T58	10	17
Exorbitant mobile cost charges	T26	1	2
Poor mobile connectivity	T8 T21 T26 T29 T32 T34 T35 T52	8	13
c) Booking/Payment challenges			
Limited electronic real-time books	T28 T57 T33 T58	4	7
Limited electronic payment systems	T16 T28 T32 T44 T49 T50 T55 T56	8	13
d) Custom Procedures			
Long waits and queues at borders due to manual procedures	T2 T11 T14 T18 T19 T27 T28 T29 T35	9	15
e) ATM			
High ATM transaction charges	T19	1	2
Scarce ATMs	T21 T22 T24	3	5
Limited acceptance of international debit and credit cards at ATMs	T1 T21 T24 T51 T52	5	8
f) Poor e-marketing strategies			
Lack of important information from marketing media	T8 T10 T12 T15 T17 T28 T39 T56	8	13
Lack of information concerning secondary activities	T18 T26 T49 T51 T54	5	8
Out-dated information from the marketing media	T1 T15 T17 T49 T50	5	8
Poor usability of the marketing media	T15 T26 T49	3	5
Use of antique ICT equipment by service provider	T40	1	2
Websites information not properly designed	T39 T49	2	3
g) Web Portal			
Information inconsistences of websites	T60	1	2
No single page with list of all possible resorts and activities	T33	1	2

- Exorbitant internet charges

Table 5.8 shows that 1% of the respondents complained that they had no access to the internet and those who did access the internet (5%) felt that the cost of internet of an average USD$1 for 40 minutes was too expensive. According to one respondent: *"Internet was extremely expensive"* (T52). This was further confirmed by another respondent who commented: "*internet is very expensive and slow"* (*T38)* and this was echoed by another respondent who noted that *"Poor network coverage and the data is a bit expensive"* (*T58).* All three respondents (5%) noted that the internet was marginally expensive and the other two stressed further that despite being expensive the internet was very slow and the network was very poor.

- Intermittent internet connectivity

A total of 20% of the respondents noted that another internet-related challenge was the unreliable and slow internet services. The respondents complained that they faced the challenge of: *"poor internet connectivity"* (T36) and that "*sometimes internet was slow"* (T48) and that there was "*intermittent internet connection and poor mobile network coverage*" (T56). It is therefore clear that the speed of the internet was cited as very slow for tourist services, which require high-speed web services as they go about their business.

- Unavailability of internet connections

On the unavailability of internet connections, 13% stated that the internet was not readily available at the tourist resorts. This was summarised by one respondent who comments: *"availability of internet and telephone services in resort areas is lacking"* (*T38).* Similarly, two other respondents pointed out that there was: *"lack of IT infrastructure, for example WI-FI"* (*T6*) and there was no *"... easy access to internet, like WI-FI*" (T43).

Another respondent (T52) observed that some shops were not able to use point-of-sale machines, when they did not have electricity or they would say they had a bad network, especially on MasterCard transactions.

b) Mobile networks

The other major challenge identified by 32% of the respondents was telecommunication-related challenges, especially concerning mobile networks. The mobile challenges were grouped under the following headings: poor mobile network coverage, exorbitant mobile phone service charges and poor mobile connectivity.

- Poor mobile network coverage

The responses to the questionnaire indicate that, tourists face the challenge of poor mobile networks in Zimbabwe. A total of 17 per cent of respondents indicated that they had challenges in accessing the mobile network. This challenge of poor mobile network made it difficult to receive calls even for those on a roaming service. One respondent stated that the "*availability of internet and telephone services in resort areas is lacking*" (T38). Another respondent complained of *"network unavailability"* (T30)*. The researcher visited one tourist attraction, Nalatale Ruins and found that there was no mobile network and in some other cases, the signal strength was very low. It was clear that the country's major telecommunication infrastructure is concentrated in major cities and densely populated areas. Tourist areas are usually in the remote areas, especially national parks, which are far away from cities and along the country's borders which are sparsely populated, mobile coverage is poor. The other issue to note is that some of the national parks are in far-flung mountainous areas.

- Exorbitant mobile cost charges

A total of 2% of the respondents noted that even though the mobile network access was poor, they were of the opinion that the mobile phone charges were high averaging US$0,24 per minute for international calls. Tourists ideally require reliable, low-cost and 24 hour connectivity. One respondent recommended that *"phoning charges be lowered"* (T26).

- Poor mobile connectivity

The other major challenge identified by 13% of the respondents was poor mobile networks that made it difficult to receive calls even though they were on roaming. Buying a Zimbabwean SIM card did not help either as the network problems

persisted. A tourist from Zambia, who indicated that one of the challenges faced during the visit was poor network connectivity, illustrates this view recommending that *"improve the quality of the mobile network because some of us will be roaming and even if we purchase Zimbabwean SIM card it is still difficult to get hold of the family back in Zambia."* (T34). Tourists expect high-class connectivity in the form of telephone networks and other support infrastructure. The above comment illustrated that tourists want to continue to communicate with their families during their visit.

c) Booking/Payment challenges

The limited use of electronic payment services was another problem identified by 20% of the respondents. This is hindering business, because it means service providers cannot sell their services to tourists who prefer not to carry large sums of money. Allowing electronic payments would be a huge enabler for growth in the sector.

- Limited real-time bookings

Another area of concern by the tourists was the area of bookings and electronic payments. This was confirmed by the results shown in Table 5.5, where the respondents indicated that there was very little real-time booking information and limited electronic payment systems (13%). A total of 7% of the respondents indicated that they preferred to make bookings online and make the necessary payments online. A small number of tourists (3%) pointed out that the use of manual booking transactions was a prevalent instead of electronic booking. This was shown by the following comment from a respondent:

"The visit to resort and leisure sites e.g. the world heritage sites and payment for leisure such as boat cruise. Most hotels and lodges have become modern such that bookings can be made online and payments made using credit cards, however, most touring companies are still processing bookings manually and requiring cash payments for activities to be done." (T55). Other tourists felt that there should be more online bookings and payments by debit and credit cards. However, this was in sharp contrast to one respondent (T20) who indicated that he preferred manual bookings and paying cash for all transactions.

d) Custom procedures

A total of 25% of the respondents complained of long queues at the border because of slow manual procedures. They indicated that they preferred customs procedures to be done electronically. In the respondents' opinion customs' procedures were slow, tedious and mainly manual. In addition, 8% of the respondents answered the same questions by stating they would have preferred to pay for their visa applications and payments online.

e) ATMs

The ATM-related challenges were grouped under the following headings; ATM transaction charges, scarce ATMs and limited acceptance of international debit and credit cards at ATMs.

- High ATM transaction charges

A total of 2% of the respondents complained that the ATM charges were exorbitant. One respondent commented that *"I have just withdrawn cash from ATMs and it cost a lot of money"* (T19).

- Scarce ATMs

Another challenge that was highlighted by respondents was the difficulty involved in locating ATMs. This challenge ATM scarcity was experienced by 8% of the respondents. There are no in-store ATMs in Zimbabwe as the cash dispensing machines are found only at banks. However, 6% of those who did managed to find ATM indicated that they were unable to use their electronic cards as they were not accepted by the Zimbabwean banks.

- Limited acceptance of international debit and credit cards at ATMs

The majority of the ATMs in Zimbabwe only accept VISA and MasterCard. American Express cards and Diners Club are, for example, not catered for. One respondent from Switzerland stressed that "*VISA seem to have a monopoly, you have to have VISA or cash and this causes inconvenience to tourists". H*e also raised a concern that there was a "*two-level society where foreigners pay more*" (T24). Furthermore, another respondent from South Africa reported that there was no "*information on where to find ATMs, which cards are in use and currencies in use*"

(T5. This respondent further stated that: *"I had converted money in the bank card from rands to USD but at the hotel if you are using MasterCard the currency is in rands hence there was loss on double conversion"* (T5).

f) Poor e-marketing strategies

The results of the survey showed that tourists in Zimbabwe face an array of problems emanating from poor e-marketing strategies. A total of 40% of the respondents identified e-marketing-related challenges before and during their stay in Zimbabwe. The e-marketing-related challenges were divided into six categories, namely; lack of important information from marketing media, lack of information concerning secondary activities, out-dated information from the marketing media. The last two challenges are the use of antique ICT equipment by service providers and websites that have not been properly designed in conveying information.

- Lack of important information from marketing media

According to Table 5.8, 8% of the respondents felt that the marketing media they used lacked important information such as services available, booking information and information about places to visit in Zimbabwe, tourist maps, and prerequisites of what one should be aware of when visiting Zimbabwe, as well as payment for services such as food and accommodation. This was shown by comments like the following

"Information about distances, safari and multiple visa entry charges. The country is relatively unknown in Germany not many know Victoria Falls. A lot of tourists coming to Victoria Falls are adventurous in nature; as such a "free to download" list of things to do in Victoria Falls that also contain hotspots and maps of the region would be great" (T40). This was further supported by 13% of the respondents who complained that the marketing media had little or no information about services. Important information such as prices, telephone numbers and tour operator information was sometimes missing. The researcher faced the same situation when he was attempting to locate and visit most of the tourist organisations. The websites often carried out-dated information about telephone numbers and the physical locations of organisations. This is further supported by the comments from a respondent who said: *"websites are not very clear, some information is missing"* (T39). Another respondent suggested that Zimbabwean organisations must have *"toll-free numbers to call if*

there is a problem with the website or alternatively helpdesk personnel should be able to see the screen and content of the client" (T12). The deficiency of important information as illustrated by another tourist who commented that: "The tourism office in Zimbabwe did not have current information about e.g. *bus timetables to various tourist destinations. "No flyers. No current information about prices. Word of mouth and tripadvisor were most useful*" (T50). Most websites contained information that was merely dump and not updated regularly. There was also little or no response after tourists had left questions or comments on the sites. Most resort areas do not even have websites.

- Lack of information concerning secondary activities

Pavlovich (2014) postulates that a comprehensive tourism experience involves the core tourism attractions as well as the supporting activities and these complement each other to attract tourists. The respondents in this research complained that there was no information on secondary and supporting activities. The tourists raised a number of issues like:

"Improve the information about the schedule on trains and buses/border (times, prices, how to transfer from one country to another)" (T18). Another respondent added that they wanted to obtain information on *"where to find ATMs, which cards are in use and currencies in use"* (T22). A further concern was that *"the tourism agency in Zimbabwe did not have current information about e.g. bus tours to various venues. No flyers. No current information about prices. Word of mouth and tripadvisor were most useful*" (T50). The tourists seem to share the view that they need information on secondary and supporting services to be clearly shown in the marketing media, for instance the exact locations, prices, times and ratings of services. This was summarised by a respondent who said*: "we want a recognisable restaurant website which shows exactly where the restaurants are, food quality etc."* (T12).

Other respondents highlighted that the information about Zimbabwe describes the general tourist sites and leisure areas but there are no updates relating to current developments, changes or improvements that have taken place in those areas. The

general information does not include additional leisure or new tourist sites built in recent years. Tourists only find this information when they arrive in Zimbabwe.

- Out-dated information from the marketing media

The findings showed that 8% of the respondents complained that the information obtained from the marketing media was not up-to-date. The respondents felt that the information on pricing of services was not being updated. This was illustrated by the following comments that suggests that tourists need; "*up-to -date information about hotel room rates and currency exchange rates*" (T49). This was supported by another respondent who said: "*there must be good websites with up-to-date pricing, especially for activities*" (T17). Two other respondents complained that there were many changes in prices and telephone numbers and another one claimed that the information on the websites was six months out of date.

- Use of antique ICT equipment by service providers

Only 2% of the respondents felt that the service providers in Zimbabwe offered antique equipment for use by tourists to access the internet. One respondent complained that: "*Desktop computers used left a lot to be desired, especially when accessing content rich websites*" (T40).

- Website information not properly designed

From the research, 3% of respondents were unsatisfied with the website designs. This was emphatically summarised by one respondent who said:

"*And some links of the few websites are not performing their purpose (malfunctioning). Moreover, the website has gotten too much idle pictures that make it difficult to find what you will be looking for. And the information is not properly arranged and some of the information is out of date especially on the (*Organisation X) *Website*" (T49). Another respondent concurred saying "*Websites are not very clear as some information is missing*" (T39) and one further recommended: "*Try to make ICT user friendly*" (T8). Since the websites were poorly designed, other respondents complained about poor usability of marketing media. Another respondent complained that it was "*hard to find some reliable information about the prices*" (T15).

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g) Web portal

A total of 4% of the respondents noted that there was no portal for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe which provides information about Zimbabwe on one website. This was summarised by one respondent who complained that: "*No one page clearly lists all the tourism possibilities in Zimbabwe*" (T26). There is no single website that lists all possible resorts and activities in the country. One respondent (T60) commented that there were situations where there were inconsistencies in the information obtained from different websites.

This subsection looked at the various ICT-related challenges identified by respondents before and during their stay in Zimbabwe. Thus, challenges affecting tourists were identified. The next subsection will look at the recommendations suggested by respondents on how ICT could have been used to enhance their stay in Zimbabwe.

iii) Recommendations from tourists

In order to probe the respondents further, the tourists were asked to make recommendations on how Zimbabwe could effectively utilise ICT in the tourism sector. The rationale for this section was to obtain tourists views on how ICT could have been used to enhance their stay in Zimbabwe. Secondly, from the recommendations one can infer some inherent problems faced by tourists. The recommendations were generally solutions or improvements to the challenges listed in Table 5.8, though some new dimensions were also added.

a) Web portal with all activities, maps, resorts, virtual tour

A total of 17% of the respondents recommended that there should be one web portal for the whole of Zimbabwe tourism. Some of the respondents commented that there should be *"A webpage that group all tourist services available, especially tour organisation, activities, accommodation plus events"* (T15). This recommendation emanated mainly from the respondents who complained that it was hard to find reliable information. Other respondents made similar comments saying: "*Use main portal to promote the country that contains links to relevant webpages with information of safaris, flights, hotels, restaurants, culture, hospitals and other general considerations*" (T57). Another respondent confirmed this by saying: "*Resort areas to have websites and have one main site which has links to different resorts*" (T46). The other respondents (T56, T12) further

suggest that the portal should have full information about services offered, exact location and ratings of services and accommodation available.

Table 5.9: Recommendations by tourists

Recommendation	Respondent	Number of respondents	Number of respondents as a percentage
a) Web portal			
Portal with all activities, maps, resorts, virtual tour	T12 T15 T26 T17 T39 T46 T47 T49 T56 T57 T58	10	17
Organisations must have websites	T52	1	2
Embassy information	T39	1	2
Current and up-to-date information	T9 T11 T15 T49	4	7
Share photos	T1 T23 T32	2	3
b) E-services			
Electronic payments	T8 T16 T32 T44 T49 T50 T51 T52 T54 T55 T56 T57	12	20
Customs procedures (make them electronic)	T19 T27 T29	3	5
Visa application online electronic visa application to improve efficiency	T3	1	2
Reliable secure real-time booking	T6 T25 T28 T33 T35 T46 T49 T51 T60	9	15
Online check in	T38	1	2
c) E-marketing			
Up-to-date lively websites	T11 T17 T26 T41 T47 T52	6	10
Social media and blogs	T11 T32 T17 T57 T58	5	8
Advertising +(pop up adverts)	T10 T32 T33 T39 T54 T56	6	10
Information on ancillary activities	T12 T21 T22 T26 T28 T31 T40 T55 T57	9	15
Website optimisation	T47	1	2
Customer feedback on website	T46	1	2

inquiries			
Mismatch between information on the website and what is on the ground	T15 T26	1	2
Customer service – toll-free numbers Toll-free phone number to call when having a problem	T12	1	2
d) Telecommunication services			
Internet speed	T34 T36 T48 T51	4	7
Improve network services	T4 T8 T29 T30 T34 T35	6	10
Mobile Improve mobile network	T35	1	2
Hotspots	T36 T40 T26 T43	4	7
Reduce call charges	T26	1	2
e) ATM			
Reduce ATM transaction charges	T19 T52	2	3
Access to ATMs	T21	1	2

- Organisations must have websites

One respondent lamented that "*some places we went to cannot afford to create websites or check e-mails regularly or update Facebook or twitter pages and I am sure they would attract more people* (T52).

- Current and update information

A further recommendation given by 8% of the respondents was that there was a need for adequate, current and up-to-date information. The respondents complained that it was often very difficult to find such information. They urged organisations to *"frequently update information on their websites and recommend that they should develop online platforms*" (T49) to give current and reliable information. Tourists expect adequate, current and reliable information on prices, hotel room rates, exchange rates, embassy information and information about activities and other ancillary services.

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- Share photos

The respondents further suggested that the portal should have virtual tours of some of the tourist sites. The portal and linked websites should enable tourists to share photos, experiences, suggestions and recommendations. One respondent recommended "*sharing photos of trips on a website*" (T1).

b) E-services

Most respondents, (42%) perceive that the tourism sector in Zimbabwe does not fully exploit e-services capabilities such as; electronic payments, visa applications, customs procedures and making reliable secure real-time bookings.

- Electronic payments

A total of 20% of the respondents recommended electronic payments. This was summarised concisely by one respondent who commented that: *"generally implement electronic means of making any payments so as to eliminate moving around with cash while on holidays"* (T44). This was further expanded by a respondent (T51) who stated that electronic payments "*would limit need to carry cash around risking thefts*" (T51). This seems to suggest that electronic payments give tourists peace of mind during their holidays. Tourists would like to use electronic payments to buy souvenirs and make payments for bookings for activities and meals.

- Customs procedures

A total of 5% of the respondents suggested that customs procedures should be fully electronic to increase efficiency and improve the current procedures which are slow, tedious and mainly manual. In addition, 2% of the respondents recommended that visa applications should be done online. Electronic visa applications in Zimbabwe are currently open to nationals from China and India only.

- Reliable secure real-time booking

Other respondents (15%) recommended that there should be reliable, secure and real-time bookings.

- Online check in

 In addition, 2% of the respondents recommended services like; an online checking in especially at the country's international airports.

c) Electronic marketing

Other recommendations given by respondents had to do with electronic marketing, as 38% of respondents suggested an array of electronic marketing activities.

- Up-to-date lively websites

 A total of 10% of the respondents suggested that the Zimbabwean tourism sector should develop good websites that are lively and are constantly updated. One respondent commented:

"Improve marketing efforts via the internet/websites do not offer a lot of information, they are not exciting they are dull and not encouraging. They are way below South African websites. It is easy for a potential tourist to lose interest and change the planned destination to that with a powerful website" (T47).

- Social media and blogs

Some respondents 8% advised that the websites be linked to social media and blogs to share updated information. The respondents indicated that if Zimbabwean tourism organisations joined and participated in social networks, they could market their products and services and measure public opinion regarding their services.

- Advertising

A total of 10% of the respondents recommended that there be online advertising, especially pop-up advertisements.

- Information on ancillary activities

Of great interest was that 15% of the respondents recommended that there should be information on ancillary activities, for example WI-FI services. The tourists found it difficult to find local information about activities and their prices, information on whether WI-FI was available or not, medications and perquisite information of different nationalities to enter Zimbabwe. The tourists expected to get hints

concerning travelling within the country, price, banks and other ancillary services. It was recommended that any additional charges that need to be paid should be clearly explained.

- Website optimisation

Another respondent complained that the website was not properly optimised. This was illustrated by a comment like: "Information *was too brief on website and the websites were too weak. Each time I googled I was diverted to South African websites. e.g. wanted to go to Nyanga each time I googled I was given information about Nyanga in South Africa"* (T47).

- Customer feedback on website inquiries

The respondents (2%) recommended that tourism operators should give customer feedback on inquiries made on the website. The respondents noted that the tour operators takes a long time to respond to web inquiries.

- Mismatch between information on the website and what is on the ground

Other respondents, (3%) felt that there was a mismatch, between the information on the websites and the prevailing situation on the ground. The respondents recommended that there should be no big changes in prices and contact details of the tour operator. Another respondent cited an example of a restaurant where one website stated that the lodge had closed and the other one stated that the lodge was open.

- Customer service toll-free numbers

On the other hand, 2% of the respondents suggested that websites should provide feedback on web inquiries. A further 2% of respondents recommended that there should be "*toll-free numbers to call when a customer is a problem with the website where the tour operator can see exactly the screen of the customer*" (T12).

d) Telecommunication services

Some respondents, (10%) urged an upgrade of both the mobile and internet networks, recommending some improvements in their provision. In addition, they suggested the provision accessible and free wireless hotspots. Only 2% of the respondents suggested a

reduction in call charges. The growing economic importance of services is enhanced by the rapid advancement in ICT. This has been complemented by globalisation, which has resulted in the gradual integration of national economies into the global market. The result is a closer integration of countries and people of the world that makes communication networks like the internet crucial in breaking barriers to the flow of services, capital and knowledge across borders (van den Bossche, 2008). Tourists continue to face a number of telecommunication-related challenges.

e) ATMs

On the ATM-related challenges, 5% of the respondents made recommendations.

- Reduce ATM transaction charges

Recommendations were mainly directed at reducing ATM transaction costs.

- Access to ATMs

Other suggestions were to provide more ATMs, for use by both tourists and the public to use.

5.5.3.2 Results from semi-structured interviews with government officials

As a result of the interviews, it was deduced that the current policies of the government were based on the economic blueprint titled the "Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation" (ZIMASSET). This document contains major policy pronouncements for all areas of the economy, as well as government direction and priorities. All the respondents from government (G1 and G2) stated that the fiscal policy statements from the Ministry of Finance and the monetary statements from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) were used to guide their operations. It was made clear that the government was experiencing financial challenges, which are hampering developments in all other ministries. It was mentioned that the government is in the process of implementing e-government and has introduced an electronic visa. The electronic visa is currently open to nationals of China and India.

The researcher also learned that after successfully co-hosting the United Nations World Tourism Organisation conference, the government wants to encourage and diversify into the

Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) niche market. The government would like international meetings, conventions and exhibitions to be hosted in the country. From the interview with respondent (G1), it was inferred that one of the ministries did not have a qualified ICT members of staff, but relied on two self-taught staff members, who do not have any ICT qualification, only some basic knowledge of ICT. "*I think we need to have a standalone IT department responsible for ICT in the ministry through the assistance of the PSC [Public Service Commission]. We need to have that department; we need IT guys in our ministry. The current staff responsible ICT is not specialists. They have acquired ICT expertise on their own. The Ministry of ICT does not employ them for ICT. We need ICT skilled employees specifically for ICT. You will find out that some of the laptops we were given by the ministry will go down because we do not have the ICT department. Some of them will be attacked by viruses and so that that's why we say we need a standalone ICT Department*" (G1).

The government appreciates the role of ICT in the tourism sector; however, there is no clear strategy as to how ICT will be used. This was supported by the interviewee who said: *"We have got a policy, but we have not developed an implementation matrix for it so that we can monitor that it is being implemented."* (G2).

The other challenge cited as an impediment to the use of ICT is government policy and legislation, which requires paper-based documents. This was summarised by one respondent who said *"...on confidential documents, as government we always rely on paper for record purposes that's the stumbling block of using ICT. In government you need to keep record of some sort we have files we need filing ... we are using hard copies because the system. The official secrecy act requires that all private and confidential documents must not be sent through on e-mails ... We use email in certain instances, but we are saying that there are certain private general work we don't use email files when we receive files which are hard copies but if I have got research I can then email him and then*" (G1).

Thus, the challenges identified by tourists and the recommendations were provided. The study revealed that tourists face a number of ICT-related challenges in Zimbabwe. The next subsection presents the results of the interviews held with the regulator.

5.5.3.3 Interviews with the regulator

This subsection presents the results obtained from the regulator. There eleven interviews held by staff from the regulator. The regulator organisations, has a standalone ICT department.

i) General organisational information

The ICT activities in the ICT departments of the sampled organisations were grouped into the following categories; user support, systems administration, web development and systems development. Three of the regulator had an ICT department involved in user support and system administration and web development. However, the regulator was not involved in software development.

a) ICT applications

The ICT applications of the regulator were grouped into the following categories; Office applications, finance/accounting, human resources management system and specialised software and enterprise resource software. The study that regulator had hardware infrastructure, which was varied and at different levels of granularity at head office and at branches in other towns. The regulator had a total of seven internal systems All the organisation's systems were not integrated and therefore the systems were not communicating with each other.

b) Structure and composition of the ICT departments

The results showed there were four ICT personnel in the regulator's ICT department. The department was headed by an ICT manager.

c) Management level of the senior ICT person

In the regulator the management level of the senior most ICT person was the ICT manager who was classified as a senior management. On further inquiry, it was revealed that the manager do not report directly to the Chief Executive Officer but to other managers. Though ICT managers claimed to be senior management, they were not part of executive management.

d) ICT department and the board

The regulator had an ICT management committee; however, there was no ICT committee at board level.

e) Website management

The research revealed the websites were managed in-house. The marketing department managed the website and the ICT department's role played an active role.

f) ICT representation in management

The highest ranking ICT personnel were in the top management level though the manager did not report directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

ii) ICT challenges faced by the regulator

This subsection reports on the ICT challenges identified by respondents in the regulator category during interviews.

a) Lack of finance

The survey revealed that there are many challenges facing the regulator and these are hampering the full utilisation of ICT. Table 5.10 shows that 64% of the respondents revealed that the greatest challenge faced by regulator in the tourism sector was the lack of finance. One respondent remarked:

"I think for Zimbabwe funding is the greatest challenge, the marketing budget I am often told by colleagues at the ZTA the marketing budget for a competitive destination like South Africa their marketing budget alone is far bigger than the entire ZTA budget operations budget ye ZTA yese (in total) is smaller than the marketing budget of competitor's like South Africa so I think funding is what remains the biggest challenge" (R6). A similar comment by another respondent was that; I *remember at one time we were given a quote from CNN running into millions of dollars just for advertising and if you look at our budget for the whole organisation to carry out its mandate a million dollars will be like maybe 50% or so of the total budget of the total for all our operations so we can't" (*R4).

Table 5.10: Challenges faced by the regulator

Challenge	Number N=11	Percentage
a) Lack of finance	7	64
b) Lack of ICT skills	9	82
c) No Integration of Information across Government-related Organisations	3	27
d) Out-dated communication Methods in the Supply Chain	2	21
e) Loss of Information due to hardware challenges	3	27
f) Lack of robust local software	2	18
h) High Cost of hardware	2	18
i) Resistance to technological changes	3	27
j) Internet Speed	3	27
k) Lack of use of electronic payments	3	27

The funding challenges emanate from the fact that the regulator gets its money from treasury and the treasury does not release the funds on time. According to one respondent (R1), this makes planning and financing of activities very difficult. The financial challenges are also faced by service providers who were supported by the regulator. This was revealed by a respondent who commented:

"*Publicity associations were previously supported by council and ZTA grants and then mainly they are funded by members. Members pay a joining fee and subscription so the major contributors are the members. As I said previously ZTA could contribute, councils could contribute but it wasn't mandatory so ZTA stopped supporting all publicity association way back in 2005 there about….. Well, the major problem is the issue around the economy. There are no members who are prepared to pay the subscription ...so basically it's the issue around funding, then two the issue around commitment as well from members and the issue around the membership fees*" (R11).

These member-based organisations are facing financial challenges as a result of dwindling membership and failure to get support from the regulator. This also affects the acquisition of ICT equipment in the member-based organisations. Other problems, which resulted from the lack of finance, were archaic hardware and a lack of basic equipment like digital cameras.

From the interviews, it was apparent that the regulator was facing many challenges, especially with regard to finance and, therefore ICT receives low budget priority. This result in a deterioration of ICT infrastructure it is generally expensive. The lack of budgetary support results in other challenges such as the failure to attract skilled ICT practitioners, and low ICT skills (82%).

b) Lack of ICT skills

The respondents stated that the other reason for the lack of skills arises from the fact that ICT is continuously evolving and skills valued today may not be required in the next few years. The respondents felt that since most of the organisations were still recovering from the effects of the economic meltdown, they took issues of training and development for granted. They did not value the need to keep ICT practitioners updated so as to keep abreast with new developments. In the regulator there was no scheduled training as most of the trainings was needs based.

c) No integration of Information across governmental organisations

The respondents revealed that the tourism sector was fragmented. This was summarised by one respondent (R6) who said that there was lack of appreciation among tourism role-players that even though they may be operating separately as airlines, hotels or adventure activities, tourists, particularly international tourists, view, service providers in Zimbabwe as one entity. Yet the organisations are fragmented and there is no seamlessness in operations within the government departments responsible for tourism or with private sector service providers. The respondent disclosed that because the country did not have many embassies abroad, it was not easy to get a Zimbabwean visa. Furthermore, the collection of statistics at ports of entry was not smooth and needed to be streamlined.

It was clear that most ICT systems were not integrated which would make it even more difficult to integrate the underlying systems. Some respondents lamented the lack of an active programme to promote ICT in the tourism sector saying, "*in the absence of an active programme to promote ICT application within the sector, we might remain very poor players on a comparative basis*" (R1). The problem mainly emanates from the fragmentation of the tourism sector as the organisations involved resort under different ministries, for instance the National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (Zimparks) comes from the Ministry of Environment, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority comes from the Ministry of Tourism while Museums and National Monuments as well as Department of Immigration Control are under the Ministry of Home Affairs. There is no integration of ICT services across these organisations or across the supply chain.

d) Out-dated communication methods in the supply chain

With respect to the communications between different organisations, it was clear that there was no system that communicates in real-time among the diverse role-players in the tourism sector's supply chain. The respondents revealed that they use e-mail and social media to communicate with their members. It was observed that most of the processes were still predominantly manual.

According to one respondent (R6), the collection of tourism statics and those related to other organisations is antiquated and paper-based. There is no guarantee that every tourist fills in their information, and even if the tourist completes these immigration forms they may or may not be submitted to the tourism board. An electronic immigration system should ideally interface with the national tourism board in real-time feeding through statistics for planning purposes. The respondents revealed that currently the tourism sector is not getting timely and accurate statistics. Paradoxically, the tourism sector, is also failing to supply relevant authorities like the Central Bank with current information (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2014).

e) Loss of information as a result of hardware challenges

A further challenge is the loss of data owing to hardware failure (27%) which results in loss of data. The respondents emphasised that they had lost substantial amounts of data due to hardware failures. This was summarised by a respondent who said: "*we do quite a*

lot of work and then people talk of computer yacrusher (has crushed) hema (there was a) virus that sort of thing. You are suddenly told that we can't access that information. So we are trying to professionalise that unit to a level where we will be able to say that work done today is work that has been achieved and will not be lost the way we have been doing (R1).

This hardware failure may be a result of the constant power outages in Zimbabwe, overheating, equipment breakdown, electrical faults, malicious damage to the equipment, obsolete equipment and theft. As the respondent pointed out, the loss of data through equipment failure results in the organisations having to redo the work. This demotivates staff and adds additional related costs.

f) Lack of robust local software

The lack of robust local software was also identified by three respondents, as one of the challenges facing the regulator. The respondents argued that there was no human capital to develop the software applications and as a result organisations ended up buying the software from outside the country. This results in high cost, a lack of support and the failure of the software to meet the local conditions or the specific needs of the organisation.

g) High cost of hardware

The respondents (18%) complained about the high cost of hardware and software as the price of hardware is comparatively higher in Zimbabwe than in neighbouring countries because Zimbabwe is coming from an era of high inflation. The prices of gadgets were said to be relatively high despite the fact that the government has removed duty on ICT hardware and equipment.

h) Resistance to technological changes

From the interviews it was evident that the ICT personnel persistently stated that users frequently resist the introduction of some new systems. It was clear, however, that users do not resist all ICT initiatives. It was argued that users were used to manual ways. The issues were summarised by one respondent who said:

"..when new wireless was deployed everyone accepted, but when we deployed a host package not everyone accepted. Why? Because it was going to change the way they were

doing everything and it was going to bring transparency into the whole system. So we had issues with one of the people there obviously didn't want to be trained and who tried by all means to avoid using the new ICT system." (R8).

The users resisted the use of ICT by sabotaging the systems, theft of hardware and general unwillingness to use the ICT systems

i) Internet speed

Moreover, 27% felt that the internet speed was very slow thereby affecting their operations.

j) Electronic payments

The limited use of electronic payment services was another problem identified by 27% of the respondents. This is hindering business, as tourists prefer not to carry large sums of money, thus organisations that do not use such systems cannot sell them services. The respondents argued that allowing the use of electronic payments would be a huge enabler for growth in the sector.

This section provided the results of the interviews and observations from the regulator. The study focussed on the structure, composition and the interaction of the ICT department horizontally and vertically. The ICT challenges in these organisations were identified. In addition, the next subsection presents the results from the interviews with service providers.

5.5.3.4 Service providers

This subsection presents the results gleaned from the service providers. The main activities of their ICT departments were grouped into the following categories; user support, systems administration, web development and systems development**.**

i) General organisational information

Three organisations did not have ICT departments as they outsource all ICT services. These organisations were mainly small or family-owned enterprises. On the other hand, the other organisations usually had between one and three full-time employees and one or two students on internship. In organisations that had ICT departments, the departments were mainly at the head office and staff from head office visit branches whenever there is a need. In the organisations that had ICT departments the staff was mainly engaged in user support. Two of the organisations were involved in system administration. None of the organisations was

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involved in web development. The number of ICT personnel in medium enterprises was generally between one and three, who were mainly engaged in user support.

None of the surveyed organisations were involved in software development or web development. This may explain why 67% of the websites were developed and managed outside the organisation. Some of the outsourced websites were hosted outside Zimbabwe. In most cases, these websites were rarely updated, as the outside vendors usually demand payment upfront before they update the websites. It was also revealed that most of the websites that receive payments were hosted outside Zimbabwe. This creates mistrust with monetary authorities that are not sure if the money is remitted back to Zimbabwe (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2014). None of the organisations were involved in systems development. The results show that there were variations in the organisations' ICT activities.

ii) ICT challenges faced by service providers

This subsection reports on the ICT challenges identified by respondents from commercial and service providers during interviews. Table 5.11 shows the identified challenges.

Table 5.11: Challenges faced by service providers organisations

Challenge	Number N=29	Percentage
a) low ICT representation	15	52
b) Lack of appreciation of value of ICT	14	48
c) Lack of finance	12	41
d) Power outages	15	52
e) Resistance to technological changes	6	21
f) ICT skills	12	41
g) Telecommunication challenges	16	55
h) e-Customer relationship management	6	21
i) Poor service level agreements	8	28

a) Low ICT representation

The survey revealed that in five of the selected organisations, ICT practitioners occupied lower management or non-managerial positions. ICT departments mostly formed a small section under the finance department. ICT practitioners complained that they did not have the opportunity to articulate issues that affect them to management. They are not involved when ICT decisions are made and the problem is further compounded by management that sometimes procure ICT hardware without consulting them. However, when the hardware fails or incurs high maintenance costs ICT practitioners are always blamed. According to one respondent (P8), the procurement of hardware depends on the power of the person who is in need, the financial situation and technical advice. Management sometimes by-passes technical advice and relies on advice from suppliers. This was shown by respondent who said "*so you would find that when it comes to procurement the buying team will make decisions excluding the key person [ICT] and then at the end when these devices malfunction the ICT department is to blame now because the management has to keep on pumping out more money on repairs*" (P2).

b) Lack of appreciation of value of ICT

A total of three respondents agreed that management does not value ICT services or lack appreciation of the importance of ICT as they see no need for ICT services. One owner of small business, who argued, *"ICT is not the panacea of our problems*" (P20), supported this assertion. One respondent (P5) revealed that their organisation's business process can be best handled manually and were too complicated to use ICT. On a similar point, another respondent argued that *"We have managed to survive in this business, for many years without ICT, so we do not need ICT"* (P18). On the other hand, another respondent pointed out that it was difficult to work with management that does not appreciate the importance of ICT saying: *"ICT is an upcoming area. It is it is very difficult to work with people who don't appreciate ICT existence people still take ICT as a support service instead of taking it as a driver you see ICT is really?"* (P10). It becomes very difficult for management to support and give guidance to the ICT practitioners when they (management) do not appreciate the value of ICT.

c) Lack of finance

Lack of financial resources was also cited by seven respondents, as one of the challenges hindering the business of commercial service providers in the sector from effectively leveraging ICT. Financial resources are essential for the implementation of ICT systems and may also act as a barrier to the adoption of ICT. Lack of finance, according to respondent (P2), means ICT projects take longer to implement. The lack of finance and the rapid changes in ICT software and hardware also results in organisations failing to replace hardware frequently, thus resulting in organisations using obsolete hardware. One respondent who said illustrated this: *"I think these computers I found them here when I joined the organisation when I was doing my attachment in 2006 and we are still using the same computer which is about over 10 years. We don't regularly replace the computers because financial resources do not permit"* (P18). In some cases, organisations may fail to have the required equipment. Another reason given by another respondent was that the price of hardware and software in Zimbabwe was overpriced in comparison to neighbouring countries.

d) Power outages

Power outages resulting from power shortages in the country were another problem that was cited by 52% of the respondents. Over the years the national power company has resorted to load shedding due to the erratic supply of electricity, which seriously affects business organisations. This forces organisation to buy diesel or petrol powered-generators and escalates operation costs. This was supported by a respondent who stated that *"we have resolved the load shedding…we have a very big generator… and …a backup generator so one fails we have another one"* (P5).

e) Resistance to technological changes

From the interviews, it was evident that the ICT end-users generally demonstrate various forms of resistance to the introduction of ICT systems. It was argued that these users resist ICT initiatives instead favouring manual systems. It was also shown that organisational members intentionally sabotage new systems to ensure that the systems fail to achieve its aims so that there is no transparency and so they can continue to benefit unfairly from the organisations. According to (P19), organisations in the tourism sector do not pay well hence they have to supplement their meagre salaries through pilferage.

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f) ICT skills

A total of 41% of respondents believed that there were no adequately skilled ICT personnel and that this has led to the outsourcing of ICT support services. There was *"unavailability of human capital to develop the software applications so we ended up buying the software packages"* (P10) and thus organisations end up outsourcing ICT services.

However, 44% of the surveyed organisations outsource ICT services because they do not have a standalone ICT department. Furthermore, a total of 41% cited a concern relating receive on-going training. The lack of budget for ICT training was cited as another reason for ICT practitioners not developing and updating their skills despite the fact that training is critical in improving ICT readiness, adoption and usage in organisations. It was also observed that management expects employees to be acquainted with all facets of ICT ranging from programming, networking, system administration to web development.

Another challenge was that the ICT practitioners do not show any initiative and they expect management to show them what to do. One respondent stated that "…*I cannot tell the management what to do but now the management is actually aware that we need a website and software.*" (P2).

g) Telecommunication challenges

Telecommunication challenges were identified by 55% of the respondents as some of the challenges facing the service providers in the Zimbabwe tourism sector. These challenges included intermittent internet connections, poor access remote areas, slow internet connections, high internet cost and mobile network-related challenges. The intermittent internet connection was identified by 20% of the respondents. Tourism businesses require uninterrupted connectivity, but services like; the internet, email and shared resources become unavailable when there are disruptions in connectivity. Intermittent internet connections also disrupt systems, which depend on the availability of the internet, and this annoys tourists.

Respondents (5%) further indicated the internet speed is very slow and at the same time,

the internet is a bit expensive. This was summarised by a respondent who stated "…*the internet it's quite costly*" (P6).

The telecommunications challenges are compounded by the fact that some tourist resorts are situated in remote locations where they do not have internet access or mobile network coverage. These challenges were cited by 15% of the respondents.

h) e-Customer relationship management

On customer relationship management, four challenges were observed. The first challenge was the unnecessarily lengthy time taken to respond to customer enquiries. In this regard, advances in information technologies can now enable business transactions to be conducted instantaneously. The second challenge is that of deceitful marketing where the operators intentionally give false information about the services they offer to induce a sale. One respondent explained, *"....sometime people are selling at any cost and they try to limit certain information that might not enhance the change of recruiting those clients." (P6).* Customers become frustrated when their expectations are not met and they feel they have been cheated. The third problem identified was in the hunting business which involves tourists booking in advance and involves a lot of money, often in excess of $US15,000. The tourists only make bookings through agents in their own countries. The respondent revealed, "*most of the clients feel secure to do so through their own country men in case anything goes wrong they can easily sue the organisation or demand their money back from their own country agents. It is much easier than to do it through a foreign company mainly because they trust their own local agents*" (P6).

Lastly, the external agents require a commission for their services, which reduces the earnings for local organisations. Ironically, one tour operator revealed that they now fear that advances in ICT will cause tourists to deal directly with airlines, hotels and thereby causing them to lose business.

i) Poor service level agreements

In most cases, websites were rarely updated as outside vendors usually demand payment up-front before they update websites. This was attributed by respondents to poor service level agreements.

The common thread in all the selected cases in the service provider's category was lack of finance, and governance-related challenges. It was clear that ICT has not been entrenched into the organisations' daily operations.

Thus, the problems faced by service providers were identified and highlighted in this subsection. The next subsection presents the results from netnography.

5.5.3.5 Netnography

A total of 113 comments and reviews, which referred to ICT-related subjects, where considered appropriate and relevant for the study.

Table 5.12: Challenges from netnography

Challenge	Number of Respondents (N=113)	Respondents as a Percentage
a) Booking Challenges	19	17
b) Customer Relationships	15	12
c) Internet	15	13
d) Deceitful marketing	21	19
e) Information about services	41	34

a) Booking challenges

A total of 17% of the respondents noted that they had experienced challenges with booking for services and accommodation. One respondent complained that they had booked a hotel from South Africa only to be informed, that they had not been booked, although they had all the supporting evidence of their booking. Another respondent, Andreas03 complained, *"I booked and paid for a game drive (6 days) in Hwange NP in June since then they are unable to send me the confirmation."* These booking challenges were experienced in different entities, offering different services. Another respondent (Carol33708) complained that their reservation was mixed up, and although this was later resolved, some inconvenience had been caused.

b) Customer relationships

The results of the survey showed that tourists in Zimbabwe face diverse customer relationship-related challenges. A total of 12% of respondents identified electronic customer relationship challenges during their stay in Zimbabwe. The challenges were summarised by one respondent (Elena S) who said "*Guest services picked up the phone 50% of the times*". The other respondents complained that operators took unnecessarily long to respond to customer e-mails.

c) Internet

A total of 13% of the respondents complained that the internet connection was very slow with respondents failing to access the internet. This was revealed by one respondent (MGM1954) who complained that there was no internet access in Mana Pools and Hwange. The same respondent also complained of poor mobile service in the two areas.

d) Deceitful marketing

Another area of concern for tourists was deceitful marketing. Deceitful marketing occurs when service providers intentionally give false information in order to attract tourists. This was confirmed by the results shown in Table 5.12, where the respondents (19%) complained about this practice. One respondent complained, "*There are some things stated in the hotel booklet that are simply false. There is no work out room contrary to the website*" (Elena J). Other respondents complained of difference in rates shown on the marketing media and what they are asked to pay eventually when they arrive in Zimbabwe.

e) Information about services offered

The other major challenge identified by 34% of the respondents in this section related to the search for information about services and activities in Zimbabwe. Listed below are some of the frequently asked questions;

> "*I am travelling to Zimbabwe end of October and looking for an affordable car hire, has anyone used Zimbabwe car hire services. Are the cars in good condition, how is the overall customer care? My budget is at most $65/day*" (Chiremba123).

"*I plan to travel to Vic Falls along with my spouse and a 3 year old in December. Can anyone advise on the health precautions/vaccinations one is supposed to take prior/after travel?*" Abhishek_Saha

"*We will be staying at Ilala Lodge Hotel in Vic Falls for a couple of nights end May and wondering who to use for our activities*" (*haggisbasher48*).

"*I am an Indian citizen, planning to travel to Zimbabwe in October 2014. Can you suggest me whether I can apply through the newly introduced E-Visa system. Can you share your experiences*" (CalcuttaJatri).

"*Do you need to book a bridge and tram tour to see the bridge and have a tram ride or is it possible to just turn up and buy a return ticket on the tram and walk the bridge independently?*" (holidaykiwiSydney).

The sample of six comments above illustrate that potential tourists tend to rely on other visitors to get advice on pertinent information, which could easily be supplied on websites. This may suggest an inherent weakness in the way ICT is being applied in the Zimbabwe tourism sector.

This subsection presented the ICT challenges identified by analysing tourists' reviews and comments from tripadvisor.com. The comments by tourists on the websites show that potential tourists face a number of challenges in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

Moving forward, next subsection presents findings from the analysis of government policy documents.

5.5.3.6 Analysis of government policy documents

The two government documents currently driving the country's economic direction and policy in the tourism sector will be briefly described. These two documents are; the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation and the Zimbabwe Tourism Policy.

a) Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET)

In this document ICT is listed as part of ten programme areas that integrate vertically and horizontally with programmes in other clusters. The ICT and tourism sectors were further identified as part of the key drivers for growth and employment creation.

The document aims to promote the uptake of ICT at all levels of society through a number of interventions; these include revising the ICT policy and developing ICT legislation as well as an internet policy. The other issues that the blueprint highlights for addressing are universal access, bandwidth, connectivity, corporate governance principles and ICT literacy. The blueprint document identifies the need to invest in ICT infrastructure in collaboration with the private sector.

b) The tourism policy

The policy clearly spells out that it seeks to increase tourist receipts, destination preference, accessibility as well as a liberalised visa regime. The tourism policy envisages the sector to achieve a target of generating $5 billion annually by the year 2020. The policy recognises the entire country as tourism development zones and seeks to develop tourism opportunities in tourism niche markets such as cultural, religious, medical, sport, township and mining tourism to attract tourists and increase the sector contribution to total revenue.

The policy has a paragraph on ICT which states that: "*The ICT sector plays a very crucial role in facilitating tourism development. The provision of ICT is a key component of tourism destination competitiveness and its systematic application and innovative use is a key element for enhancing tourism business. The government will develop effective and efficient ICT infrastructure to support the marketing, communications and payment systems in the tourism sector*" (Zimbabwe National Tourism Policy, 2014).

