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## An Evaluation of the Challenges Faced by the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Regency Flamboyant Hotel from 2005-2009

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### **Abstract:**

*This research seeks to evaluate the challenges that the Zimbabwean tourism and hospitality industry faced during the period (2005-2009). The main objectives of the research involves assessing how far the Zimbabwean political, economic, social, technological, legal and ecological situations affected the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe and evaluating the effectiveness of current marketing tools for more effective promotion of tourist products. The researcher also investigates on the effects of a change in the tourism industry performance on society and identified sustainable means of boosting tourism in Zimbabwe.*

*The researcher used exploratory research design and descriptive research designs to enable the data collection. In conducting the research questionnaires were distributed to employees and management, while the management was also interviewed to gather relevant data on the topic under study. Other information was collected through desktop research in the form of monthly financial reports, information memorandums, text books and other relevant company documents.*

*Findings from the research indicated that the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe has been affected by the activities hinging on political events that transpired during the period under review its effects cascaded to the economy which has the direct bearing on the tourism and hospitality industry.*

**Keywords:** Challenges, tourism, hospitality industry, economy, Zimbabwe

### **1. Introduction to the Study**

Zimbabwe has been associated with various forms and negative like controversial political reforms (land reform and indigenization). The outcome of the challenging economic transformation has been persistent hyperinflation, high unemployment, food shortages, price distortions, land inversions, unprecedented utility charges, power and water cuts and grinding poverty. The lack of consensus and a shared national vision manifests itself in serious economic challenges which have pervaded all sectors of our existence as a nation. This negative picture associated with the country has had a negative impact on the tourism industry. The sector which used to contribute about eight percent to Zimbabwe's annual gross domestic product, continued to willow under a barrage of negative publicity surrounding the country's economic and political climate.

Players in the industry continued to be optimistic about the recovery of the sector, and at one point pinned their hopes on the anticipated influx of foreigners expected to visit South Africa and the region for the 2010 World Cup soccer show case. Since inception, the World Football Cup has never been held on African soil. For the first time in World Football history, South Africa was chosen to host the prestigious 2010 World cup tournament. Zimbabwe, the host country's northern neighbor stood to benefit immensely from numerous opportunities associated with events of this magnitude. There is need to have a consensus and a shared vision that will drive the province into 2010.

Given its geographic location and similar climatic conditions with Limpopo Province, Masvingo Province had great potential to benefit from this international spectacle. In South Africa's World Cup 2010 Strategic Document, the host nation confirms its lack of adequate capacity in accommodation facilities. Strategically Masvingo Tourism business operators should target those opportunities available in this Northern Province of South Africa.

Masvingo is centrally located in the region, and for a number of neighbouring countries, it is the gateway to South Africa. It is very strategic that Masvingo is easily accessible by air and road, from within and outside. Of even more importance is the accessibility between South Africa and Zimbabwe. Facilitation of the smooth movement of visitors at our Ports of Entry, as well as availability of fuel is very critical.

With 32 national teams competing in a total of 64 matches, let alone several friendly to be arranged prior to the final extravaganza, Zimbabwe was best placed to compliment services provided by the host nation, in the form of provision of accommodation and tourism activities. With strategic packaging and promotion, the country's image as a tourist destination stood to benefit from the event's expected 3 million spectators in South Africa as well as over a billion televisions viewers across the world.

### 1.1. *The Regency Flamboyant Hotel*

Regency Hotels and Leisure Group trading as Regency Hotel Flamboyant was incorporated in 1992 and its core business is tourism, hospitality management, conferences and contract management. The development currently on hold because of financial constraints at Regency Hotel Flamboyant located on the immediate outskirts of Masvingo is designed to provide for a four star international hotel, conference and casino facility in time for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Currently the hotel has 106 rooms, which comprise two presidential suites, four executive suites and the remainder of the rooms being doubles and twin rooms making it the largest hotel in the province. The hotel is accessible from the Masvingo/Beitbridge road which leads into South Africa which is a major source for our regional tourism. The hotel is currently operating at 30% bed occupancy. It is situated about 300kms from all the major cities in Zimbabwe that is Harare, Mutare, Bulawayo and Beitbridge. The hotel is 25kms from the Great Zimbabwe monuments where you find Zimbabwe's largest inland lake and Kyle national park. It has conference rooms with a capacity ranging from 10 to 250 delegates.

The hotel has been experiencing viability challenges, the greater part of the blame being attributed to the political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal spheres amongst other factors.

The crisis being faced by the industry with particular reference to Regency Flamboyant hotel demands quick win strategies to stabilize its viability. The challenges facing the sector have been evaluated and discussed from a comprehensive and holistic approach with Regency Flamboyant hotel being used as a case study.

### 1.2. *Need for the Study*

Zimbabwe has a wealth of tourism sites in and around its Lakes and National Parks, its location and natural beauty, giving the country huge potential for tourism. Despite the fact that Zimbabwe is one of the nations with exquisite tourist attractions, its potential has not been met with an equal capacity to attract a huge number of tourists. There is therefore an important need to investigate the various challenges that the tourism sector faces in attracting tourists to the country.

It is important to note that the tourism and hospitality industry used to contribute significantly to the gross domestic product. The challenges being faced by this sector have created collateral damage to other sectors of the economy. It thus justifies the study of these challenges.

The researcher sought to establish the facts on the ground about Zimbabwe especially at a time when the country has been demonized by the western media also noting that the country has faced its fair share of problems and how these have cascaded down affecting the tourism industry as a separate entity.

Zimbabwe has also been falsely represented by other countries, notably, the South African media who have been advertising the falls as if they can only be viewed from Zambia, when in fact they are more spectacular from the Zimbabwean side. It is important to determine the various factors that prevent a correct portrayal of the country to visiting tourists.

## 2. **Review of Related Literature**

### 2.1. *Political Factors*

Hall and Sullivan (1996:117), propagated the following theory; "Perceptions of political instability and safety