This subsection has presented the findings of analysis of government policy documents in order to identify the guiding policy directions from the Government of Zimbabwe. The analysed documents in include ZIMASSET and the tourism policy. The chapter closes with a conclusion.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter indicated how data was collected by means of an extensive embedded case study of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This research has highlighted that there is a lack of government policy, and a lack of implementation of the policies that do exist. This is further exacerbated by the absence of ICT legislation for providing an enabling environment for ICT use. There is also an inconsistent data network and unreliable power supply in Zimbabwe. The tourism sector requires reliable, uninterrupted and low service connectivity in the form of telephone networks, internet networks and constant power supply. As there is no online payment gateway in Zimbabwe, the country can benefit from an integrated system for marketing, bookings and payments that accommodate most international credit cards.

At organisational level, even though management recognise the importance of ICT and its capabilities, there is a lack of commitment and leadership to entrench ICT into core business operations. In most organisations a governance problem has been identified as, for example, ICT practitioners who are supposed to implement ICT strategies are not represented at senior management and/or board levels. Furthermore, there are no clear decision rights identified or specified between management and ICT personnel. Organisations in the sector will have to train, support and capacitate their staff to utilise relevant ICT services effectively, as huge ICT investments are left in the hands of unskilled - or semi-skilled manpower. The data presented will be analysed in the next chapter, Chapter 6: Data Analysis.

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6.2 KEY FACTORS IDENTIFIED FROM DATA ANALYSIS
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CHAPTER 6 DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is aimed at gaining a deeper insight into the current position and the utilisation of ICT in the Zimbabwe's tourism sector. The research employed an extensive case study, as described in detail in Chapter 5, which made use of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. A total of 60 semi-structured questionnaires were completed by tourists. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted on two government officials, eleven officials from selected regulator and an additional twenty-nine to service providers within the tourism sector. This chapter thus analyses and interprets the data gathered by means of the principal methods discussed earlier in Chapter 4. Key elements were identified during the data analysis phase, to feed into a strategy for integrating ICT effectively into the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The proposed elements were identified and highlighted as recommendations to the government, the regulator and service providers. The analysis and interpretation of the results subsequently identify and make recommendations towards a sustainable ICT-related strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This section analyses the data according to the fifth step of the Yin's case study approach followed and described in section 5.1.

Section 6.1 introduces the chapter. Section 6.2 provides the interpretations of the key findings from the results. Accordingly, the findings from the interviews with government officials, and various role-players in the tourism sector, netnography and document analysis were analysed and categorised into country-specific factors, sector-specific factors and organisational-specific factors. Subsection 6.2.1 looks at country-specific factors identified from tourists, government officials, the regulator and service providers. Subsection 6.2.2 deals with sector-specific factors drawn from tourists, government officials, regulator and service providers. Subsection 6.2.3 looks at organisation-specific factors identified from tourists, government officials, regulator and service providers. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary in Section 6.3. Throughout this chapter, the findings that resulted from the interpretation of the data collected are presented in the form of recommendations for the ICT strategy which will assist in improving the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

6.2 KEY FACTORS IDENTIFIED FROM DATA ANALYSIS

This section synthesises and interprets the findings of the case study presented in Chapter 5. The factors identified in Chapter 5 were synthesised and categorised into three categories: i) country-specific factors, ii) sector-specific factors and iii) organisational-specific factors.

6.2.1 Country-specific factors

Country-specific factors are issues common to all sectors within the same country (Duit, 2014). The factors affect all industries in the economy positively or negatively irrespective of sector. Moreover, factors explored in this chapter are specific to Zimbabwe and may not be present in other countries. Subsection 6.2.1.1 discusses the country-specific factors identified from the tourist questionnaire. The following subsection, 6.2.1.2 explores the country-specific factors deduced from interviews with government officials. The next subsection, 6.2.1.3, will include country-specific factors which relate to the regulator. Finally, subsection 6.2.1.4 discusses country-specific factors identified from interviews with service providers.

6.2.1.1 Tourists

This subsection discusses country-specific factors identified by tourists. These factors include internet challenges, mobile networks, limited electronic payment systems and unavailability of real-time booking systems as well as ATMs. The factors identified will now be discussed under the separate headings.

a) Internet challenges

The research revealed that tourists face a plethora of internet-related challenges as identified in subsection 5.5.3.1 (ii) and Table 5.8. While tourists in most cases expect to use very high speed and reliable internet, as is available in their respective countries, they are often frustrated by the slow internet speeds they regularly experience in Zimbabwe. Neuhofer et al. (2014) argue that tourists want to communicate with their social circles which help in co-creating their experience. However, this cannot be achieved if the internet speed is generally slow throughout Zimbabwe. In this regard, slow speed frustrates tourists who are usually in a hurry or they want to browse the internet quickly before taking a rest after a day's activities. It can also be asserted that internet use has some financial budgetary constraints as tourists are charged for using the internet whether or not they have managed either to download or upload documents from their e-mails, as observed in subsection 5.5.3.1(ii) (a). It is plausible to argue that ICT can help to create a

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memorable and convenient stay the tourists. However, similarly, ICT inconveniences can spoil a memorable stay. Thus, it can be argued that it is not enough to have great tourist destinations because difficulties with ICT or the absence of ICT can spoil what could have been a memorable stay: for example if the tourist is unable to communicate with home. Since services rely mainly on infrastructure, this greatly impacts on the level of services Zimbabwe can provide in resorts and remote areas. The resort areas in Zimbabwe are mainly located on the border or in remotely located towns and areas where there is low population density. Zunguze (2009) observed that the ICT infrastructure in Zimbabwe is concentrated mainly in central business district of major cities and towns. She further states that the situation is skewed to serve high density areas. Linked to this, Tarus, Gichoya, and Muumbo (2015) argue that access to technology depends on the infrastructure. It can therefore be argued that poor internet access and mobile services are caused by poor infrastructure.

Tourists expect a high level of service quality in terms of the internet-related services offered and the equipment used (Sabiote, Frías, & Castañeda, 2012). Thus, satisfactory internet-related services are definitely a factor that plays an important role in creating a memorable tourist experience. They will improve the overall online experiences for both tourists and role-players in the tourism sector to enable them to explore advanced and robust ICT applications.

b)   Mobile networks

Tourist areas face challenges with mobile networks. Poor mobile networks make it difficult to receive calls even for those on roaming and this cut the visitors off from the outside world. As mentioned in subsection 5.5.3.1(ii) (b), mobile network challenges cause dissatisfaction and unnecessary anxiety for tourists when they unable to communicate with their families and friends. Tourists may feel short-changed when paying for mobile services that they fail to receive. Failure to get services due to poor mobile services displeases tourists who consider their mobile phones to be 'accompanying computers' away from the desktop (Bødker and Browning, 2013). The tourists complained that the cost of mobile services was excessive, as described in subsection 5.5.3.1 (ii) (b). This is in line with the telecommunication cost modelling study conducted by the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

which concluded that Zimbabwean mobile call tariffs were 30% higher than service providers should charge (Perekwa, Prinsloo, & van Deventer, 2016). High tariffs discourage people from making calls and contribute to a negative experience. This also discourages the introduction of mobile-enabled services in the tourism sector. This limited and expensive mobile phone coverage is a factor that negatively affects tourists.

c) Limited electronic payment systems and unavailability of real-time booking systems

Limited electronic payment systems and lack of real-time booking information in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe as stated in subsection 5.5.3.1 (ii) (c) shows poor development and highlights the embryonic stage of ICT in the sector. Because of this tourists cannot make payments and bookings online, something most tourists nowadays expect. The tourism sector in Zimbabwe does not fully exploit the e-services capabilities such as; electronic payments, visa applications, customs procedures and making reliable secure real-time bookings. In essence, the findings of this study highlight the lack of electronic payment facilities is a major challenge hampering payment for services. Consequently, there is a little use of electronic services in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe despite the country being rated as having the highest literacy level in Africa. Thus, it can be concluded that the lack of acceptable, modern online payment and booking systems is a factor that is hampering growth in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This could result in a loss of tourists to other competing destinations that offer such online services and also limits the reach of Zimbabwean tourism organisations. The use of electronic services should be an important element in building the country's comparative and competitive advantage (Baum & Mahizhnan, 2014), as well as in expanding the market internally and externally. It is surprising that Zimbabwe is reluctant to use online payment, despite the presence of some global banks such as Barclays Bank, Standard Chartered and Nedbank of South Africa operating in the country. These globally established banks boast of advanced state-of-the-art technology, but it has not been fully utilised. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) has also encouraged the use of electronic payments, but there has been no significant increase in the uptake of these services. The provision of online payment services can enable integrated systems for marketing, bookings and payments that accommodate most international debit and credit cards.

d) ATMs

The banking sector also has its own problems hindering the growth of the tourism sector in contemporary Zimbabwe. The unavailability or limited presence of ATMs was noted as one of the major setbacks to the growth of the sector as mentioned in subsection 5.5.3.1 (ii) (e). It was noted that those who were fortunate enough to locate an ATM found that they were unable to draw funds as their electronic cards were not accepted by the Zimbabwean banks. The bulk of the ATMs in Zimbabwe only accept VISA and MasterCard variants. American Express and Diners Club cards are for example not catered for. Additionally, there are no in-store ATMs in Zimbabwe as they are found only at banks. Besides, the ATMs are often down or offline and thus useless even if located.

The results in this research highlight the lack of electronic payment facilities as a major challenge and therefore the lack of enough functional ATMs is definitely a restricting factor.

6.2.1.2 Government

This subsection outlines the country-specific factors identified from interviews with government officials as described in subsection 5.5.3.2. The study noted that there was a good ICT adoption rate, despite the usage having remained low as ICT has not been embedded in the day-to-day activities of many organisations. It was found out that ICT is not being used for strategic purposes but to support administration and finance. The main application of ICT has been for basic office usage and emails. Moreover, systems are not integrated which may result in duplication of information and data redundancy, resulting in the benefits of ICT not being realised. Time is also wasted as some documents and reports may need to be compiled from multiple systems which are not integrated which reduce speed and efficiency. The reliance on one person for ICT means that when that person is not present, work may be delayed. These factors will be discussed under the following separate headings; low usage of ICT by the government, ICT personnel and political will.

a) Low usage of ICT by the government

The findings stated in subsection 5.5.3.2, revealed that the government ministries in Zimbabwe are not fully computerised, as many tasks are still being done manually. This is indicative of the slow rate at which the government is adopting ICT in its day-to-day operations. Since the government is the largest consumer in any country, low use of ICT

by government translates to low demand in the domestic market. The government is expected to be the pacesetter in adopting ICT, but the fears of the political use of ICT by the Zimbabwean government 'enemies', whether real or perceived, should not prevent the government from seeing the advantages of technological advances of ICT. The government should computerise its operations and be engaged in activities such as e-government for economic development. The low use of ICT by government is definitely a factor that affects the use of ICT in an economy.

b) ICT personnel

One of the findings in subsection 5.5.3.2 was that one of the government ministries in the case study did not have an ICT department and had no qualified ICT personnel. There can therefore be no computerisation without ICT departments managed by ICT skilled people, hence the need to attract skilled staff by offering competitive remuneration which will help to attract skilled personnel. It has been noted that poor remuneration often results in a high staff turnover. It is also important that the government provides appropriate remuneration to its employees so as to attract and retain competent people with the requisite ICT skills so that they make informed ICT decisions. The people with requisite skills will assist in making astute ICT decisions and policies. These will especially advise government on ICT issues and help in the formulation and implementation of ICT policies and services by government.

c) Political will

All the factors discussed in this subsection largely depend on a strong political will. The success of the Rwandan ICT sector starts and ends with the President of Rwanda (Mwangi, 2006). The Rwanda case illustrates how strong political will and commitment at the highest level of government can help transform an economy. It is plausible to assert that the political will in Zimbabwe is lacking as seen by the failure to enact ICT legislation to promote the use of ICT. From the interviews it was established that the failure to enact the ICT bill into law was purely on political grounds and that the bill was being promoted by a minister from the opposition party. In Zimbabwe, from 2009 to 2013 there was a coalition government and the ministry of ICT was under an opposition minister, but now ZANU PF is fully in control. Despite, the fact that the current minister belongs to the ruling party, however, nothing much has been done. Media scholar Moyo

(2009a) sums it up as 'change without change'. Thus, political will is a key factor in the effective utilisation of ICT it the general economy of Zimbabwe.

6.2.1.3 Regulator

The following subsection analyses the country-specific challenges faced by the regulator. Results from the regulator will be discussed under the following subheadings; lack of finance, low ICT prioritisation, training of staff and lack of skilled staff, as well as lack of robust local software.

a) Lack of finance

The semi-structured interviews results as outlined in subsection 5.5.3.3 (ii) (a) identified a lack of finance as a challenge for the regulator. Mwangi (2006) identified financial support as one of the critical pillars for success in the implementation of ICT projects. This research highlighted that the regulator in Zimbabwe relies on internal and external sources of funding. Internal funding is mainly statutory levies in the form of service charges to customers, while external sources include funding from the treasury and donors. The main challenges relate to the fact that these sources have been dwindling as a result of donor flight and the funds allocated by the treasury will not necessarily be disbursed and that the disbursements are sporadic hence making it very difficult to budget. The regulator is then forced to give priority to immediate and short-term needs. Other areas, including ICT investments, are given low priority. This is compounded by the fact that the ICT function is not represented in management so their needs go largely unmet. Financial resources are required for the acquisition of infrastructure, training of staff and attracting as well as retaining skilled staff. Thus, financial resources are definitely a key factor for the effective adoption, use and integration of ICT, especially for countries like Zimbabwe which has suffered a ruinous financial crisis.

b) Low ICT prioritisation

Low ICT prioritisation also emerged as a major factor as indicated in subsection 5.5.3.3 (ii) (a). Key informants in the study, specifically from lower levels of the organisations, identified out-dated hardware as a challenge. Out-dated hardware may have compatibility challenges with new software. Out-dated hardware can be directly attributed to the lack of

finance and high cost of replacing hardware. The cost of hardware is comparatively higher in Zimbabwe than in its neighbour countries. This is in direct contrast with Kajimoto, Suzuki, and Kanno (2014) who argue that rapid advances in digital and communication technologies have resulted in a reduction of prices of hardware.

The low prioritisation of ICT is shown in the value regulator place on ICT in enhancing organisational processes and operations. It also indicates the high level at which ICT assets have been entrenched in organisation's daily operations. The IT governance will also determine how ICT will be represented at management and board level as well as the prioritisation of ICT equipment thus, calling for appropriate IT governance structures. ICT governance is achieving strategic alignment between business and ICT, in-order to make sure that money spent on ICT is delivering business value. The prioritisation of ICT in an entity depends on how top management supports the ICT function, as they are the custodians of organisational resources.

c) Training of staff

The regulator did not have a budget for ICT training for ICT practitioners or other organisational members as reported in 5.5.3.3 (ii) (b). The respondents stated that the other reason for the lack of skills arises from the fact that ICT is continuously evolving; hence the skills valued today may not be required in the next few years. Training is critical to help organisations to improve ICT readiness, adoption and usage. This, however seemed to be a sub-factor induced by lack of finance. The organisation appeared concerned with survival and training of staff was considered to be non-critical.

d) Lack of skilled staff

As stated in subsection 5.5.3.2 (ii) (b), the respondents constantly reported that the tourism sector was suffering from a lack of skilled staff, both with ICT skills and other areas like tour guiding and executive chefs. The lack of skilled staff could be ascribed to the massive brain drain that occurred during the crisis period. During the years 2000 to 2009, Zimbabwe was embroiled in unprecedented political turmoil and an economic meltdown. The economy shrunk by 40% in eight years (Biti, 2009). There was a massive brain drain, food shortages, foreign currency shortages, massive deindustrialisation and an almost a total breakdown in the health delivery system until the meltdown was arrested in 2009 (Nyahunzvi, 2014) and exponential recovery recorded (Takavarasha Jr,

Hapanyengwi, Chimanikire, & Kabanda, 2015). Most of the organisations are still recuperating from the economic meltdown. The replacement and training of new staff takes some time. The findings of the study show that, the country has a critical shortage of skilled staff. This may be the result of the brain drain and also the expectation that ICT practitioners should know all the facets of ICT. ICT practitioners should show initiative and develop their skills further instead of being happy to be just 'support' staff. They should help organisations to infuse ICT into their activities. The other respondents complained that the ICT practitioners were blinkered in their ICT without understanding the whole tourism business and how they fit in. The tourism sector must train its staff to have multiple skills in both business and tourism. Training is critical to help organisations to improve ICT readiness, adoption and usage within organisations.

e)   The lack of robust local software

The lack of robust local software was also identified by three respondents, as one of the factors negatively affecting regulator. The respondents as explained in subsection 5.5.3.3 (ii) (f) argued that there was no human capital to develop software applications and as a result organisations ended up buying software from outside the country. This results in high costs and lack of support and failure of the software to meet the local conditions or specific needs of the organisation. Mlay, Zlotnikova, and Watundu (2013) argue that the software which is imported from other countries may not fit the operational environment seamlessly. Sabi, Mlay, Bang, and Tsuma (2014) argue that there are impediments such as economic, technological, legal, financial and infrastructural issues that influence the acceptance and usage of foreign designed software packages.

6.2.1.4 Service providers

As explained in subsection 5.5.3.4 (i), the study revealed that there is a variation in the levels of investments and usage of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The variations are determined by factors such as organisational size, ownership and location. The use of ICT ranges from organisations that had enterprise resource planning (ERP) software to organisations that have only basic office applications. Although organisations use computers and the internet, internet usage is still largely restricted to email usage, faxes, searching for suppliers and visiting suppliers' websites. Nevertheless, there are variations among organisations in terms of hardware endowment. The study did not show much deviation from

previous studies. Previous studies conducted in other sectors of the Zimbabwean economy showed that the usage levels of ICT were relatively low, particularly in the banking sector (Dube, Chitura, & Runyowa, 2009) and also in agribusiness (Mupemhi, Mupemhi, & Duve, 2011), which is the backbone of the country's economy. The usage level in SMEs is still in the embryonic stage (Dube, Chitura, & Runyowa, 2010). Despite the massive investments that have been made by both the government and the private sector in the tourism and ICT sectors. These investments include a terrestrial link and a fibre optic cable en route to the undersea cable in the Indian Ocean, which grants access to the rest of the world at high-speed velocities. This project has enabled reliable, high-speed internet access and enhanced voice services, in addition to data services at affordable prices. Furthermore, the government has waived duty on ICT and tourism capital equipment. These measures were meant to create and support an enabling environment for industry, government, service delivery, education and the communications sector (Biti, 2011).

The internet penetration rate continues to steadily improve, and is estimated to be 47.5% as of 30 November 2015 – from 13% in 2011 (Mwenje, 2016) and bandwidth has increased. Nevertheless, the internet continues to be utilised mainly for non-commercial purposes, such as social networking, entertainment and visiting news sites (Dlamini, Ncube, & Muchemwa, 2015; Muneri, 2016; Zanamwe, Rupere, & Kufandirimbwa, 2013).

Limited online payments are being made (Mangudya, 2016). However, there has been dramatic growth in the use of mobile money service by all three Zimbabwean mobile service providers for transferring, receiving and paying for services using mobile phones. Banking institutions that have not been providing customers with debit cards, credit cards and internet banking facilities are surprisingly in the forefront of offering mobile banking services and not online payments.

The country-specific factors affecting the service providers were identified as; poor mobile networks and internet connectivity and power shortages.

   a) Poor mobile networks and internet connectivity
   As pointed out in section 6.2.1.1 (a) earlier, tourist areas in Zimbabwe are mainly located in remote areas. Poor mobile networks and internet connectivity may be caused by poor

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ICT infrastructure and lack of investment in remote areas. There are still significant parts of the country that are under-serviced by mobile operators (Gambanga, 2015). The government, through the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), is supposed to provide infrastructure in remote areas for the purposes of promoting connectivity (Gambanga, 2016; Zhou, Herselman, & Coleman, 2015a). Nevertheless, Zimbabwe's remote areas remain underserviced by telecommunications and mobile operators, as business viability of providing services in these areas is low. An effort has been made by the government through a levy, the Universal Service Fund (USF) on mobile operators, to fund the development of underserviced areas, but to date no USF project has been carried out (Gambanga, 2015). POTRAZ administers the USF, to which all telecommunication operators are obliged to contribute two per cent of their revenues (Zhou et al., 2015a). This may well explain the concerns raised by one of the mobile service operators that believes that the fund is not being used for the intended purpose (Gambanga, 2016; Rutsito, 2014). The telecommunication challenges in remote areas may be a sign of poor coordination and the prioritisation of tourist areas by the government, despite ICT and tourism being identified as key areas of the economic revival.

The challenges highlighted in this subsection dovetails with the second recommendation presented in subsection 6.2.1.1 (b), which calls for the provision of appropriate telecommunication infrastructure in tourist areas. Hence, the study has highlighted the need for further development of infrastructure in resort areas. Nevertheless, the challenges related to the speed of the internet may also add to the suspicion that telecommunication service providers may not be offering the bandwidth stipulated in their service level agreements.

b) Poor service level agreements

In subsection 5.5.3.4 (i), it was noted that the organisations' websites, which were outsourced, where not updated regularly because of poorly negotiated contracts with service providers. These websites were rarely updated as the outside vendors retain the exclusive right to update and manage the websites. The outside vendors generally demand payment up-front before the updating of websites. Thus, poorly negotiated service level agreements result in the tourist organisations being locked in by service providers. Poor

service level agreements are therefore a further factor affecting organisations in the tourism sector. This can likewise be ascribed to the fact that the tourism organisations are represented by their management during negotiations for service level agreements, who may not fully understand ICT issues. This factor can be addressed adequately if competent ICT personnel are involved in making ICT decisions. This fits very well with the sixth recommendation in section 6.2.1.2 (b), above, which recommended that organisations must have functional ICT departments operated by skilled personnel. This, therefore, calls for organisations to retain knowledgeable people with requisite ICT skills so that they can make judicious ICT decisions.

c) Power outages

The findings as reported in subsection 5.5.3.4 (d) revealed that service providers continue to face power outages. Reliable electricity supply is essential to ICT rollout and is a vital limiting factor (Zunguze, 2009). Over the years the national power company has resorted to load shedding, which has negatively affected industries, other business organisations and domestic consumers and the ICT sector has also not been spared. According to Akuru and Okoro (2014), insufficient power generation and erratic transmission and distribution capacity have had a direct impact on ICT development strategies. The same author further submits that because of the erratic supply of electricity in Zimbabwe companies have to buy diesel powered generators and this pushes up the operational costs. However, the government is making considerable efforts to curb the severe power shortages threatening the revival of industry by increasing capacity at its power stations and building a hydro-electric power station at Batoka.

6.2.2 Sectorial factors

The previous section discussed the country-specific factors affecting the tourism sector including the tourists, government officials, the regulator and service providers. This subsection will discuss the sector-specific factors identified by the various role-players in the tourism sectors discussed above. Sector-specific factors include; policies and issues common to a specific sector in the country's economy. The issues and policies affect positively or negatively all industries in a particular sector of the economy (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011). The sector-specific factors identified from tourists will be elaborated in subsection 6.2.2.1. The next subsection, 6.2.2.2 will examine sector-specific factors identified from government

officials. Consequently, the following subsection, 6.2.2.3 will discuss sectors specific factors identified from interviews with the regulator and lastly, subsection 6.2.2.4 will explore factors identified from interviews with service providers.

6.2.2.1 Tourists

This subsection provides a discussion of the sector-specific factors identified from the tourist questionnaire. The factors will be discussed under the following heading: lack of important information on the marketing media.

a) Lack of important information on the marketing media

The tourists found it difficult to find local information about activities, banks and other ancillary services. In subsection 5.5.3 (ii) (f), the respondents noted that the marketing media lacked the requisite information that potential visitors want to know before visiting. This information includes services available, activities, price information, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of service providers. This makes it difficult for potential visitors to communicate with service providers and to get the essential information they require. Jacobsen and Munar (2012) and Ho et al. (2016) believe that tourists need adequate information before deciding to visit a particular destination. The tourism sector has virtually become an information industry as tourist decisions are now based on the information available to them before visiting. ICT is pivotal in the tourism sector to the extent that it has been embedded into the tourism business, thereby contributing to the massive growth of the sector.

The lack of important information on the marketing media tallies well with the discussion in subsection 6.2.1.4 (b), which observed that websites for tourism role-players in Zimbabwe were mainly outsourced and tended to be static. As explained in subsection 5.5.3.4 (i), the websites were developed and managed outside the organisation. Some of the outsourced websites were even hosted outside Zimbabwe. The websites hosted outside Zimbabwe accepted online payments and could be used for managing customer feedback, handling reservations and transacting commercially. This tally with the findings obtained from the tourist questionnaire, which showed that tourists in Zimbabwe face a variety of ICT-related challenges. These challenges include failure to get up-to-date information about the destination and to make real-time bookings. These illustrations

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show that tourists continue to face challenges related to payments and thus adversely affect their ability to spend on holiday, thereby resulting in the country not getting as much as it could from tourists. This may as well explain the number of tourists which continues to grow in Zimbabwe without the concomitant rise in revenue (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2014). Other organisations had point of sales that accepted VISA and Master cards.

One important recommendation stems from the tourists, namely, there is a need for the creation of an integrated interactive tourism portal for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, which should be linked, to websites of the various role-players in the tourism sector.

6.2.2.2 Sector-specific factors

The following subsection analyses the sector-specific challenges faced by regulator. The challenges are discussed under the following heading; government implementation matrix.

a) Government implementation matrix

As stated in subsection 5.5.3.2, the case study has highlighted a lack of a clear government policy together with a lack of implementation of any existing policy in the tourism sector. This is further exacerbated by the absence of ICT legislation that provides an enabling environment for ICT use. The government has several roles to play in the coordination, planning, legislation, regulation and financing of tourism, for the political, economic and social wellbeing of the nation as a whole (Amoah & Baum, 1997; Muzapu & Sibanda, 2016; Pastras & Bramwell, 2013).

The government has a critical role to play in defining policies and regulations to promote the use of ICT in the tourism sector through a number of mechanisms at its disposal. The tourism sector needs enough energy, reliable communication systems, an efficient transportation system and equally important, a predictable operating environment. Zimbabwe must learn from best practices in other countries in this sector. The development of enabling services and infrastructure as identified in subsection 6.2.1, may depend on the political will and policies, as well as government regulations. The government plays a leading role in providing power, security, telecommunication connectivity, international connectivity, education and efficient transport systems

(Uwamariya et al., 2015; Walsh & Amponstira, 2013). The legislative environment can either deter or attract foreign investment (Wood, Yin, Mazouz, & Cheah, 2014; Wright, 2004). Government's fiscal policy and quality of governance are essential in attracting investment and creating a favourable business environment to enable the private sector to also assist in developing private infrastructure. Therefore, strong government support is demonstrated by favourable policy interventions, incentives and collaboration with the private sector is an important factor in growing the tourism sector.

Inconsistent data networks and unreliable power supply in Zimbabwe were reported in subsection 5.5.3.1 (a) and (b). The government should enact the ICT Act and amend the Tourism Act. This would help to remove institutional fragmentation among organisations dealing with ICT and tourism.

6.2.2.3 Regulator

The following subsection will explore sector-specific factors relating to interviews held with the regulator. The factors will be discussed separately under the following headings: no integration of information across regulator and other government-related organisations and ICT representation at senior management level.

a) No integration of information across regulator

The findings of the study as reported in subsection 5.5.3.3 (ii) (c) revealed that organisations in the tourism sector are defragmented and there is no seamlessness amongst government departments as well as the service provider organisations. This factor is mainly the result of the organisations involved in the tourism sector coming from different ministries, for instance Parks and Wildlife reports under the Ministry of Environment, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority reports the Ministry of Tourism, Museums and National monuments and Immigration under the Ministry of Home Affairs. These organisations are affected by policies that originate from their line ministries. There is thus no integration of ICT systems across these organisations and their underlying supply chains.

As regards communications between different organisations, it was clear that there was no organisation that communicates in real-time between the diverse role-players in the

tourism sector and the supply chain. It was likewise demonstrated that most of the procedures are still predominantly manual. This has resulted in the failure of government agencies to provide timely and accurate statistics.

b) ICT representation at senior management level

The results in subsection 5.5.3.3 (i) (f) established that ICT was poorly represented at management level, a factor that hampers the use of ICT in the tourism sector. This may be indicative of the low value placed on ICT by management. ICT departments at organisational levels are not properly represented in the top echelons of organisational management. Resultantly, the ICT voice is lacking at management level as ICT personnel are deprived of the opportunity to articulate their issues to management. The problem is further compounded by management which sometimes procures ICT equipment without consulting ICT personnel. ICT practitioners who are supposed to implement ICT strategies are generally not represented at management and board levels. At organisational level, even though management recognises the importance of ICT and its capabilities, there was seen to be a lack of commitment and leadership to entrench ICT into core business operations. Poor representation of ICT and lack of clear strategy cripples ICT practitioners since there will be no guiding policy and direction to feed into.

6.2.3 Organisation-specific factors

This subsection will discuss organisation-specific factors related to government and factors affecting the regulator and service providers. The organisation-specific factors affecting the regulator and service providers appeared similar and consequently, they will be discussed concurrently.

a) Government

Although, the government, has plans to introduce e-government, the process has taken an unnecessarily long time and the government is yet to come up with ICT legislation that recognises digital signatures. Currently, the limitation is that all paper documents have to be physically signed. The respondents cited pieces of legislation like the Official Secrecy Act, which they say does not allow them to send confidential documents over the e-mail. This is in line with the statement by the former Deputy Prime Minister of Zimbabwe who said that, "*Zimbabwe's Government was still paper loaded despite the vast use of ICT*

worldwide. You try to arrest me if I bring an I-pad in Cabinet. We are still too much worried about security," (Mugabe, 2013). The government of Zimbabwe therefore believes that technology can be a tool used by the country's enemies to fight its sovereignty (Mugabe, 2013). This alone shows how much the Zimbabweans fear cyber threats and vulnerabilities. The government is expected to be the pacesetter in adopting technology and developing technology policy for the country but the lack of policies and legislation to guide ICT development is a factor negatively affecting the adoption and integration of ICT in the Zimbabwean economy.

b) Regulator and service providers

This subsection discusses the organisation-specific factors affecting both the regulator and service providers. The factors will be discussed under two headings: governance of ICT and customer relationship management.

- Governance of ICT

The results in subsection 6.2.1.4, show that almost all organisations have fully operational and well-established IT sections, which normally fall under finance departments; these departments mainly consist of one to five members of staff. The ICT practitioners are usually from the user support section. In addition, they are expected to also do other tasks like network administration. ICT practitioners are expected to know everything related to ICT.

An effective IT governance programme undertaken by the boards and management would help Zimbabwean tourism organisations to understand the issues and risks surrounding the strategic importance of ICT, to ensure that ICT would sustain operations, and to help enable companies to use ICT to their competitive advantage. Furthermore, the complexity and rapidly changing nature of ICT may have an impact on the knowledge and experience required for its governance. Complexity and rapid changes imply that directors must be able to quickly understand the complex changes in ICT systems and the impact they may have on the organisation's operational and strategic goals. Additionally, there are currently no clear decision rights between management and ICT personnel. Managers must, nevertheless, recognise the role that they should play in making certain that proper IT governance guidelines are adopted

so that the ICT strategy is aligned with business strategy and thereby adds value to the organisation. There is therefore, a critical need for boards to provide effective governance over ICT, along with the necessary leadership from the top, organisational structures and processes that ensure that ICT efficiently, sustains and extends the corporate strategies and objectives (Gil-Pechuán, Pullicino, & García, 2014).

There was a clear lack of synergy between ICT and other departments. ICT and other departments worked as if they were separate entities divorced from each other, despite being situated within one organisation. There is a need for a steering committee that comprises representatives from all departments. ICT governance determines ICT representation at management and board level as well as the procurement of ICT equipment.

- Customer relationship management

Customer relationship management in tourism has been described as a business approach that seeks to discover, acquire and retain customers by developing sound relationships through meaningful, consistent and relevant communications (Tian & Wang, 2014).

Tourism organisations should also collect customer information at each stage of the service, before, during, and after a visit in order to understand behaviour choices and the concerns of their customers. Customer satisfaction depends greatly on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of specific tourism information and the ability of organisations to react instantly to consumer requests (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

The case study in subsection 5.5.3.4 (ii) (h) noted four challenges pertaining to customer relationship management. The four challenges were taking unnecessarily long to respond to customers, misrepresentation of information about the services they offer to induce sales, lack of trust and the use of agents. Therefore, proper client relationship management is an important element of the tourism sector.

The study noted that whenever customers are mistreated they express their anger on the internet through social media and websites. Websites and social media are thus

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very influential sites for travellers in their decision-making in terms of where to go, what destination to choose, where to stay, and what to do at a destination.

This chapter analysed and interpreted the data presented in Chapter 5. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted on with government officials, eleven officials from selected regulator and an additional twenty nine to service providers within the tourism sector. In addition, a total of sixty semi-structured questionnaires were completed by tourists. A number of factors affecting effective utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe emerged. These factors were classified into three categories; i) country-specific factors, ii) sector-specific factors and ii) organisational-specific factors. There was an overlap of and convergence between the factors affecting the role-players in the tourism sector.

6.3 EVALUATION OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

In order to ensure credibility, trustworthiness and integrity in data analysis the hermeneutic principles as enunciated by Klein and Myers (1999) was applied in this research. The motivation for using this principle is due to the fact that the study is mainly interpretive in nature. Consequently, knowledge about reality is constructed as a result of human actions; therefore theories of reality are developed to make sense of the world (Walsham, 1995). This section shows how the seven principles were used to analyse data in the research. The seven principles are; the fundamental principles of the hermeneutic circle, principle of contextualisation, principle of interaction between researchers and subjects, principle of abstraction and generalisation, principle of dialogical reasoning, principle of multiple interpretations and principle of suspicion. The manner in which these principles were applied is discussed in detail below.

6.3.1 The fundamental principle of the hermeneutic circle

Hermeneutic principle states that human understanding is accomplished by understanding the interrelationships of parts and their interdependencies as well as the whole that they form. In this research, the *"whole"* refers to the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. *"Parts"* refers to the selected role-players, while *"interdependencies"* refer to the interactions, process in the delivery of the tourism product.

The understanding of the other six principles emanate from the fundamental principle of the hermeneutic circle. Furthermore, Myers and Newman (2007) argue that the understanding of complex phenomena comes from pre-conceived ideas of the parts and their relations. In the study the researcher had pre-conceived ideas that there has been a massive investment of ICT to support the tourism sector. It is perceived that Zimbabwe had enough ICT infrastructure in Victoria Falls, the main tourist destination in Zimbabwe, especially after hosting the UNWTO conference which had been described as a smart city (Njerekai, 2014). The second preconceived idea was that access to respondents was going to be very difficult since in Zimbabwe there is generally a mistrust of strangers and researchers due to the political situation. Researchers are often mistaken for undercover journalist, spies or opposition activists (Takavarasha Jr et al. (2011).

After interacting with the role-players there was a shared meaning that there was a massive deficit of ICT infrastructure in the key resort areas in Zimbabwe. Such finding may be contrary to the pre-conceived idea that there was a massive ICT investment in Zimbabwe. This idea emanated from the fact that ICT service providers temporarily provide high connectivity in resort areas during important meetings and conferences. On the other hand, access was provided to the researcher save in one government ministry where the researcher talked to junior officials. This also shows that the government altitude and perception towards ICT4D researchers is slowly changing.

The shared understanding from the preconceived idea about ICT infrastructure between the researcher and role-players is that ICT infrastructure was no longer adequate because of the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis. Tourism role-players did not move to more sophisticated ICT applications after initial adoption.

6.3.2 The principle of contextualisation

The principle of contextualisation demands that the research demonstrate a strong social and historical background in order for the audience to understand the emergence of the phenomena being studied or investigated. Furthermore, the principle accounts for uneven information systems innovation in a global context. In short, this principle, entails that research should reflect on the local and global contexts.

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Applying this principle, the context in this research is the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, a Southern African country. The research looked at the context in which ICT is utilised in Zimbabwe and is thoroughly assessed in Chapter 3. In that chapter, the tourism sector in Zimbabwe is described in detail; in addition the historical events that led to the current situation were presented in order for intended audience to understand the current situation. Furthermore, the current usage of ICT was presented and the PESTEL analysis given. The historical background was that the country was embroiled in unprecedented political turmoil and an economic meltdown which resulted in infrastructure decay and bad publicity. The violent land reform programme, invasion of tourist attractions, operation Murambatsvina, hyper-inflation, corruption, state-sponsored violence and inconsistent policies by the government among other activities were the major source of bad publicity (LeBas, 2014; Matiza & Oni, 2013), which led to a negative perception in source markets, resulting in tourists shunning the country (Mugobo & Wakeham, 2014). Zimbabwe is subsequently perceived as more dangerous than war-torn countries (Chibaya, 2013). Moreover, the economic challenges resulted in role-players fighting for survival and neglecting investment in ICT infrastructure and training of personnel which was now considered a luxury.

Tourism geographical setting in Zimbabwe is presented in Section 3.3. It demonstrated that tourist areas are situated in the remote areas, particularly national parks, which are located far away from cities, along the country's borders and are sparsely populated resulting poor telecommunication coverage. In addition, national parks are located in far-flung mountainous areas which make it expensive to install telecommunication infrastructure. Consequently, telecommunication service providers shun such areas as they cannot recoup their investments since the markets are small because of low population density. On the political front, it is established that the government of Zimbabwe lacks political will to fully develop ICT, which it perceives that it can be used as a tool by the country's opponents to jeopardise its security and incite internal revolt.

6.3.3 The principle of interaction between the researchers and subjects
This principle entails that there should be interaction between the researchers and respondents in order to come up with research results and findings. Interpretivism research suggests that knowledge is constructed through social interaction between the researcher and respondents.

In addition, the researcher should take into consideration his/her role and the role of respondents in conducting the research.

It is for these reasons that the researcher embarked on a field trip to Zimbabwe to obtain first-hand information and increase understanding of the current situation by observing what is happening in the tourism sector in country. Prior, to the field study, the researcher had to send e-mails to the relevant authorities to seek permission to carry out research. In cases where, no responses were received physical and telephone follow ups were made. On the field trip, the researcher interacted and interviewed tourism service providers using semi-structured interviews. In addition, the researcher personally administered questionnaires to international tourists at tourist destinations and border posts as well as observing how the tourists and various role players were interacting. Furthermore, in order to interact with tourism role-players the researcher attended the Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair and the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) conference and exhibition. These meetings provided the opportunity to interact, understand and network with various stakeholders in the tourism sector.

6.3.4 The principle of abstraction and generalisation

The principle of abstraction and generalisation applies both the principles of the hermeneutic circle and the principle of contextualisation in order to come up with common understanding that can be generalised to other contexts. The findings were analysed through structural coding and thematic analysis and yielded a general understanding that the tourism sector in Zimbabwe faces the following seven challenges which are: (1) the lack of infrastructure and enabling services; (2) e-customer relationship management; (3) the lack of collaboration and a poor system integration; (4) policy and regulation; (5) the lack of financial resources; (6) poor ICT governance; and (7) poor human resource development.

This research was conducted in a developing country that was recovering from over a decade long of economic recession; hence, the results may be limited owing to contextual and technological variations. However, the results may be generalised to countries which generally have the same contextual and technological situation as Zimbabwe.

6.3.5 The principle of dialogical reasoning

According to the principle of dialogical reasoning there must be conscious to the possibility that pre-conceptions gained from theory might influence findings of a research. Moreover, the researcher is aware that there is need for revisions where research findings do not conform to theoretical pre-conceptions. Applying this principle in this research, the Government of Zimbabwe identified ICT and tourism as strategic industries, as pillars for economic revival. In all the government economic blue prints and policy documents driving the country's economic direction ICT is identified as a core component of economic revival. However, the findings of the research discovered that ICT is still being used for peripheral functions and not driving the core functions. It was clear that the government of Zimbabwe was aware that ICT can play an important role in all the sectors of the economy. Despite this awareness, the government has not fully computerised its operations and there is no ICT legislation as well as a clear strategy for the adoption and utilisation of ICT. There is a clear contradiction between government policy and the implementation of ICT.

6.3.6 The principle of multiple interpretations

This principle suggests that the researcher must be aware that respondents may provide different interpretations among themselves. There can be multiple narratives from the same sequence of events. Hence, the researchers must seek multiple view points and their reasons. Various viewpoints were obtained during the data collection. For instance, tourists viewed lack of quick and immediate response to e-mails as poor customer relations and lack of hospitality. At the same time employees felt that they were very responsive to customer queries as they immediately forward customer queries to their superiors. ICT practitioners felt that management did not consult them when making important ICT decisions at the same time management felt that ICT staffs were adequately consulted. In order to deal with these differences in perspective the researcher had to find out and explain why there was such a difference in perception.
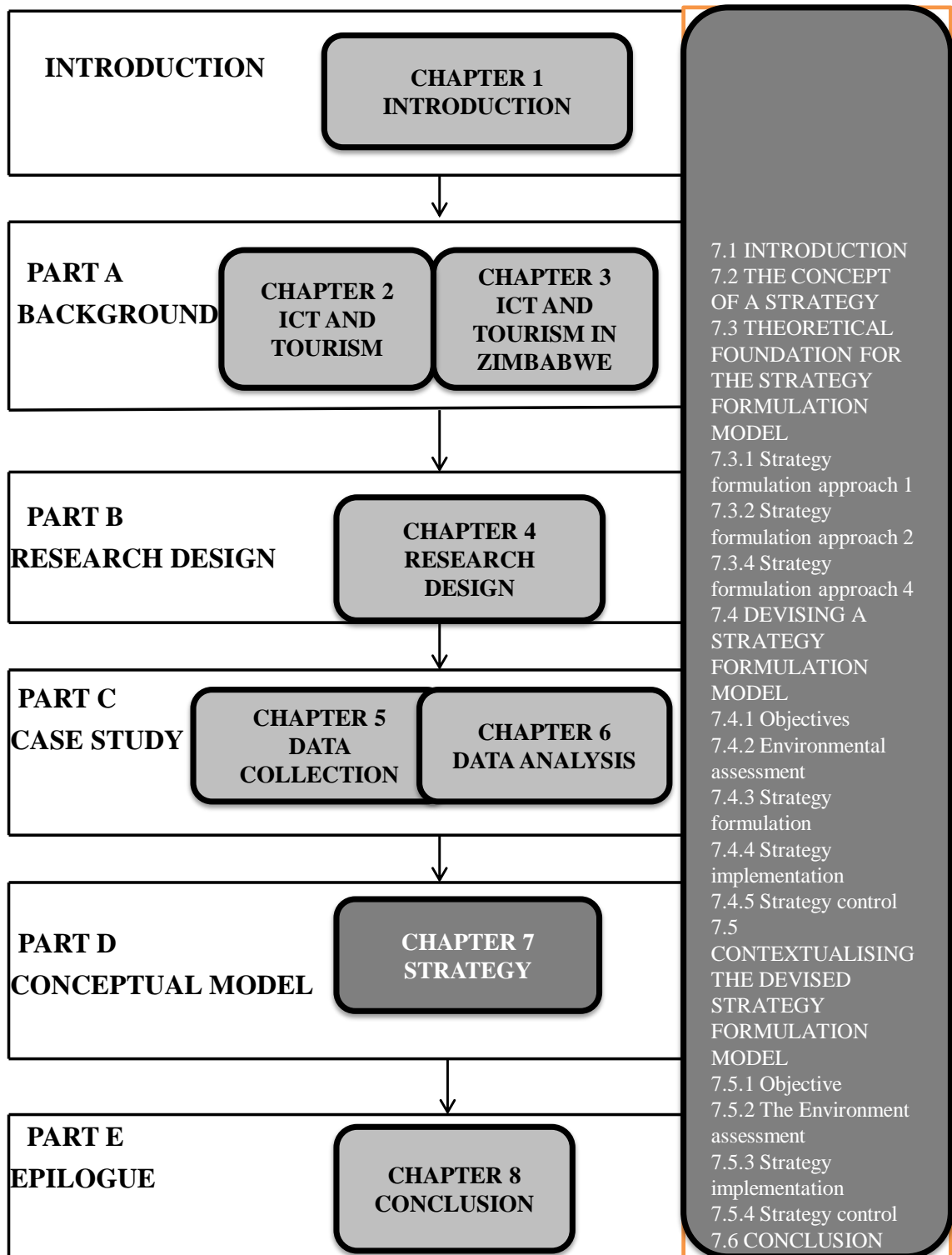
6.3.7 The principle of suspicion

According to the principle of suspicion researchers should take note of possible biases as well as systematic distortions that might arise from respondent's respondents. During data collection, respondents were assured that their contributions were confidential and anonymity was guaranteed to minimise bias. Furthermore, triangulation of data sources and viewpoints

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was undertaken with the aim to remove biases and distortions. The research employed a multi-cross-sectional case study approach, involving the government, the regulator, service providers and international tourists. This approach provided pertinent insights into the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Moreover, comments made by tourists on tourist websites on their experiences were triangulated with data from questionnaires. This section discussed how the seven hermeneutic principles as enunciated by Myers and Newman (2007) is applied to analyse data in the study.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter reported on the analysis of the data gathered from interviews with key role-players in the tourism sector, observations, netnography as well as the questionnaires distributed amongst tourists. The data were analysed in two phases consisting of structured coding and thematic analysis as described in subsections 4.13.1 and 4.13.2. Furthermore, this chapter the applied hermeneutic principles as enunciated by Klein and Myers (1999) to evaluate the data analysis. The results highlighted critically important key issues, which must be addressed in the proposed ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. However, the major research objectives need to be fulfilled which will lead to the crafting of the ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe; this will be dealt with in the next chapter, Chapter 7.

INTRODUCTION	**CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**	7.1 INTRODUCTION
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CHAPTER 7: STRATEGY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to fulfil the core objective of this research, which is to devise an ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The chapter focuses on the design of the strategy for ICT integration and sustainable use in the Zimbabwean tourism sector. Section 7.1 introduces the chapter. Section 7.2 describes the concept of strategy, while section 7.3 provides the theoretical foundation for the strategic formulation approach. Section 7.4 discusses how the strategy was devised. In section 7.5, specific details of the study are located in the context of the devised strategy formulation model. The chapter concludes with section 7.6.

7.2 THE CONCEPT OF A STRATEGY

A strategy is defined as "a unified comprehensive and integrated plan relating the strategic advantages of the firm or enterprise to the challenges of the environment. It is designed to ensure that basic objectives are achieved" (Glueck 1980 quoted in Rudani (2013, p. 84). Strategy is not a destination, but a road map for success (de Ruijter, 2016). It is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It determines how an organisation is positioned in a particular market for competition. In fact, strategy helps an organisation to focus its efforts in a unified direction. A well-formulated strategy is indispensable to the sustainability and growth of any organisation (Karami, 2012). It can also be seen as an inclusive and broad plan that is focused on taking advantage of an organisation's internal strengths and opportunities. A strategy responds to challenges and competitors in the organisation's environment. It incorporates a specific plan prepared to respond effectively to the firm's extended environment. It involves a conscious, active, and rational programme to define objectives and determine response to the environment (Rudani, 2013). Hence, a strategy in the author's view is a purposefully designed plan. This is further concretised by Rumelt (2011, p. 6) who defines a strategy as "a coherent set of analyses, concepts, policies, arguments and actions that respond to a high-stakes challenge". The specific issue in this definition is that a strategy is based on actions that flow from policies that in turn most likely stem from an analysis to solve problems and/or to meet objectives.

A strategy can also refer "to the long-term policy measures taken by a competent authority in charge of economic affairs in tackling major industrial problems with an aim for sustained development of local and state-level industry as a whole" (Zhu, 2013, p. 161). From this definition, it is clear that a strategy is a long-term plan that is crafted by those who are in responsible positions to solve a particular problem in a sustainable way. A strategy can apply to an industry, a sector or an organisation. A typical organisation can be seen as a miniature industry or sector. The factors that affect an industry also affect the organisation and vice versa. An industry is in fact an aggregation of many organisations.

In all of these definitions, four issues are common: (i) "coherent broad plan that combines both internal and external factors"; (ii) 'relates to the challenges of the environment'; (iii) 'combines actions' and (iv) 'sustainability as it has a future orientation'. From these critical issues, it can be seen that a strategy is an integral part of an organisation's continued existence. The operational activities of two organisations may be similar, but strategy is what makes the difference between them and as explained by Michael Porter, all organisations must continually improve operational effectiveness in their activities, but sustainable performance differences rest on having a distinctive strategic position (Porter, 2000). Sustainability in this research is regarded as the achievement of long-term survival, growth and success.

For the purpose of this research, strategy is defined as a coherent, broad, all-inclusive plan that is purposefully designed to ensure that internal strengths are used in a sustainable manner to respond to the challenges of the environment and attain set objectives.

Triantis (2016) observes that the word 'strategy' is commonly paired with some variant of the word 'plan', as in the process of 'strategic planning' or the resultant 'strategic plan'. This is explained by Thompson, Gamble, Strickland, and Peteraf (2015) who argue that strategic planning directs organisational resources in order to reach the organisational objective. It involves the process of supporting future value creation by identifying, defining, assessing and applying goals and resources in the marketplace (Achtenhagen, Melin, & Naldi, 2013; Ali & Bailur, 2007). Consequently, the whole aim of strategic planning is to achieve success and survival by directing resources in order to achieve the organisational goals. Kachru (2009), maintains that effective strategic planning links long-term goals and the actions and

resources to achieve those goals. It therefore sets the organisation's strategic goal, integrates business systems, coordinates actions, and thereby improves organisational performance (Fadol, Barhem, Elbanna, Adcroft, & Bruce, 2015). Daft and Samson (2014) , support the above view by positing that strategic planning is an instrument to achieve the long-term strategic goals of an organisation. This is because it defines where the organisation is going, how the organisation will achieve its plan and conversely will show the organisation how it has not achieved its objectives (Chege, Wachira, & Mwenda, 2015). Khan and Khalique (2014), add that strategic planning bridges the gap between where the organisation is and where it wants to go. The following section deals with the theoretical foundation of strategy formulation.

7.3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE STRATEGY FORMULATION MODEL

This section deals with the theoretical foundation of a strategy formulation process. First, literature describing the various approaches to strategy formulation is presented. Secondly, there is a consolidation of the identified components of the strategic planning process. These are identified from a variety of strategic management processes in order to come up with a specific process for use in this research. Thirdly, the proposed strategy formulation approach that is applied in this research is explained.

The existing formulation strategies that were have used are from Goldman and Nieuwenhuizen (2006), Enz (2009), Tesone (2012) and Christiansen (2014) respectively. The motivation for selecting these strategies was their close alignment with this research. On the basis of this, four existing strategy formulating approaches are discussed in the rest of this section.

7.3.1 Strategy formulation approach 1

Goldman and Nieuwenhuizen (2006), suggest a strategic formulation approach as depicted in Figure 7.1.
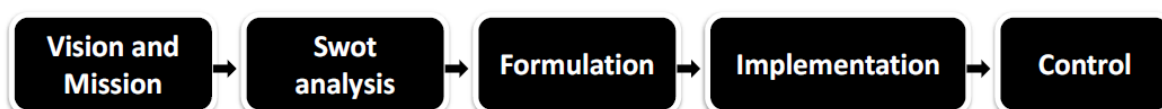
Figure 7.1 Strategic formulation approach 1 (Goldman & Nieuwenhuizen, 2006) (2006)

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7.3.1.1 Vision and Mission

The vision sets the hope, wishes and aspirations that the organisation/sector seeks to achieve. It gives a compelling image of where the organisation needs and wishes to be. The vision instils a sense of purpose and long-term direction for an organisation, thereby establishing a mission.

A mission is an enduring statement of purpose that defines the specific objective, philosophy and business of an organisation. It gives focus by defining what the organisation does, why it exists, for whom and how it hopes to achieve its goals. Furthermore, it explains the principal product or service areas in the context of achieving customer expectations. In a nutshell, the mission statement indicates the purpose, business and values of an organisation.

7.3.1.2 SWOT analysis

The word SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Strengths are the desirable qualities possessed by the organisation in relation to the external environment while weaknesses are internal factors that hinder it from reaching its potential. Opportunities are external issues that can assist it to execute its strategies. Threats are external factors that may jeopardise operations of the organisation. The importance of a SWOT analysis is that it helps an organisation to exploit opportunities and its strengths while offsetting threats and remedying and revolving weaknesses.

A SWOT analysis is an integral part of an organisational assessment as well as part of the strategic planning process. It is used to generate a strategy by carefully evaluating the internal and external environments to support the mission of the organisation.

7.3.1.3 Strategy formulation

After reviewing information obtained from the SWOT analysis, an organisation's mission is converted into challenging problems, targets, actions and processes to achieve its goals. The goals of an organisation should be crafted, measured and used as yardsticks in all the key areas. What emerge from goals should be comprehensive plans that show the desired outcomes as well as how the organisation will achieve them. Therefore, strategy formulation does not deal only with the crafting of actions, but also creates overall strategy which can be used to pursue the actions.

7.3.1.4 Strategy implementation

The agreed-upon actions and processes are converted into action steps to achieve strategic goals and objectives. This involves channelling resources, creating required structures, and defining processes and action plans to be followed in attaining the set objectives. It is important to note that strategy formulation and implementation are closely linked but fundamentally different. This is because strategy formulation takes place before action to solve a problem while implementation takes place during the problem-solving action, and requires meticulous coordination.
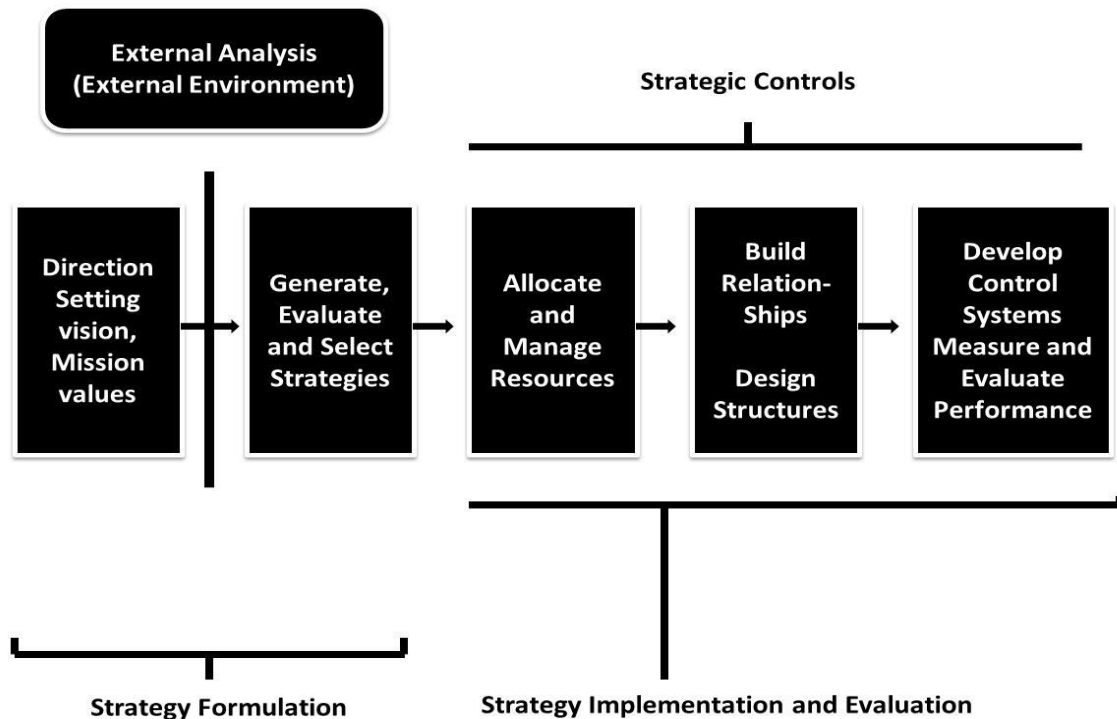
7.3.1.5 Control

Control can take place during implementation, not necessarily at the end of it. It involves monitoring and getting feedback throughout the implementation processes, to fully regulate the operation. Furthermore, it helps to identify problems or potential problems before they get out of control.

7.3.2 Strategy formulation approach 2

The second strategy formulation approach was proposed by Enz (2009) and it outlines a generic process for formulating a strategy. Figure 7.2 shows the processes for formulating the strategy.

7.3.2.1 Determine direction

Determining direction refers to the long-term goals of the organisation, and the reasons and purpose for the organisation's existence. The direction is usually contained in the vision, mission and objectives of the organisation, showing the direction which the organisation will take through its environment in order to survive and to accomplish its goals.

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                                    Strategic Controls
 ┌─────────────────────┐
 │  External Analysis  │
 │ (External Environment)│
 └─────────────────────┘
 ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐
 │ Direction│  │ Generate,│  │ Allocate │  │  Build   │  │ Develop  │
 │ Setting  │  │ Evaluate │  │   and    │  │ Relation-│  │ Control  │
 │  vision, │  │and Select│  │  Manage  │  │  Ships   │  │ Systems  │
 │ Mission  │  │Strategies│  │Resources │  │          │  │Measure and│
 │  values  │  │          │  │          │  │  Design  │  │ Evaluate │
 │          │  │          │  │          │  │Structures│  │Performance│
 └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────┘

      Strategy Formulation        Strategy Implementation and Evaluation
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Figure 7.2 Strategic formulation approach 2 (Enz, 2009)

7.3.2.2 Environment analysis

An environment analysis means investigating the environment to shape the strategic direction. It involves both an internal and external analysis. It fits the organisation's resources and competences to the requirements of the environment in which the organisation operates. To provide a quick organisational strategic situation a SWOT analysis is usually used to evaluate the internal and external environmental factors.

The internal environment includes all the factors inside an organisation, including the strengths and weaknesses in the organisation. On the other hand, the external environment consists of factors outside the control of the organisation that influence the choice of direction and actions together with organisational structure and internal processes. These factors may present opportunities or may pose threats to the organisation. An environmental analysis thus identifies the opportunities and the threats.

7.3.2.3 Strategy formulation

Strategy formulation means developing strategies based on strength and opportunities while overcoming and neutralising the weaknesses and threats seen in the environmental analysis.

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7.3.2.4 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation involves decisions and actions that suit the formulated strategy. At this stage, stakeholder relationships and organisational resources are managed in a way that helps the organisation to move towards successful execution of the formulated strategies in accordance with the strategic direction. Implementation activities include the creation of the organisational design as well as control systems to ensure that the organisation continues in the right direction.

7.3.2.5 Monitor, evaluate and control

This aspect refers to the processes that lead to necessary changes in the strategic intentions. All strategies and mission statements can be modified because of the constantly changing environment. Strategy evaluation and control determines whether the selected strategy is attaining the organisation's objectives. The basic strategy evaluation and control activities include reviewing internal and external factors that are the bases for current strategies, measuring performance, and taking corrective actions.

7.3.3 Strategy formulation approach 3

The third strategy formulation approach was proposed by Tesone (2012). Figure 7.3 shows the processes of formulating the strategy according to this approach.

Figure 7.3 Strategy formulation approach 3 Source: Tesone (2012)

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7.3.3.1 Mission and Vision

In this approach, the mission describes the current purpose and values of the organisation. It is the basis for the existence of the organisation. This statement determines the methodology the organisation uses to reach its vision, and the purposes behind its goals. The mission statement articulates the purpose of the organisation in express, clear and unambiguous terms. This statement also assists in the allocation of resources, forms the boundaries of its activities, and helps to facilitate accountability, control, time and performance by providing criteria for mission achievement.

An organisation's strategic mission includes a long-range perspective of what the organisation strives for in going forward. A clearly stated mission will provide the organisation with a guide for carrying out its plans. The elements of a strong strategic mission statement should include the values that the organisation holds the nature of the business, special abilities or position the organisation holds in the marketplace, and the organisation's vision of where it wants to be in the future. On the other hand, a vision describes the potential purpose and values of the organisation at a given time in the future. It also pertains to the future direction of the organisation. The mission and vision together give the purpose, philosophy and core reasons for the existence of the organisation in its current and future forms.

7.3.3.2 Internal audit

An internal audit views the organisation from within, so that strengths and weaknesses are identified and evaluated. Internal factors can be grouped into two categories, strengths and weaknesses. Strengths refer to areas where the organisation is doing well and weaknesses are those areas where it can do better. The organisation generally has control over internal factors.

7.3.3.3 External audit

An external audit focuses on situations outside the control of the organisation, which may promote or hinder the vision and mission of the organisation. These external factors are classified as opportunities and threats. Opportunities are factors, which have a potentially positive effect, while threats are factors with a possible negative impact on the organisation.

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7.3.3.4 Strategy formulation

Strategy formulation is a planning process. The process begins with mission and vision auditing. This is done to establish the purpose, philosophy, and main reason for the organisation's existence both in the present and the future. In addition, objectives, both long-term and short-term, are formulated. It sets out the strategies, performance targets and action plans to be achieved.

7.3.3.5 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation is the action stage of strategic management. It denotes proclamations that are made to install new or support current strategy. The essential and basic strategy implementation actions include setting annual objectives, devising policies as well as allocating resources. This includes tactical activities such as programmes, budgets, procedures and rules. Strategy implementation also includes the making of decisions with regard to matching strategy and organisational structure, developing budgets, and motivational systems.

7.3.3.6 Strategy control and evaluation

This phase is a continuous process which is conducted using a feedback loop within the entire strategic plan. In strategy control and evaluation, actual performance is compared against a set standard for performance.

7.3.4 Strategy formulation approach 4

The fourth strategy formulation approach was proposed by Christiansen (2014). Figure 7.4 shows the underlying processes for formulating strategy.

Figure 7.4 Strategic formulation approach 4 (Christiansen, 2014)

7.3.4.1 Strategic intent

The strategic intent is a captivating and convincing statement about which direction the organisation will take, that concisely expresses a sense of what it wants to attain in the future. Strategic intent follows a chronological structure which consists of three elements: broad vision definition, the translation of vision into a mission, and specifying goals and operationalising strategic objectives.

7.3.4.2 Environmental scanning

In environmental scanning organisations observe their environment to detect opportunities and threats affecting their business when taking strategic decisions. There are many methods that are used to carry out environmental scanning, which include a SWOT analysis and a Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) analysis. In the environmental scanning process all possible risks and opportunities are assessed. Both the internal and external factors in the environment that may positively or negatively affect the organisation are analysed.

7.3.4.3 Strategy formulation

Strategy formulation reviews the information obtained from the environmental scanning both at macro and micro level. Situational analysis, self-evaluation and competitor analysis are conducted. Strategic objectives are set and then the mission, vision and strategies are formulated.

7.3.4.5 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation is the action stage of the strategic planning process. This process is influenced by various variables in the environment that link with the organisation. At this stage responsibilities and duties of organisational members and how they fit into the organisational overall goal are made clear. Any resources or funding for the organisation, as well as human resources, technology, and organisational design, are allocated.

7.3.4.6 Strategy evaluation

Strategy evaluation is the last step in the strategic management process. It provides feedback on the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategy being implemented. 'Evaluation' means coordinating the many different tasks and control mechanisms that measure the overall performance. It identifies what has been successfully performed and what is yet to be performed, thereby enabling the organisation to take advantage of its strengths and eliminate its weaknesses.

This section has presented the theoretical foundation of the strategy formulation. Various approaches to strategy formulation were outlined and it was demonstrated that there are various ways and means that can be used to formulate and direct strategic management direction and activities. Owing to variations among the general strategy formulation approaches, it is necessary to develop a model of the foremost thought in strategic management appropriate to this research. In the next section, the core aspects of several approaches studied are integrated into a single strategy development model to be used in this research.

7.4 DEVISING A STRATEGY FORMULATION MODEL

In Section 7.3 various approaches to strategy formulation were presented. These will be employed to provide the basis for devising a strategy formulation model most appropriate for

this research. The proposed strategic formulation model borrows relevant concepts from the models that were presented. It is tailor-made to suit the situation at hand as presented earlier in this research.

7.4.1 Objectives

The fundamental ingredient of any strategy formulation process is to set objectives which guide the direction and path to be taken. A strategy serves as a medium for the realisation of objectives. The objectives and strategy are closely linked in the sense that the former stresses the state of being there, whereas the latter stresses the route to reaching there. Strategy involves both the setting of objectives and the mechanisms to be used to accomplish the objectives. Therefore, strategy is an all-encompassing plan which involves the allocation of resources in an endeavour to realise the objectives. It is the complement between strategy and objectives, which results in the choice of objectives to replace mission and vision. Objectives are more explicit in that they are specific, measurable, attainable, result-orientated and time-specific. Objectives focus and drive a sector towards what needs to be accomplished and challenges to be overcome as the sector moves towards the desired state of affairs. The objectives state what is to be achieved in a given time period. Therefore, objectives serve as yardsticks for measuring performance.

7.4.2 Environmental assessment

Environmental assessment involves analysing both the internal and external environments in order to understand the factors that affect the specific sector; in this case, the tourism sector. It requires the involvement of all stakeholders. There are many techniques that can be used to carry out environmental assessment (Goldman & Nieuwenhuizen, 2006). These include a SWOT analysis, a PESTEL analysis, Porter's competitive force model, a resource view model, and value chain analysis. Although the SWOT analysis is commonly used for environmental assessment, its major weakness is that it is very subjective (Bazin, Cassard, Caudron, Prognon, & Havard, 2015; Fertel, Bahn, Vaillancourt, & Waaub, 2013) and lacks objective stakeholder engagement (Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2015) which is an objective way of evaluating the environment. Stakeholder engagement involves different stakeholders, in this case, in the tourism sector. Very often users, in this case tourists are left out because they are not represented by particular bodies, but they do constitute the group, which has the

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direct experiences of the tourism product. For this reason, the environmental assessment should be conducted in an objective manner and in close relation with all the stakeholders.

7.4.3 Strategy formulation

This research adopted an approach proposed by Rumelt (2011). Accordingly, Rumelt (2011), proposes a three-stage approach to formulating the kernel of a strategy.

7.4.3.1 The kernel of the strategy

The kernel of a strategy provides the logical structure, which acts as a guide in reasoning and ensuring that a quality strategy is developed. The kernel of the strategy comprises three distinct but related elements, namely: diagnosis, guiding policy and a set of coherent actions. These elements and their roles are discussed in detail below.

a) Diagnosis

Diagnosis is a core component of strategy and defines the nature of the challenge, identifying the critical aspects of the situation directly from the environmental assessment, and the obstacles that have to be overcome. In the diagnosis, an attempt is made to identify the root problem and put it into context by thoroughly understanding the situation. At minimum the diagnosis classifies the situation, linking facts to patterns, and suggesting issues that need to be given more attention. The diagnosis assists in simplifying an overwhelmingly complex and ambiguous situation so as to make sense of the situation.

b) Guiding policy

This element specifies the overall approach to dealing with the obstacles identified during the diagnosis. It is 'guiding' because it channels action in a certain direction without defining exactly what needs to be done. The guiding policy further helps to reveal and organise interactions of many possible actions, thereby helping to focus and coordinate efforts. Without a guiding policy, efforts and resources can be inconsistent, incoherent and even antagonistic to each other. Adoption of a guiding policy assists in collaborating, coordinating and sharing information and knowledge among the role-players, so as to eventually deliver ICT-enabled services to tourists.

c) Set of coherent actions

A good strategy has coherence, coordinating actions, policies and resources. A set of coherent actions are steps, policies, resource commitments and actions designed to activate the guiding policy. A good strategy can transform vague goals into a coherent set of actionable objectives. The three elements discussed above, from the kernel of the strategy, are core to the eventual strategy.

7.4.4 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation implies the execution of a set of coherent actions. It involves following guiding policy and executing the set of coherent actions identified in the strategy formulation process. The implementation process will be holistic and involve different role-players as well as the deployment of the devised strategy in the tourism sector. It ensures that the guiding policy fits the context of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. It involves changing the way in which the sector has been offering its services to tourists by following the guiding policy and putting into action the set of coherent actions. The implementation gives guidance on the order in which the actions are to be implemented, as well as the role of different stakeholders. It involves the re-alignment and redesign of how services are offered to tourists. It also involves changes in the roles of employees and other role-players in the sector.

7.4.5 Strategy control

Strategic control links elements of the strategy formulation process together, and helps to assess their effectiveness as well as supporting the continual revision of strategy. The control process continually assesses the relevance, progress and feedback in the guiding policy and set of coherent actions. It also evaluates how well the set of coherent actions satisfies the devised strategy and enables the taking of remedial actions to address gaps in the needs of all the different role-players. The severity of the gaps in the needs of the various role-players must be judiciously documented for future evaluation. The proposed model is outlined below in Figure 7.5.
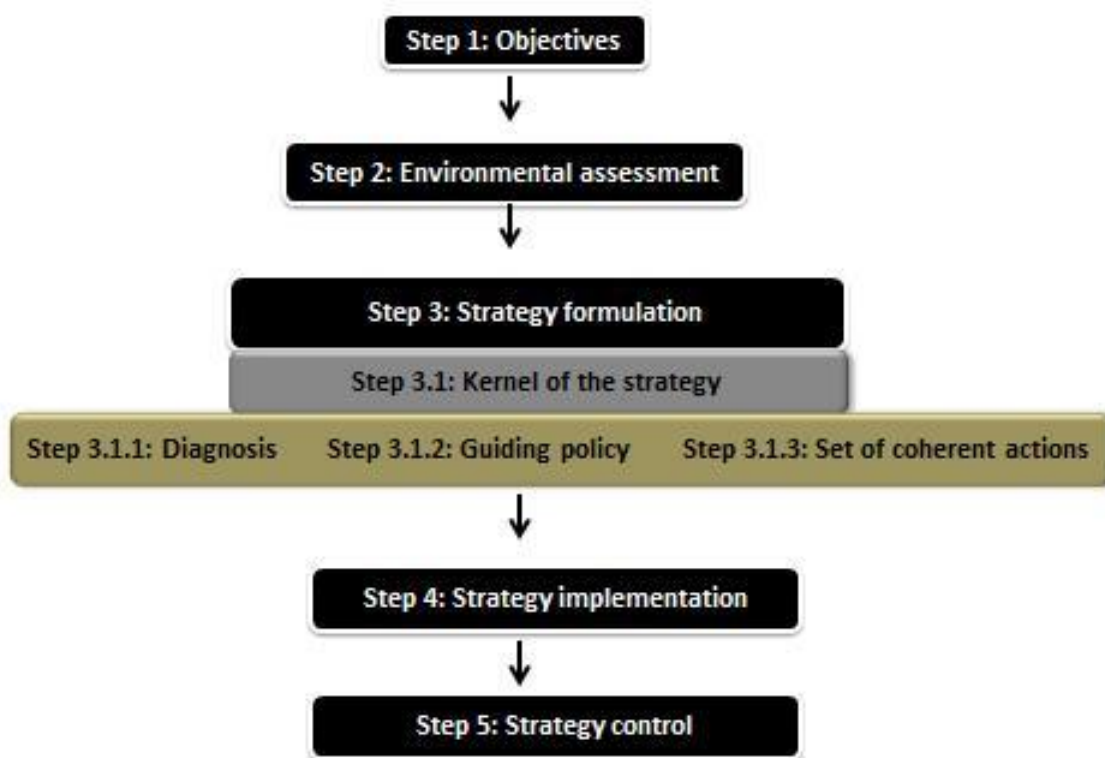
Figure 7.5 Proposed strategic formulation model Source: Researcher's design

7.5 CONTEXTUALISING THE DEVISED STRATEGY FORMULATION MODEL

In this section the strategy formulation model is applied to the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. In section 7.4, a strategy formulation model was devised, based on the theoretical foundations described in section 7.3. This model addresses a specific problem and context at hand which is limited usage of ICT and the continued provision of tourism services manually despite massive investments in ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Contextualising the devised strategy formulation model will result in the strategy set as the goal for this research. In this section the specific details of the study are discussed in the context of the guiding model depicted in Figure 7.5.

7.5.1 Objective

As outlined in Section 7.4, there will be no explicit vision and mission, but rather objectives form part of the strategy. The purpose, direction and specific need for the use of ICT in the

tourism sector is clearly defined by the Government of Zimbabwe's national economic blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) and National Tourism Policy. It is therefore prudent not to set a new vision and mission since the relevant arms of government have already pronounced their vision and mission. However, the vision and mission spelt out in the government blueprint and policy documents lack clearly defined objectives as part of an extensive strategy.

The main objective of this research was to devise an ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe. The Government of Zimbabwe identified ICT and tourism as strategic sectors as well as pillars for economic revival (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). The two sectors were identified as essential sources of foreign exchange earnings and profound drivers of the economy, while reducing poverty through direct employment in down-stream and up-stream industries. The study also seeks to understand why most tourism services continue to be provided manually. It can therefore be argued that the tourism sector in Zimbabwe has relaxed after its initial adoption of ICT. There is an apparent lack of clear guidelines and strategy for the sustainable usage of ICT to enhance the tourism sector. This research seeks to posit that, given a clearly devised ICT strategy, the country can capitalise on the opportunities in its tourism sector.

The purpose of the research was to establish and observe what is happening in the tourism sector, by involving personnel and management and critically studying related tourism documents where necessary.

The objective of this research is therefore:
To propose a specific strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.
In order to fulfil this objective, three sub-objectives were formulated:
i) To make recommendations for the adoption of a national strategy to enhance ICT usage in the tourism sector.
ii) To examine Zimbabwe's potential to use ICT sustainably in the tourism sector.
iii) To assess the current ICT and tourism-enabling conditions in Zimbabwe.

These objectives will populate Step 1 (Objectives) of the strategic formulation model as per Figure 7.5. The next subsection looks at how the environmental analysis was conducted in order to fulfil the objectives and sub-objectives stated above.

7.5.2 The Environment assessment

The environmental analysis, as discussed in Section 7.4.2, was done through stakeholder engagement. It involved an extensive case study of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe involving the use of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and netnography that focused on the usage and integration of ICT. The data collection exercise was intended to explore the experiences of international tourists on how their use ICT and the challenges they were facing. An extensive data-collection exercise was conducted over a period of four months, in the form of a case study involving the most relevant role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

The full extent of the case study is reported in Chapter 5. The internal environment consisted of the government ministries, the regulator and tourism service providers and the external stakeholders were the international tourists to Zimbabwe. These constituted relevant social groups from whom first-hand information to fully understand the current position and utilisation of ICT in Zimbabwe could be obtained.

The case study is considered to have adequately covered all the information required in the environmental assessment. In order to do data triangulation, a PESTEL analysis was also conducted as part of the study of extant literature. This was presented in Section 2.5. This current subsection looked at how the environmental analysis (Step 2 from Figure 7.5) was conducted. The next subsection will discuss how the results of the case study were analysed to identify the challenges, gaps and weaknesses in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

7.5.2.1 Diagnosis

The results of the environmental assessment provided pertinent and reliable information to assess the status of ICT integration and usage in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The environmental assessment helped to identify the challenges, gaps and weaknesses of the current infrastructure, human resource, legislation, policies and regulations as well as the actual use of ICT. After thorough assessment of the environment, the results were reported in

Section 6.2. After a further analysis of the results, these were synthesised into seven diagnostics. These diagnostics are listed and explained in detail below.

a) Diagnostic 1: Infrastructure and enabling services (D1)

Section 6.2.1.1 identified factors such as internet challenges, poor and highly priced mobile networks, power outages, limited electronic systems, and unavailability of real-time booking systems, as well as a lack of ATMs. Tourists cannot share their experiences back home with their family and friends in real-time. People are also limited in spending because they cannot access cash. From the diagnosis of all these challenges, it can be deduced that there is a problem with infrastructure and enabling services, as well as restricted access to the required services by tourists before they visit the country and during their stay. The infrastructure in a country has a great potential to determine the attractiveness of a tourism destination (Fetscherin & Stephano, 2016; Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2015). Infrastructure therefore plays an important role in enabling tourists to access various services at their destinations. For example, communication infrastructure allows tourists to have rapid and economical communication between their origin and their destination country. From this diagnosis, it was noted that poor internet and mobile network connectivity, limited electronic payment systems and the absence of real-time booking systems were the major infrastructural services affecting the tourism sector. Moreover, communication infrastructure and enabling services are not yet fully utilised.

b) Diagnostic 2: Electronic customer relationship management (D2)

The second diagnostic was the problem of poor electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM), as noted in subsection 6.2.2.1 in the previous chapter. The tourism sector lacks critical information that is required by the tourists in decision-making. Indeed, important information about source destinations is still missing from many websites in Zimbabwe. Against this backdrop, it can be concluded that the adoption of e-CRM is still deficient in the Zimbabwe tourism sector. Many organisations did not respond to customer reports, requests, queries and complaints and those that did took long to respond. In some instances, organisations had out-dated information on their websites and they did not have a platform for customers to comment on the services provided. There was also a mismatch between information and the services offered mainly because

of out-dated information. The speed of transaction was generally slow because services are offered in a fragmented way and at times there were power outages. There were also problems associated with poor bookings caused by mixing-up reservations which resulted in unnecessary arguments and delays. The unavailability of adequate information on the websites also led to loss of sales by the organisations since tourists may opt to go to other destinations.

Organisations need to capture valuable data from the customers to enable them to build personal online relationships and use the information to improve service delivery. e-CRM is an approach that is used by many organisations to improve relations with customers through meaningful communication. This strategy helps the organisation to boost its customer base, customer retention and profitability. e-CRM also increases communication between the organisation and its customers through feedback channels. e-CRM has the potential to transform customers into ambassadors who can recommend others to partake in the same experience. By having good e-CRM, organisations achieve relationship marketing since e-CRM and relationship marketing are interlinked and are complementary. However, most tourism operators are reluctant to implement internet technologies if they have the capability to support e-CRM.

The other benefits of e-CRM are that organisations can showcase their services and business to the world and it helps organisations to integrate customer data. Since tourism also comprises global clients, this feature is important in building international markets and customers beyond the geographical proximity. The tourism sector needs to use e-CRM as a tool to manage customer information and improve communication. The players in the tourism sector should take into consideration the needs of customers and try to fulfil them. The use of ICT in the tourism sector is essential in building a strong relationship with the customers. It should form the larger part of the strategy by creating added value, which will make organisations' business endeavours successful. The tools for e-CRM include informative websites, database-driven websites, emails and other browser-based applications. This enables organisations to exchange information with clients, including product information (e.g. price and preview), orders and complaints.

c) Diagnostic 3: Lack of collaboration and poor system integration (D3)

The third diagnostic was a lack of collaboration and system integration. The findings presented in subsection 5.5.3.2, revealed that the government ministries in Zimbabwe are not fully computerised as many tasks are still being done manually. There is a low level of computerisation and limited integration of government-related services. The systems are not integrated, which results in duplication of information and a lot of data redundancy, resulting in the benefits of ICT not being realised. Time is also wasted as some documents and reports are compiled from multiple systems that are not integrated. This reduces the speed and efficiency of serving tourists and compiling of reports. There is no portal for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe that is linked to the websites of the various role-players in the tourism sector, a situation that has deleterious effects on the sector.

The findings of the study, as presented in subsection 5.5.3.3 (ii) (c), reveal that the organisations in the tourism sector are fragmented. There is a lack of instantaneous information sharing between the organisation and other members of the supply chain. The main challenge is that there is no standardisation of database formats and structures, which makes sharing of information difficult. The absence of information sharing results in duplication of services which continue to be delivered in a traditional fragmented way. Tourism products and services are usually produced by a range of tourism businesses. There is also a lack of synergies between organisation departments and in most cases they operate in silos. There is no real-time information integration across departments. Systems in organisations are not fully integrated which breeds data redundancy, thereby jeopardising the benefits of the ICT. Time is wasted as reports and documents are compiled from different unlinked systems, which reduce speed and efficiency. The challenges that exist also include out-dated communication methods. This results in a lack of collaboration among the players.

d) Diagnostic 4: Policy and regulation (D4)

The fourth diagnostic is that of poor policy and regulation for the adoption and implementation of ICT in the tourism sector. Lack of policy that guides ICT developments affects the adoption and integration of ICT in the Zimbabwean economy (subsection 6.2.1.2). Most of the services are bureaucratic and manual.

There is a lack of political will in Zimbabwe as indicated by the absence of ICT regulation/legislation to promote its use and deal with legal issues that emanate from ICT; for example, e-transactions are not supported. There is no recognition of business agreements made online, and the use of digital signatures is not considered valid. Instead, the government policy requires that all official documents should be physically signed. This is complicated by such legislation as the Official Secrets Act, which does not allow documents to be transmitted electronically. There is an obvious a lack of clear government policy and clear implementation matrix in the tourism sector.

e) Diagnostic 5: Financial resources (D5)

The fifth diagnostic in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe is the lack of financial resources (subsection 6.2.1.3 (a)). Financial resources are required for the acquisition of infrastructure, training of staff and attracting as well as retaining skilled staff. Financial resources are definitely a key factor that is required for the effective adoption, utilisation and integration of ICT, especially for countries like Zimbabwe which suffered a ruinous financial crisis especially between 2000 and 2010, popularly known as 'the decade of crises.

This research established that most organisations in Zimbabwe have limited financial resources, mainly because they rely on government for funding. Others rely on service charges from the customers and sporadic disbursements from government. The unavailability of finance affects the training of staff and the payment of workers and service providers. There are also budgetary constraints resulting in the low prioritisation of ICT. This affects the ability and quality of services, resulting in out-dated hardware and poor entrenchment of ICT in their daily operations. It also affects the services offered, in turn negatively affecting the adoption of ICT since the organisations tend to use out-dated hardware, software and systems.

The results of the semi-structured interviews, as outlined in subsection 5.5.3.3 (ii) (a) identified lack of finance as a challenge in the regulator. Mwangi (2006) identified financial support as one of the critical pillars for success in the implementation of any form of ICT projects. The study revealed that the regulator in Zimbabwe relies on internal and external sources of funding. Internal funding comprises mainly statutory levies in the form of service charges to customers while external sources comprise funding from the

treasury and donors. The main challenges are that these sources have been dwindling owing to donor withdrawal and also the fact that funds allocated by the treasury are not necessarily disbursed. In addition, the disbursements are sporadic, making it very difficult to budget. The organisations are then forced to give priority to immediate and short-term needs while other areas, including ICT investments, are given low priority. This is also compounded by the fact that ICT is not represented on the top management level to articulate its needs.

f)   Diagnostic 6: Human skills development (D6)

The sixth diagnostic was poor development of human resource skills. The tourism sector suffers from the 'brain drain' like any other sector in Zimbabwe, resulting in massive losses and an exodus of skilled labour. In general, employees in the sector are not well skilled; often they are too specialised, for example, most ICT personnel understand technology but they do not comprehend its implications on the whole organisation (subsection 6.2.1.3 (c) and (d)). Lack of financial resources has also hindered the development of ICT personnel as discussed in subsection 6.2.1.3 (a).

g) Diagnostic 7: Poor ICT governance (D7)

The seventh diagnostic made was poor ICT governance. Poor governance of ICT and lack of a clear strategy cripple ICT practitioners since there will be restricted guiding policy and direction to feed into.

ICT practitioners who are supposed to implement ICT strategies are generally not represented at senior management and board levels depriving ICT personnel of the opportunity to articulate their issues. The problem is further compounded by management procuring ICT equipment without consulting ICT personnel. At the organisational level, even though management recognises the importance of ICT and its capabilities, there is a lack of commitment by senior management to entrench ICT into core business operations.

There is a clear lack of synergy between ICT and other departments, who work as if they are separate entities divorced from each other, although they are in one organisation. There is a need for a typical steering committee that comprises representatives from all

related departments. ICT governance structure shows how ICT is represented on management and board level as well as the procurement of ICT equipment.

In summary, ICT-related issues are not well represented at strategic levels. This has resulted in important ICT decisions being made without the input of ICT staff. There is no clarity as to who is responsible and accountable for ICT decisions since ICT practitioners generally occupy lower level positions and are normally not involved in negotiating contracts with outsiders. Management sometimes procures ICT equipment without consulting ICT personnel, resulting in low-quality services. There is also poor ICT strategic alignment between company and ICT strategy, resulting in a lack of synergy between ICT departments and other departments. The departments work as separate entities despite being in the same organisation.

In this subsection the challenges facing the tourism sector were diagnosed. The challenges were diagnosed as being a lack of infrastructure and enabling services, e-CRM, a lack of collaboration and poor system integration, a lack of policy and regulation, a lack of financial resources, poor ICT governance and, finally poor human resources development. The next subsection will look at the guiding policy for each of the seven diagnostics.

7.5.2.2 Guiding policy

In the preceding subsection, seven diagnostics of hindrances to the tourism sector in Zimbabwe were identified and discussed. In order to respond and solve the seven diagnostics that were identified in the environment, a guiding policy needs to be identified for each of the seven diagnostics. For the first diagnosis, enabling services and infrastructure, the guiding policy of access is suggested. The guiding policy for poor customer relationship management is ubuntu and the devolution of power to lower levels of the organisation, to assist customers quickly. A guiding policy for lack of finance is strategic resource allocation and investment. Other guiding policies are stakeholder involvement, ICT governance, and skills development as explained in the following subsection. Each of these will be discussed in more detail below.

a) Guiding Policy 1: Access (GP 1)

Subsection 7.5.2.1 identified infrastructure and enabling services as one of the challenges affecting the effective usage of ICT in the tourism sector. In order to solve this challenge, the guiding policy for the challenges of infrastructure and enabling services would be adequate and effective access. 'Access' refers to the availability and accessibility of various ICT infrastructures, capturing its readiness (Dobrota, Martic, Bulajic, & Jeremic, 2015). Enhancing access to infrastructure and enabling services is critical to the success of the tourism sector. The identified challenges such as internet, mobile phones, online payments, ATMs and lack of computerisation of government services all point to the problem of access. This calls for the government to devise strategies that can boost access to infrastructure. Poor infrastructure impedes a nation's economic growth and its international competitiveness (Kumar, Mudambi, & Gray, 2013; Wondowossen, Nakagoshi, Yukio, Jongman, & Dawit, 2014). Further, the lack of access has a negative impact on the level of services that can be provided in the tourism sector. Inadequate infrastructure is also a major cause of loss of service quality.

b) Guiding Policy 2: Ubuntu (GP 2)

In subsection 7.5.2.1 (b) poor customer relationship management was diagnosed as a challenge in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The suggested guiding policy of poor customer relationship management is ubuntu and the devolution of power to lower levels of the organisation. The concept of Ubuntu is derived from the African culture, which teaches friendliness, hospitality and welcoming in addition to showing love and treating others with dignity and respect (Ramose, 1999). Ramose (1999), explains that the philosophy of ubuntu is made up of the principles of sharing and caring (communalism) for one another in society. Ubuntu also encourages compassion, dignity, reciprocity and harmony (Tomaselli, 2009). Therefore, applying the same philosophy to the tourism sector would ensure that the players in the sector are included in a culture of caring, as well as sharing resources and using ICT.

c) Guiding Policy 3: Devolution of power (GP 3)

In addition to ubuntu, power needs to be decentralised in order to give employees at various levels the power to make fast and informed decisions which support organisational operations and to serve customers efficiently. This can be achieved using

the power of ICT to increase customer satisfaction. ICT can enable the efficient provision of marketing information and the management of bookings for accommodation, as well as hiring of equipment, vehicles and aircrafts. Tourists should be able to instantly access menus from their ICT devices and to pay through some online system.

d) Guiding Policy 4: System thinking (GP 4)

In subsection 7.5.2.1 (c) a lack of collaboration, system integration, and information sharing, was diagnosed in the tourism sector. There is fragmentation and no seamlessness between government departments or service providers. Consequently, there is duplication of services, and services continue to be provided manually in a fragmented way. Organisations in the tourism sector tend to neglect the impact of their decisions on other role-players within the supply chain. For effective tourism services, customer-focused systems are preferred. The suggested guiding policies for this problem are system thinking and customer focus.

The tourism role-players in Zimbabwe should appreciate that tourists view the Zimbabwe tourism product as a complete experience from the time a tourist leaves home to the time he/she returns. This calls for system thinking. System thinking involves understanding of the whole tourism sector by examining the linkages and interactions between role-players that comprise the entire tourism sector (Becken, 2013). It entails viewing the various role-players in the sector in relationship to their environment.

e) Guiding Policy 5: Customer focus (GP 5)

As mentioned in the preceding subsection, the guiding policy for the problem of lack of collaboration, system integration, and information sharing was customer focus. Customer focus entails various role-players in the tourism sector collaborating and serving tourists in the best possible way through seamlessness. Furthermore, it seeks to understand, analyse, design and construct the tourism sector as an integrated and complex interconnection of many systems working together successfully to provide a service for tourists. This calls for seamlessness among the various tourism role-players. The various role-players should commit to putting customer needs and concerns first in an innovative way in order to best serve them and remove any dissatisfaction.

f) Guiding Policy 6: Political will (GP 6)

Subsection 7.5.2.1 (d) discussed and diagnosed the problem of poor policy and regulation for the adoption and effective implementation of ICT in the tourism sector. It was also noted that most of the services are still predominantly bureaucratic and manual. Because there is no ICT legislation to deal with legal issues that emanate from ICT there is a need for strong political will to be shown by the government towards the development and utilisation of ICT services. There should be a strong government support in devising policies that promote tourism. The government should provide appropriate enabling legislation and policies. The guiding policy will therefore involve the strong political will to involve all stakeholders, devise appropriate policies and legislation. There must be high-level participation during policy formulation between those who craft the policies and those who are supposed to implement them. The inclusion of stakeholders is particularly essential for destination planning and management to ensure that organisational strategies are focused on the direction and goal (Mistilis et al., 2014; Sigala, 2013; Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2013). The Rwandan experience shows that the implementation of good policies is critical to success, rather than only having policies on paper and failing to implement them. Rwanda moved fast in this regard and performed better than 25 other African countries which had started using ICT earlier (Mann & Nzayisenga, 2015; Mwangi, 2006) The implementation of good policies transformed Rwanda from a technological laggard to a technological leader in Africa (Lacity et al., 2008; Uwamariya et al., 2015).

g) Guiding Policy 7: Investment (GP 7)

The fifth diagnostic as discussed in subsection 7.5.2.1 (e) showed that there was a definite lack of financial resources in most tourism organisations in Zimbabwe. This problem requires basically two guiding policies, investment and the strategic allocation of resources. The process of acquiring capital is called investment (Cheng, Dhaliwal, & Zhang, 2013).

h) Guiding Policy 8: Strategic allocation of resources (GP 8)

The strategic allocation of resources refers to the proper usage of the organisation's financial resources. Organisations in Zimbabwe should attract investment and at the same

time use the financial resources that they get from investments and from the resources they already have judiciously.

i)   Guiding Policy 9: Skills development (GP 9)

In subsection 7.5.2.1 (f) it was diagnosed that the tourism sector suffers from the 'brain drain' resulting in considerable loss of skilled labour. In other cases personnel was too specialised to understand other functional areas. The guiding policy for this problem was skills development. The tourism sector should train, support and capacitate its staff to effectively utilise the relevant services.

j)   Guiding Policy 10: ICT governance (GP 10)

In subsection 7.5.2.1 (g) ICT governance was diagnosed as a problem in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. ICT governance aims at achieving strategic alignment between business and ICT in order to make sure that money spent on ICT deliver business value. The governance structure determines key performance indicators for ICT. The value of ICT depends on how organisations exploit ICT to enhance their management processes and operations. ICT assets on their own can produce no value for a company, whereas ICT assets entrenched in a company's daily operations are usually found to be indispensable as a multipurpose technology (De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2015). This calls for a guiding policy for establishing appropriate IT governance structures. The implementation of proper ICT governance in the sector can ensure properly financed, managed and supported ICT investments.

This subsection suggested ten guiding policies that are required to address the ICT challenges in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. These ten guiding policies (Step 3.1.2 in Figure 7.5) are in response to the seven diagnostics (Step 3.1.1). The next subsection will provide the set of coherent actions (Step 3.1.3 in Figure 7.5) required for each of the identified guiding policies.

7.5.2.3 Set of coherent action plans

In section 6.2 the key factors affecting the tourism sector in Zimbabwe were identified. The challenges were then categorised and diagnosed in subsection 7.5.2.1. Guiding policies were subsequently identified for each of the diagnostics, as discussed in subsection 7.5.2.2. According to the strategic formulation model, as per Figure 7.5, the guiding policies (Step

3.1.2) should lead on to the formulation of a set of coherent actions (Step 3.1.3) that could be used as part of the overall strategy to assist the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This subsection discusses this set of coherent actions derived from each of the identified guiding policies to contribute to the proposed strategy for addressing the shortcomings in the tourism sector. The coherent actions stem from the conclusions made following the data analysis based on the data gathered in the case study (Section 6.2).

a) Guiding Policy 1 (GP 1) - Access

In order to enhance accessibility, availability and affordability in ICT, there are various strategies that the government can implement as shown in Figure 7.6. These are financing mechanisms which include: self-financing, private public partnerships (PPP), build operate and transfer (BOT), enforcement of service standards and infrastructure sharing. The government should also encourage the adoption of e-services in its underlying departments and organisations.
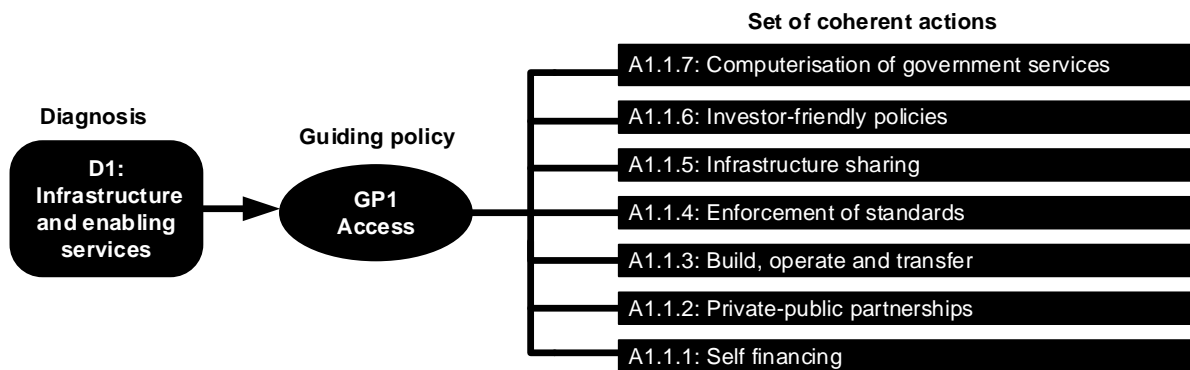
Figure 7.6 Guiding policy - Access Source: Researcher's design

i) Self-financing (A1.1.1)

Organisations in the tourism sector are legally required to pay a 3% levy on their sales to the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority for the development of the tourism sector. These levies should be used to build financial reserves and create a revolving fund to acquire and build appropriate infrastructure. On the other hand, the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) administers the Universal Service Fund to which all telecommunication operators are obliged to contribute 2% of their revenues (Rutsito, 2014). The government, through POTRAZ, is supposed to provide infrastructure in remote areas for the purposes of promoting connectivity (Gambanga, 2015).. However,

this has not yet been achieved as remote areas are still underserviced and most of the remote areas around the country still suffer from connectivity problems. This has resulted in poor or no service.

ii) Private-public partnership (A1.1.2)

PPP is a collaboration of the public and private sectors in the financing and development of public goods and services (Oyedele, 2014). An effective government private-sector partnership should be created, as neither government nor the private sector can undertake the development of the ICT and tourism sector alone. The ICT and tourism sectors need enough energy, reliable communication systems, an efficient transportation system, and equally important, a predictable operating environment. Zimbabwe must apply best practices in these sectors, like Rwanda, in developing infrastructure through PPPs (Mwangi, 2006). The government should embrace the use of PPs to build robust infrastructure in tourist resort areas. This includes building of telecommunication networks, ATMs and other enabling infrastructures. The concept of PPPs has also been used in the developed world, for example in Spain (Bakıcı, Almirall, & Wareham, 2013) and the Netherlands (Koppenjan, 2015).

Apart from PPPs, role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe can look for partners who have the capacity and willingness to build infrastructure using their own resources and pay them later by levying the end-users.

iii) Build operate and transfer (A1.1.3)

BOT is a PPP infrastructure project model whereby a private organisation carries out a large development project under contract to a public sector partner, such as a government agency (Iossa & Martimort, 2015). In this relationship the private sector designs, builds and operates, and then transfers the infrastructure to the government at some specified future time or when the private organisation has recouped its investment (Allard & Trabant, 2011). The transfer procedure may be done freely or for an amount that might enable the private sector to recover infrastructure project costs. The public sector partner may offer a partial subsidy or benefits such as tax exemptions, but the private sector remains responsible for the risks that are related to planning, constructing, operating and maintaining the project for an agreed time period. After the infrastructure has been

transferred, the private sector organisations may rent or lease the infrastructure from the government. BOT can be applied in the tourism sector to boost access, especially in the area of providing telecommunication infrastructure.

iv) Enforcement of standards (A1.1.4)

In order to facilitate good telecommunication service, the government should enforce service standards on internet and mobile service providers, and penalise such providers for poor services. The government through the tourism regulator must agree on the quality of service to be provided during the licencing of service providers and the penalty charges thereof. There must be legislation and policies that enable the enforcement and monitoring on the use of ICT, particularly on the licensing, registration process and grading of tourism organisations.

v) Infrastructure Sharing (A1.1.5)

Currently, each internet or mobile service provider is supposed to make its own investment in order to boost its infrastructure. The infrastructure includes towers, cables, satellites and power back-up. In Zimbabwe, each individual telecommunication service provider has its own infrastructure in one area; therefore, there is no sharing of ICT infrastructure among the players (Zhou et al., 2015a). This has seen service providers duplicating infrastructure, while other areas have no facilities thus causing inefficiencies.

vi) Investment-friendly policies (A1.1.6)

The government should formulate investor-friendly policies and mechanisms to ensure that telecommunication service providers share their infrastructure on both telecommunications and data services, while competing only on service delivery. Sharing of infrastructure will eradicate duplication of infrastructure and allow investments in areas where infrastructure is not readily available. Energy sources are vital for socio-economic development. In countries like Zimbabwe where there is an abundance of sunshine, the country can harness solar energy. This may require some capital outlay and thereafter give continuous power that could be used for lighting and energy in remote areas.

vii) Computerisation of government services (A1.1.7)

The service providers in the tourism sector must be equipped with the right tools and infrastructure to deliver the expected high quality service that satisfies customers. The government should also take the lead by fully computerising its operations; hence the need to attract skilled staff by giving appropriate remuneration. The government is the largest consumer as well as provider of services in any market, and if it computerises, it is more likely that the other organisations will follow suit.

Government policy can impede or promote the use of ICT in an economy. The Government of Zimbabwe can benefit from the use of computer controlled revenue systems that allows real-time calculations of taxes and reduce revenue leakages in the economy. Government systems must be linked across all the sectors of the economy. There must be a deliberate effort towards ensuring standards or compatibility across systems in the tourism sector.

This section discussed various mechanisms which can be used by the government to finance infrastructure for supporting ICT strategy in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. It was noted that the government cannot afford to provide infrastructure on its own, hence the need for partnerships. The next section focuses on customer relationship management.

b) Guiding Policy 2 (GP 2) Ubuntu

In order to improve poor customer relationship in the tourism sector, ubuntu and the devolution of power are suggested as a guiding policy, and thereafter a set of coherent actions are suggested as shown in Figure 7.7. The tourism sector must use all the communication technologies available to satisfy its customers. Thus, there should be an appropriate e-customer relationship management.
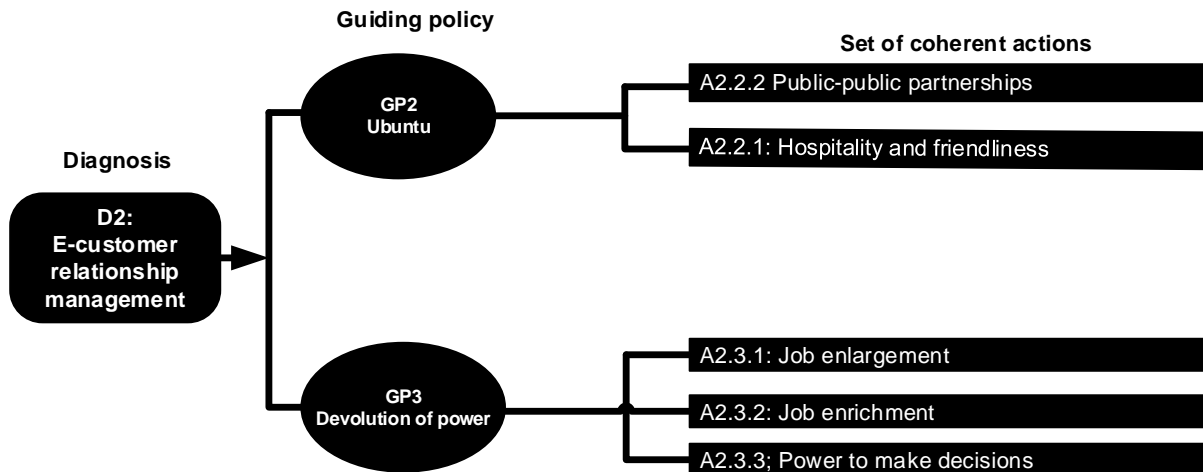
Figure 7.7 Guiding policies - ubuntu and devolution of power Source: Researcher's design

i) Hospitality and friendliness (A2.2.1)

In Africa, the concept of ubuntu teaches hospitality, friendliness, welcoming as well as relating well with others. The philosophy also encourages showing love and treating others with dignity and respect. Mkono (2010), notes that culture is the only product which cannot be substituted; hence it can be successfully differentiated for competitive advantage. The author goes on to note that Western tourists expect authentic experiences which are personalised and offer high quality service delivery. Therefore, using the Zimbabwean friendliness and hospitality traditions as an intervention strategy in the tourism sector will ensure a true reflection of the Zimbabwean ideology/philosophy of hospitality and friendliness. The sector should handle customers in a hospitable manner to avoid situations where dissatisfied customers post negative comments on social media. Dissatisfied customers spread information that adversely affect the tourism sector, while satisfied customers act as brand ambassadors for organisations.

ii) Information sharing (A2.2.2)

Ubuntu is a philosophy of life that emphasises mutual sharing and profound cooperation for the collective good of society. The rapid advance in ICT has provided tourism related role-players with an opportunity to dynamically interconnect using several technological information-sharing platforms. Tourism role-players should enhance their effectiveness through collaboration and the sharing of expertise, resources, costs and risks. The tourism sector in Zimbabwe should foster collaborative linkages and expand existing business relationships through the use of ICT to achieve supply chain relationships and

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collaboration. Through collaboration tourism role-players can join their skills, to offer an integrated and aggregated service in order to take advantage of business opportunities and fight competition from competing destinations. Through collaboration and cooperation tourism role-players can be more responsive to variations in the marketplace, thereby enabling them to provide comprehensive services.

c) Guiding Policy 3 (GP 3)-Devolution of power

In addition to ubuntu, power must be decentralised so as to give employees at various levels responsibility to make fast and informed decisions which support organisational operations. Employees in the tourism sector must have the power to make quick decisions and to best serve customers. This can be achieved using the power of ICT. There should be targeted job enrichment and job enlargement for employees who deal directly with customers so that they have power to make rapid decisions and attend to customer requests. Customers must be supported from the moment they visit the website up to the point of fulfilment. The system should work harmoniously with current systems so that different applications are integrated. The organisation in the sector must be customer focused by being able to identify, analyse, categorise, profile and service customers.

i) Job enlargement (A2.3.1)

Job enlargement entails expanding jobs on a horizontal basis. This ensures that tourists can be served quickly instead of obtaining multiple documents from different service points to satisfy the requirements of a specific transaction. Services should be obtained through a single contact so as to cut cumbersome bureaucracy and customer service time.

ii) Job enrichment (A2.3.2)

Job enrichment entails expanding jobs on a vertical basis thereby giving more power and multiple skills to employees. According to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if employees are given more responsibility on a vertical basis they become committed to the organisation. Job enrichment gives workers at lower levels of the organisation the power to make quick decisions as well as personalise services to customers and to be innovative. This is particularly helpful situations where tourists co-create their experiences.

iii) Power to make decisions (A2.3.3)

According to Parker (2014), the conditions for devolution of power encompasses the opportunity to be involved beyond one's job description, access to information pertaining all the aspect of the organisation, the room for decision-making and the access to resources as required by the employee. Although the power base should be controlled to achieve meaningful/responsive use of resources, power should be given to employees at various levels so that they take faster and more informed decisions which support organisational operations.

d) Guiding Policy 4 (GP 4) System thinking

In section 7.5.2.1 (c) it was shown that the tourism sector is a complex sector with inputs from various role-players and different subsectors of the economy. It was critical to understand interdependencies among the various role-players since the tourism sector is a holistic system. These role-players are affected differently by the same factors. This could be solved by system thinking and being customer focus as shown in Figure 7.8. The action required under system thinking is strategic thinking.
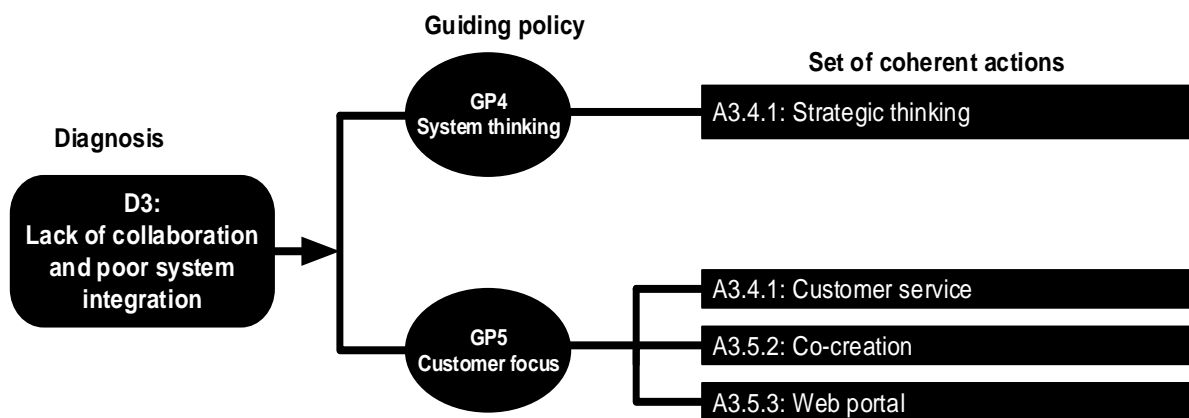
Figure 7.8 Guiding policies - System thinking and customer focus Source: Researcher's design

i) Strategic thinking (A3.4.1)

The tourism role-players in Zimbabwe should understand interdependencies among various role-players. Each role-player should consider and understand the implications of its decisions and its choices on the tourism ecosystem. This also applies at both organisational and individual level. Since tourism requires complex coordination in order to achieve unity of purpose among the various role-players, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority should facilitate the coordination of activities in the sector.

e) Guiding Policy 5 (GP 5) Customer focus

Organisations in the tourist sector must be customer focused and ensure that their processes are there to best serve the interests of their customers. The actions that are required under customer focus include customer service, co-creation and web portal.

i) Customer service (A3.5.1)

Customer service entails a series of activities designed to enhance the level of tourists' satisfaction. It involves tourists feeling that their experience with the Zimbabwean tourism product has met their expectation. Tourism role-players must give maximum attention to current and potential tourists' recommendations and makes sure that they are given feedback in as far as their queries and questions are concerned. Social media can be used for potential and current tourists to post their questions and recommendations this may increases loyalty towards Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

The rapid advancement in ICT has greatly improved customer services. Using ICT customers can search, book and pay and give their preferences. This advantage has greatly enhanced customer service on account of tourists discarding traditional ways in favour of modern ways.

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ii) Co-creation (A3.5.2)

ICT can help tourists to "co-create their experience" by selecting and assembling their own unique tour components. Co-creation is useful as an innovation practice well as a strategic method to strengthen brand value and positively influence product perceptions (DeRuyck, 2012). Tourists and role-players can help each other to create /boost innovation on creative and product streams. This helps tourism role-players to remain close to the tourist and meet their emerging needs. Consequently, service failures can be reduced. Tourism role-players can improve their service through constant interaction and online feedback obtained from customers.

iii) Web portal (A3.5.3)

The following actions are suggested from the results of an analysis of the websites in Zimbabwe. Tourism websites must be well designed, usable and frequently updated. They should provide information about resorts and ancillary services. There should be facilities for customers to contact the organisation and for it to respond timeously. One

person should be dedicated to dealing with social media and electronic enquiries. There must be customisation of customers on websites. Zimbabwe is a landlocked country, but being landlocked does not mean being e-locked (Collier, 2008). This means that Zimbabwe can develop e-services to deliver tourism services. Hence, the role-players in the tourism sector must negotiate for favourable service level agreements.

An interactive portal for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe should be introduced, which should also be able to interface with databases of related organisations, and allow virtual tours, videos, online bookings and payments. However, for the system to be integrated organisations must ensure that all their internal systems are integrated first; only then will the system be enabled to interface with other systems. The portal must be managed by a pool of skilled people from diverse backgrounds like marketing, communication, advertising and web development. Moreover the portal should have; for example, 'clickable' maps showing hotels, resorts and places of interest on each site on the map as well as revenue-sharing agreements.

The organisations in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe should move forward from simply having online presence. Websites should be thoroughly tested for usability to provide high-level user experience in terms of page design, content design and site design. The tourism sector in Zimbabwe must effectively utilise human and technological resources to reach customers quickly, easily, efficiently and effectively. The emphasis should not just be on the recruitment of new tourists, but also on the retention and personalisation of relationships. A system must be developed that coordinates and optimises e-CRM processes because an online presence alone cannot bring customer value.
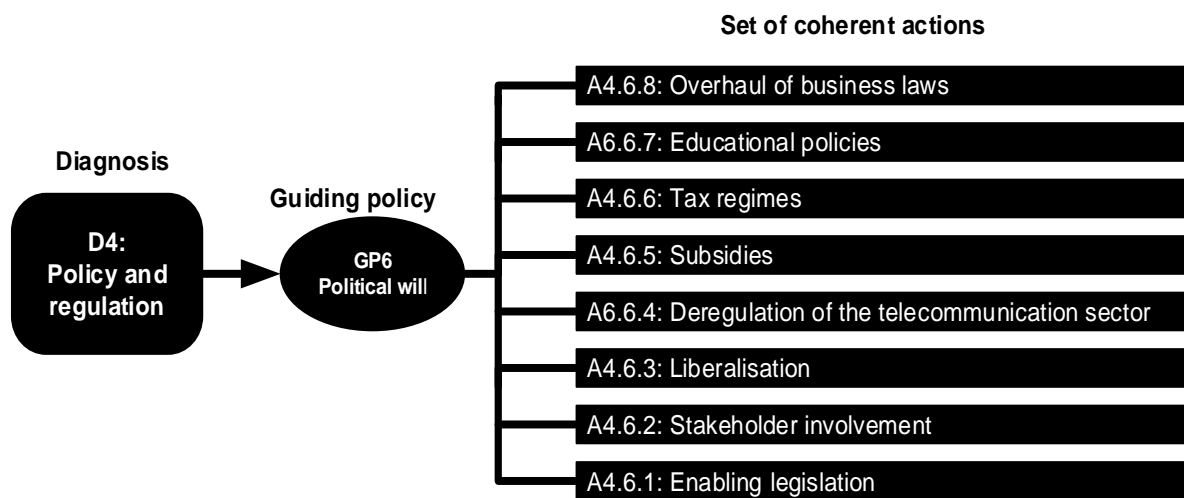
f) Guiding Policy 6 (GP 6)-Political will

Strong political will has an impact on the development and diffusion of technology through various possible interventions, as shown in Figure 7.9. The implementation of right policies positively affect he usage of ICT, thereby encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, which in turn can lead to new services in the tourism sector and other supporting industries.

For example, the implementation of effective policies has transformed Rwanda from a technological laggard to a technological leader in Africa (Lacity et al., 2008). The Rwandan government reforms since the year 2001 have liberalised and deregulated the telecommunication sector, and moreover 100% foreign ownership of companies is permitted among other incentives such as the duty-free import of ICT equipment and zero tax on exported products. The restoration of international relations with Western countries should be prioritised by Zimbabwe.

The case of Rwanda illustrates the importance of political will in the implementation of technologies. Strong political will can have an impact on the development and diffusion of technology through various possible interventions such as regulation, liberalisation, and subsidies to firms, tax regimes, educational policies that foster employee skills and the enforcement of standards. The implementation of the right policies positively affects usage of ICT in the tourism sector.

Figure 7.9 Guiding policy - **Political will** Source: Researcher's design

i)   Enabling legislation (A4.6.1)

Laws are instrumental in attracting foreign investments – or scaring away foreign investors (WEF, 2012). The Zimbabwean government should overhaul business laws so that they become user-friendly to businesses and foreign investors. The 51/49% indigenisation law in Zimbabwe should exempt firms in the ICT and tourism sectors. Technological leaders in Africa such as Rwanda have reworked their legislation to prioritise ICT investment. The reforms which were made in Rwanda include quick

approval of foreign investment proposals that are directed at critical areas that include ICT and tourism.

Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, there is no legislation that recognises electronic transactions and e-commerce and an online payment gateway in Zimbabwe is yet to be established. It is currently very hard for internet users in Zimbabwe to transact online. While a few banks have introduced MasterCard and Visa card payments, the majority of US and EU based merchants online do not accept these payments. As stimuli, government through financial regulation must spearhead and encourage credit/debit card processing in our local context. As long as these cards are not being used in the country the existence of the infrastructure will not translate into actual commerce or trade.

ii) Stakeholder involvement (A4.6.2)

The implementation of the strategy involves the institutionalisation of the strategy to prevent it from being undermined. The government of Zimbabwe through the ZTA should promote and communicate the strategy to ensure its acceptance and positive attitude. The strategy must get buy-in and commitment from the stakeholders, as it should not look as if it is being imposed on them. Such acceptance will be a prerequisite for strategy implementation. The roles of all stakeholders must be defined with sufficient clarity so as to promote a shared understanding of the clear goal of the strategy. Stakeholders must understand that they complement, support and affect each other negatively or positively. After acceptance of the strategy, action steps as suggested in the set of coherent actions may be implemented.

iii) Liberalisation (A4.6.3)

Liberalisation encourages private investment in strategic sectors such as telecommunication and infrastructure development which in turn leads to greater connectivity. The government is Zimbabwe should allow new service providers to take their place in the ICT sector.

iv) Deregulation of the telecommunication sector (A4.6.4)

The Government of Zimbabwe should drive and nurture the tourism sector by deregulating enablers such as the telecommunication infrastructure. The development of

the telecommunication sector in Zimbabwe may be hampered by licensing system and the way government regulates the ownership requirements of companies and the market share they can control.

v) Subsidies (A4.6.5)

The government should provide subsidies to tourism-role-players that invest in ICT and train their staff. The government should offer both fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

vi) Tax regimes (A4.6.6)

There must be targeted grants, tax and investment incentives should be available for role-players that cultivate and use ICT and train their staff with ICT skills. Generous incentives should include tax reductions for role-players that have fully computerised their operations and the duty-free import of ICT equipment.

vii) Educational policies (A4.6.7)

The tourism and hospitality curricula should include more ICT components in their programmes offering. Partnerships should be formed between tourism role-players and universities, especially on the use of ICT in order to harmonise curriculum with industry needs and requirements. Universities and colleges should add more ICT-related courses that are relevant to the tourism sector in their curriculum. Refresher courses should be constantly provided to both management and ICT personnel to keep them abreast of constant advancements in technology.

viii) Overhaul of business laws (A4.6.8)

Business laws should be overhauled, consequently reducing administrative inconveniences, to attract and nurture new players. Laws should promote competition.

g) Guiding Policy 7 (GP 7) - Strategic allocation of resources

The organisations in the tourism sector should allow creativity and innovation by putting more financial resources into operations, especially into services required by the customers rather than by management as illustrated in Figure 7.10. This is not always the case in many organisations. In most cases, management gets most of the financial resources at the expense of service operations. Managers seem to be obsessed with their

own self-interest rather than the sustainability of the organisations. While many organisations complained about the lack of resources, organisations in the tourism sector must fully utilise available resources. Inadequate resources result in a failure to serve customers adequately and give adequate information, especially on websites, which are outsourced. Lack of financial resources means organisations fail to invest in infrastructure and human development.
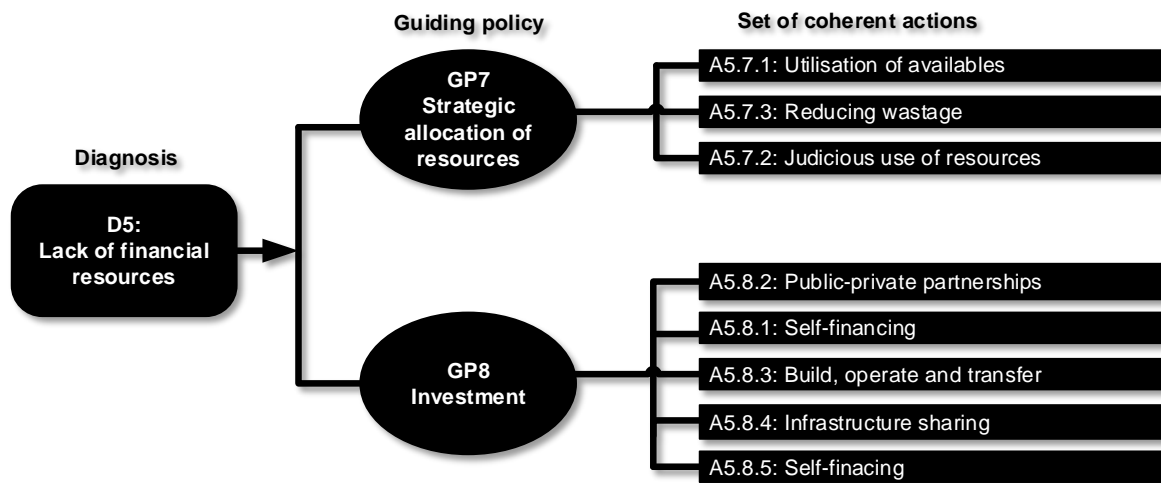
Figure 7.10 Guiding policies – Strategic allocation of resources and investment Source: Researcher's design

i) Utilisation of available resources (A5.7.1)

The role-players in the tourism sector must fully utilise their existing technologies for commercial purposes to enhance their market knowledge and networks, increasing productivity and competitiveness. Apart from commercial purposes, technology must be used in the core business operations and for administrative purposes.

ii) Judicious management of resources (A5.7.2)

The strategic allocation of resources involves their judicious management, appropriate training and motivation to make high levels of productivity possible.

iii) Reducing wastage (A5.7.3)

The strategic allocation of resources also entails reducing the costs of production per unit as well as the wastage of resources. In many Zimbabwean organisations, capital and financial resources are diverted to non-essential things like unnecessary travel, in order

for top management to claim high subsistence allowances (Ncube & Maunganidze, 2014; Rusvingo, 2014; Zvavahera & Ndoda, 2014) and packages of executives.

While many organisations complain of a lack of resources, organisations in the tourism sector must fully utilise available resources. Inadequate resources result in failure to serve customers and to give sufficient information, especially on websites which are outsourced. The lack of financial resources means that organisations fail to invest in infrastructure and human development. In addition internet bandwidth is wasted when employees download non-work related material slowing down connectivity and accessibility.

h) Guiding Policy 7 (GP 7) - Investment

Zimbabwe has suffered from a protracted economic meltdown as well as international isolation which have resulted in the country being viewed as a negative investment destination. This negative image has resulted in the country failing to attract FDI. The suggestions made in subsection 7.5.2.3a function as ways of helping to deal with the challenges of poor investment. Suggested investment and financing mechanisms are: Self-financing, private public partnerships (PPP), build operate and transfer (BOT), and infrastructure sharing.

i) Guiding Policy 8 (GP 8) - Skills development

In subsection 7.5.2.2 (i) the suggested guiding policy for poor human resources development was skills development. The coherent actions that need to be taken for skills development include human capital development, as illustrated Figure 7.11.
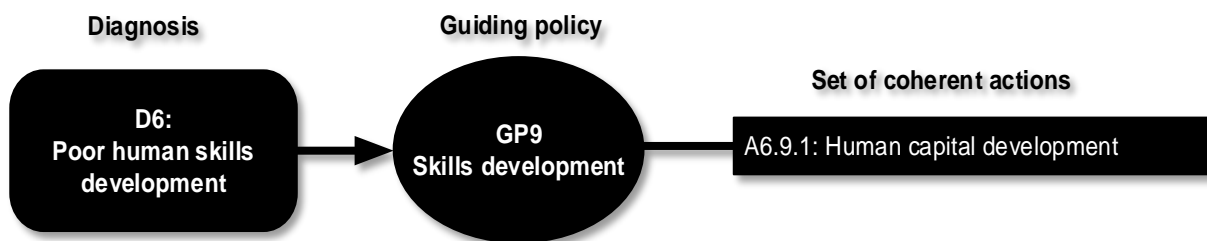

Figure 7.11 Guiding policies – Skills development Source: Researcher's design

Human capital development (A6.9.1)

Human capital development involves human resources and deals essentially deals with the empowerment of employees. Human resource development is critical and essential to the success of the tourism sector and involves equipping employees with the requisite skills and values necessary for growth in this sector. The organisations in the sector must empower their employees in terms of their authority, skills, jobs and decision-making. The effectiveness of labour depends on the education, training and quality of capital (Thomas & Qiu, 2012). Employees in the tourism sector need to possess multiple skills to meet the challenges in tourism and ICT. The major advantages of having multiple skills are that employees have increased confidence in serving the customers, everyone gets involved in performing organisational tasks, and there is less idle time since employees can move around with workload, instead of work to coming to them. Effort should be made to conduct in-house training on all facets of the organisation. There is a need for trans-disciplinary ICT employees in the tourism sector so that employees not only just understand ICT issues but also the general tourism business. ICT personnel should have multiple skills that include hospitality and tourism management to be able to know and identify needs and best serve customers.

j)   Guiding Policy 10 (GP 10)-ICT governance

In subsection 7.5.2.2 (i) the suggested guiding policy for poor ICT governance was proper ICT governance as illustrated in Figure 7.12. The suggested coherent actions are strategic alignment, top management support, recognition of ICT practitioners and the establishment of clear procurement procedures.

Set of coherent actions

Diagnosis   **Guiding policy**

D7:
Poor ICT
governance

GP10
ICT governance

A7.10.1: Strategic alignment

A7.10.2: Top management support

A7.10.3: Recognition of ICT staff

A7.10.4: Establishment of clear procurement procedures
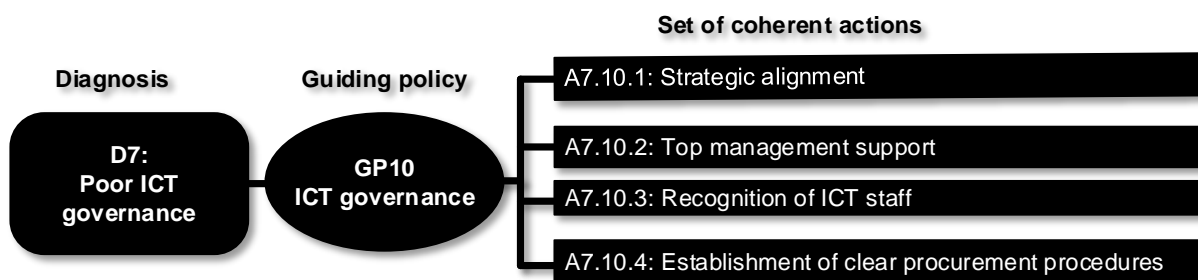
Figure 7.12 Guiding policy – ICT governance Source: Researcher's design

Strategic alignment (A7.10.1)

ICT governance refers to achieving strategic alignment between the business and ICT in order to make sure that money spent on ICT actually delivers value to the businesses. An

effective ICT governance programme would help Zimbabwean organisations to understand the issues and risks surrounding the strategic importance of ICT, to ensure that ICT sustains operations and to help enable companies to use ICT for their competitive advantage. The value of ICT would depend on how companies exploit ICT to enhance their management processes and operations. Own their own, ICT assets do not add any value to a company; whereas ICT assets entrenched in a company's daily operations are usually found to be indispensable – as a multipurpose technology. Strategic alignment ensures that the vision and mission of the sector are linked and aligned to the sector strategy and objectives.

ii) Top management support (A7.10.2)

The effective use of technology is dependent not only on the availability of the technology itself, but also on other factors such as the ICT policies within the organisations. Top management should appreciate that ICT can make a difference in an organisation. They should develop the necessary capacities for the organisation to be able to use ICT practically in organisational operations. In addition, top management must ensure that ICT becomes part and parcel of everyday practice, as top management are the custodians of the organisational resources. However, the success of the entity depends on how top management supports the ICT function, as they are the custodians of organisational resources. The value of ICT depends on how organisations exploit ICT to enhance their management processes and operations.

iii) Recognition of ICT practitioners (A7.10.3)

ICT practitioners in the tourism sector should be accorded appropriate professional status and recognition. Consequently, ICT practitioners must be involved in making important and strategic decisions. These sets of coherent actions are shown in Figure 7.9. ICT practitioners in the tourism sector had low professional status and were not involved in decision making. They were not involved in some important decisions as they were not part of senior management where they must provide their expert advice like in the procurement of ICT equipment. There is need to give high regard to ICT practitioners in dealing with ICT issues.

iv) Establishment of clear ICT procurement procedures (A7.10.4)

There should be clear ICT procurement procedures and ICT personnel should play a pivotal role in making decisions about the software and hardware to be procured. Management should rely on the expert advice of internal ICT staff, whilst together management and ICT should assess the ICT needs of the organisation based on the organisational objectives. It should also be determined how the procured ICT resources will add value to the organisational strategy and objectives. In addition, whatever is procured must fit into the overall strategy of the organisation. Prior to the procurement of ICT resources, the technical skills of the staff should also be considered in order to determine the need for training. Every ICT decision should be made with the involvement of ICT staff.

This subsection discussed the various suggested coherent actions which are summarised in Figure 7.13, which places the identified diagnostics (Step 3.1.1 in Figure 7.5), guiding policies (Step 3.1.2) and coherent actions (Step 3.1.3) in context. Together these three steps form the kernel of the strategy (Step 3.1) which completes the formulation of strategy. Thus, it can be stated that Figure 7.13 depicts the formulated strategy for revolving the diagnosed problems in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Moving forward, the next section will provide details of how the identified set of coherent actions will be implemented (Step 4 in Figure 7.5) as part the ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.
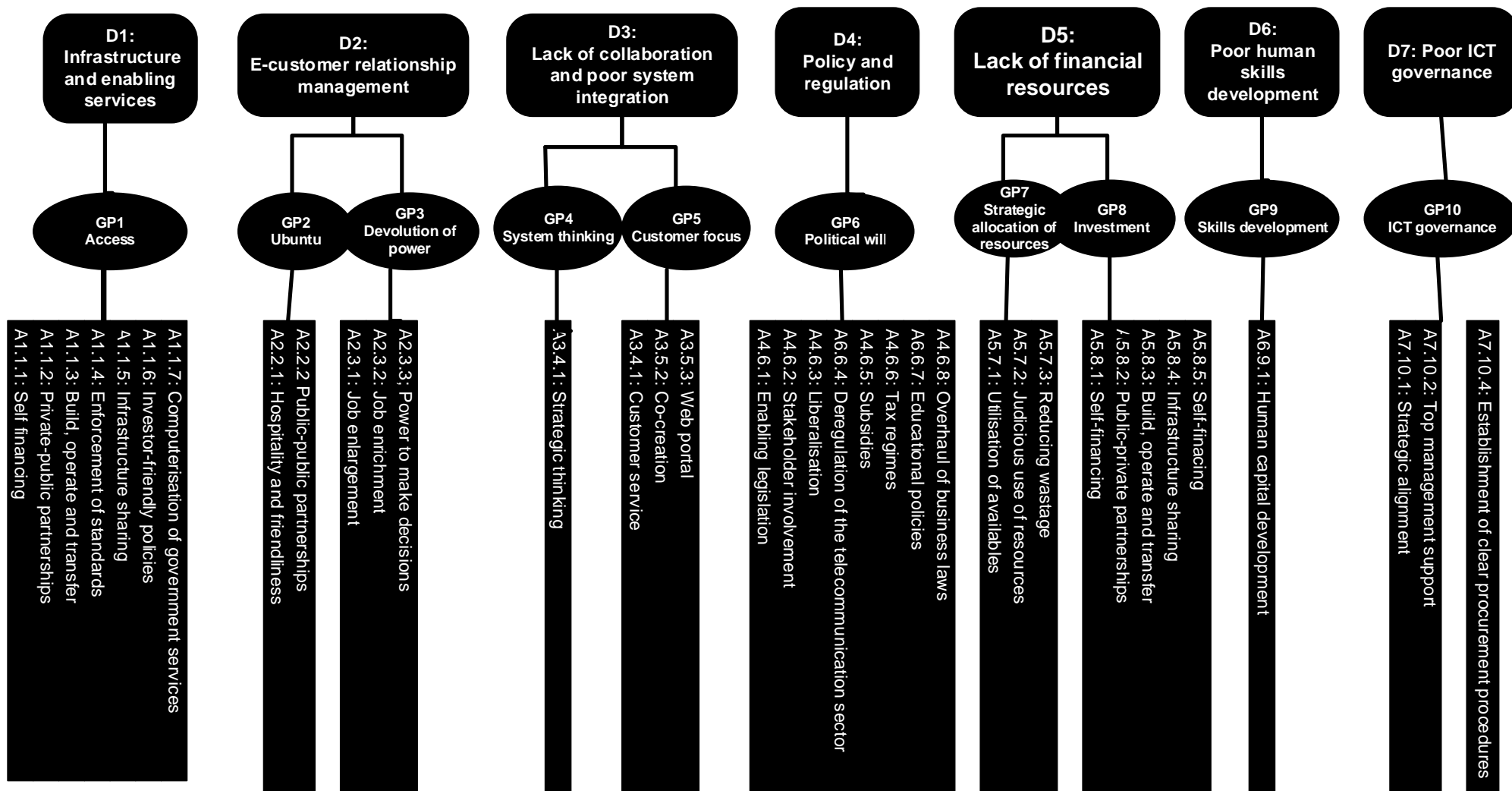
Figure 7.13 Summary of the relationship between diagnostics, guiding policies and actions Source: Researcher's design

7.5.3 Strategy implementation

This subsection discusses how the strategy should be executed or implemented in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Strategy implementation (Step 4 in Figure 7.5) involves the conversion of the strategy to use ICT sustainably in the tourism sector. The set of coherent actions suggested for each of the guiding policies was diagrammatically synthesised into a three-phased implementation plan as illustrated in Figure 7.14 and explained below.

The implementation of the coherent set of actions involves the inputs and roles to be played by the government, the regulator and the service providers. This implementation of the coherent set of actions is perceived to consist of three layers: government, regulator, service provider management as illustrated in Figure 7.13.

7.5.3.1 Government

The government sets and addresses the prerequisites for the implementation of the ICT strategy. The prerequisites include the actions that the government needs to perform before ICT can be effectively utilised in the tourism sector. The entry point in this layer is stakeholder involvement, which must be facilitated by the government because the implementation of the strategy will be guided by the concept of stakeholder involvement. During policy formulation and implementation, there should be high level of participation between those who crafted the policies, those who are supposed to implement the policies and those who are affected by the policies. Stakeholder involvement can either be in the form of partnership or participation as these two involve a two-way engagement, shared accountability and responsibility. Stakeholder involvement ensures that the concerns of the tourism sector are addressed as well as the concerns of other sectors. This is in line with the Zimbabwe National Tourism Policy which states that the tourism sector is government-led and private-sector driven.

All stakeholders must be involved so that their input in the policies and laws that affect them is taken into consideration. Every stakeholder should play their part and should understand how their roles affect other stakeholders in the sector. There should be no antagonism between the regulator and the regulated; instead there should be cooperation and collaboration. Stakeholder involvement should lead to the overhaul of the current business law, which should in turn result in enabling legislation and investor friendly policies,

especially in the use ICT and other modern business tools. Investor-friendly policies will probably include the deregulation of the telecommunication sector, subsidies, liberalisation, educational policies, and public-private partnerships. These policies should enable the development of the tourism sector. In light of the fact that the tourism sector is constantly changing business laws also need to change to support its development.

7.5.3.2 Regulatory layer

This layer is concerned with the implementation and enforcement of government policies and legislation through the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). The ZTA implements government policies in the tourism sector through the enforcement of standards during the registration, grading and monitoring of service providers in the sector.

The ZTA should provide explicitly coordinate and control the entire sector. There should be an interactive portal for the tourism sector which should interface with all tourism-related organisations and other stakeholders through a central database. The portal should allow virtual tours, online bookings and payments. In addition, the portal should be search engine optimised, connected to social media, user friendly and must accept a variety of international debit and credit cards. Furthermore, the portal should clearly show the points of difference between Zimbabwe and other competing countries. The portal should be managed by professionals from diverse backgrounds. It should allow "*click*" able maps that show all the resorts and places of interest within the country. Additionally, the portal should be able to generate its own revenue through some revenue-sharing agreements.
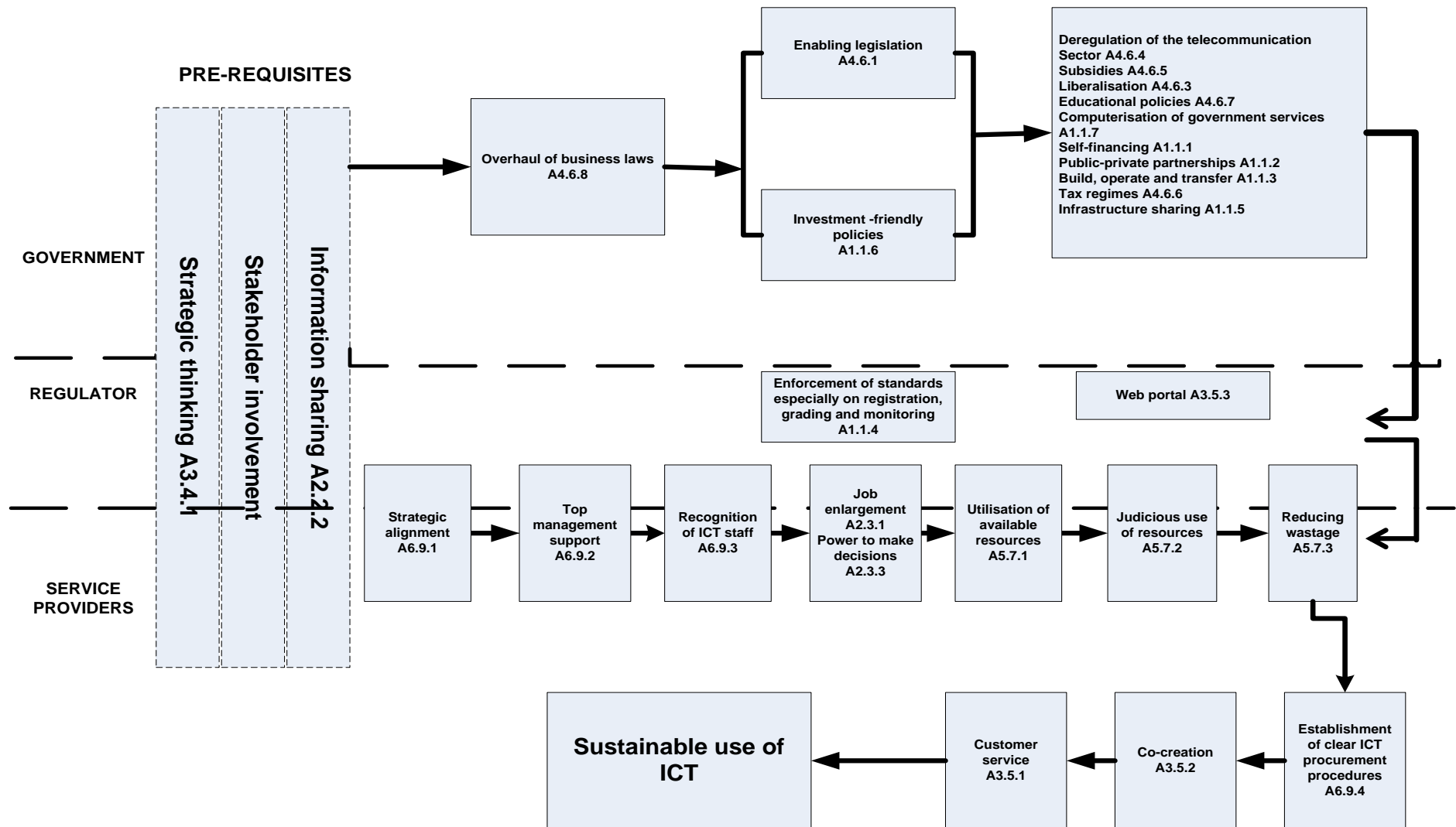
Figure 7.14 Strategy implementation Source: Researcher's design

7.5.3.3 Service providers

Service provider boards and top management should allow all their employees, including ICT practitioners, to contribute to the formulation of organisational policy. The governance mechanisms determine the representation at management and board level, as well as the procurement of ICT equipment. There should also be strategic alignment between business and ICT, in order to make sure that money spent on ICT delivers business value.

There should be a strategic alignment between government strategy and ICT strategy and they should work hand in hand to achieve organisational goals. If these strategies are aligned, there will automatically be top management support. This will be particularly important as top management are the custodians of organisational resources and determine direction which the organisation should take. Since a considerable amount of resources will be allocated to ICT, management will then recognise ICT practitioners and their critical role in decision-making.

The recognition of ICT practitioners will also help in establishing clear procurement procedures. This means that ICT practitioners will be given the power to make decisions and this will help them to broaden their jobs thus contributing to human capital development. All these processes will help in the judicious use of resources which help to reduce wastage and enable co-creation. This will in turn help to contribute to customer services that result in the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector. It is also important to note that at each layer there must clear controls, measures, monitoring and evaluation.
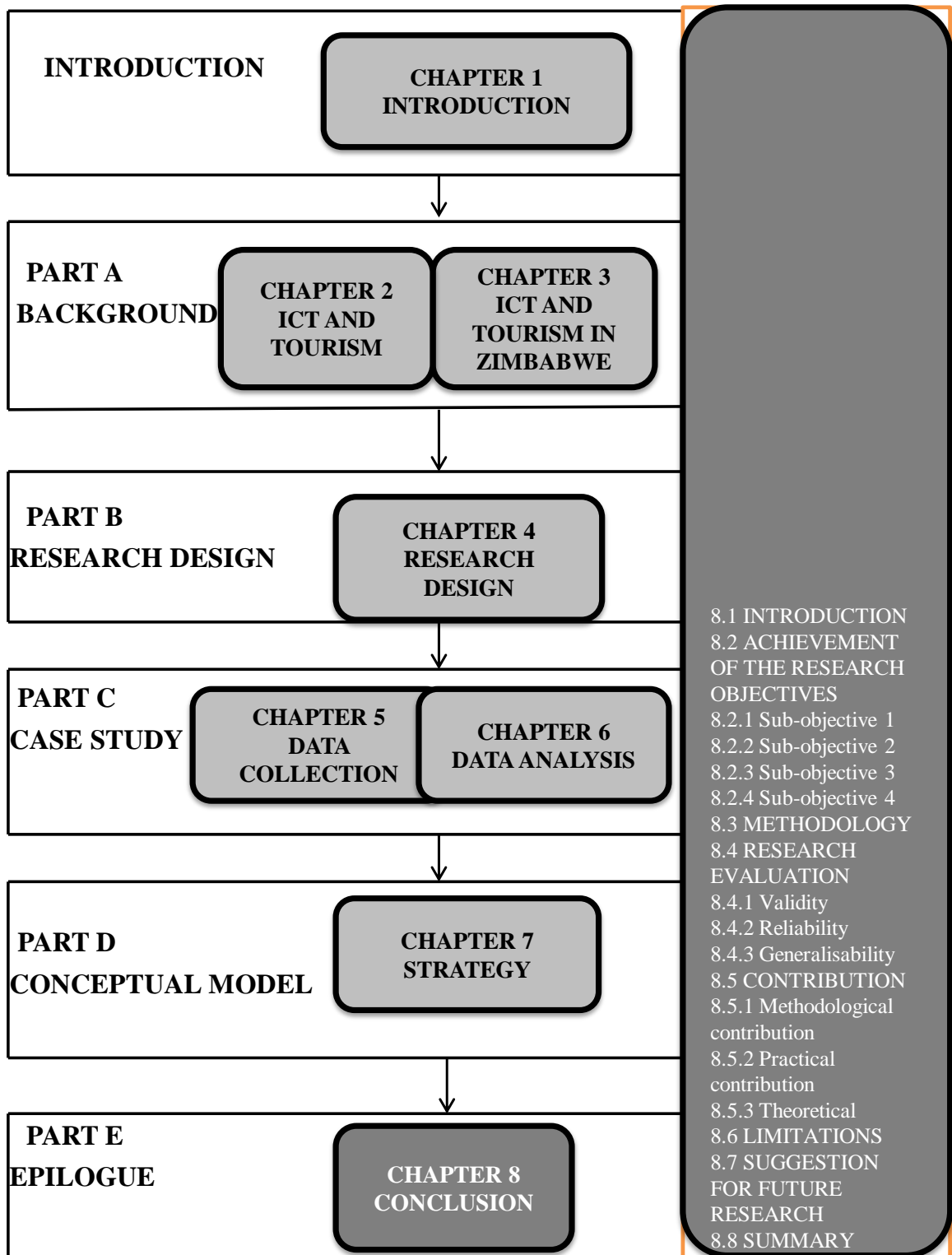
7.5.4 Strategy control

The following subsection discusses how the strategy would be controlled. Strategic control will take place continuously at each level to ensure that the strategy goes according to plan and that deviations are corrected before they derail the strategy.

Overall, the strategy control should ideally be done by the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, which oversees the tourism sector. This strategic control process involves the ministry tracking and monitoring the implementation processes, identifying deviations and taking necessary corrective action. The control process begins with the strategy formulation and ends with implementation. In this research, strategy control ensures that all the actions taken are according to the guiding policies identified in

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subsection 7.5.2.2. It is also important to note that the strategic control also ensures that guiding policies are still pointing in the right direction. Furthermore, it allows corrective action to be taken and changes made where necessary.

7.6 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this chapter was to gain deep insight into the strategy formulation process and the design of a sustainable ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Various definitions of the concept of strategy and the strategy formulation processes were looked at. Consequently, a definition and a strategy formulation process were developed for this research. The subsequent strategy formulation was then applied, resulting in the development of an ICT strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector. Prior to the development of strategy, seven diagnostics were identified. Seven interventions in the form of ten guiding policies and a set of coherent actions were then suggested. The development of the strategy fulfilled the major research objectives, which were to craft an ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe. It is therefore maintained that the sound implementation (Step 4 of Figure 7.5) and control (Step 5) of the formulated strategy (Step 3) can definitely possibly address the problems and shortcomings experienced in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The next chapter restates the research problem and methodology as well as how the objectives were achieved additionally, it concludes the research.

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a strategy formulation model to address the problem at hand, namely, the lack of a clear strategy for the use of ICT in the context of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This chapter offers a summative conclusion of this research. The research defined the problem to be addressed as the lack of any apparent strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the main research objective was to devise a sustainable strategy for ICT integration in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This strategy aims to promote the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

With the above mentioned in mind, this chapter is structured as follows, Section 8.1 presents a brief introduction. Section 8.2 restates the research sub-objectives, and how they were achieved while Section 8.3 provides a summary of the research methodology used in conducting this research. This is followed with Section 8.4, which briefly evaluates the research. The significance and contributions of this research are discussed in Section 8.5 under three headings: methodological contribution, practical contribution and theoretical contribution. Thereafter, suggestion for future research follows in section 8.5 and finally a summary of the research is presented in Section 8.7.

8.2 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective was to develop an ICT strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

The following sub-objectives were addressed to achieve the main research objective:

- To examine the current usage of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, as well as user experiences and perceptions thereof.
- To explore the factors that determine the effective utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe in order to establish the key components of the ICT strategy.
- To draw lessons from countries which have been successful in utilising ICT in the tourism sector.
- To suggest ways in which ICT can be effectively utilised and integrated to further enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

This subsection discusses each of above sub-objectives, and how they were achieved, in more detail below.

8.2.1 Sub-objective 1

> To examine the current usage of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe as well as user experiences and perceptions thereof.

This sub-objective was achieved through an extensive, comprehensive case study carried out in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe involving the use of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and netnography as reported in Chapter 5. The case study involved the most relevant role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and was undertaken over a period of four months. It was intended to explore the experiences of international tourists on how they were using ICT and the challenges they were facing. The case study included the government ministries, the regulator and tourism service providers, as well as the external stakeholders were the international tourists to Zimbabwe. The aim of carrying out the case study was to get first-hand information to fully understand the current position and utilisation of ICT in Zimbabwe.

The case study was conducted in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Matopos, Hwange and Victoria Falls. A Zimbabwe annual premier tourism expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair, was also attended to understand and interact with various role-players and to conduct both formal and informal interviews.

The questionnaires, which were completed by tourists, were administered in Harare, Hwange, Victoria Falls, Matopos, Beitbridge and Kazungula Border Post. An online version of the questionnaire was also administered. The questionnaire link was e-mailed to tourists, as some of the tourists did not have sufficient time to complete the questionnaires during their stay in Zimbabwe and agreed to do so via email.

8.2.2 Sub-objective 2

> To identify the factors that determine the effective utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe in order to establish the key components of the ICT strategy.

This sub-objective was achieved by synthesising and interpreting the findings of the case study that was presented in Chapter 5. The factors identified in Chapter 5 were synthesised and categorised into three categories; i) country-specific factors, ii) sector-specific factors and iii) organisational-specific factors in each role-player category namely: tourists, government officials, governmental organisations and private organisations. The next stage was to identify distinct themes using multiple iterations to ensure that the identified themes were accurate and complete. The kernel of a strategy, as proposed by Rumelt (2011), was used to diagnose the actual problems in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Diagnosis was the core component of the strategy that was used to define the nature of the challenge, identifying the critical aspects of the situation directly from the environmental assessment, and obstacles that have to be overcome. In the diagnosis, an attempt was made to identify the fundamental problem and put it into context by thoroughly comprehending the situation. At the very least, such diagnosis classifies the situation, linking facts to patterns, and suggesting issues that need to be addressed. The diagnosis helped to simplify an overwhelmingly, complex and ambiguous situation so as to make sense of the situation.

8.2.3 Sub-objective 3

> To draw lessons from countries which have been successful in utilising ICT in the tourism sector.

Two countries that are doing well in ICT were studied, namely, Rwanda and India. The purpose of including these studies was to ascertain whether Zimbabwe, or any other third-world country for that matter, could learn any lessons from the Rwandan and Indian experience.

8.2.4 Sub-objective 4

> To suggest how ICT can be effectively utilised and integrated to further enhance tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

This sub-objective was achieved by identifying appropriate guiding policies, as per Rumelt (2011), for each of the challenges diagnosed earlier. A guiding policy specified the overall approach to dealing with the obstacles identified during the diagnosis. Hence, for each guiding policy there was a need to identify a set of coherent actions to address the associated

guiding policy. The set of coherent actions was defined in the form of steps, policies, resource commitments and actions designed to activate the guiding policy. The next stage was to establish the order in which the coherent set of actions was to be implemented, resulting in the eventual strategy which thus formed as the main research contribution.

These sub-objectives helped to address the purpose of this research.

8.3 METHODOLOGY

The overarching methodology for this research was a case study approach. The case study methodology, as expounded by Yin (2014), was used to build a single extensive embedded case study, which consisted of designing the case, conducting the case and analysing the case evidence.

This research adopted a single embedded dimension as the units of analysis. A single embedded case study was selected because this method enables an in-depth study to be carried out. In this case, the real-life phenomenon to be studied was the way in which ICT was being used in the tourism sector for survival and growth.

The interpretivist paradigm was applied to the research mainly because it allowed for the exploration and in-depth understanding of the context and the environment in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe where the action took place. A mixed methods approach was be used for this research in order to gather a rounded and reliable data. A mixed methods approach was highly appropriate for this research because tourism is a complex industry and therefore no single method would have adequately addressed the complexities of the sector.

8.4 RESEARCH EVALUATION

In order to substantiate that the research has been done appropriately and suitably according to qualitative research there is need for an evaluation (Meadows & Vollman, 2016). This is in agreement with Bryman (2015) who states that qualitative research must be evaluated to guarantee rigour, credibility and integrity. Therefore, research evaluation is an important part of qualitative research. Oates (2006) and Tappen (2015) provide criteria for evaluating interpretivist research. The evaluation criteria include trustworthiness, dependability,

credibility, conformability and transferability. The following subsection discusses these evaluation criteria under the above headings.

8.4.1 Trustworthiness

In this research two theoretical frameworks were identified in order to achieve external trustworthiness. During data collection, triangulation of data sources and viewpoints from various role-players in the tourism sector was undertaken with the aim to increase trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was also achieved through using adequate and sound methodology explained in Chapter 4. Holloway and Galvin (2016) argue that adequate and sound methodology is any essential component to achieve trustworthiness in qualitative research.

8.4.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the ability to replicate or obtain similar results in subsequent researches or to mirror current results of a research in future results. Dependability of research can be enhanced through the use of multiple sources and triangulation of data from multiple sources. The study is guided by the following theories which include the factor category of e-commerce adoption decision and the key areas of bench-making ICT theory. Dependability was also achieved through the use of renowned authors, such as Robert Yin. The data collection followed in this research was propounded by Yin (2014). Yin suggests six linear but iterative steps for conducting a case study. These six steps include; plan, design, prepare, collect, analyse and share.

Furthermore, to ensure dependability in research, a case protocol can be used which details all the steps taken in a research. This protocol allows other researchers to come up with almost similar results. In addition, all the participants were made aware of the purpose of the research and were given the opportunity to ask questions before the commencement of the interviews or the completion of the questionnaires. This ensured that the respondents answered the questions with full knowledge of purpose of the research and without any reservations. The respondents were assured that their responses were confidential and hence they could answer questions as honestly as possible. All audio recordings were made after receiving consent from the respondents. Finally, the data was compiled and analysed using the research methods outlined in chapter 4 to ensure accuracy and dependability.

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8.4.3 Credibility

Credibility refers to confidence that the findings reflect the true picture of phenomenon being investigated or studied. Credibility is only confirmed by the respondents. Therefore, the researcher should ensure that the findings are a true reflection of the perceptions of the respondents (Holloway & Galvin, 2015). In the study, credibility was achieved through referencing all sources used during literature review. In addition all respondents were labelled numerically with the prefix 'T' for tourists, 'R' for regulators, 'P' for service providers and the prefix G for government. All quotes quoted verbatim were attributed to the respondent to ensure the fulfilment of credibility.

8.4.4 Conformability

Conformability describes the extent to which research findings can be judged as accurate based on the collected data not simply by research interpretations. It entails that adequate information about the research presented so that judgement can be made on whether findings are supported by data. Hence, adequate details of the research, its background and researcher feelings must be made for scrutiny (Holloway & Galvin, 2015).

In this research, this was achieved through triangulation of multiple data collection techniques and following a clearly illustrated research process, data collection and data analysis methods. Some data from interviews and questionnaires in Chapter 5 were reported verbatim. This minimises the probability of misrepresenting the respondents' views. Chapter 6 illustrates how the data was analysed and Chapter 7 shows how the strategy was formulated.

8.4.5 Transferability

Transferability is equivalent to external validity or generalisability in positivist research. It refers to the applicability of the findings to other situations beyond the context of the research (Tarpen, 2011). However, the same author further argues that qualitative researches are not meant for making generalisation because of sampling procedures employed in such researches. Silverman (2013) postulate that interpretivist qualitative researches are meant to describe phenomena within a certain context. However, Freeman (2000) argues that qualitative researches may make connections between their findings and those from other researches and making careful comparisons. Transferability is enhanced where the context of the research has been adequately defined. This research was conducted in the Zimbabwean

tourism sector and the literature review included the Indian and Rwandan case studies which described other contexts as part of data analysis. The Zimbabwean context was described in detail in Chapter 3 so that judgement can be made if the research is applicable to a different context. This research was conducted in a developing country that is recovering from over a decade long of economic recession; hence, the results may be limited owing to contextual and technological variations. However, the results may be transferable to developing countries, which generally experience the same contextual and technological situation as Zimbabwe.

8.5 CONTRIBUTION

This research contributed knowledge at the methodical, practical and theoretical levels. The research contributed to an increased understanding of the application of ICT in the tourism sector of a developing country that is recovering from more than a decade-long economic recession. The research also contributed to the body of knowledge on the use of ICT in the tourism sector in a developing country. The tourism sector has unique characteristics, which may be enhanced by the use of ICT. The major contribution of this research was the ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and the implementation plan, which is illustrated in Figure 7.14. This research contributed to this understanding and broadens knowledge on the need for the adoption and utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector. There is currently a dearth of explicitly delineated ICT strategies in the tourism sector for Zimbabwe and other developing countries.

8.5.1 Methodological contribution

This research was trans-disciplinary, bringing together the disciplines of tourism and ICT for development. Hence, the research involved the inference of aspects from a variety of fields, including strategic management, information systems and public administration. Therefore, the research took a qualitative approach; the rationale the process that was been employed was motivated extensively in Chapter 4. Various approaches were analysed and the approach that best satisfied the objective of the research was chosen. The sophistication of this research lies in the fact that it deployed a multi-cross-sectional case study approach, combining government, the regulator, service providers and international tourists. Such an approach undoubtedly provides pertinent insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

Additionally, comments from tourists on their experiences in Zimbabwe were triangulated with data from questionnaires. Hence, this method is not commonly used in ICT researches. This research may help other researchers in future to explore this method. Previous researches has marginalised the voices of the international tourists in Zimbabwe, regardless of the fact that they are key stakeholders who can either constrain or enhance the prospects of the tourism sector in any country. Therefore, the strength of this research lies in the fact that it positions tourists to Zimbabwe at the centre of the investigation.

**8.5.2 Practical contribution**

This research has contributed to the existing literature as there is currently a dearth of academic research on utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The major contribution was the diagnosis of the problems that are hampering the utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The diagnostics are: (i) lack of infrastructure and enabling services; (ii) e-customer relationship management; (iii) lack of collaboration and poor system integration, (iv) policy and regulation; (v) lack of financial resources; (vi) poor ICT governance and (vii) poor human resource development. In addition, the research contributed the guiding policies required for each of diagnostic. The guiding policies that resulted are: (1) access; (2) ubuntu; (3) devolution of power to lower levels of the organisation; (4) strategic resource allocation; (5) investment; (6) stakeholder involvement; (7) ICT governance and (8) skills development. Subsequently, the research contributed a coherent set of actions for each of the guiding policies.

The key challenges and appropriate interventions required from each role-player were identified. The research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is the first, which extensively studied the use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

Therefore, this research has provided the foundation for appropriate interventions from government and other role-players in the tourism sector. Furthermore, another practical contribution for this research was to foster and encourage the use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Policymakers in Zimbabwe and other similar countries could use this research to develop more focused policies in this important sector. However, the major contribution of this research is a sustainable ICT strategy in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

8.5.3 Theoretical

The research developed a strategy formulation process model, as shown in Figure 8.1. This model was utilised to develop the eventual strategy as the research output of this research and is a contribution to the body of knowledge, especially in the study of developing countries. The model can be used by other researchers who may be interested in conducting research in the fields of ICT and tourism as well as other related studies.
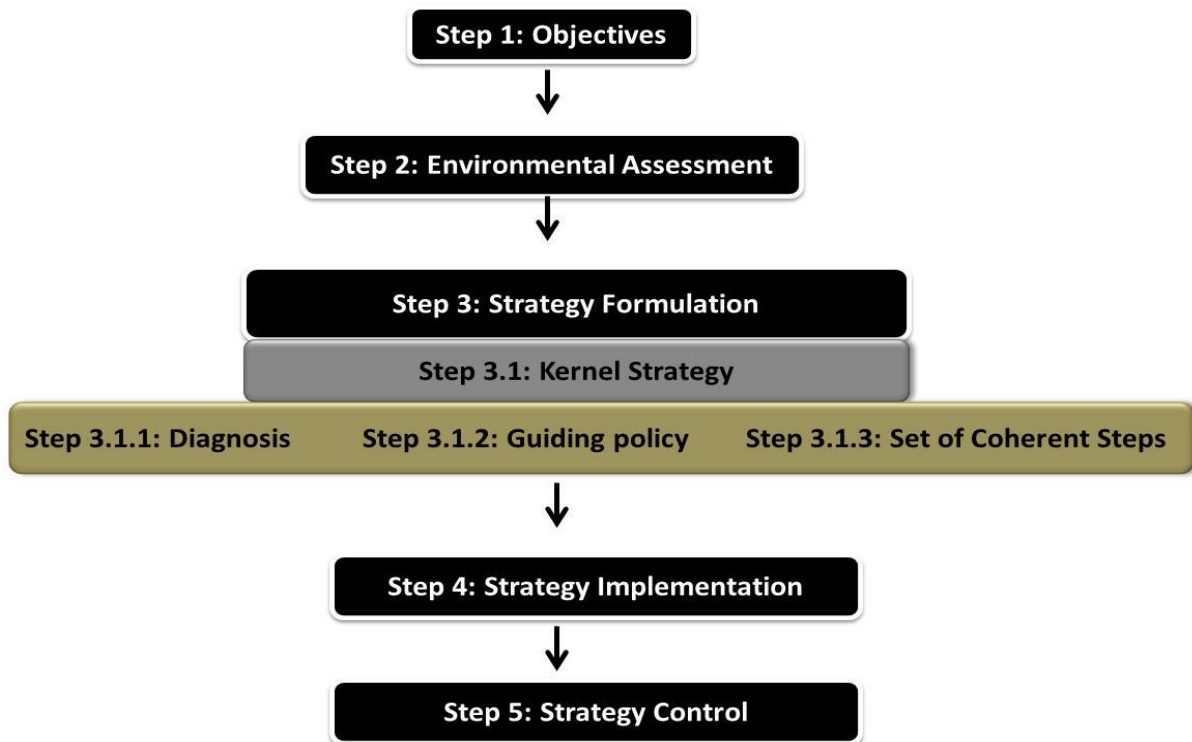
Figure 8.1 Strategic formulation processes model

Thus, the research has also succeeded in providing a theoretical model for strategy formulation. In addition to the model the research offered a deep understanding of the factors hampering the use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and set out coherent actions that need to be taken in Zimbabwe.

8.6 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the research include the constraints that were encountered in the course of the research project. The targeted population for this research was hard to find and this could have had an impact on the total number of respondents. In addition, some of the international tourists, service providers and government officials were reluctant to participate in the research as respondents. In Zimbabwe there is generally a mistrust of strangers and

researchers due to the political situation. Researchers can be mistaken for undercover journalist, spies or opposition activists. This may also have affected the research. It was also established that tourists are advised not to entertain strangers and touts who may want to get close to them. This resulted in the number of respondents being limited to 60 on the questionnaires and two officials from the government. Efforts were made by the researcher to explain to potential respondents the benefits the research could have for both the country and the researcher. In addition, it was not easy to meet senior government officials in Zimbabwe. Consequently, triangulation of various sources had to be used in addition to secondary sources, like the videos from the internet, tourists' comments on www.tripadvisor.com and various policy documents issued by the government. Lastly, the strategy has not been tested or verified in a working environment, so its limitations may not be known at this stage.

8.7 SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It might be interesting to investigate the possibility of extending the strategy formulation process model to other sectors, as well as other developing and emerging countries. Further research could be done to test the strategy in a real-life environment. This is important for establishing the applicability of the results to other countries in the same context and technological situation as Zimbabwe.

It might also be interesting to extend the research to address the effect of politics on tourism and ICT adoption and utilisation in developing countries. It is also necessary to find out if indeed ICT contributes to performance and competitive advantage in the tourism sector of developing countries like Zimbabwe. In addition, it is necessary to investigate whether the causes of inadequate information sharing and fragmentation are only relevant to tourism or whether they are prevalent in the whole economy, as this research examined the tourism sector only.

8.8 SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to develop a sustainable ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The research was motivated by the apparent lack of ICT utilisation in the tourism sector and the services that continue to be offered in a traditional and fragmented way. This strategy was therefore developed as a solution to this identified gap. An inquiry

into the existence of the problem, formulating the research objectives was carried out in Chapter 1

.

The research followed a case study approach whilst using an interpretivist philosophical stance. The research methodology and design section of the study was presented in Chapter 4. Chapters 2 and 3 were chapters in which the literature was reviewed in order to understand the nexus of ICT and tourism. Chapter 3 gave an outline of the history and structure of the tourism sector and ICT sector in Zimbabwe. Chapter 5 presented the results of the case studies and triangulated the results with those from the netnography and the document analysis. The data analysis was done in Chapter 6. The problems hampering the tourism sector were diagnosed in Chapter 7, which also proposed the guiding policies. Eventually the strategy was developed.

It can be concluded that the purpose of the research was satisfied through the development of the ICT strategy and its implementation plan as well as it evaluation plan.

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INDEX OF APPENDICES

CASE PROTOCOL

An ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe

1. Background

The rapid advances in ICTs and globalisation has resulted in the gradual integration of national economies into the global market. The result is a closer integration of countries and the people of the world which has resulted in tourism emerging as a lucrative and one of the most rapidly-growing worldwide industries (Seng, 2012). The number of tourists travelling outside their countries grew by 4% in 2012 to reach 1.035 billion and in the process generating USD$1.2 trillion dollars in export earnings. It is projected that the industry will grow by a further 3-4% in 2013 (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2013). On the other hand 39% of the world population culminating to about 2.7 billion people is using the internet and the number continues to grow (ITU, 2013). The tourism sector has been heavily affected by ICTs to the extent that they have been embedded into the business thereby contributing to the massive growth of the sector. The tourism sector has virtually become an information industry as tourists decisions are now based on the information available to the tourists before experiencing the product. No sector has been more affected by the "technology revolution" than tourism (Staab and Werthner 2002).

ICT usage has become indispensable in developing, reaching, managing as well as distributing tourism products worldwide. It exists as a source of information and confidence booster since the ultimate choice of preferred tourist destination depends on the available information and not the actual destination itself (Staab & Werthner, 2002). The rapid developments in ICT have revolutionised the operations and the way companies and countries lure tourists thereby resulting in stiff competition in the global tourism businesses. Prospective tourists now have more information and variety of options. Since the tourism sector has become important in driving economies of many countries, it is therefore imperative to examine how ICTs resources are being leveraged in contributing and driving the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

2. The Problem Statement

Therefore, the problem for this study could be stated as:

There is lack of any apparent and clear strategy for the effective usage and integration of ICT to enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe after its initial adoption.

3. Research Objectives

The main research objective may be stated as follows:

To devise a strategy for ICT integration and utilisation in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

The following **sub-objectives** will be addressed to achieve the main research objective:

- To find out the current ICTs being utilised in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe?

- To examine the

- inhibitors and motivators for the effective utilisation of ICT in tourism sector in Zimbabwe

- To determine and analyse the impact of ICTs on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe?

- To suggest how ICT can be effectively utilised and integrated to further positively develop the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

- To find out how organisations in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe compute and co-operate.

- To find out how the organisations use ICT to facilitate relations with Customers

- To find out how the organisations use ICT to facilitate relations with Suppliers

- To find out how the organisations use ICT to improve internal processes

- What ICT infrastructure and resources being utilised in tourism sector in Zimbabwe?

- What ICT enabled services are being offered and supported in the tourism sector in

- Zimbabwe?

- To determine if there are any barriers to ICT/business alignment in the tourism sector

- To determine at which management level ICT is being implemented within the tourism sector

Research Phases

The research activities will be broken down into seven phases representing different activities to be performed to complete the study. The phases a listed below;

Phase 1: Literature Review and Development of Objectives

Phase 2: Pilot Studies

Phase 3: Data Collection

Phase 1: Literature Review and Development of Objectives

-Do extensive literature review on use of ICT and the tourism sector in general. Look also at the link and use of ICT in the tourism sector. Do an overview of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

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-Identify the problem
- Develop research objectives
- Identify a theoretical framework from a number of possible theoretical frameworks that shows the impact of ICT on the economy

Theoretical Framework

The key areas of benchmarking ICT theory adapted from Cragg (2002) by Wainwright, Green, Mitchell & Yarrow (2005) will be used in this study to ensure a solid theoretical base. The key areas of benchmarking ICT theory point out two valuable factors for adoption and utilisation of ICT which are functional sophistication and managerial sophistication. The functional sophistication emphasise on technical skills, knowledge and complexity of the ICT function which determine the organisation's capacity to adopt and deploy ICT efficiently and effectively. The effective and efficient adoption and deployment lead to greater innovation and firm performance (Korac-Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2001). Managerial sophistication looks at the involvement of top management, strategic alignment and the governance of the ICT function. Thus, the real-world problem from the environment and the use of the existing knowledge base would ensure the aspects of relevance and rigour as illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: The key areas of benchmarking ICT theory

Functional Sophistication

IT Personnel
Role of the IT Function
Decision Level
Type of IT Development
Position of the IT Function
User Participation
Internal Personnel and IT Skills
Computer Use
IT Plans
IT Projects

IT Practices

IT Impact on Business Performance

Firm Performance
IT Use
IT Satisfaction
IT Management

Managerial Sophistication

Top Management Involvement
IT Investment
IT Adoption Process
Presence of Consultants
IT Planning Process
Control and Evaluation of IT
Internal Communication
Firm Strategy and Strengths
Firm Structure

IT Practices

Source: Adapted from Cragg (2002)

The area of study

The continuous circle, in Figure 2, shows the Tourism sector which represents the area of study in this research.

Figure 2: The Tourism sector

Figure 2: The relationship between the tourism, hospitality and travel industries.
Source: Adapted from Pizam (2009).
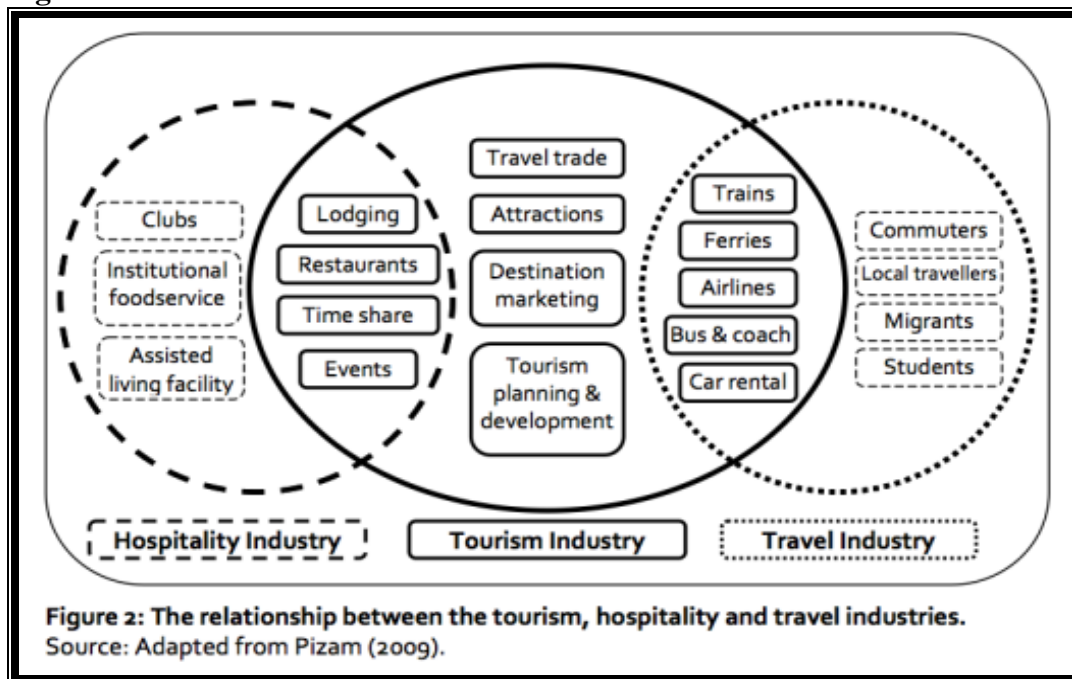
Selected organisations and their activities

Organisation	Services	Contact Person
RockShade Car Rentals and Tours (Pvt) Ltd	Car Rental Services, Airport Transfers, Guided Tours, Luxury Coach Hire, Educational Tours	Milton Mukwiti Marketing Manager Milton@rockshade.co.zw 00263772 606 163
Rothes Travel and Tours	Cruises, Holiday Apartments, Hotel Accommodation, Care Hire, Tours and Excursions, Safaris, Air Ticketing	Lilian Samakande Operations Manager 00263 736 485 113 main@rothestravelandtours.co.zw Skype: Rothestravelandtours
Zimbabwe Council of Tourism	It is private sector arm of tourism in Zimbabwe. It represents the tourism sector at all levels of society. It influences opinions, policies and planning and working for the creation of a favourable legislative,	June Muchemeyi-Nazare Director 00263772 289 503 ceozct@gmail.com

	fiscal and physical environment for tourism operators	
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority's' mandate to lure tourists to Zimbabwe using this communication and distribution Channel It is also the regulator of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe	Reason Machigere Head Planning and Investment Promotion 00263712321893 reason@ztazim.co.zw
Zimbabwe Parks Authority	The Authority has a mandate to manage the entire wildlife population of Zimbabwe, whether on private or communal lands. The Authority and provide visitors with leisure and accommodation facilities such as lodges, chalets, cottages, caravan sites, camping sites and picnic areas. Zimbabwe has eleven National Parks, each of which offers vastly contrasting and fulfilling wilderness experiences	Mr. Magaya IT Manager 00263772436659 hmagaya@zimparks.co.zw
Cresta Hospitality	Cresta hospitality group is one of Southern Africa's leading hotel management groups operating business and resort hotels in Zimbabwe	Ms Mukombo The Human Resources Manager Cresta Hospitality And James Nanchito Group IT Manager 00263773174970
Museum and National Monuments	to provide for the preservation of ancient, historical and natural monuments, relics and other objects of historical or scientific value or interest	Eilaine Mhereyenyoka PA- Executive Director 04710044
Ministry of Tourism	Policy Makers in Zimbabwe	

4. Aim of the Field Visit	
-Aim is to get first-hand information and observe what is transpiring in the tourism sector and see for myself how ICT is being used and see where ICTs can be further utilised.	
-To visit the tourist destinations and service providers an	
-Talk to ICT personnel and tourism players to solicit their views and input and understand their situation	
-Talk to tourism management /tourists to solicit their views and input	
-Get necessary documents relevant to the study	

5. Preparation for a Field Investigation	
-Attended Research Methodology Class	
-Identify organisations in each of the segments of the tourism sector shown in Figure 2.	
-Send out letters and e-mails requesting to carry out research to organisations that would give most relevant, pertinent, and significant information.	
-Make physical follow-ups for the letters and e-mails.	
- Prepared a budget which shown on page	
- Prepare interview schedules and the tourist questionnaire	
--Buy an audio recorder	
- The researcher already has digital camera and video recorder	
- Develop a Journal - The purpose of the Journal is to;	
Record observations and impressions during visits to the tourists impressions	
the journal will be daily updated	
-Make 150 business cards for those who may have questions and who may want to make a follow up	
-Contact participants by e-mail and those who do not respond make a follow up by telephone	

Date of Visit	Organisation	Interview Schedules	Documents to be Requested	What to observe	Comments

Phase 2: Do Pilot Studies
A pilot study to will be done to check on the equipment, refine interview questions and what is to be observed during data collection, and refine the questions were there is need.
- The interviews will be pretested on 3 lectures in the department of Tourism and Hospitality at the Midlands State University.
- Online questionnaire will also be tested to selected 20 from diverse backgrounds. The selected people must include among other people those who have visited Zimbabwe before, and academics.
- The respondents will be asked to comment on the question format, wording and order. This also applies to hard copies.
- The pre-test interviews will be done at Village Lodge in Gweru.

Phase 3: Data Collection

Case studies will be purposefully chosen to ensure cover all the major tourists destinations

Harare, Victoria Falls, Hwange, Masvingo and Nyanga (Eastern Highlands)

Figure 3: The Map of Zimbabwe
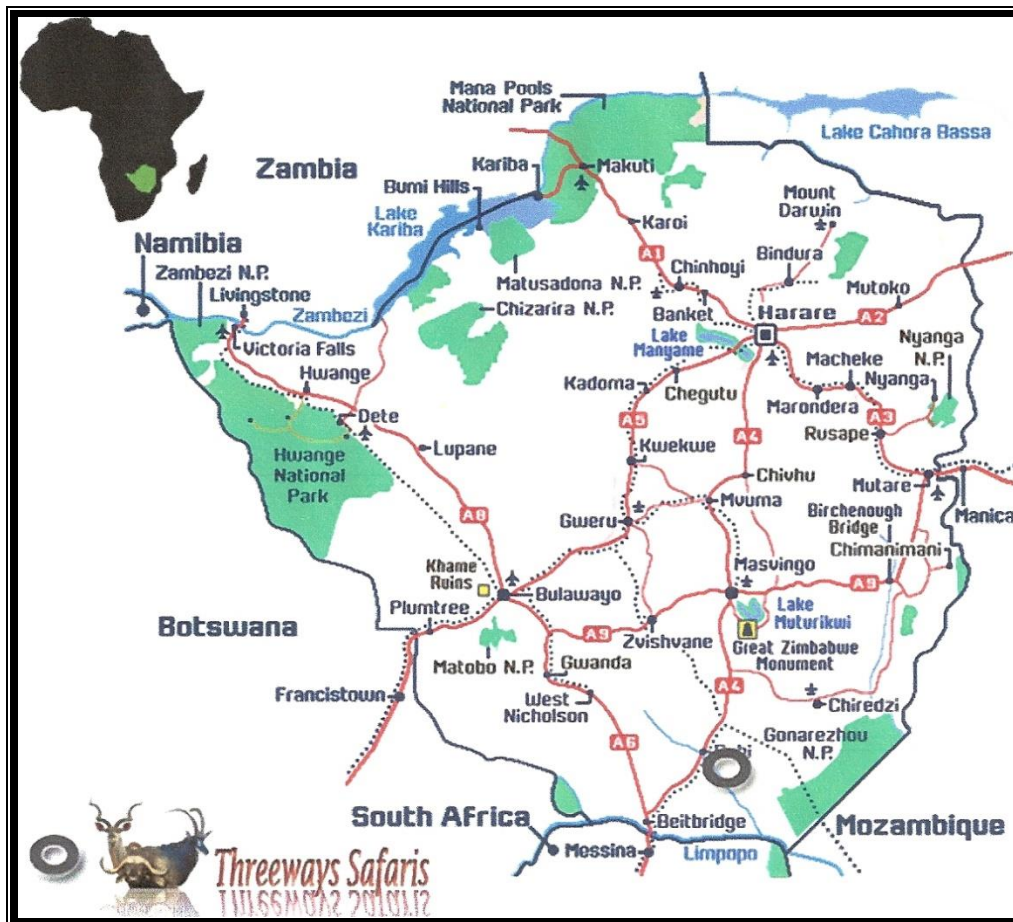
Data Collection Procedures

-Case protocol will be communicated to the organisation that will be used in the case study but not interview questions.

-The researcher will look at the website and social media pages of the organisation were data will be collected.

-Observe how ICT is being used in the interaction with customers

-Request for annual reports, Policy documents, Mission Statement

-Select the participants for the study

Interview the Senior Most ICT person (Ask questions on the ICT interview Guide)

The Second group will be Managers and Marketing/Operations workers from marketing and operations (Those who interface with the customers)

Data Collection Plan

	Place to be visited	Planned Start	Number of Days	Planned Completed
1	Harare		15	
2	Nyanga		3	
3	Masvingo		2	
4	Nalatale Ruins		1	
5	Bulawayo		1	
6	Matopos National Park		1	
7	Hwange National Park		2	
8	Victoria Falls		3	

Expected Route
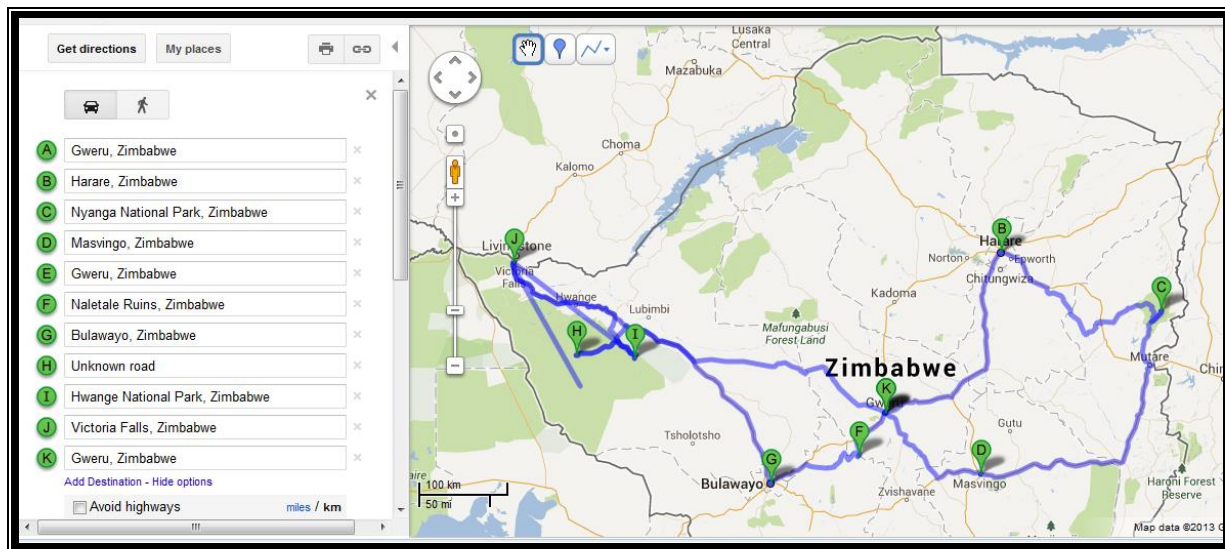
Total Kilometres 2 512 km,

The researcher will start on First Stage of data collection by visiting Harare, the Capital City of Zimbabwe, to gather information from the Head Offices of the case organisations. The case organisations are:

- Ministry of Tourism
- Zimbabwe Tourism Authority,
- Zimbabwe Council of Tourism,
- Cresta Hospitality
- National Meseums and National Monuments of Zimbabwe
- Zimbabwe Parks Authority
- RockShade Car Rentals and Tours (Pvt) Ltd
- Rothes Travel and Tours

The case study respondents will be grouped into three categories; Executive Management, ICT personnel as well as operations and marketing. The operations and marketing will include personnel that directly interface with the customers. Data will be gathered using semi-structured interviews as well as from relevant documents obtained from interviewees and the websites of the case organisations. Those selected will be identified from the organisational charts and interviewed .The interviews will be recorded and later transcribed and analysed

After completing this first phase the second phase of data collection will follow. The second phase of data collection will start with a trip to Nyanga in the Eastern Highlands because of its proximity to Harare. Data will be collected at Nyanga National Park. The researcher will use observations to collect to get first-hand information on how the park is using ICT not what

management and ICT personnel say it is happening. The researcher will also have a chance to get first-hand information on how the national parks interact with tourists. The researchers will book services and accommodation to see how they interact with the tourists by going through the whole cycle in which customers pass through when getting their services.

The researcher will also observe and take note of ICT infrastructure and resources being utilised in tourism sector in Zimbabwe and ICT enabled services are being offered and supported in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe?

The data will also be collected from the tourist through giving them printed questionnaires or a brochure which describes the research at the end requests the tourist to indicate if they want to participate in the study by writing their names and e-mail addresses so that the questionnaire link can be send to their e-mail address so that they complete the survey in the comfort of their homes eventually when they return to their homes.

The researcher will also visit Mbizi Game Park which about 10 kilometres from Harare International Airport. This is a privately owned game park.

From Nyanga , the researcher will proceed to Great Zimbabwe Ruins, in Masvingo Province. The researcher will interview Regional Manager from the Museum and National Monuments, Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site on how they are using ICT to market and provide services to tourists. The data will also be collected from the tourist through giving them printed questionnaires or a brochure which describes the research at the end requests the tourist to indicate if they want to participate in the study by writing their names and e-mail addresses so that the questionnaire link can be send to their e-mail address so that they complete the survey in the comfort of their homes eventually when they return to their homes. The researcher will also visit the largest inland lake in Zimbabwe lake Mutirikwi. The visit to Masvingo will take two days.

From Masvingo the Researcher will proceed to Gweru, Midlands province home to take a rest and reflect and the progress so far and how challenges encountered may be overcome and assess if there things which should be done differently. The small break will also be used to prepare for next trip.

From Gweru the researcher will proceed to Victoria Falls via Nalatalie Ruins, Bulawayo, Matobo National Park and Hwange. At Nalatalie the researcher will interview the Regional Manager

responsible for the site and the site and we will leave questionnaires and collect them on our way back from Victoria Falls.

In Bulawayo, is the second largest city of Zimbabwe. The researcher will visit Cresta Bulawayo Hotel and book an overnight in Hotel so as to experience the ICT services by hotel and see how ICT is used.

From Bulawayo the researcher will proceed to Matobo National Park and do the same procedures as the ones outlined for Nyanga. The same procedures will also be used for Hwange National Park.

The final destination will be Victoria Falls, which is the prime destination for Zimbabwe. The researcher will visit number of services providers and see how ICT is being used in the industry.

Interview Guides
Interview data collection procedures Interviews should be flexible to take into consideration issues the respondents can bring up (The interview will start with background work activities and delve into ICT issues based on earlier remarks)
-Follow up areas of interest that may crop up
-After interview transcribe the conversation after transcribing listen to the interview again whilst listening at the notes.

Interview Guide for ICT Personnel My name is Theo Tsokota; I am currently working on PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University degree. I would highly appreciate to have about 30-45 minutes of your time to discuss with your the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilized to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD-degree. The objective of the interview is to discuss how your organisation is tapping ICT in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism sector. To achieve this objective the interview guide is divided into three sections:
1) Functional Sophistication
2) Managerial Sophistication
3) Areas in which IT has impacted on Business Performance
Your responses will be treated with confidence and at all times data will be presented in such a

way that your identity cannot be connected with specific published data. Do you have any questions or an issues that you feel may need to be clarified before we start the interview?

Questions
Demographic information
What are your duties in the organisation?
What Managerial level do you occupy?
Who do you report to?
Functional Sophistication
-How is the IT department constituted and what are the specific tasks of the individuals?
-Which IT- enabled services are you utilising in your organisation? Which one is frequently used and why?
-What IT software applications are you currently using?
-How do you acquire ICT facilities in your organisation?
-How does your organisation determine the budget for the ICT department?
-Since IT is dynamic and ever changing, do you go for refresher course? If yes, name the IT course(s)?
If No, does it mean that the IT department is abreast with trends in IT?
-What information do you put on your website?
-What services do provide on the website?
-Who is responsible for running the website?
-What processes and procedures do you follow when updating and uploading information on the website?
-How do you evaluate the website?
-What is general volume of traffic on your website?
-How are you connected to the outside world, customers, suppliers? (Are you on twitter, face book etc.).
-How are you using ICT to improve internal processes?
-Which problems/challenges are being solved by IT in your organisation?
-How are you using ICT to facilitate relations with Customers?
-How are you using ICT to facilitate relations with suppliers?
-Which areas do you think you need to utilise IT better?

-How did the use of IT change the landscape in your industry?
Managerial Sophistication
-How is the top management involved in IT issues?
-How has IT affected your organisational structure?
-How is IT aligned to the broad organisational strategy?
-How do you interact with the Board?
Impact on Business Performance
-Is IT issues discussed in meetings?
-What information do you put on your website?
-Which problems/challenges are being solved by IT in your organisation?
-To what extent is IT effective in solving the challenges?
-How do you compare your IT with other organisation in the tourism sector?
-What are your strengths?
-Which areas you can do better and what need to be done?
-What are the factors affecting the effective utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
-What are using ICT for besides the administrative functions?
-Can you please comment on the overall organisation strategy?
-Can you please comment on the overall ICT strategy of your organisation?
-How is the ICT strategy aligned to overall organisational strategy?
-Are you considering adopting more advanced ICTs applications in the future?
-What are the motivators for the effective utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
- What are the inhibitors for the effective utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
-What are the drawbacks associated with the use of ICT in your organisation?
-From your point of view, what factors contribute to the success of adopting ICT in the tourism sector?

Interview Guide For non -ICT Personnel
My name is Theo Tsokota; I am currently working on PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University degree. I would highly appreciate to have about 30-45 minutes of your time to discuss with your the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilized to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD-degree. The objective of the interview is to discuss how your organisation is tapping ICT in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism sector.
To achieve this objective the interview guide is divided into three sections:
1) Functional Sophistication
2) Managerial Sophistication
3) Areas in which IT has impacted on Business Performance
Do you have any questions or any issues that you feel may need to be clarified before we start the interview?

Questions
Demographic information
-Introduction and ask for background
-What are your duties in the organisation?
-What Managerial level do you occupy?
-Who do you report to?
Functional Sophistication
What ICT applications are you using now?
What are other opportunities for the continued use of ICT
What are the hinderances to the use of ICT?
How is your organisational IT strategies aligned to your overall organisational objectives?
What is the total fraction of the organisational budget allocated to ICT?
Do you have a member IT background within the board?
-Which IT- enabled services are you utilising in your department? Which one is frequently used and why?
-What IT software applications are you currently using?

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-What information do you put on your website?
-What services do provide on the website
-Who is responsible for running the website?
-What processes and procedures do you follow when updating and uploading information on the website?
-How do you evaluate the website?
-What is general volume of traffic on your website?
-How are you connected to the outside world, customers, suppliers? (Are you on twitter, face book etc.).
-How are you using ICT to improve internal processes?
-What are the key challenges being faced by your organisation in using ICT?
-What problem solving strategies are being used to solve the problems currently being faced by your organisation?
-Which problems/challenges are being solved by IT in your organisation?
-How are you using ICT to facilitate relations with Customers?
-How are you using ICT to facilitate relations with suppliers?
-Which areas do you think you need to utilise IT better?
Managerial Sophistication
-Who manages the IT projects in your organisation?
-How do you set up an ICT budget?
-Does your institution have an IT strategic plan?
-Who in your organisation typically make final decisions, individually or as part of a group, about IT infrastructure strategies?
-Who in your organisation typically make final decisions, individually or as part of a group, about computer application needs?
-How is the top management involved in IT issues?
-How has IT affected your organisational structure?
-How is IT aligned to the broad organisational strategy?
-How do you interact with the Board?
Impact on Business Performance
-Which problems/challenges are being solved by IT in your organisation?
-To what extent is IT effective in solving the challenges?

-How do you compare your IT with other organisation in the tourism sector?
-What are you strengths?
-Which areas you can do better and what need to be done?
-What are the factors affecting the effective utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
-What are using ICT for besides the administrative functions?
-Can you please comment on the overall organisation strategy?
-Can you please comment on the overall ICT strategy of your organisation?
-How is the ICT strategy aligned to overall organisational strategy?
-Are you considering adopting more advanced ICTs applications in the future?
-What are the motivators for the effective utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
-What are the inhibitors for the effective utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
-What are the drawbacks associated with the use of ICT in your organisation?
From your point of view, what factors contribute to the success of adopting ICT in the tourism sector?

Observations Guide
-Visit tourism institutions/resorts to get an impression and write in the Journal
-Daily update the Journal and transcribe
-Book hotels/other services to gain a general picture
-Visit each site for at least 2 working days
-See actual ICT equipment being used
-To gain access to the organisations to familiarise with their world.
-See the interactions

Policy Makers- Ministry
The government of Zimbabwe identified ICT and Tourism as some of the pillars of economic revival in 2009. What policies measures have been put in place to achieve that goal? What is ICT strategy for the Ministry?
-What have been your major achievements?
-How have you ensured that policies are properly implemented?
-What challenges have you faced as a government and in particular as a ministry of Tourism?
-What measures do you feel needs to put in place to overcome those challenges?
-How are you leveraging ICT in your strategy?

-It appears the tourism industry in Zimbabwe has many players from different industries and ministries (Museums- Home Affairs, Parks- Natural Resources, Transport -) what measures are in place to avoid duplication of roles and conflicts.
-How has ICT changed your business process as a Ministry?
-How has ICT changed your strategies?
-How has ICT changed your business culture?
-What challenges will you have to overcome to fully computerise your operations?
-How is the ministry ensuring that ICT policies and initiatives are being implemented?

Questionnaire Design
1. Demographic Information (Including the country and region of the tourist)
2. Motivation for visiting Zimbabwe
3. Information on how the tourist found information about the country and the places to be visited.
4. An assessment of the adequacy of the information sources
5. Recommendations and suggestions

	Proposed Budget	
	A. Travel and Subsistence:	
i	Gweru – Harare 275 km @ 16c/km	US$ 44
	Meal allowances @ US$40 x 15 days	US$ 600
	Harare Local Travel (25km *2*15 days)@16 c/km	US$ 120
ii	Harare - Nyanga- return 282km @16c/km	US$ 45
	Camping allowances 2 Nights@ US $ 70 x 2	US$ 140
iii	Nyanga- Masvingo 405km @ 16c/km	US$ 65
	Camping allowances 2 Nights@ US $ 70 x 2	US$ 140
iv	Masvingo (Great Zimbabwe)- Gweru 190km @ 16c/km	US$30
	Camping allowances 2 Nights@ US $ 70 x 2	US$140
v	Gweru- Nalatalie 70km @16c/km	US$ 11
	Nalatalie Ruins to Bulawayo 133 km @16c/km	US$ 21
	Camping allowances 1Nights@ US $ 70	US$ 70
vi	Bulawayo to Matopos National Park 31@16c/km	US$6
	Matopos National Park to Hwange National Park 357@16c/km	USD$57
	Camping allowances 1Nights@ US $ 70	US$70
	Hwange National Park to Victoria Falls 227 @16c/km	USD$36
	Camping allowances 3 Nights@ US $ 70	US$210
	Victoria Falls to Gweru 517@16c/km	US$83
	Meal allowances @ US$10 1 days	US$10
	Miscellaneous expenses Phone	US$10
	Parking Expense	US$20
	Total Estimated Expenses	**USD 1928**

PERMISSION TO CARRY RESEARCH B

From: Tsokota, Theo (Mr) (s212213342) [mailto:s212213342@live.nmmu.ac.za]
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2013 10:41 PM
To: ceo@ztazim.co.zw
Cc: sugar@ztazim.co.zw; salome@ztazim.co.zw; Von Solms, Rossouw (Prof) (Summerstrand Campus North)
Subject: Request to carry out research on the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

Dear Mr. Kaseke

I am kindly requesting for permission to carry out an investigation to gather information in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, including your organisation. The purpose of the investigation is to determine and analyse the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilised to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD-degree that I am currently pursuing.

I am a Zimbabwean, who is studying towards a PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa and a Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at the Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe. My supervisor is Prof. R. von Solms.

This letter also serves to requests permission to conduct such an investigation exercise and, all the information gathered will be used solely for research purposes and that the anonymity of all is guaranteed.

Attached is a signed copy of this letter and a supporting letter from my Supervisor Prof. R. von Solms

If you have any questions concerning the study, please do not hesitate to contact me through the email address and cell phone number provided below.

I trust that you will kindly consider this request as the outcome of the project can be beneficial to the tourism industry in Zimbabwe as well as assisting me towards obtaining an PhD-degree.

Thanking you.

 Yours faithfully

 Theo Tsokota

E-mail s212213342@live.nmmu.ac.za

 Cell Number: 0027837517249

From: CEO [mailto:ceo@ztazim.co.zw]
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 10:47 AM
To: 'Reason Machigere'
Subject: FW: {Disarmed} Request to carry out research on the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

 Goodmorning

 Please find below email and attachments fya.

 Karikoga Kaseke| Chief Executive

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

55 Samora Machel Avenue, Harare, Zimbabwe

Office: +263 4 758712 | Office: +263 4 758713/4 | ceo@ztazim.co.zw

 Direct Line : +263 4 751784

 Fax: +263 4 758797

 Website: www.zimbabwetourism.net

 Thank you for considering the environmental impact of printing emails.

From: Reason Machigere [reason@ztazim.co.zw]
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2013 5:36 PM
To: Tsokota, Theo (Mr) (s212213342)
Subject: FW: {Disarmed} Request to carry out research on the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

Hie Theo

Thank you for the interest in the research project. We are positive that the research will be of interest to us. Please kindly indicate whether official response on ZTA letterhead would be preferable you.

 For further inquiries you may contact the undersigned on 00263712321893. By the way when are you in Zimbabwe so that we could have face to face engagement.

 Regards

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Reason Machigere

Head Planning and Investment Promotion

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

RE: {Disarmed} Request to carry out research on the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe
Reason Machigere <reason@ztazim.co.zw>
3/22/2013Tsokota, Theo (Mr) (s212213342)

Noted thanx.

From: Tsokota, Theo (Mr) (s212213342) [mailto:s212213342@live.nmmu.ac.za]
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2013 8:53 PM
To: Reason Machigere
Subject: RE: {Disarmed} Request to carry out research on the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

Dear Mr. Machigere
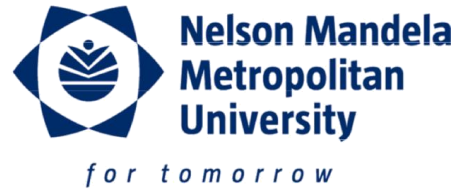Thank you so much for your e-mail and your kind response.

I will be in Zimbabwe within the next two weeks, I will call you when I get to Zimbabwe for further engagement. I will also be happy to get an official response on ZTA letterhead, when I came to Harare.

Once again, thank you so much.

Regards

Theo Tsokota

SUPERVISOR SUPPORT LETTER C

• PO Box 77000 • Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
• Port Elizabeth • 6031 • South Africa • www.nmmu.ac.za

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

for tomorrow

Institute for ICT Advancement
Summerstrand North Campus

Tel: +27 (0)41 504 3604
Fax: +27 (0)41 504 9604
rossouw@nmmu.ac.za

7 March 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Mr Theo Tsokota (212213342) is a PhD student in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

The focus of Mr Tsokota's study is to investigate the impact of ICT on the tourism industry in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilised more effectively in this regard.

To enable him to conduct this study, he needs to gather related information from various sectors of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe. The information gathered will only be used for this study and if publications stemming from this study are published, no specific reference will be made to any particular party involved.

It would be appreciated if you could support Mr Tsokota and provide the necessary opportunities for him to gather relevant information.

Yours Truly,

Rossouw von Solms (Prof)

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BROCHURE

D
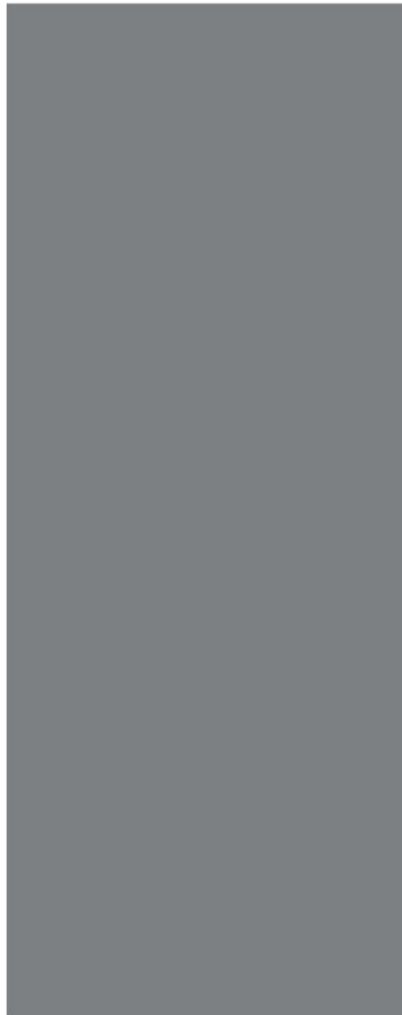
An ICT strategy for

sustainable tourism

in Zimbabwe

Mr Theo Tsokota
*PhD Candidate in
Information Technology at
the Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan University*

Prof. Von Solms
PhD Promoter

Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University

for tomorrow

Port Elizabeth & George

Please take note of the following:

My name is Theo Tsokota. I am a PhD candidate in Information Technology at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University under the supervision of Professor Von Solms. The title of my PhD thesis is "An ICT integration and utilisation framework for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe."

I wish to request for your participation in this research as one of the respondents. I trust that you will kindly consider this request as the outcome of the project can be beneficial to the tourism industry in Zimbabwe as well as assisting me towards obtaining a PhD-degree.

➢ Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point.

➢ Your participation in this study does not include any compensation.

➢ Confidentiality will be maintained and your identity will in no way be linked to your responses to the questions.

➢ -You will be provided with feedback from the results when the study is completed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details below. Feel free to advise some of your colleagues you think may assist in this regard.

Theo Tsokota:

Zimbabwe: 00263775126089

South Africa: 002783 751 7249

E-mail: s212213342@live.nmmu.ac.za

theotsokota@gmail.com

Would you like to be one of the respondents? Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

If you are willing to be part of the respondents please provide your details below, tear off the slip and leave the slip at
……………………………….
……………………………….
……………………………….

Name:

Surname:

Email address:

REGULATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE E

Date……………………… ……………Time…………………………………………….
Place……………………………………………………………………………………….
Type of an organisation…………………………………………………………………..
Function of the organisation………………………………………………………………….
My name is Theo Tsokota; I am currently working on PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University degree. I would highly appreciate to have about 30-45 minutes of your time to discuss with you the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilized to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD-degree. The objective of the interview is to discuss how your organisation is tapping ICT in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism sector.
To achieve this objective the interview guide is divided into three sections:
1). Demographic Information
2).Your organisation as Regulator and implementer of government policy
3).Your organisation as user of ICT
Your responses will be treated with confidence and at all times data will be presented in such a way that your identity cannot be connected with specific published data. Do you have any questions or any issues that you feel may need to be clarified before we start the interview?
1. Demographic Information
1.1 What is your current position?
1.2 Who do you report to?
1.3 What managerial level do you occupy?
1.4 For how long have you been part of this organisation?
1.5 What are your duties in the organisation?
2. Regulator as Policy implementer

2.1 What is the mandate of your organisation?
2.2 How are you using ICT towards fulfilling your mandate?
2.3 What is the overall ICT strategy for the Ministry of Tourism?
2.4 Are there any ICT related issues you are lobbying to government?
2.5 To what extend have you been able to implement policy government in Tourism sector?
2.6 How is the ministry monitoring to ensure that the relevant policies are being implemented?
2.7 As a regulator of the Tourism industry is there a roadmap for the integration of ICT the tourism industry?
2.8 What has been done from 2009 up to now in the development and use of ICT in the tourism sector?
2.9 What policy measures do you feel still needs to be put in place to ensure that ICT continues to play a central role in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe?
2.10   What measures/policies have you put in place to promote cooperation between tourism ecosystem?
2.11   How are you using ICT to counter bad publicity/bad image the country faced in the past few years?
2.12   It appears as though the tourism industry has a number of bodies that share responsibility and some of these bodies coming from different ministries. What measures have been put in place to avoid duplication of roles and conflicts?
3. Regulator as User
3.1 What ICT software applications are you currently using?
3.2 How are these applications integrated?
3.3 What ICT enabled services are you currently using?
3.4 Does your organisation have an ICT Strategic plan?
3.5 How is your ICT strategy aligned to your overall corporate strategy?
3.6 How are ICT applications supporting your business strategy?
3.7 The adoption of ICTs has required many organisations to significantly review or change their strategies.
3.7.1   How has this happened to your organisation?
3.7.2   If there are changes who initiated these changes, how are you leveraging ICT in your

strategy?
3.8 What are the key challenges you facing in general and more specifically in using ICT?
3.9 What problem-solving strategies are you currently implementing?
3.10 What factors are affecting the utilisation of ICT in your organisation?
4. Conclusion
4.1 How can ICT contribute to the enhancement of Zimbabwe's tourism competitiveness?
4.2 Is there anything else you want to share with me generally or personally regarding your experience during the course of your work in using ICT?

TOURIST QUESTIONAIRE F

Research Title: An ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Theo Tsokota. I am a PhD candidate in Information Technology at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University under the supervision of Professor Von Solms. The title of my PhD thesis is "An ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe."

 I wish to request for your participation in this research as one of the respondents. The purpose of this questionnaire is to get an insight into your experience and expectations on how ICT was used or could have been used to enhance their experience in Zimbabwe.

I trust that you will kindly consider this request as the outcome of the project can be beneficial to the tourism industry in Zimbabwe as well as assisting me, towards obtaining a PhD-degree.

Please take note of the following:

➢ Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point.
➢ Your participation in this study does not include any compensation.
➢ Confidentiality will be maintained and your identity will in no way be linked to your responses to the questions.
➢ You will be provided with feedback from the results when the study is completed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details below. Feel free to advise some of your colleagues you think may assist in this regard.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

Theo Tsokota:

Mobile Number : 002783 751 7249 (South Africa)

              : 00263775126089 (Zimbabwe)

E-mail: s212213342@live.nmmu.ac.za

       tsokotattheotsokota@gmail.com/

QUESTIONNAIRE TO TOURISTS

The following are the questions which you are requested to spend a few minutes to respond. *Please tick inside the relevant box if appropriate). [√].*

For open - ended questions fill in the blank spaces.

1. Demographics

1.   Gender:

Male	
Female	

2.   Age:

Age	
0-17	
18-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-55	
56-65	
66-75	
76 and above	

3.   Your Country of residence: _____

2. Tourism Experience

4.   How many times have you visited Zimbabwe?

Once	
Twice	
Thrice	
More that Thrice	

5.   What is the main purpose of your visit to Zimbabwe? _____

_____

_____

5b.   How did you come to choose to visit Zimbabwe?

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

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6. How did you find information about Zimbabwe tourist resorts?

If Other: _____

_____

7. Was the information sources that you used before visiting Zimbabwe and its tourists' resorts up-to-date?

YES	
NO	

8. If No, state the information that you need that was not up-to-date?

_____

_____

9. Was the information about Zimbabwe and its tourist resorts you got from source that you used easy to comprehend?

YES	
NO	

10. If No, state what needs to be improved? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

11. How did you make your booking?

Website	
Email	
Travel Agents	
Friends or Relatives	
In Person	
Telephone	
Tour Operator	
Other, Please Specify	

Other, Specify: _____

12. How did you make your payment?

Credit card	
PayPal	
Western Union	
Wire Transfer/ Local Bank Transfer	
Cash	
Other, Please Specify	

Other, Specify: _____

13. If you used the electronic means was the payment made to Zimbabwean organization?

YES	
NO	

14. If No, state the country were payment was made: _____

15. What was that which was not electronic that you could have preferred done electronically

_____

_____

16. What information and communication technology challenges did you face during your visit to Zimbabwe?

_____

17. What recommendations can you make on how Zimbabwe can effectively use ICT in the tourism sector?

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Any other comments …………………………………………………………………………………………

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GOVERNMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

G

Date………………….… ……………Time…………………………………………….
Place…………………………………………………………………………………….
Type of an organisation………………………………………………………………..
Function of the organisation…………………………………………………………….
My name is Theo Tsokota; I am currently working on PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University degree. I would highly appreciate to have about 30-45 minutes of your time to discuss with you the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilized to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD-degree. The objective of the interview is to discuss how the government of Zimbabwe is tapping ICT in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism market.   To achieve this objective the interview guide is divided into two sections:
1) Government as policy maker
2) Government as a user of ICT
Your responses will be treated with confidence and at all times data will be presented in such a way that your identity cannot be connected with specific published data. Do you have any questions or any issues that you feel may need to be clarified before we start the interview?
a) Government as a policy maker
1.1 What motivated the government of Zimbabwe to identify Tourism and ICT as pillars of economic revival in 2009?
1.2 What mechanism, policies have been put in place to encourage the use of ICT in the tourism sector?
1.3 What policy measures have been put in place to ensure that the policies are properly implemented?
1.4 How is the ministry monitoring to ensure that these policies are being implemented?

1.5 What have been your major achievements so far?
1.6 What have been your major drawbacks?
1.7 How has ICT changed policies in the tourism industry?
1.8 It appears as though the tourism industry has a number of bodies that share responsibility and some of these bodies coming from outside your ministry. What measures have been put in place to avoid duplication of roles and conflicts?
1.9 What policy measures do you feel still needs to be put in place to ensure that ICT continues to play a central role in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe?
b) Government as User
2.1 What ICT enabled services are you currently using in the Ministry?
2.2 Does your ministry have an ICT Strategic plan?
2.3 How are you leveraging ICT in your strategy as a Ministry?
2.4 How is your ICT strategy aligned to your overall strategy as a Ministry?
2.5 How are ICT applications supporting your business strategy?
2.6 What challenges are you facing as a ministry in fully digitalising your operations?
2.7 How are you mitigating these challenges?
c) Conclusion
3.1 Do you have any comments or additions to make on any issue raised in this interview?

SERVICE PROVIDERS INTERVIEW GUIDE H1

Date………………… …………Time…………………………………….
Place…………………………………………………………………….
Type of an organisation……………………………………………………..
Function of the organisation…………………………………………….
My name is Theo Tsokota; I am currently working on PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University degree. I would highly appreciate to have about 30-45 minutes of your time to discuss with you the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilized to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD- degree. The objective of the interview is to discuss how your organisation is tapping ICT in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism sector. To achieve this objective the interview guide is divided into three sections:
1). Demographic Information
2). Functional Sophistication
3). Managerial Support
Your responses will be treated with confidence and at all times data will be presented in such a way that your identity cannot be connected with specific published data. Do you have any questions or any issues that you feel may need to be clarified before we start the interview?
1   Demographic information
1.1 What is your current position?
1.2 Who do you report to?
1.3 What managerial level do you occupy?
1.4 For how long have you been part of this organisation?
1.5 What are your duties in the organisation?
2   Functional Sophistication

2.1 What are the goals of your organisation?
2.2 How are you using ICT to reach these goals?
2.3 What ICT applications are you currently using in offering services to your customers?
2.4 What are the ICT-enabled products are you currently using in your department?
2.5 What are the ICT-enabled products are you currently offering in your department?
3 Anticipated Benefits
3.1 What benefits do you expect from using ICT in your organisation?
4 Strategic Alignment
4.1 How is ICT department involved in the formulation of your corporate strategy?
4.2 How is your ICT strategy aligned to the corporate strategy?
4.3 What is the total fraction of the organisational budget allocated to ICT?
4.4 What challenges do you have to overcome to fully digitalise your operations?
4.5 The adoption of ICTs has required many organisations to significantly review or change their strategies;
4.5.1 How has this happened to your organisation?
4.5.2 How has ICT changed your business strategies?
4.6 Does your board of directors have any ICT sub-committee? If yes who are the members in that committee?
4.7 Does your institution have a top-level steering committee for oversight of major ICT policies and initiatives?
4.8 Does your organisation have an ICT Strategic plan? Y / N
4.9 Who typically makes final decisions on ICT infrastructure strategies?
4.10 Who typically makes final decisions on Computer applications needs?
4.11 What are the main barriers to the use of ICT in your organisation?
4.12 How is ICT being used to create relationships with your customers in terms of;
4.12.1 Customer service
4.12.2 Customer inquiries
4.12.3 Selling services
4.12.4 Providing after services
4.12.5 Promoting new products
4.13 How are you using ICT to create relationships with your suppliers?
4.14 How are you using ICT to make relationships with other organisations in the industry?
4.15 Which areas do you think needs to utilise ICT better?

5	**Management Support**
5.1 How is the management supporting ICT department?	
5.2 How many ICT projects have you implemented in the past five years?	
5.3 How do you come up with the ICT budget?	
6	**Financial Readiness**
6.1 How do you come up with the ICT budget to do the following?	
6.1.1 Purchase hardware	
6.1.2 Purchase software and applications	
6.1.3 ICT staff and	
6.1.3 other staff training	
6.1.4 Customer service	
7	**Process Innovation**
7.1 How are ICT applications supporting your business strategy in doing the following;	
7.1.2 Customer Service	
7.1.3 Managing your business process	
7.1.4 Revise or improve existing services	
7.1.5 Repackage existing products	
7.1.6 Introduce new products	
7.1.7 To enter new markets	
7.1.8 Competitive advantage	
7.1.9 Improve your internal administration and process	
7.1.10 Job satisfaction	
7.2 How has ICT helped to change your business process within your organisation?	
7.3 What are the challenges that you are currently facing in using ICT?	
7.4 What problem-solving strategies have you implemented to counter the challenges you are currently facing?	
8	**Organisational Structure**
8.1 How have you changed your organisational structure as a result of adopting ICT systems and applications?	
8.2 How have you changed structure to enhance;	
8.2.2 Employee empowerment?	
8.2.3 Cross-functional integration?	
8.2.4 New business methods?	
8.2.5 To enable making of timely decisions?	
9	**Individual Learning**
9.1 What ICT training have implemented after introducing new ICT technology systems	

and applications?
9.2 Have you changed any roles for your staff after the introduction of ICT?
9.3 What new innovations have made by your employees in using ICT?
9.4 Have your employees shown any resistance to new ICT system and applications?
10 IT readiness
10.2   What ICT infrastructure do you have available?
10.3   How many systems application are you using as any organization?
10.4   How are these system integrated?
11 Culture
11.1 How have ICT changed your organisational culture?
12 Local Competition
12.1 How are you using ICT to fight your competitors?
13 Consumer Pressure
13.1 How have your customer pressure and expectations helped you to adopt ICT and other new ways of doing business?
13.2How has your customers responded to changes in ICT?
14 Regulatory Issues
14.1 What regulatory issues are affecting the use of ICT in the tourism sector?

ICT STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE H2

Date………………………… ……………Time………………………………………………….
Place………………………………………………………………………………………….
Type of an organisation…………………………………………………………………………..
Function of the organisation………………………………………………………………….
My name is Theo Tsokota; I am currently working on PhD-degree in Information Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University degree. I would highly appreciate to have about 30 minutes to about one hour of your time to discuss with you the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) on the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and how ICT can be utilized to further positively impact this important sector. This study will form part of my research towards a PhD- degree. The objective of the interview is to discuss how your organisation is tapping ICT in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism sector. To achieve this objective the interview guide is divided into three sections:
1). Demographic Information
2). Functional Sophistication
3). Managerial Support
Your responses will be treated with confidence and at all times data will be presented in such a way that your identity cannot be connected with specific published data. Do you have any questions or any issues that you feel may need to be clarified before we start the interview?
1. Demographic information
1.2 What is your current position?
1.3 Who do you report to?
1.4 What managerial level do you occupy?

1.5 For how long have you been part of this organisation?
1.6 What are your duties in the organisation?
2. Functional Sophistication
2.1 How is your ICT department constituted and what are the specific main duties of each of the member of the department?
2.2 What managerial level does your most senior ICT person occupy?
2.3 What are the main goals of your organisation?
2.4 How are you using ICT to reach these goals?
2.5 What ICT software applications are you currently using?
2.6 What are the ICT-enabled products are you currently offering?
2.7 What key factors led you to select these ICT applications?
3. Anticipated Benefits
3.1 What benefits do you expect from using ICT in your organisation?
4. Strategic Alignment
4.1 Does your organisation have an ICT Strategic plan?
4.2 How is ICT department involved in the formulation of your corporate strategy?
4.3 How are ICT applications supporting your business strategy?
4.4 How is your ICT strategy aligned to the overall corporate strategy?
4.5 What is the total fraction of the organisational budget allocated to ICT?
4.6 What challenges do you have to overcome to fully digitalise your operations?
4.7 The adoption of ICTs has required many organisations to significantly review or change their strategies ;
4.7.1   How has this happened to your organisation?
4.7.2   How has ICT changed your business strategies?
4.8 Does your board of directors have any ICT sub-committee? If yes who are the members in that committee?
4.9 Does your institution have a top-level steering committee for oversight of major ICT policies and initiatives?
4.10   Who typically makes final decisions on ICT infrastructure strategies?
4.11   Who typically makes final decisions on ICT applications/solutions needs?
4.12   What are the main barriers to the use of ICT in your organisation?
4.13 How is ICT currently being used to create relationships with your customers in terms of;
4.13.1 Customer service

4.13.2 Customer inquiries
4.13.3 Selling services
4.13.6 Providing after services
4.13.7 Promoting new products
4.14   How are you using ICT to create relationships with your suppliers?
4.15   How are you using ICT to make relationships with other organisations in the industry?
4.16   Which areas do you think needs to utilise ICT better?
5. Management Support
5.1   How is the top management involved in ICT issues?

ICT and the turning-around of the Zimbabwean Economy J1

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Abstract. *The purpose of the study was to determine how ICT could possibly contribute to the turning-around of the economy of Zimbabwe. The study was based on literature review, theoretical underpinnings, and a review of Rwanda as a case study. The case shows strong political will, vision and top-level commitment as driving forces of the turn-around. The study recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe should computerise its operations, and provide a conducive environment and policies to the private sector, in order to make effective use of ICT. The government can impact on the use of technology through various interventions, such as, regulation, liberalisation, subsidies to firms, tax regimes, educational policies that impinge on the skilfulness of employees, and the enforcement of standards. This paper argues that there exists a theoretical basis for the successful implementation and proliferation of ICT that could contribute towards strategies that might turn-around the economy of Zimbabwe.*

Keywords: Information and Communication Technologies, Turn-around, Zimbabwe, Rwanda

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become the keys to the efficient running of virtually all facets of the national economy, transcending every industry and service (Posthumusa & von Solms, 2005; Shanker, 2008). ICT "encompasses all technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication among human actors, between human beings and electronic systems, and among electronic systems" (Hamelink, 1997). ICT is becoming the harbinger and epicentre of global socio-economic transformation, in addition to being a strategic resource and foundation of every economic activity (Bedia, 1999; Kabanda, 2011). ICT accelerates economic activities, such as consumption, investment, government-service delivery and export competitiveness (Bedia, 1999). Moreover, ICT enhances competitiveness, as well as economic and societal modernisation, because of its revolutionary power as a key catalyst for change, modernisation and innovation – connecting people and communities, improving standards of living, and creating new trade opportunities – both locally and globally. This offers developing countries the opportunity to leap-frog over stages of economic development by modernising their production systems and rapidly boosting their competitiveness.

Developing countries have the prospect of achieving sustainable economic growth and social transformation by using ICT to build their economies – or risk being left behind (UNCTD, 2003; UNDP, 2004).

ICTs can enable the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as these technologies are pervasive and include more people in social, economic and political participation. In education, ICTs facilitate the expansion of distance learning and the health-sector applications, such as telemedicine. ICTs have proved successful for diagnostics and treatment costs in remote areas (Government of Zimbabwe,

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2012). All these benefits impact positively in poverty-reduction through direct employment in down-and-up-stream industries.

Technology could help nations and individuals to overcome periods of stagnation in their development (World Economic Forum, 2012). A stagnant development is a period of no economic development. Due to its pervasive nature, ICT should be seen as an essential means to drive economies to greater heights, as the world progress further into the knowledge economy. The power of ICT lies in the unprecedented growth of its world-wide network – and the ability to connect computers and several individuals – without any of the barriers of geographic space.

ICT could help streamline supply chains to better delivery of services, improved interactions of business and industry, as well as to facilitate access to information for citizens, thereby improving their decision-making. This would impact economies significantly – resulting in increased transparency, convenience, revenue growth, cost reductions and a subsequent decline in corruption. Furthermore, networked businesses can explore new business models, which could include dynamic business partnerships and radical market restructuring (UNDP, 2004).

Interestingly, the Government of Zimbabwe (2012) has identified ICT as one of the pillars for economic turn-around.

1.1 The decline of the Zimbabwean Economy

In the years 2000 to 2008, Zimbabwe was embroiled in an economic and political crisis. The economy shrank by 40% in 8 years (Biti, 2009) and suffered an unprecedented inflation, which peaked at 231 million per cent in July 2008 (Gono, 2012). This resulted in a massive brain drain and a decline in all sectors of the economy. The setting-up of the Government of National Unity (GNU), as well as the introduction of the multi-currency system, brought some prospects of political and economic stability. The immediate challenge is on which development path the country should pursue.

The Government of Zimbabwe (2012) has identified ICT as one of the pillars for the desired economic turn-around. The ICT sector was identified as one of immense importance in stimulating and supporting the economy to greater performance as a sector, and as a supporting unit in services to all the other sectors. Massive investments have been made by both the government and the private sector in the ICT sector. These investments include a terrestrial link and an optic fibre cable en-route to the undersea cable in the Indian Ocean.

This project has enabled reliable, high-speed internet access, enhanced voice – in addition to data services – at affordable prices. This has also been complemented by similar projects within Zimbabwe being done by network operators, to link major cities by optic fibre. These measures create and support an enabling ICT environment for industry, government, service deliveries, education, and communications. The tele-density rate continues to improve; and it is estimated to reach 79% by December 2012 from 68% in 2011. The internet penetration rate continues to steadily improve, and is estimated to reach 19% by the end of 2012 – from 13% in 2011 (Biti, 2012). Thus, it may be noted that the basic foundation for sound electronic communication- within Zimbabwe and also with the rest of the world - is in place.

1.2 ICT Challenges in Zimbabwe

There is a lack of institutional mechanisms, as well as a clear guideline for ICT integration into the country's economic development strategies (Mhlanga, 2006). It is, as yet, unclear as to how the ICT hardware and software are being employed, as organisations continue to use traditional ways in an attempt to remain competitive, and in their customer offerings. With the exception of a few services, the

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citizens and businesses in Zimbabwe have to obtain services in the traditional way: waiting in queues to obtain multiple documents from different sources – to satisfy the requirements of a specific transaction – and then repeating the process again and again. This way of interacting is cumbersome, as it costs people time and money; it causes dissatisfaction; it creates opportunities for corruption; and it increases costs to the government (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). The challenges above are the result of duplication, information redundancy and lack of/or poor system integration.

The economy of Zimbabwe is poorly networked, slow, with revenue leakages and bottle-necks. There is a considerable loss of opportunities for the full benefits of utilisation of ICT infrastructure – due to weak utilisation, the absence of collaboration, networking, better services, efficiency and effectiveness (Ruhode, Owei, & Maumbe, 2008; Chimhangwa, 2012).

The Zimbabwean economy is still in a fragile state, although there is a relatively stable macro-economic environment in the country. The country is facing many challenges, although there are output improvements in some sectors. On the other hand, the country has a basic ICT backbone in place – to offer and utilise high-level ICT services. However, ICT is currently being used for very basic purposes only. The success of the economy hinges on the full exploitation of ICT – to improve and enhance the national economy (Bedia, 1999).

The usage levels have remained relatively low, particularly in the banking sector (Dube, Chitura & Runyowa, 2009) and also in agribusiness (Mupemhi, Mupemhi, & Duve, 2011), which is the backbone of the country's economy. The usage level in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) is still at the embryonic stage (Dube, Chitura, & Runyowa, 2010). The improving economic conditions have, however, enabled the availability of computers at home and access to the internet. However, the internet continues to be used for non-commercial purposes, such as: social networking, entertainment and visiting news sites (Shoko, 2012).

Although organisations use computers and the internet, internet usage is still largely restricted to email usage, faxes, searching for suppliers and visiting suppliers' websites. No online payments are being utilised (Mupemhi et al., 2011). This shows that there is weak utilisation and an ineffectual use of these technologies. Genuine value from the utilisation of ICT only occurs when key stakeholders use ICT to deliver economic value. Simply owning ICT assets does not generate business value, in terms of gaining competitive advantage, improving business processes, or reducing costs. However there has been dramatic growth in the use of mobile money service by all the three Zimbabwean mobile service providers for transferring, receiving and paying of services using mobile phones. Banking institutions which have not been providing customers with debit and credit cards and internet banking facilities are surprisingly in the forefront to offer mobile banking services. One mobile company has partnered with a bank in providing such services and the same organisation has also acquired a bank to enhance the provision of mobile money transfers. However, mobile money transfer are not being used for international business and in making online payments.

Although it is generally known that ICT could play an influential role in the economy, and assist in turning-around the economy of the country, ICT does not yet play such a role in the general economy of Zimbabwe. If a robust ICT policy could be implemented – by digitalising all sectors of the economy – then weak utilisation would be eradicated, as it clearly indicates a loss of those opportunities that ICT presents to the economy.

With this in mind, the objective of this paper is to identify, suggest and motivate some guidelines and mechanisms, whereby ICT could play a major contributing role in turning-around the economy of Zimbabwe.

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2. Methodology

The methodology followed to address this objective, as stated above, is based on extensive literature studies conducted, along with two semi-formal cases studies conducted on the Zimbabwean and Rwandan situations. These two case studies were chosen, because both Zimbabwe and Rwanda have emerged from political conflicts. Rwanda suffered a traumatic past, characterised by social disturbances and wars that culminated in the 1994 genocide, which decimated the country's population and economy.

In spite of this traumatic history, there is evidence of social, political and economic transformation in the country (Mwangi, 2006). Zimbabwe and Rwanda are both land-locked and have almost homogeneous economies based on agriculture, mining and tourism. These two countries have identified ICT as pillars to turn-around their economies. The purpose of including the Rwandan case study was to identify whether Zimbabwe, or other similar third-world countries, could learn some lessons from the Rwandan experience.

3 The case of the Zimbabwean economy

The following are a number of critical aspects to consider when addressing the role that ICTs could play in an economic turn-around strategy for Zimbabwe.

3.1 International Competitiveness

The world is rapidly becoming a knowledge-based economy, which is propelled by ICT, as well as efficient transport and communication systems. These help to promote and improve the functioning of the markets, to reduce transaction costs, and to increase productivity – thereby, improving international competitiveness (Gono, 2005). Zimbabwe is not doing very well, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) ICT Global Competitiveness index. Zimbabwe's competitiveness is ranked at 136 out of 139. The e-readiness has also been ranked very low, at 124 out of 139 – with a score of 3.7 out 8 (WEF, 2012). Consequently, it is clear that Zimbabwe is not competing well from an ICT-competitive point of view.

3.2 Lack of Access to international markets

Another serious problem is that trade and commerce, especially marketing products and services to overseas markets. The major shortfall is in the failure to advertise and market online, which has forced several companies to use traditional, and largely outdated, ways of marketing. The Ministry of Agriculture is a notable example, where agricultural commodities are poorly marketed – even though agriculture is the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy.

Alongside the Ministry of Agriculture, others that are suffering from the lack of modern marketing initiatives are: Tourism, Industry, Mining and International Trade. It is important to point out that the internet and intranets are the solution to the problem of inaccessible information like forms, examination results, tourist information, and virtually all information that the public must access (Ruhode et al., 2008).

3.3 Uncompetitive Local Products

Zimbabwe is a land-locked country; and its manufacturing industry is not competitive (Mupemhi et al., 2011) because the country faces many costs in the selling and distribution of its products (Chimhangwa, 2012), as well as high production costs. Most of its production processes are still manual – with little or no involvement of technology. This is further compounded by the fact that the country has to pay high costs for transporting both raw materials and products to and from overseas.

In order for these products and goods to be competitive, they have to leverage on lower production processes and costs. The locally produced goods continue to face stiff competition from lower-priced

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imports. The competitiveness of locally produced goods could be improved – through cost-reduction – by automation and the use ICT. According to Collier (2007), being land-locked does not mean to be e-locked, however. ICT could change the way Zimbabwean products compete on the world market.

From the above, it becomes clear that the Zimbabwean economy is definitely not internationally competitive. Furthermore, ICT is definitely not being utilised in the general economy to its full potential; and this definitely contributes to Zimbabwe's low competitiveness, from an economic point of view.

4. The case of the Rwandan economy

The emergence of Rwanda from the 1994 genocide, which decimated the country's population and economy, into an East African technological hub, is in many ways surprising to many. Many wonder how a land-locked country, which was devastated and impaired by genocide, with few natural resources, has managed to turn-around its economy to such a degree – simply by using ICT. Before for the 1994 genocide, Rwanda was one of the most technologically deficient countries. Within a short space of time, the country has transformed itself into a country where government business is conducted online; and wireless internet is available throughout the country.

Businesses throughout the country are linked by VISA electronic banking and mobile money services for those who are unable to do electronic payments. The mobile services allow subscribers to transfer, withdraw and pay pre-paid electricity and television bills using SMS messages (Tafirenyika, 2011). Rwanda has become a shining beacon and model for deployment of ICT in Africa (Lacity, Willcocks, & Rottman, 2008).The economy has been growing by an average of 7% for the past 10 years (CIA, 2012). After studying the successful Singapore example, Rwanda decided to focus its attention on improving its ICT infrastructure, and by providing an ICT education to its citizens. The government of Rwanda launched the National Information and Communications Infrastructure plans in 2001. These were rolled out in four five-year plans, which have been subsequently developed into Vision 2020, championed by President Kagame (Mwangi, 2006). This Vision aims to transform the country's economy by 2020.

As a result, the Rwandan Development Board was established, the telecommunication sector was deregulated, and ICT equipment is imported without the imposition of any duty. In line with this vision, high-speed fibre optics has been laid across the country. The technological advances in the country have transformed the daily lives of Rwandans in terms of how they communicate, do business, trade, and pay for goods and services (Tafirenyika, 2011). VISA is linking businesses, shops and cash machines, with its extensive global network – to enable electronic payments.

Mobile phones are also being used in the health sector to provide health-related updates to local clinics, to call ambulances, to track pregnant women, to respond to emergency alerts and patient management systems. In the fight against counterfeit drugs, consumers can now send a text code by using SMS to a database, and then get an SMS reply indicating whether a drug is genuine or not (Tafirenyika, 2011).

Farmers can now receive market updates for their produce, thereby eliminating the need for the 'middlemen' who used to exploit the farmers. Others services include SMS voter registration, making driving license bookings and driving tests results online (Tafirenyika, 2011).

The country has also seen an array of other innovative products and systems, which are transforming the daily lives of ordinary Rwandans, such as the introduction of a smartcard bus ticketing system. In its quest to transform the national economy by using ICT, the Rwandan government considers the educational sector to be pivotal in developing the necessary human capital. Since 2000, there has been a concerted effort to introduce computers in all schools, and to integrate ICT into the education curriculum

at all levels of education through a variety of initiatives. These initiatives include the one-laptop-per-child project.

Furthermore, the government has signed an agreement with Carnegie Mellon University to establish a campus in Rwanda; and the Cisco Academy was established at Kigali Institute of Technology to teach computer engineering and to train teachers. By the end of 2006, 400 out of about 500 secondary schools in Rwanda had received computers (Mwangi, 2006).

5. Theoretical underpinning for an economic turn-around based on ICT
Having studied some of the factors that helped Rwanda to turn-around its economy, it may be argued that there is a clear relationship to the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, as shown below in Figure 1. This theory can indeed be used in forming a national ICT Diffusion Strategy – by assuming that the typical organisation is seen to be a microcosm of the national economy.

The motivation for such an analogy is beyond the scope of this paper. Based on this theory, however, innovativeness is dependent on variables, such as individual (leadership) characteristics, internal organisational structural characteristics, and external characteristics of the organisation, according to Figure 1. Individual characteristics describe the leader's vision and commitment that influences followers to adopt new technologies. Internal characteristics of organisational structure show how power and control are distributed in the government.

The complexity refers to levels of knowledge and skills in a country's citizens and the country's infrastructure. Formalisation is the degree to which members of the society follow rules and procedures; interconnectedness is the degree to which the economic units are linked; organisational slack is the degree to which uncommitted resources are available to an economy; and "size is the total population of a country. External characteristics of organisation refer to system openness and to how receptive the country is to foreign investment and international cooperation (Tiago Oliveira and Maria Fraga Martins 2011).
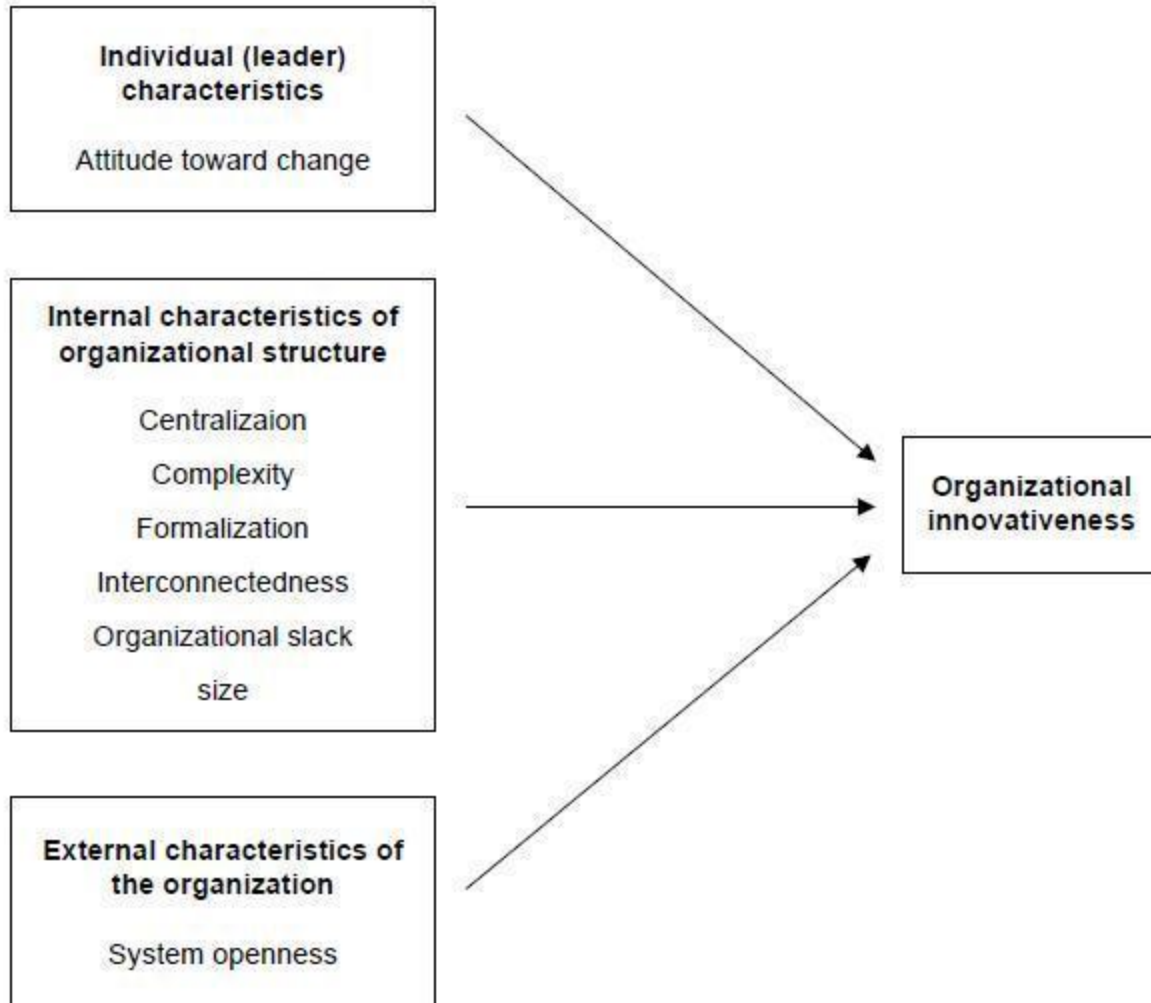
Figure 1: Diffusion of innovations

The three factors of individual (leader) characteristics, internal organisational structural characteristics, and external characteristics of the organisation (economy) support the embracing of new technologies by individuals, businesses and government, which encourage entrepreneurship, innovativeness and the introduction of new services in an economy.

The common thread in all the ICT-based economic turn-arounds has been that no matter how robust a policy framework is, the following aspects are necessary to transform the above-mentioned theory into success, as demonstrated through the case of Rwanda. The following are a number of guidelines and conclusions, based on the Theory of Diffusion of Innovations and related successes experienced in Rwanda.

5.1 Strong Political Will
The success of the Rwandan ICT sector starts and ends with the President of Rwanda (Mwangi, 2006). The Rwanda case illustrates how strong political will and commitment at the highest level of government can help transform an economy. The President and the cabinet should be committed not only in terms of rhetoric, but also in action. The Rwandan President is considered the Champion of ICT (Mwangi, 2006).

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While appreciating the Zimbabwean School Computerisation Program, and allowing duty-free imports of ICT equipment, more needs to be done – especially in dealing with bottle-necks to entry and growth into the ICT sector – and an integrated all-encompassing policy should be formulated to minimise policy conflicts. The ICT Ministry should be run from the President's Office. There must be the top-down approach, not the current scenario, where the Ministry of ICT has to rely on persuasion to other ministries, in order to facilitate some of its mandate, which intersect with other ministries, such as for example, Education.

Zimbabwe should take advantage of its more than 90 per cent literate population to educate on how to use ICT products.

5.2 Quasi-government Organisation

The study recommends the establishment of a quasi-government organisation, similar to the Rwanda Information Technology Authority (RITA), to co-ordinate activities in the ICT sector. This organisation should be responsible for the upgrading of the infrastructure; giving incentives to both local and international investors, monitoring training in both the public and private educational institutions, and for general monitoring of the ICT sector in the country as a whole.

5.3 Foreign Investment

The Rwandan government reforms, from the year 2001, liberalised, and deregulated the telecommunication sector, and also permitted 100% foreign ownership of companies among other incentives, such as the duty-free import of ICT equipment, and zero tax on exported products. The restoration of international relations with Western countries should be prioritised by Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean Governments should overhaul business laws, to be user-friendly to businesses and foreign investors. These laws are instrumental in attracting foreign investments – or in scaring away foreign investors (WEF, 2012). The legislative environment can deter or attract foreign investment. The 51%/49% indigenisation rules must exempt firms in the ICT sector.

5.4 Public-Private sector Partnership

An effective government-private-sector partnership should be created, as neither government nor the private sector can undertake the development of the ICT capacity alone. The ICT sector needs enough energy, reliable communication systems, an efficient transportation system, and equally important, a predictable operating environment. Zimbabwe must learn from best practices in this sector. Information centres, kiosks and technology parks should be built. When the ICT infrastructure is firmly in place, the industries should grow at a higher rate.

5.5 Government use of ICT

The Government of Zimbabwe has not fully computerised its functions, as many are still being done manually. This is indicative of the slow rate in which the government is adopting ICT in its day-to-day operations. Since the government is the largest consumer in any country, low use of ICT by government translates to low demand for the domestic market. In this regard, the government is expected to be the pacesetter in the adoption of the new technology. In addition, Government could sub-contract some of the ICT companies to provide services to its institutions, so as to increase demand.

5.6 Implementation of agreed Policies

The Rwandan experience shows that the implementation of good policies is critical to success, rather than just having policies on paper, and failing to implement them. Rwanda moved fast in this regard and performed better than twenty-five other African countries, which had started using ICT before Rwanda. The implementation of good policies has transformed Rwanda from a technological laggard to that of a technological leader in Africa (Lacity et al., 2008).

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5.7 Diaspora

The return of the Rwandan educated elite assisted in the development of ICT and related services in the country (Rubagiza et al., 2011). The brain-drain over the years can now easily turn into an important gain for the country if Zimbabweans in the diaspora could be lured back to the country. The skills they have acquired could then be used to profit the economy.

5.8 IT Governance

ICT governance is achieving strategic alignment between the business and ICT, in order to make sure that money spent on ICT is delivering value to the businesses. An effective ICT governance programme would help Zimbabwean organisations to understand the issues and risks surrounding the strategic importance of ICT, to ensure that ICT would sustain operations, and to help enable companies to use ICT for their competitive advantage. The value ICT would depend on how companies exploit ICT to enhance their management processes and operations. ICT assets on their own can produce no value to a company; whereas ICT assets entrenched in a company's daily operations are usually found to be indispensable – as a multi-purpose technology.

5.9 Individual Usage

For individuals to assimilate technology would depend on their perception, willingness, availability and affordability of the services. Other factors include the level of education, ICT skills and security concerns. Zimbabwe should take advantage of its high literacy rate and affordable broadband ushered in by the country linking with the undersea terrestrial optic fibre to provide social and economic services through ICT. Once security and perception issues are addressed, there could be a high subsequent uptake of ICT.

5.10 Business Usage

ICT developments raise the need for business organisations to use ICT to support, sustain and grow their businesses. Simply possessing ICT assets will not produce business value in providing competitive advantage, enhancing business process or reducing costs. Value from ICT only arises when information technology is used to provide business value. The use of ICT has rendered the obstacles of time and geography less relevant. Zimbabwean companies must come up with new business models and new ways of offering their services to fully benefit from the usage of ICT. ICT equipment must be used to the maximum potential, thereby increasing the organisation's returns on investment.

5.11 Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The use of such technology would encourage entrepreneurship and innovation thereby the introduction of new services. This would help the economy to grow subsequently turning- around the economy.

Strong political will can have an impact on the development and diffusion of technology through various possible interventions, such as, regulation, liberalisation, and subsidies to firms, tax regimes, educational policies that impinge on the skilfulness of employees and the enforcement of standards. The implementation of right policies positively impacts the individual, business and government usage of ICT, thereby encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation which in turn can lead to new services that could help to turn-around the economy.

6 Conclusion

ICT can be used to turn-around an economy. This can be achieved through a strong political will, vision and top-level commitment to implement good policies that would lead to ICT development and diffusion. The government and business should commercially exploit the current technological trends to revolutionise the manner in which business and the general public trade. ICT could improve revenue, enhance competitiveness, assist in the economic and societal modernisation. It can further facilitate innovation, connecting people and communities, and improving standards of living and new trade opportunities both locally and globally.

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The study recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe should create an enabling environment to promote ICT development and diffusion. A quasi-governmental organisation should be set up to co-ordinate the activities in the ICT sector. The country should fully utilise ICT investment and the abundant human resources in the country. The embracing of technology by individuals, business and government would encourage entrepreneurship and the introduction of new services, which in turn, would help the economy to grow – thereby turning-around the economy.

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TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR ICT INTEGRATION IN THE TOURISM SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

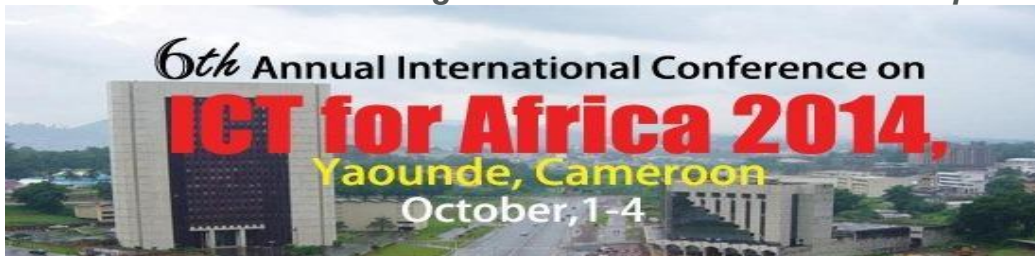## AUTHORS

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Conference Paper

Towards a strategy for ICT integration in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

Abstract.
This paper reports on the current position and utilization of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe and provides some recommendations towards the adoption of a national strategy to enhance the ICT usage in the tourism sector. This paper reports on the findings from thirty-five semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the tourism sector as well as sixty questionnaires amongst tourists. The findings highlight the challenges identified by tourists and other key stakeholders including Government. The paper culminates in recommendations towards a strategy for ICT integration into the tourism section in Zimbabwe. Specific components of the envisaged strategy are identified from the data collected. The definition and outline of the specific strategy is briefly described in the future work with the aim of developing a strategy that will allow for the integration of ICT into the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of ICT has become a vital tool for the survival of tourism organizations (Evans & Wurster, 1997). Bulhalis (1998) argues that information is the life-blood of tourism because ICT is becoming pivotal in the sector. This is supported by Stiakakis & Georgiadis (2011) who point out that the tourism sector is becoming a fiercely information intensive competitive business. In the tourism business, worldwide competitive advantage is no longer natural, but man-made driven by advances in science, modern technologies, information and innovation (Hojeghan & Esfangarech, 2011). In this regard, business that does not sufficiently adopt ICT risk being driven gradually out of global markets (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011). Therefore, many leading organizations are turning to ICT to remain competitive (Murphy, Schegg & Olaru, 2006). ICT is pivotal in the tourism sector to the extent that it has been embedded into the tourism business thereby contributing to the massive growth of the sector. These technologies have become ―functional equivalent of electricity in the industrial era‖ (Castells, 1999). Due to the intangibility of the tourism product, tourists base their decisions on relatively reliable cues such as the information on the internet (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Therefore, ICT has a direct impact on tourism sector, which can be improved using electronic business (Hojeghan & Esfangarech, 2011).

Interestingly, the Government of Zimbabwe has identified ICT and tourism as strategic sectors as well as pillars for economic revival (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). The two sectors are identified as essential source of foreign exchange earnings and a means to drive the economy to greater heights while reducing poverty through direct employment in down-stream and up-stream industries. It is therefore imperative to

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examine how ICT resources are being leveraged in contributing and driving the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

2. ICT AND TOURISM IN ZIMBABWE

Both the government and the private sector in the tourism and ICT sectors made massive investments. These investments have enabled reliable, high-speed Internet access and enhanced voice services, in addition to data services at affordable prices. This has also been complemented by other similar projects to upgrade all the airports, road infrastructure, refurbishment of hotels and other tour operations. In addition the government waived duty on ICT and tourism capital equipment (Biti, 2012). Despite these huge investments and being endowed with rich natural resources, five World Heritage natural sites, rich fauna as well as abundant wildlife, Zimbabwe is not competing well in the world tourism industry. Zimbabwe has been ranked 118 out of 140 countries according to the 2013 World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (WEF, 2013). Despite the strengths, in terms of endowments, the low Tourism and Travel Competitiveness Index suggest weaknesses in related and supporting areas.

With the exception of a few services, the citizens, tourists and businesses in Zimbabwe have to obtain services in the traditional and fragmented way. They have to wait in queues to obtain multiple documents from different sources to satisfy the requirements of a specific transaction, and repeating the process again and again. This way of interaction is cumbersome, as it is time consuming and causes dissatisfaction (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). The challenges above are the results of duplication, information redundancy and the lack of, or poor system integration. These challenges still exist despite the fact that by 2005 all sectors of the economy had registered significant progress in the deployment and application of ICT (Government of Zimbabwe, 2005).

In light of the above-mentioned situation, it can therefore be argued that the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, instead of moving with the technological advances through applying more robust ICT applications that are at the core of their businesses, relaxed after initial adoption of ICT. Simply having ICT assets does not generate business value in terms of gaining competitive advantage, improving business processes, or reducing costs (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2011) but genuine value occurs if it is used to deliver economic value.

2.1 Research problem and objective

The problem addressed in this paper is an apparent lack of clear guidelines and strategy for the effective usage and integration of ICT to enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe after its initial adoption. The main purpose of this paper is to report on data collected and analyzed together with some recommendations in this regard. The study also sought to understand why most tourism services continue being provided manually despite massive investments in ICT.

2.2 Theoretical under-pining on the use of ICT

Meyers (2001), quoting Hartley (1994), emphasizes the need for a theoretical framework or strategy to ensure a sound theoretical base to guide data collection and avoid collection of data without meaning. The key areas of benchmarking ICT theory adapted from Cragg (2002) by Wainwright, Green, Mitchell & Yarrow (2005), was used in the study to ensure the sound theoretical base. The key areas of benchmarking ICT theory point out two valuable factors for adoption and utilization of ICT which are functional sophistication and managerial sophistication. The functional sophistication emphasizes the technical skills, knowledge and complexity of the ICT function which determine the entity's capacity to adopt and deploy ICT efficiently and effectively. The effective and efficient adoption and deployment lead to greater innovation and firm performance (Korac-Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2001). Managerial

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sophistication looks at the involvement of top management in ICT as well as the alignment of ICT goals and corporate strategy.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed to address the objective above is based on an extensive, comprehensive case study in the tourism sector involving the use of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The research was carried out in accordance with case study steps as outlined by Yin (2009). According to Pizam (2009), the tourism sector is an array of businesses that offers goods and services to tourists. The entities and organizations that formed part of the case study were purposefully chosen to provide a proper representative sample of the tourism role-players in Zimbabwe. The samples were based on sample variation and feasibility (taking into consideration factors such as geographical location, organizational thrust and size). Prospective respondents were first identified and then contacted by e-mail. For those who did not respond, follow-ups were done by telephone and in some cases, physical follow-ups.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with various role players in the tourism industry. Typically the interviews lasted between 30 minutes to one and half hours. The role-players interviewed included 2 officials from the national government, 20 interviewees from government-related organizations as well as trade associations and 13 interviewees from private organizations. The interviews were held in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Matopos, Hwange and Victoria Falls. As mentioned, the interview s followed a semi-structured nature and were divided into four sections. The four sections comprised of demographic information, functional sophistication, managerial sophistication as well as aspects related to organizational websites. A Zimbabwe annual premier tourism expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair, was also attended to understand and interact with various players and to conduct formal and informal interviews.

The questionnaires, completed by tourists, were administered in Harare, Hwange, Victoria Falls, Matopos, Beitbridge and Kazungula Boarder Post. As argued by Walliman (2005), personal delivery has an advantage of being able to help clarify questions to respondents. Secondly, it provides the advantage of being able to persuade respondents, which can help to get a higher response rate. The process of persuading prospective respondents required good skills of building rapport and persuasion. An online version of the questionnaire was also administered. The questionnaire link was e-mailed to tourists, as some of the tourists did not have sufficient time to complete the questionnaires during their stay in Zimbabwe and agreed to do so via email.

3.2 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed qualitatively in accordance to Creswell (2008). The data was grouped into four main categories namely: tourists, government officials, governmental organizations and private organizations. Each respondent was numbered according to one of the above categories during the transcription of data. Once the data was captured, distinct themes were identified, extracted and coded in a spreadsheet. Multiple iterations ensured that the identified themes were accurate and complete. In situations where different responses pointed to the same aspect, a broad key phrase was identified to provide one common description for the unstructured data. The frequency of each code was tallied and converted into a percentage for each of the categories.

4. RESULTS

The following section outlines results and a brief discussion for each of the four categories namely; tourists, government, governmental organizations and private organizations.

4.1 Results from the Tourists

4.1.1 Demographic Overview

The respondents from the questionnaire were 48% males and 52% females this shows a fair and proportional gender representation in the study. Most of the respondents were aged between 18-25 years. The respondents were drawn from twenty different countries with the majority of the respondents coming from South Africa (20%), UK (12%), USA (8%), Australia (5%), Belgium (5%), Germany (5%), Botswana (5%) and Namibia (5%). The remainder came from Zambia (3%), Botswana (3%) and the rest from other countries like Tanzania, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Kenya, Italy, Lesotho, Canada and Angola having 2% of the respondents apiece as shown in Figure 1.
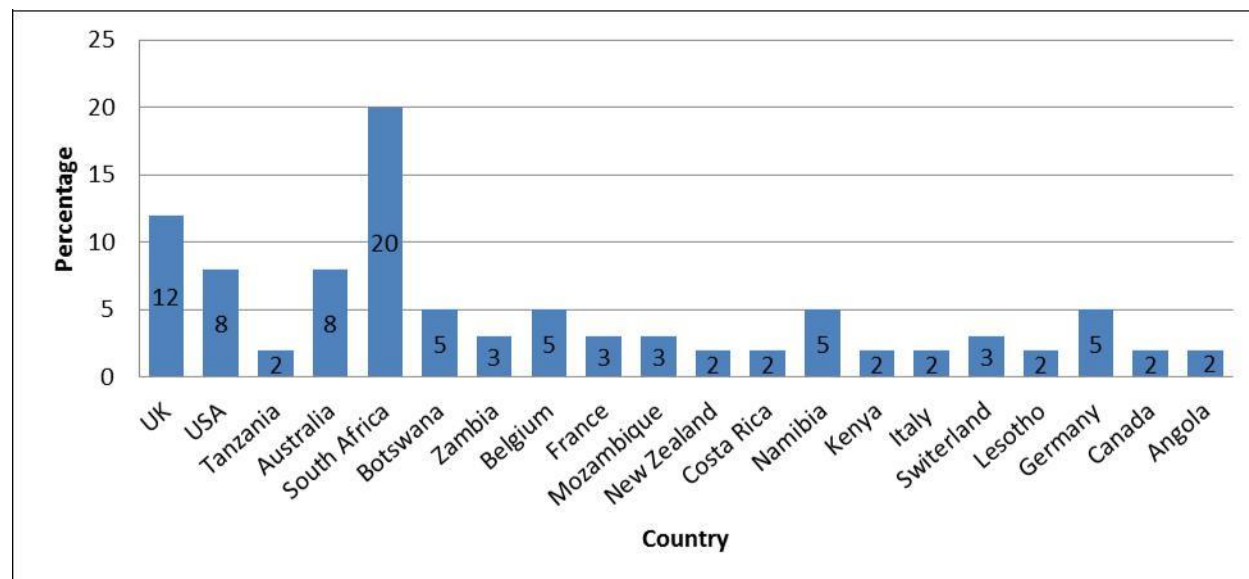
Figure 1: The sources of tourist information

The tourism sector has virtually become an information industry as tourist decisions are now based on the information available to them before visiting. Findings indicated that 58% of the tourists interviewed, used websites to get information about Zimbabwe. Websites and social media are very influential sites for would-be travellers in their decision making in terms of where to go, what destination to choose, where to stay or what to do at a destination. Would-be tourists trust social media and websites like www.tripadvisor.com as these provide first hand advice from other travellers.

It is also important to note that the majority of tourists use a variety of sources to get information about the destination. Traditional methods like travel books (13%), magazines (8%) travel agency (7%), tourism companies (3%), travel fairs (3%) and tourism ambassadors (2%) still play a significant role in providing information to tourists. In spite of the majority of respondents using websites as a source of information when it comes to the booking of services, only 12% use websites, 10% use e-mails, and 8% use telephone

services. It is interesting to note that a significant number of 28% use travel agents and 12% use tour operators. The rest of the tourists booked in person (25%) and 13% used friends and relatives to make the bookings on their behalf. This shows that there is low usage of electronic services utilized in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Most of the tourists (60%) indicated that it was their first visit to Zimbabwe while 40% stated that they had been to Zimbabwe before. The high rate of first time visitors may be indicative of successful marketing campaigns by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and potential of repeat visits in the future.

Figure 2 shows that the majority (56%) of payments for services was made in cash. This points to the fact that there is still a prevalent use of cash in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. This is despite the fact that the majority (58%) used websites to get information on Zimbabwe and that tourists prefer to use electronic payment services and do not want to move around with cash (Maswera, Dawson & Edwards, 2008). The other methods that were used are credit cards (30%), Western Union (4%) and wire transfers (11%). Furthermore the results show that 13% of payments are made outside Zimbabwe that the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) noted was subject to potential leakages in the earnings due to weakness associated with transparency and accountability of tourism payments made offshore (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2014). From the results, it was revealed that 13% of the payments were paid to South Africa whilst Australia, Zambia, Netherlands, Australia, UK and USA got 2% apiece.
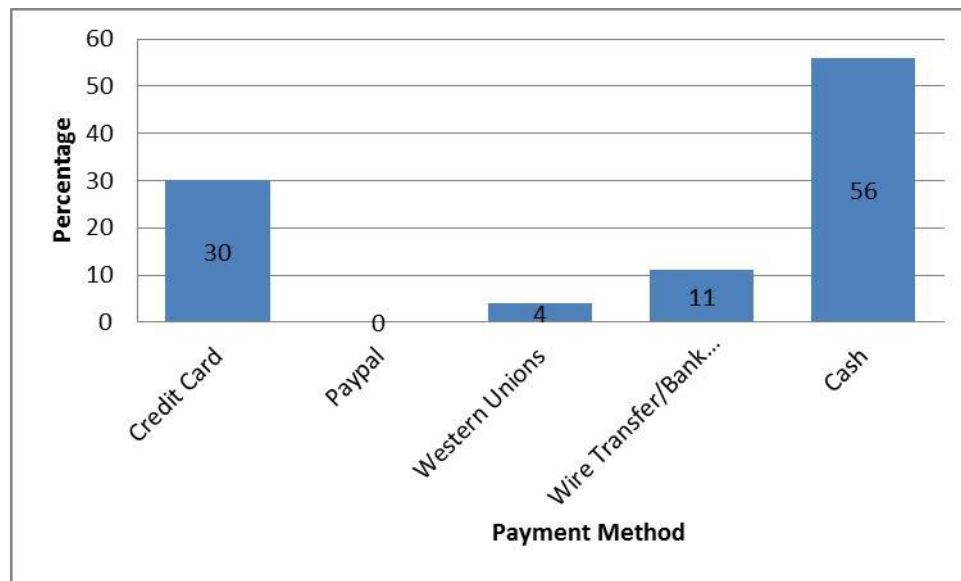
Figure 2: Methods of Payment.

The results of the survey showed that tourists in Zimbabwe face an array of ICT-related challenges. The primary challenge being the low speed of Internet (24%), as tourists want to use the Internet during their stay. Neuhofe, Buhalis & Ladkin (2014) argue that tourists want to communicate with their social circles and help in co-creating their experience. This cannot be achieved if the Internet speed is slow. In addition to this challenge, respondents indicated that they often had difficulty in finding Internet access points.

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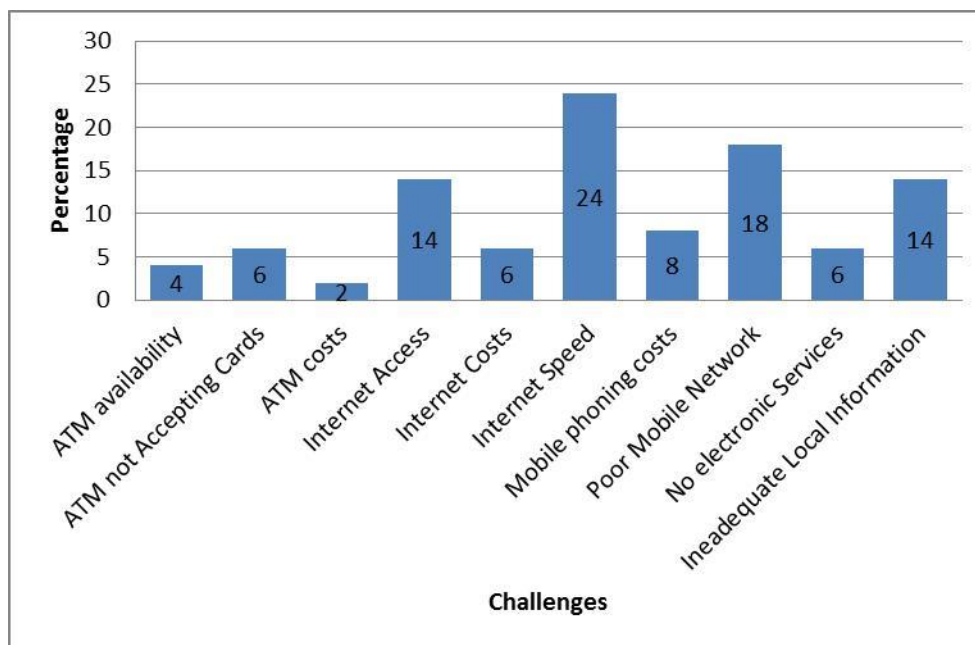
Figure 3: Challenges faced by tourists.

Figure 3 shows that 14% of the respondents complained that they had no access to the Internet and, those who obtained access to Internet (6%) felt that the cost of Internet of average USD$1 for 40 minutes was too expensive. The other major challenge identified in the results is poor mobile networks that made it difficult to receive calls even though they were on roaming. Buying a Zimbabwean SIM card did not help either as the network problems persisted. Even though the mobile network access was poor, 8% were of the opinion that the mobile phone charges were high averaging USD$0,24 per minute for international calls.

A further challenge that was identified is that of inadequate availability of local information. The tourists found it difficult to find local information about activities, banks and other ancillary services. Further challenges included the lack of availability of ATMs as experienced by 4% of the respondents. However, 6% of those who managed to find the ATMs, indicated that they were unable to draw funds as their electronic cards were not accepted by the Zimbabwean banks. The majority of the ATMs in Zimbabwe only accept VISA and MasterCard. American Express cards and Diners Club are for example not catered for. Additionally, there is no in-store ATMs in Zimbabwe as they are found only at banks.

4.2 Results from the Government

Senior civil servants were interviewed to obtain government views on policy directions. Based on the interviews, it was deduced that the current policies of the government are based on the economic blueprint titled the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). This document contains major policy announcements for all areas of the economy. Civil servants stated that the fiscal policy statements from the ministry of finance and the monetary statements from the RBZ were used to guide their operations. It was made clear that the government was experiencing financial challenges. On other hand they stated that government assumed that it had provided infrastructure to enable ICT to be used in all areas of the economy including tourism. It was mentioned that the government is in the process of implementing e-government and has introduced e-visa. The e-visa is currently open to nationals from China and India. From the interviews it became apparent that after successfully co-hosting the United Nations World Tourism Organization conference, the government wants to encourage and diversify into the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE)

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niche market. The government wants international meetings, conventions and exhibitions to be hosted in the country.

4.3 Results from the Governmental Organizations

As part of the study, interviews and observations were made of ten trade associations and governmental bodies in the tourism sector. Although the study showed that organizations in the sector have the hardware infrastructure they are varied and at different level of granularity. Most organizations use ICT for basic office, finance and human resources functions. All the studied organizations were not involved in software development and their systems were not integrated. In most of the cases (52%) the highest ranking ICT personnel were in the lower management and 15% was in the top management though they did not report directly to the Chief Executive Officer. A total of 20% of the organizations have ICT management committee and 80% does not have. The lack of ICT management committees results in failure to articulate ICT issues at management level.

In all organizations studied, there was no ICT committee at board level hence the board do not sufficiently carry its oversight role on ICT activities. In all the organizations surveyed, there was no scheduled training for staff as most of the trainings were needs based. This could also be explained a significant number of organizations that outsource (42%) their ICT functions.
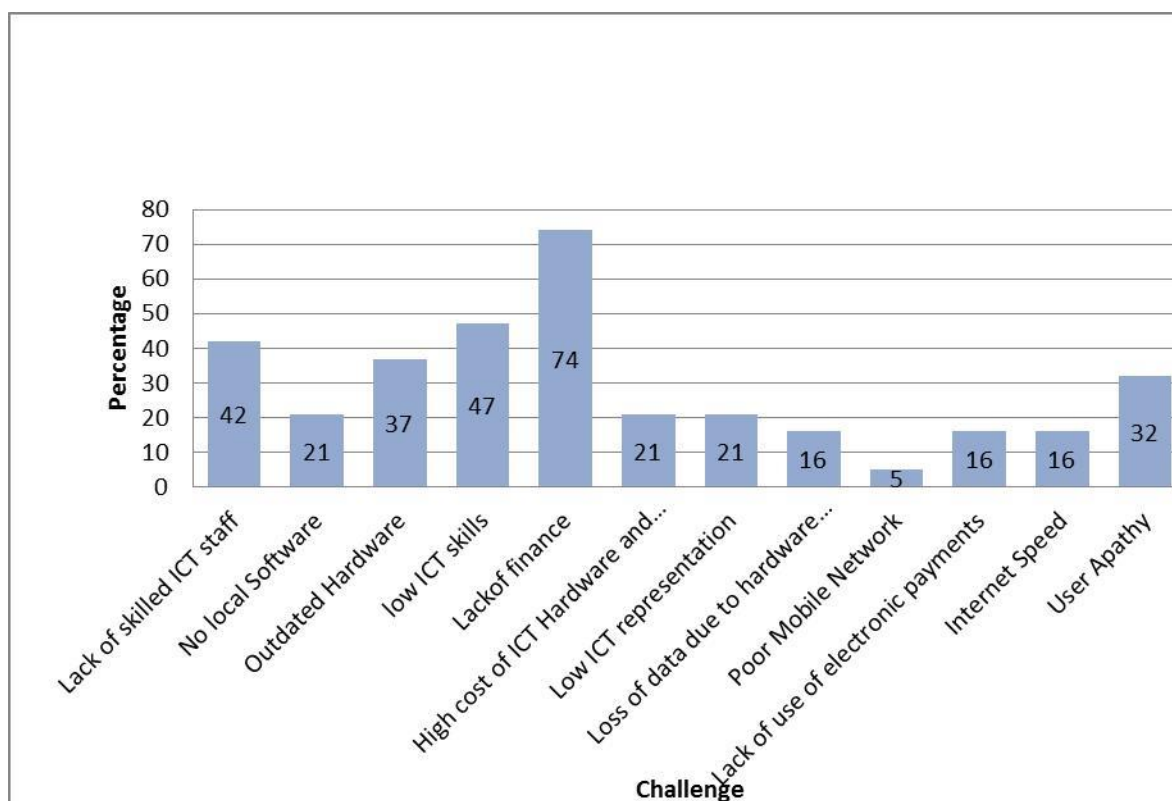

Figure 4: Challenges faced by governmental organizations

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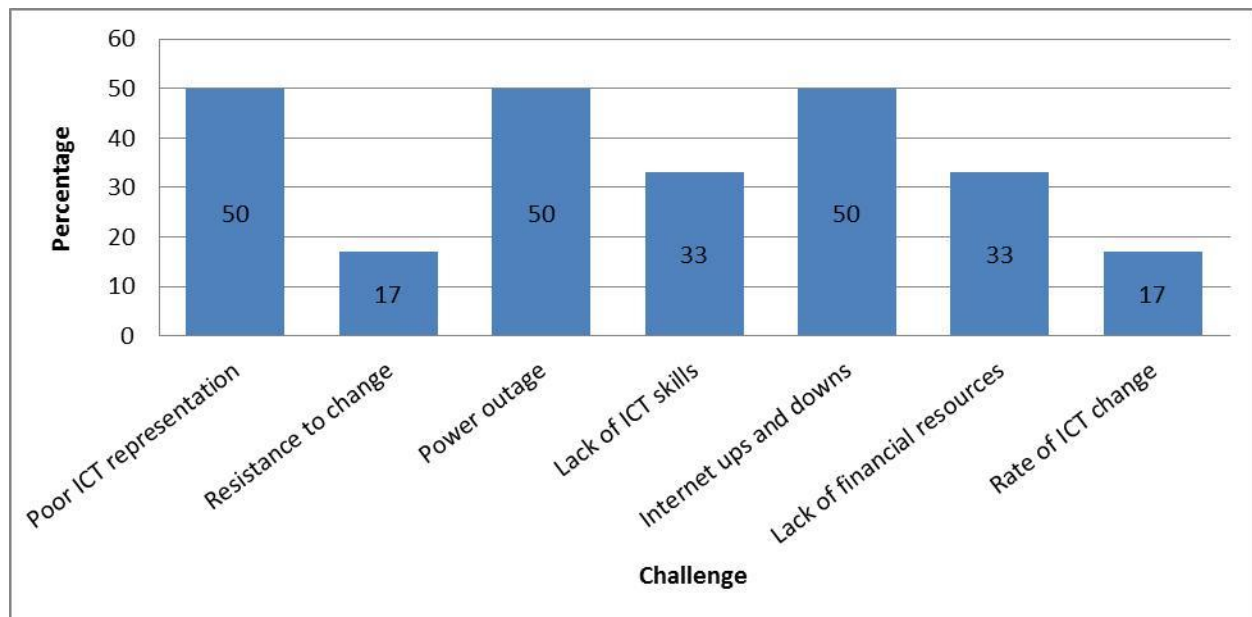*1-4th October, The ICT University, Yaoundé Cameroon*

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The survey revealed that there are many challenges facing governmental organizations and these hamper them from fully utilising ICT. Figure 4 shows that 74% of the respondents revealed that the greatest challenge faced by governmental organizations in the tourism sector was the lack of finance. As a critical factor, the lack of finance results in other challenges such as the failure to attract skilled ICT staff (42%), and low ICT skills (47%). The participants stated that the other reason for the lack of skills arises from the fact that ICT is continuously evolving; hence the skills valued today may not be required in the next few years. The next challenge was high cost of hardware and software (21%) as the price of hardware is comparatively higher in Zimbabwe than in its neighbour countries. Furthermore the participants especially at lower levels of the organisations identified out-dated hardware (37%) as another challenge. Out-dated hardware may have compatibility challenges with new software. The other big challenge is that the ICT department, at organizational level, is not properly represented at the top echelons of organizations.

Moreover, a total of 16% felt that the Internet speed was very slow thereby affecting their operations. The other challenge was that users often resist changes because of lack of training and constant introduction of new versions of software.

A further challenge is loss of data due to hardware failure (21%) and this problem can easily be solved if data is backed-up. The failure to do this shows poor ICT practices and skills. A skilled person will ensure that data is backed-up on a regular basis, ensuring that all the data generated in the past is safe and secure. Additionally the limited use of electronic payment services was another problem identified by 16% of the respondents. The limited use of electronic payments is hindering business, as companies cannot sell their services to tourists who prefer not to carry large sums of money. Allowing the use of electronic payments would be a huge enabler for growth in the sector.

4.4 Results from Private operators

The majority of tour operators in Zimbabwe are largely Small and Medium Enterprises and the large corporates being a handful (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012). The challenges faced by corporates are almost similar to the ones outlined for government-controlled organizations. The number of ICT personnel in medium enterprises was generally between one and three who are mainly engaged in user support. None of the surveyed organizations were involved in software development or web development. This can explain why 67% of the websites were developed and managed outside the organization. Some of the outsourced websites are hosted outside Zimbabwe. In most cases, these websites were rarely updated, as the outside vendors usually demand payment upfront before they update the websites. It was also revealed that most of the websites that receive payments were hosted outside Zimbabwe. This creates mistrust with monetary authorities that are not sure if the money is remitted back to Zimbabwe (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2014). The surveyed organizations were all using a computer-based financial system and 50% also had a computer-based reservation system as such it reveals that ICT is mainly used to ease administrative purposes as opposed to operations. Furthermore only 20% of the organizations had ICT strategic plans accompanied with ad-hoc budgeting indicating that there is limited planning as far as ICT strategy is concerned.

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Figure 5: Challenges faced by private organizations

The survey also revealed that in 50% of the organizations ICT positions, was lowly represented as they occupied first-line management level and below. ICT personnel do not have the opportunity to articulate their issues to management. The problem is further compounded by management that sometimes procure ICT equipment without consulting them. However, when equipment fail, or require high costs for maintenance ICT personnel are always blamed. Power outages (50%) due to power shortages in the country were also another problem that was constantly cited by the respondents. This forces organizations to buy diesel or petrol powered generators and this pushes up the operation costs. The major problem was unreliable network connectivity. This for instance disrupts systems that depend on the availability of Internet and riles tourists.

The lack of financial resources was indicated by 33% of respondents in this category as hindering the private organisations in the sector from effectively leveraging ICT. Also another 33% of respondents believed that there were no adequate ICT skilled personnel that lead to the outsourcing of ICT support services. However 44% of surveyed organisations outsource ICT services because they do not have standalone ICT department. Furthermore a total of 17% cited a concern on the constant change or advances ICT requiring staff to learn new skills as a challenge that causes some of the employees to resist change. Furthermore the lack of budget for ICT training was cited as another reason for resistance to change. Training is critical to help organizations to improve ICT readiness, adoption and usage within organizations.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Based on the findings presented in Section 4, a few implications, concerns and trends were identified. The general various themes and categories of information can be used towards the formulation of a strategy for ICT implementation in the tourism industry. Provisional components for the proposed strategy include, but are not limited to, best practices and policies. Figure 6 depicts the core elements that will be used towards the formulation of the proposed strategy.
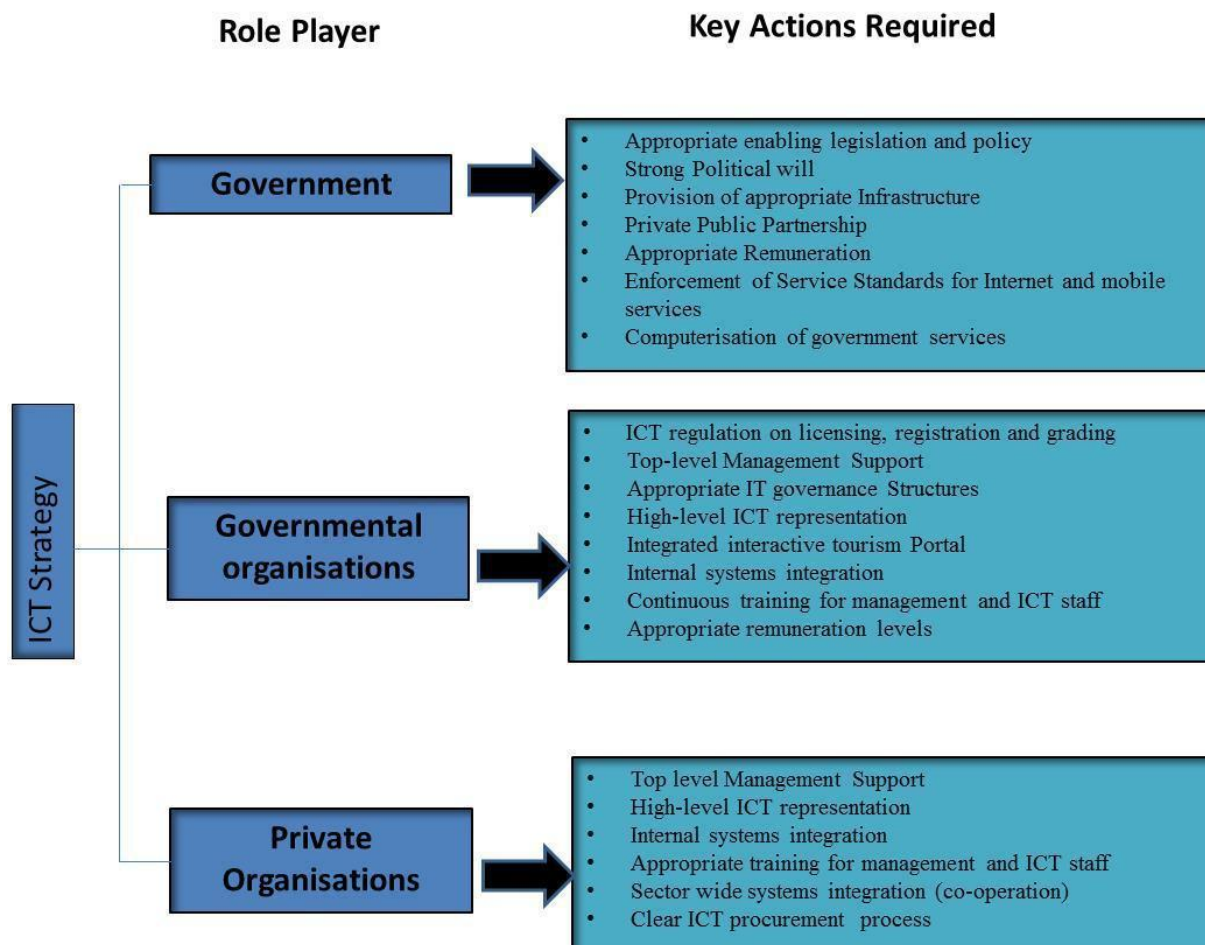
Figure 6: Key elements towards the proposed strategy

The proposed elements highlighted in Figure 6 identified key actions required from the government, government organisations and private organizations. These key actions are briefly discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.1 Government

Actions required from government include having appropriate legislation and policies that enforce and monitor use of ICT particularly on the licensing, registration process and grading of tourism organizations. The results in this paper highlight the lack of electronic payment facilities as a major challenge and that the government should enable the use of a variety of electronic payments. Tourism requires telecommunication connectivity, good roads network and other supporting infrastructure. The government should embrace the use of public-private partnerships to build robust infrastructure in tourist resort areas as neither government nor the private sector can do it alone. In-order to good telecommunication service the government should enforce service standards on Internet and mobile services providers and penalise such providers for poor services.

The government should also take the lead by fully computerising its operations; hence the need to attract skilled staff by giving appropriate remuneration as this will help to attract skilled staff. Poor remuneration results in a high staff turnover. This factor applies also to both the government and private organizations. All the factors discussed under this section will depend on a strong political will.

5.2 Government Organisations and Private Organisations

The value of ICT depends on how companies exploit ICT to enhance their management processes and operations. ICT assets on their own can produce no value to a company; whereas ICT assets entrenched in a company's daily operations are usually found to be indispensable – as a multi-purpose technology. This calls for appropriate IT governance structures. IT governance is achieving strategic alignment between business and ICT, in-order to make sure that money spent on ICT is delivering business value. The governance will also determine how ICT will be represented at management and board level as well as the procurement of ICT equipment. The governance structure will also determine key performance indicators for ICT. However the success of the entity depends on how top management supports the ICT function, as they are the custodians of organisational resources.

There must an interactive portal for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. It must also be able to interface with databases of related companies and allow virtual tours, videos, online bookings and payments. However for the system to be integrated, organizations must ensure that all their internal systems are integrated first. The system can only then be enabled to interface with other systems. The portal must be managed by a pool of skilled people from diverse backgrounds like; marketing, communication, advertising and web development. The portal must have, for example, _clickable' maps showing hotels, resorts and places of interest on each site on the map as well as revenue sharing agreements.

Universities and colleges must add more ICT-related courses, relevant to the tourism sector in their curriculum. Refresher courses must be constantly provided to both management and ICT personnel to brace up with constant advancements of technology.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted that there is lack of government policy, together with the implementation thereof. This is further exuberated by the absence of ICT legislation that provides an enabling environment for ICT use. There is also an inconsistent data network and unreliable power supply in Zimbabwe. The tourism sector requires reliable, uninterrupted and low service connectivity in the form of telephone networks, Internet networks and constant power supply. As there is no online payment gateway in Zimbabwe, the country can benefit from an integrated system for marketing, bookings and payments that accommodates most international credit cards.

At organizational level, even though management recognise the importance of ICT and its capabilities, there is lack of commitment and leadership to entrench ICT into core business operations. In most organisations there is a governance problem as ICT persons who are supposed to implement ICT strategies are not represented at management and board levels. Furthermore, there are no clear decision rights between management and ICT personnel. Organizations in the sector must train, support and capacitate their staff to effectively utilize relevant ICT services as huge ICT investments in the hands of unskilled manpower will not improve performance.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH

The main purpose of this study was to gain deep insight into the current position and utilization of ICT in the tourism sector. This was accomplished by means of an extensive case study using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Future research will entail using the key elements, identified during the data collection phase, to feed into a strategy to integrate ICT into the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

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AN ICT STRATEGY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: A CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT:
This research has sought to propose a strategy for the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. In order to achieve the above-mentioned objective, this research, which is a comprehensive case study into the tourism sector of Zimbabwe, has deployed semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observations and netnograghy to collect the data. The case study was carried out, in accordance with the case study guidelines, as outlined by Yin, and guided by the interpretive paradigm. After a further analysis of the results, the results that pointed to the same aspect were grouped together; and various deductions were made, as a diagnosis of the identified problem. The identified problems were synthesised into seven diagnostics. A guiding policy was then identified for each of the diagnostics, leading to a set of coherent actions, derived from each of the identified guiding policies. The research also showed the implementation of the coherent set of actions that consist of three layers. These are: government, regulator and service providers. This research contributes to ICT4D literature; and it has provided an ICT strategy for sustainable development in the tourism sector for appropriate interventions from government and other role-players in the tourism sector.

KEYWORDS: ICT strategy, Sustainable development, tourism sector, Zimbabwe

1. INTRODUCTION
ICT usage has become indispensable in developing, reaching, and managing, as well as distributing tourism products worldwide. It exists as a source of information and a confidence booster; since the ultimate choice of preferred tourist destinations depends on the available information, and not on the actual destination itself (Hsu & Li, 2015; Park & Jang, 2013). Prospective tourists nowadays have more information and a variety of destination choices (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012). The rapid developments in ICT have revolutionised the operations, and the way companies and countries lure tourists, thereby resulting in stiff competition in the global tourism sector.

Tourism has the potential to be the major driver of economic wealth in the 21st century. The tourism sector has immense poverty-alleviation potential and a multiplier effect on the economy and the supply chain (Davidson & Sahli, 2015; Rogerson, 2013). It contributes significantly to the national economy through wealth-creation, employment-creation and foreign-currency generation. It also contributes to export earnings and the national Gross Domestic Product (Davidson & Sahli, 2015). The importance of tourism to the economy is testified by the fact that in some economies, such as Rwanda, it is now a major

foreign currency earner, when compared with the traditional industries, such as tea and coffee(Uwamariya et al., 2015) . Tourism is arguably a multi-billion, multi-sectorial as well, as a multi-dimensional sector, which has a direct and indirect impact on an economy (Sundar, 2016).

The direct impact refers to those economic activities generated by business that directly deal with tourists; whilst the indirect impacts are those economic activities, which are enabled by the vibrancy and the multiplier effect of the tourism sector.

2.   PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

The tourism sector has become important in driving the economies of many countries (Baker, 2015). ICT has been widely acknowledged as having great potential for transforming the tourism sector through the determination to attract more tourists, or to boost the tourism sector. However, in Zimbabwe, there is a lack of any apparent and clear strategy for the effective usage and integration of ICT to enhance the tourism sector in Zimbabwe after its initial adoption (Ruhode, 2016). Therefore, the objective of this research paper is to develop an ICT strategy-sustainable tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The research was motivated by the apparent lack of utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector and related services, which continued to be offered in the traditional, fragmented and unco-ordinated way.

3.   THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE ICT STRATEGY

This section will provide the background, on which the proposed ICT strategy will be founded. A strategy is defined as "a unified comprehensive and integrated plan relating the strategic advantages of the enterprise or country to the challenges of the environment. It is designed to ensure that basic objectives are achieved" (Glueck 1980, p. 9),. A strategy is not a destination, but a road map for success (de Ruijter, 2016). It is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It determines how a country is positioned in a particular market for competition. In fact, a strategy helps an organisation to focus its efforts in a unified direction. A well-formulated strategy is indispensable to the sustainability and growth of any organisation or country (Karami, 2012).

Firstly, the literature describing the various approaches to strategy formulation was used as the theoretical foundation of a strategy formulation process. The existing formulation strategies that were used are from Goldman and Nieuwenhuizen (2006), Enz (2009), Tesone (2012) and Christiansen (2014), respectively. The motivation for selecting these strategies was their close alignment with this research project. These strategies mentioned above were consolidated to provide the basis for devising a strategic formulation model most appropriate for this project, as illustrated in Figure 1. The proposed strategic formulation model borrows relevant concepts from the above strategies; and it has been applied in this research.
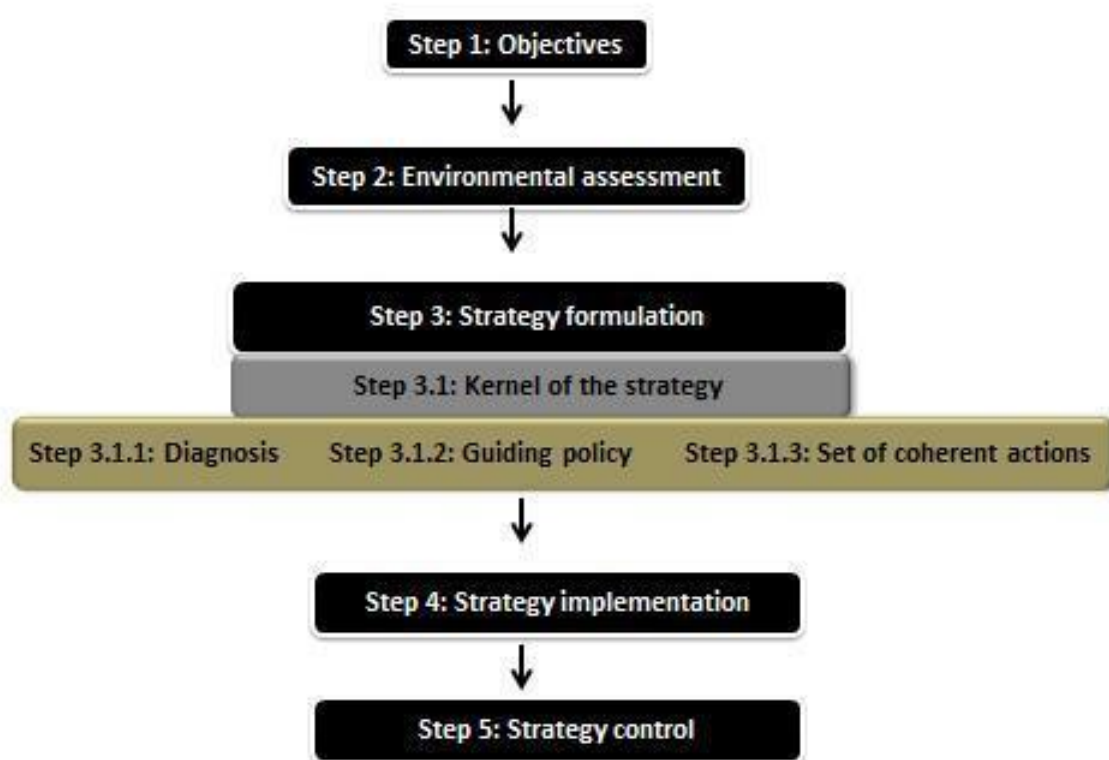
Figure 1: Proposed strategic formulation model

The fundamental ingredient of any strategy formulation process is to set objectives, which guide the direction and path to be taken. A strategy is an all-encompassing plan, which involves the allocation of resources – in an endeavour to realise the objectives. It is the complement between strategy and *objectives*, which results in the choice of objectives to replace mission and vision. *Environmental assessment* involves analysing both the internal and external environments, in order to understand the factors that affect that specific sector, and in this case, the tourism sector. It requires the involvement of all the stakeholders. There are many techniques that can be used to conduct an environmental assessment (Goldman & Nieuwenhuizen, 2006). These include a SWOT analysis (Rothaermel, 2016), a PESTEL analysis (Cooper & Downer, 2012), Porter's competitive-force model (Rothaermel, 2016), a resource view model (Robinson & Pearce, 2014), and a value chain analysis (Savino et al., 2015)

This research has adopted an approach proposed by Rumelt (2011). In this approach, Rumelt (2011) proposes a three-stage approach towards formulating the kernel of a strategy. The kernel of a strategy provides the logical structure, which acts as a guide in reasoning and ensuring that a quality strategy is developed. The kernel of the strategy comprises three distinct, but related elements, namely: *diagnosis, guiding policy and a set of coherent actions*.

Diagnosis is a core component of strategy that defines the nature of the challenge, identifying the critical aspects of the situation directly from the environmental assessment, and the obstacles that have to be overcome. *Guiding policies* specify the overall approach of dealing with the obstacles identified during the diagnosis. It is 'guiding' because it channels action in a certain direction, without defining exactly what needs to be done.

A *set of coherent actions* are steps, policies, resource commitments and actions designed to activate the guiding policy. The three elements discussed above, from the kernel of the strategy, are core to the eventual strategy. *Strategy implementation* involves following

the guiding policy and executing the set of coherent actions identified in the strategy formulation process. *Strategy control* links the elements of the strategy formulation process together, and helps to assess their effectiveness, as well as supporting the continual revision of the strategy.

4.   METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfil the above research objectives, the methodology employed to address the objective above is based on an extensive, comprehensive case study in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, involving the deployment of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The research was conducted, in accordance with the case study guidelines outlined by Yin (2014). According to Yin (2014), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. In most cases, it is used when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly visible or noticeable. Furthermore, case studies permit the use of multiple sources of evidence. In this case, the real-life phenomenon is to identify the impact of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe was chosen for this research; because it is a developing country that is currently recovering from a decade of economic recession; hence, the results may be limited because of the contextual and technological variations. However, the results can be generalised to Southern and Eastern African countries, which generally have the same contextual and technological situations as Zimbabwe.

4.1   The Data Collection

The data collection involved semi-structured interviews with various role players in the tourism industry. Typically, the interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. The role-players interviewed included two officials from the national government, 11 interviewees from the regulator, and 29 interviewees from service providers. The interviews were held in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Matopos, Hwange and the Victoria Falls. As mentioned, the interviews followed a semi-structured nature. A Zimbabwean annual premier tourism expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani World Travel and Tourism Africa Fair was also attended, in order to understand and interact with various players, and to conduct formal and informal interviews.

The questionnaires, completed by tourists, were administered in Harare, Hwange, the Victoria Falls, Matopos, Beitbridge and Kazungula Boarder Post. As argued by Walliman (2005), personal delivery has the advantage of being able to help clarify the questions put to the respondents. Secondly, it provides the advantage of being able to persuade the respondents; and this could help to get a higher response rate. The process of persuading the prospective respondents requires the good skills of building rapport and persuasion. An online version of the questionnaire was also administered. The questionnaire link was e-mailed to the tourists, as some of the tourists did not have sufficient time to complete the questionnaires during their stay in Zimbabwe; and they had agreed to do so via email.

A total of 37 hard-copy questionnaires, as well as 23 online questionnaires, were completed were completed by the tourists. The intensive review of the most prominent websites offering online tourists travel reviews, i.e. www.tripadvisor.com was done. A total of 113 comments and reviews, which referred to ICT-related subjects, where considered appropriate and relevant for the study.

4.2   The Data Analysis

The data were analysed qualitatively, in accordance with the method of Braun and Clarke (2006). The data were analysed in two phases, consisting of structured coding and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was informed by the six phases of thematic analysis, as proposed

by Braun and Clarke (2006). Key factors were identified through structural coding and thematic analysis. Country-specific, sector-specific factors, as well as organisational factors were for tourists, government, and regulator and service providers. Multiple iterations ensured that the identified themes were accurate and complete. In situations where different responses pointed to the same aspect, a broad key phrase was identified, in order to provide one common description for the unstructured data. The frequency of each code was tallied and converted into a percentage for each of the categories. However, this section will not provide a detailed and extensive report on the data captured and analysed; but the relevant aspects thereof will be reported in Section 5, below, where the strategy is devised.

5.   DEVELOPMENT OF THE ICT STRATEGY
The strategy formulation model was devised, based on the theoretical foundations described above and applied to the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Contextualising the devised strategy formulation model would result in the strategy set as being the goal for this research. In this section, the specific details of the study are discussed in the context of the guiding model depicted in Figure 1.

5.1   Objective
As outlined above, there will be no explicit vision and mission, but rather these are represented by objectives. The relevant arms of government have already pronounced their vision and mission for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. However, the vision and mission spelt out in the government blueprint and the policy documents lack clearly defined objectives, as part of an extensive strategy. The main objective of this research was to devise an ICT strategy for sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe.

5.2   The Environmental Analysis
The environmental analysis was done through stakeholder engagement. It involved an extensive case study of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, involving the use of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and netnography that focused on the usage and integration of ICT. The data collection exercise was intended to explore the experiences of international tourists on how they were using ICT and the challenges they were facing. An extensive data-collection exercise was conducted over a period of four months, in the form of a case study involving the most relevant role-players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

The internal environment consisted of the government ministries, regulators and tourism service providers; and the external stakeholders were the international tourists to Zimbabwe. These constituted the relevant social groups, from whom first-hand information – to fully understand the current position and utilisation of ICT in Zimbabwe – could be obtained. It was considered that the case study adequately covered all the information required for the environmental assessment. The next subsection will discuss how the results of the case study were analysed, in order to identify the challenges, gaps and weaknesses in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

5.3   Diagnosis
The results of the environmental assessment provided pertinent and reliable information to assess the status of ICT integration and usage in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The environmental assessment helped to identify the challenges, gaps and weaknesses of the current infrastructure, human resources, legislation, policies and regulations, as well as the actual use of ICT. After a thorough assessment of the environment, the results were synthesised into seven diagnostics, as presented below.

a) **Diagnostic 1: Infrastructure and enabling services (D1)**

Factors, such as: internet challenges, poor and highly priced mobile networks, power outages, limited electronic systems, and the unavailability of real-time booking systems, as well as ATMs, were identified as some of the hampering issues in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Tourists cannot share their experiences back home with their family and friends in near real-time. They are also limited in spending money; because they cannot access cash. From the diagnosis of all the six factors mentioned above, it may be deduced that there is a problem in the infrastructure and the enabling services. There is a problem of limited or restricted access to the required electronic services required by the tourists before they can visit the country and during their stay. This is of great importance; as the infrastructure in a country has a great potential to determine the attractiveness of the country as a tourism destination (Fetscherin & Stephano, 2016; Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2015).

b) **Diagnostic 2: Electronic customer relationship management (D2)**

The second diagnostic was the problem of poor electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM). The tourism sector lacked the critical information that was required by the tourists in decision-making. Important information on the potential destinations is still missing on many websites in Zimbabwe. Most organisations rarely responded to queries; and those that did so took longer to attend to customer reports, requests, queries and complaints. In some instances, organisations had outdated information on their websites; and they did not have a platform for customers to comment on the services provided. There was a mismatch of information and the services offered – mainly because of the outdated information advertised. The speed of transaction was generally slow; because the services are offered in a fragmented way; while at times there were power outages. There were also problems associated with poor bookings caused by confused reservations, which resulted in unnecessary arguments and delays. The unavailability of adequate information on the websites also led to the loss of sales by the organisations; since many tourists had opted to go to other destinations.

c) **Diagnostic 3: Lack of collaboration and poor system integration (D3)**

The third diagnostic was a lack of collaboration and system integration. The findings revealed that the organisations in the tourism sector were fragmented. There is a lack of instantaneous information sharing between the organisation and other members of the supply chain. The main challenge is that there is no standardization of database formats and structures, which makes the sharing of information difficult. The absence of information sharing results in the duplication of services, which continue to be delivered in a traditionally fragmented way. Tourism products and services are usually produced by a range of tourist businesses. There is also no lack of synergies between organisational departments; and in most cases, they operate in silos. Furthermore, there is no also real-time information integration across the different departments. Systems in organisations are not fully integrated, which breeds data redundancy, thereby jeopardising the benefits of the ICT. Time is wasted; as reports and documents are compiled from different unlinked systems, which reduce the speed and efficiency. The challenges that exist also include outdated communication methods. This results in a lack of collaboration amongst the various role-players.

d) **Diagnostic 4: Policy and regulation (D4)**

The fourth diagnostic is that of poor policy and regulation for the adoption and implementation of ICT in the tourism sector. There is a lack of political will in Zimbabwe, as clearly indicated by the absence of ICT regulation/legislation to promote the use of ICT and to deal with legal issues that emanate from ICT; for example, e-transactions are not

supported. There is no recognition of business agreements made online, and the use of digital signatures is not considered valid. This is because the government policies require that all official documents should conform to the Official Secrets Act, which states that all official documents should be physically signed and should not be transmitted electronically. This contradiction has a negative effect on the implementation and use of ICT in the tourism sector. Consequently, there is an obvious lack of clear government policy in the tourism sector.

e) Diagnostic 5: Financial resources (D5)

The fifth diagnostic in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe is the lack of financial resources. Financial resources are required for the acquisition of infrastructure, the training of staff and attracting, as well as retaining, skilled staff. The unavailability of finances affects the training of staff and the payment of workers and service providers. There are also budgetary constraints – resulting in the low prioritisation of ICT. This affects the ability and quality of services, resulting in outdated hardware and poor entrenchment of ICT in their daily operations. It also affects the services offered. This negatively affects the adoption of ICT; since many of the organisations tend to use outdated hardware, software and systems.

f) Diagnostic 6: Human skills development (D6)

The next diagnostic was the poor development of human resource skills. The tourism sector suffers from the 'brain drain', like any other sector in Zimbabwe, resulting in a massive loss and exodus of skilled labour. In general, employees in the sector are not well skilled; normally they are too specialised, for example, most ICT personnel understand technology; but they do not comprehend its implications for the whole organisation. The lack of financial resources has also hindered the development of ICT personnel.

g) Diagnostic 7: Poor ICT governance (D7)

The seventh diagnostic made was poor ICT governance. ICT practitioners, who are supposed to implement ICT strategies, are generally not represented at senior management and board levels, thereby depriving ICT personnel of the opportunity to articulate their important issues. The problem is further compounded by management procuring ICT equipment – without consulting the ICT personnel. At the organisational level, even though management recognises the importance of ICT and its capabilities, there is a lack of commitment by senior management to entrench ICT into their core business operations.

There is a clear lack of synergy between ICT and other departments, who work as if they are separate entities divorced from each other, although they are all in one organisation. There is a need for a typical steering committee that comprises representatives from all the related departments. The ICT governance structure shows how ICT is represented in management and board level, as well as the procurement of ICT equipment. ICT-related issues are not well represented at the various strategic levels of management. This has resulted in important ICT decisions being made – without any input from the ICT staff. There is no clarity, as to who is responsible and accountable for ICT decisions; since ICT practitioners generally occupy lower level positions; and they are not normally involved in negotiating contracts with outsiders. Management sometimes procures ICT equipment without consulting the ICT personnel, resulting in low-quality services. There is also poor ICT strategic alignment between company and ICT strategy, resulting in a lack of synergy between the ICT departments and other departments. The departments work as separate entities, despite being in the same organisation.

In this subsection, the challenges facing the tourism sector have been diagnosed. The challenges were diagnosed as: the lack of infrastructure and enabling services, e-customer relationship management, the lack of collaboration and poor system integration, policy and regulation, the lack of financial resources, poor ICT governance; while the last one was poor human resources development. The next subsection will look at the guiding policy for each of the seven diagnostics.

5.4 The guiding policy

In order to respond to and solve the seven identified diagnostics, a guiding policy needs to be identified for each of the seven diagnostics. For the first diagnosis, enabling services and infrastructure, the guiding policy of access is suggested. The guiding policy for poor customer relationship management is termed; *Ubuntu* and *devolution of power to lower levels of the organisation*, to assist customers quickly. For effective tourism services, customer-focused systems are preferred. The suggested guiding policies for this problem are *system thinking* and *customer focus*. The tourism role-players in Zimbabwe should appreciate that tourists view the Zimbabwe tourism product as a complete experience – from the time a tourist leaves home to the time he/she returns. Any problem by one role-player will effectively affect how tourists view the Zimbabwean tourism product. Customer focus entails role-players committing to put customers' needs and concerns first in an innovative way, instead of systems that best serve organisational needs ignoring the needs, and have negative impact on the tourists. Systems must be designed to best serve the tourists – without necessarily inconveniencing them.

It was also noted that most of the services are still predominantly bureaucratic and manual. There is no ICT legislation to deal with the legal issues that emanate from ICT. Therefore, the suggested guiding policy for poor regulation is a *strong political will* by the government for the development and utilisation of ICT services. A guiding policy for the lack of finance is *strategic resource allocation* and *investment*. Other guiding policies are *stakeholder involvement, skills development* and *ICT governance,* as explained in the following subsection. Each of these will be discussed in more detail below.

a) Guiding Policy 1: Access (GP 1)

In order to solve the challenge of the infrastructure, the guiding policy for the challenges of infrastructure and enabling services would be adequate and effective *access. 'Access'* refers to the availability and accessibility of various ICT infrastructures, capturing their readiness (Dobrota, Martic, Bulajic, & Jeremic, 2015). Enhancing access to the infrastructure and enabling services is critical to the success of the tourism sector.

b) Guiding Policy 2: Ubuntu (GP 2)

Poor customer relationship management was diagnosed as a challenge in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The suggested guiding policy for poor customer relationship management is *Ubuntu and the devolution of power to lower levels of the organisation*. The concept of *Ubuntu* is derived from the African culture, which teaches friendliness, hospitality and welcoming – in addition to showing love and treating others with dignity and respect (Ramose, 1999). Ramose (1999), explained that the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is made up of the principles of sharing and caring (communalism) for one another in the society. Ubuntu also encourages compassion, dignity, reciprocity and harmony (Tomaselli, 2009). Therefore, applying the same philosophy to the tourism sector would ensure that the players in the sector are included in a culture of caring, as well as sharing resources and using information and communication technology.

c) Guiding Policy 3: Devolution of power (GP 3)

In addition to *Ubuntu*, power needs to be decentralised, in order to give employees at various levels power to make fast and informed decisions, which support the organisational operations and to serve the customers efficiently. This can be achieved by using the power of ICT to increase customer satisfaction. ICT can enable the efficient provision of marketing information and the management of bookings for accommodation, as well as the hiring of equipment, vehicles and aircrafts. Tourists should be able instantly to access menus from their ICT devices and to pay through some online system.

d) Guiding Policy 4: System thinking (GP 4)

System thinking involves an understanding of the whole tourism sector by examining the linkages and the interactions between the role-players that comprise the entire tourism sector (Becken, 2013). It entails viewing the various role-players in the sector in relationship to their environment. It was critical to understand the interdependencies among the various role-players; since the tourism sector is a holistic system. The role-players are affected differently by the same factors

e) Guiding Policy 5: Customer focus (GP 5)

As mentioned in the preceding subsection, the guiding policy for the problem of lack of collaboration, system integration, and information sharing is *customer focus*. *Customer focus* entails various role-players in the tourism sector collaborating and serving tourists in the best possible way through seamlessness. Furthermore, it seeks to understand, analyse, design and construct the tourism sector, as an integrated and complex interconnection of many systems working together successfully to provide a service to tourists. This calls for seamlessness among the various tourism role-players. The various role-players should commit to put customer needs and concerns, firstly in an innovative way, in order to best serve them and deal with any dissatisfaction.

f) Guiding Policy 6: Strong political will (GP 6)

The problem of poor policy and regulation for the adoption and effective implementation of ICT in the tourism sector negatively affects the development of this important sector. The guiding policy will therefore be *strong political will* to involve all the stakeholders, to devise appropriate policies and legislation. There must be high-level participation during policy formulation between those who craft the policies and those who are supposed to implement them. The inclusion of stakeholders is particularly essential for destination planning and management to ensure that organisational strategies are focused on the direction and goal (Getz & Timur, 2012). The Rwandan experience shows that the implementation of good policies is crucial to success, rather than only having policies on paper, but failing to implement them. Rwanda moved fast in this regard and performed better than 25 other African countries, which had started using ICT earlier (Mwangi, 2006). The implementation of good policies transformed Rwanda from a technological laggard to a technological leader in Africa (Lacity et al., 2008).

g) Guiding Policy 7: Investment (GP 7)

The fifth diagnostic was a definite lack of financial resources in most tourism organisations in Zimbabwe. This problem basically requires two guiding policies, namely: *investment and the strategic allocation of resources*. The process of acquiring capital is called investment (Cheng, Dhaliwal, & Zhang, 2013).

h) Guiding Policy 8: Strategic allocation of resources (GP 8)

Strategic allocation of resources is the proper usage of the organisation's financial resources. Organisations in Zimbabwe should attract investment; and at the same time judiciously use the financial resources that they get from investments and from the resources they already have.

i) Guiding Policy 9: Skills development (GP 9)

It was diagnosed that the tourism sector suffers from a 'brain-drain', resulting in considerable loss of skilled labour. In other cases, the personnel were too specialised to understand other functional areas. The guiding policy for this problem was *skills development*. The tourism sector should train, support and capacitate its staff effectively to utilise the relevant services.

j) Guiding Policy 10: ICT governance (GP 10)

ICT governance was diagnosed as a problem in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. ICT governance aims at achieving strategic alignment between business and ICT, in order to make sure that money spent on ICT is delivering business value. The governance structure determines the key performance indicators for ICT. The value of ICT depends on how organisations exploit ICT, in order to enhance their management processes and operations. ICT assets on their own can produce no value to a company; whereas ICT assets entrenched in a company's daily operations are usually found to be indispensable, as a multi-purpose technology (De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2015). This calls for a guiding policy of establishing appropriate IT governance structures. The implementation of proper ICT governance in the sector can ensure properly financed, managed and supported ICT investments.

This paper has identified ten guiding policies that are suggested and required to address the ICT challenges in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. These ten guiding policies (Step 3.1.2 in Figure 1) are in response to the seven diagnostics (Step 3.1.1). The next subsection will provide the set of coherent actions (Step 3.1.3 in Figure 1) required for each of the identified guiding policies.

5.5 Set of Coherent Action Plans

According to the strategic formulation model, in Figure 1, the guiding policies (Step 3.1.2) should lead to the formulation of a set of coherent actions (Step 3.1.3) that could be used as part of the overall strategy to assist the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The set of coherent actions derived from each of the identified guiding policies was intended to contribute to the proposed strategy to address the shortcomings in the tourism sector. The coherent actions do stem from the conclusions made following the data analysis gathered in the case study.

a) Guiding Policy 1 (GP 1)-Access

In order to enhance accessibility, availability and affordability in ICT, there are various strategies that the government can implement, as shown in Figure 3. These are financing mechanisms, which include: Self-financing, Private Public Partnerships (PPP), Build Operate and Transfer (BOT), Enforcement of Service Standards and Infrastructural Sharing. The government should also encourage the adoption of e-services in its underlying departments and organisations.

b) Guiding Policy 2 (GP 2)-Ubuntu

In order to improve poor customer relationships in the tourism sector, Ubuntu and the devolution of power are suggested as a guiding policy, and thereafter a set of coherent actions are suggested, as shown in Figure 2. The tourism sector must use all the communication

technologies available to satisfy their customers. Thus, there should be an appropriate e-customer relationship management.

c) Guiding Policy 3 (GP 3)-Devolution of power
In addition to Ubuntu, power must be decentralised; so as to give employees at various levels the responsibility to make fast and informed decisions, which support organisational operations through job enrichment and enlargement. Employees in the tourism sector must have the power to make quick decisions and to best serve their customers. This can be achieved by using the power of ICT. There should be targeted job enrichment and job enlargement for the employees who directly deal with customers; so that they have the power to make quick decisions and to attend to the customers' requests. Customers must be supported from the moment they visit the website – through to fulfilment. The system should work harmoniously with current systems; so that the different applications are integrated. The organisation in the sector must be customer-focused by being able to identify, analyse, categorise, profile and service the customers.

d) Guiding Policy 4 (GP 4)-System thinking
The tourism sector is a complex sector with inputs from various role-players and different subsectors of the economy. It is critical to understand the interdependencies among the various role-players; since the tourism sector is a holistic system. The role-players are affected differently by the same factors. This could be solved by system thinking and better customer focus. The action required under system thinking is strategic thinking.

The tourism role-players in Zimbabwe should understand the interdependencies among various role-players. Each role-player should consider and understand the implications of its decisions and choices on the tourism ecosystem. This also applies at both organisational and individual level. Since tourism requires complex co-ordination, in order to achieve unity of purpose among the various role-players, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority should facilitate the co-ordination of activities in the sector.

The organisations need to be customer-focused and to ensure that their processes are there to best serve the interests of their customers. The actions that are required under customer focus include customer service, co-creation and web portal.

Customer service entails a series of activities designed to enhance the level of tourists' satisfaction. The social media can be used for potential and current tourists to post their questions and recommendations. This might increase the loyalty towards Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The rapid advance in information and communication technologies has greatly improved customer services. Using ICT, the customers can search, book and pay and give their preferences. This advantage has greatly enhanced customer service, due to tourists discarding the traditional ways in favour of modern ways.

e) Guiding Policy 6 (GP 6)-Political will
Strong political will has an impact on the development and diffusion of technology through various possible interventions. The implementation of right policies positively affects the usage of ICT, thereby encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, which in turn can lead to new services in the tourism sector and other supporting industries.

For example, the implementation of good policies has transformed Rwanda from a technological laggard to a technological leader in Africa (Lacity, Willcocks, & Rottman, 2008). The Rwandan government reforms from the year 2001 liberalised and deregulated the telecommunication sector; and they also permitted the 100% foreign ownership of companies among other incentives, such as the duty-free import of ICT equipment and zero tax on

exported products. The restoration of international relations with Western countries should be prioritised by Zimbabweans.

f) Guiding Policy 7 (GP 7)-Strategic allocation of resources
The organisations in the tourism sector should allow creativity and innovation by putting more financial resources into operation, especially on those services required by the customers, rather than by management. This is not always the case in many organisations. In most cases, the management gets most of the financial resources at the expense of service operations. The managers seem to be obsessed with their own self-interest, rather than the sustainability of the organisations. While many organisations complained about the lack of resources, organisations in the tourism sector must fully utilise the available resources. Inadequate resources cause the failure to serve adequately the customers and to give adequate information, especially on those websites, which are outsourced. The lack of financial resources means organisations fail to invest in the infrastructure and in human development.

g) Guiding Policy 7 (GP 7)-Investment
Zimbabwe has suffered from a protracted economic meltdown and international isolation, which has resulted in the country being viewed as a negative investment destination. The negative image has resulted in the country failing to attract any foreign-direct investment. The suggested investment and financing mechanisms are: Self-financing, Private Public Partnerships (PPP), Build Operate and Transfer (BOT), and Infrastructural Sharing.

h) Guiding Policy 8 (GP 8)-Skills development
The suggested guiding policy for poor human resources development was skills development. The coherent actions that need to be taken for skills development are human capital development. Human capital development involves human resources and skills development; and it essentially deals with the empowerment of employees. Employees in the tourism sector need to possess multiple skills to meet the challenges in tourism and ICT. There is a need for trans-disciplinary ICT employees in the tourism sector; so that employees do not just understand ICT issues only, but also the general tourism business. ICT personnel should have multiple skills that would include hospitality and tourism management, to be able to know and identify the needs and to best serve customers.

i) Guiding Policy 9(GP 9)-Skills development
It was diagnosed that the tourism sector suffers from a 'brain drain', resulting in considerable loss of skilled labour. In other cases, personnel were too specialised to understand other functional areas. The guiding policy for this problem was skills development. The tourism sector should train, support and capacitate its staff to utilise effectively the relevant services.

j) Guiding Policy 10 (GP 10)-ICT governance
The suggested guiding policy for poor ICT governance was proper ICT governance. The suggested coherent actions are strategic alignment, top management support, the recognition of ICT practitioners and the establishment of clear procurement procedures. This subsection has discussed the various suggested coherent actions, which are summarised in Figure 2. Figure 2 puts the identified diagnostics (Step 3.1.1 in Figure 1), the guiding policies (Step 3.1.2) and the coherent actions (Step 3.1.3) in context. Together, these three steps form the kernel of the strategy (Step 3.1). And this completes the formulation of strategy. Thus, Figure 2 can be declared as the formulated strategy, as set out to resolve the diagnosed problems in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Moving forward, the next section will provide details of how

the identified set of coherent actions will be implemented (Step 4 in Figure 1) as part the ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.
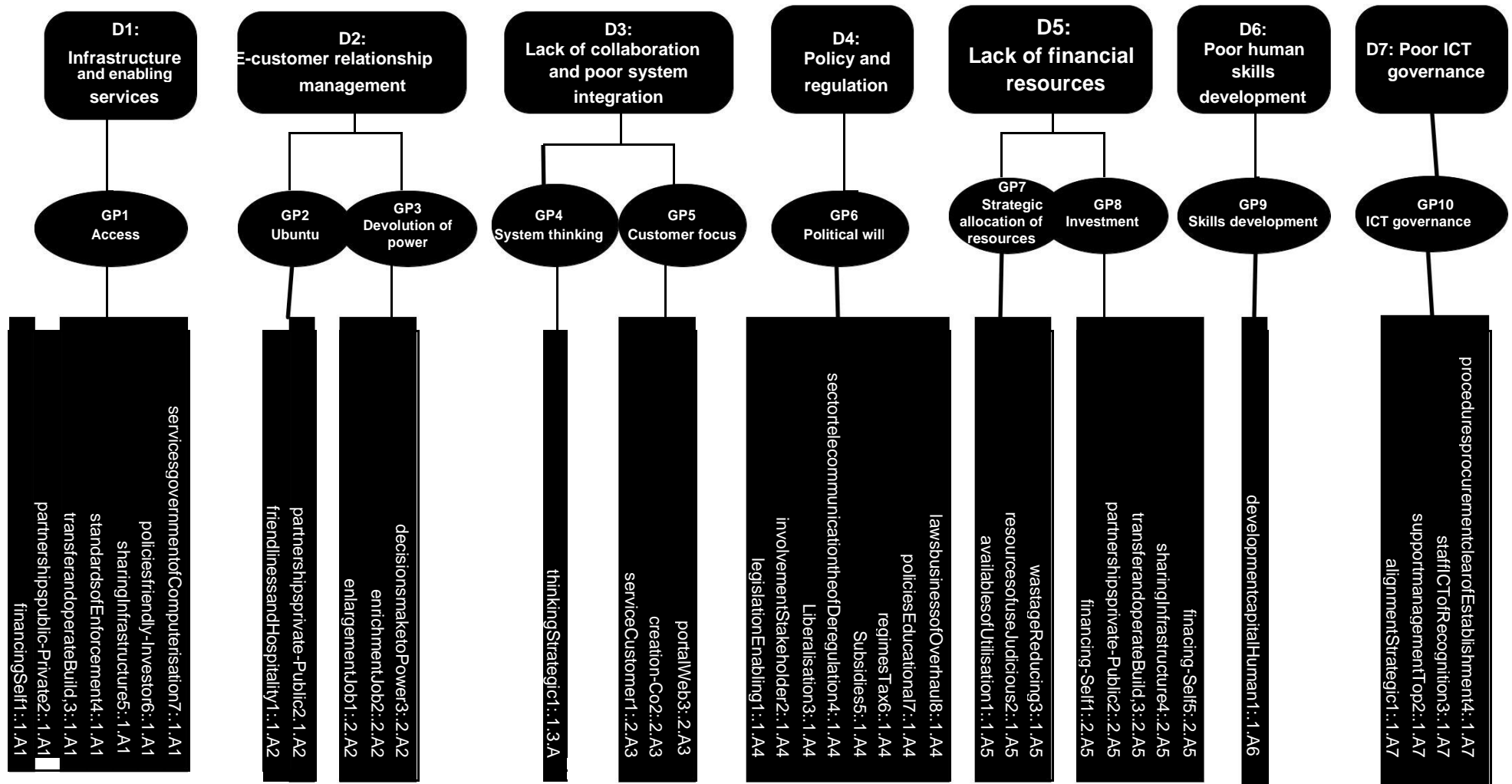
Figure 2: Summary of a relationship between Diagnostics, Guiding Policies and Actions

6.   STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

This section proposes how the strategy should be executed or implemented in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Strategy implementation involves the conversion of the strategy actions. The set of coherent actions suggested for each of the guiding policies was diagrammatically synthesised into a three-phased implementation plan, as illustrated in Figure 3; and explained below.

The implementation of the coherent set of actions involves the inputs and roles to be played by the government, the regulators and the service providers. The implementation of the coherent set of actions is perceived to consist of three layers, which are: government, government-related organisations, and service providers' management, as illustrated in Figure 3.

6.1   Government

The government sets out and addresses the prerequisites for the implementation of the ICT strategy. The prerequisites are actions that the government needs to put in place before ICT can be effectively integrated and utilised in the tourism sector. The entry point in this layer is the stakeholder involvement, which must be facilitated by the government. The implementation of the strategy will be guided by the concept of stakeholder involvement. There must be high level participation during policy formulation and implementation between those who crafted the policies, those who are supposed to implement the policies, and those affected by the policies. Stakeholder involvement can either be in the form of partnership or participation. These two involves a two-way engagement, namely: shared accountability and responsibility. Stakeholder involvement ensures that the concerns of the tourism sector are addressed, as well as those of the other concerns that are not in the tourism sector. This is in line with the Zimbabwe National Tourism Policy, which states that the tourism sector is government led and private-sector driven.

All the stakeholders must be involved, so that their input in policies and laws, that affect them, is taken into consideration. Each stakeholder must play his or her part and should understand how their roles affect other stakeholders in the sector. There should be no antagonism between the regulators and the regulated; instead, there must be co-operation and collaboration. When the stakeholders are involved, this will lead to the overhaul of the current business laws. When laws have been overhauled, with the involvement of the stakeholders, the product would enable legislation and investor-friendly policies, especially in the use of ICT and other modern business tools. Investor-friendly policies would probably include the deregulation of the telecommunication sector, subsidies, liberalisation, educational policies, and public-private partnerships.

These policies should enable the development of the tourism sector. The tourism sector is constantly changing; hence, business laws should also change to support this developmental process.

6.2   The regulatory layer

This layer is concerned with the implementation and enforcement of the government policies and the relevant legislation through the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority implements the government policies in the tourism sector through the enforcement of standards during the registration, grading and monitoring of the service providers in the sector.

The ZTA must provide explicit co-ordination and control of the whole sector. There should be an interactive portal for the tourism sector. The portal must interface with all the tourism-related organisations, and other stakeholders through some central database. The portal must allow virtual tours, online bookings and payments. In addition, the portal must be

search engine optimised, connected to the social media, user-friendly; and it must accept a variety of international debit and credit cards. Furthermore, the portal must clearly show the points of difference between Zimbabwe and other competing countries. The portal must be managed by professionals from diverse backgrounds. It must allow "*click*" able maps that show all the resorts and places of interest within the country. Additionally, the portal must be able to generate its own revenue through some revenue-sharing agreements.

6.3 Service Providers

The board and the top management of both regulator and service providers must allow all employees, including ICT practitioners, to contribute to the organisational policy formulation. The governance mechanisms determine the representation at management and board level, as well as the procurement of ICT equipment. There must be a strategic alignment between business and ICT, in order to make sure that the money spent on ICT is delivering business value.

There should also be a strategic alignment between the government strategy and the ICT strategy. These strategies should work hand-in-hand to achieve the organisational goals. If these strategies are aligned, there would automatically be the support of top management. This will be particularly important; as the top management are the custodians of the organisational resources; and they determine the direction in which the organisation should go. Since considerable quantities of resources will be allocated to ICT; the management would then acknowledge the ICT practitioners in the decision-making, as well as their critical role.

The recognition of ICT practitioners would also help in establishing clear procurement procedures. This means that ICT practitioners would be given the power to make decisions; and this would help them to broaden their jobs – hence, contributing to human capital development. All these processes should help in the judicious use of resources, which help to reduce wastage and enable co-creation. This, in turn, helps to contribute to the customer services, which would lead to the sustainable use of ICT in the tourism sector. It is also important to note that at each layer. There must clear controls, measures, monitoring and evaluation.

7. STRATEGY CONTROL

The following section discusses how the strategy would be controlled. The strategic control will be done continuously at each level, to ensure that the strategy goes according to plan and that any deviations are corrected before they derail the strategy.

The strategy control would be ideally done by the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, which oversees the tourism sector. This strategic control process involves the ministry tracking and monitoring the implementation processes, identifying deviations, and taking any necessary corrective actions. The control process begins with the strategy formulation, and then continues through to the implementation. Strategic control ensures that all the actions taken are implemented, according to the guiding policies. It is also important to note that the strategic control also ensures that the guiding policies are still pointing in the right direction. Furthermore, it allows corrective changes to be taken, where necessary.
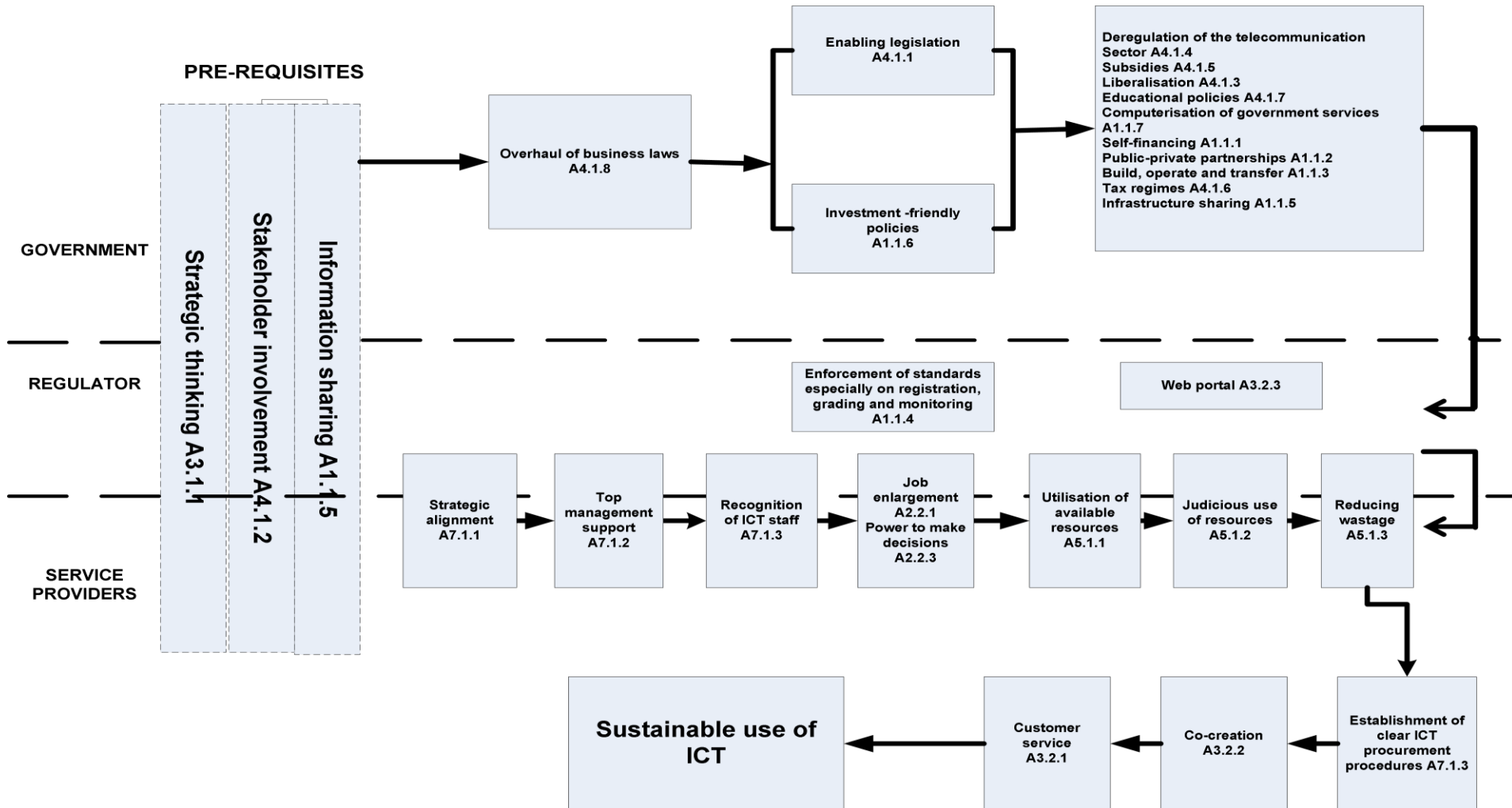
Figure 3 Strategy implementation

8.   IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

The research has contributed to an increased understanding of the application of ICT in the tourism sector of a developing country, which is recovering from more than a decade of economic recession. The research has contributed to the body of knowledge on the use of ICT in the tourism sector in a developing country. The tourism sector has unique characteristics that may be enhanced by the use of ICT. The major contribution of this research was the ICT strategy for the tourism sector in Zimbabwe, and the implementation plan thereof illustrated in Figure 3.

This research was trans-disciplinary, bringing together the disciplines of tourism and ICT for developmental purposes. This research's sophistication lies in the fact that it has deployed a multi-cross sectional case study approach, combining government, regulators, service providers and international tourists. Such an approach undoubtedly provides pertinent insights into the phenomenon under exploration.

9.   CONCLUSION

ICT plays a critical role in the sustainable development of all facets of the economy in the tourism sector. However, simply having state-of-the art ICT resources without the co-ordination, integration and collaboration of the role-players would not achieve sustainable development in the tourism sector. The tourism sector is a multi-sectorial and multi-dimensional sector, which has a direct and indirect impact on the economy. Hence, the tourism sector cannot prosper without a sound and proper ICT strategy.

The contribution of this research was the diagnosis of the problems that are hampering the utilisation of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The diagnostics are: (1) The lack of infrastructure and enabling services; (2) e-customer relationship management; (3) the lack of collaboration and a poor system integration; (4) policy and regulation; (5) the lack of financial resources; (6) poor ICT governance; and (7) poor human resource development. In addition, the research has contributed to the guiding policies required for each of the diagnostics. The guiding policies that resulted comprise: (1) Access; (2) Ubuntu; (3) the devolution of power to lower levels of the organisation; (4) strategic resource allocation; (5) investment; (6) stakeholder involvement; (7) ICT governance; and (8) skills development. Subsequently, the research has also contributed a coherent set of actions required for each of the guiding policies.

The key challenges and the appropriate interventions required from each role-player have been identified. The research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is the first that has extensively studied the use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this research has provided foundations for appropriate interventions from government and other role-players in the tourism sector. Furthermore, another practical contribution of this research was to foster and encourage the use of ICT in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The policymakers in Zimbabwe and other similar countries could use this research to develop policies that are more focused in this important sector. However, the major contribution of this research is the sustainable ICT strategy in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe.

It might be interesting to investigate the possibility of extending the strategy formulation process model presented in Figure 1 to other sectors and other developing and emerging countries as well. Further research could be done to test the strategy in a real-life environment. This is important in establishing the applicability of the results in other countries in a similar context and technological situation as Zimbabwe.

It might also be interesting to extend the research to address the effect of politics on tourism, ICT adoption and utilisation in developing countries. It is also necessary to find out, whether indeed ICT has contributed to performance and competitive advantage in the tourism sector of developing countries, like Zimbabwe. It is necessary to investigate whether the

causes of inadequate information sharing and fragmentation are only specific to tourism; or whether they are prevalent in the whole economy; since this research examined only the tourism sector.

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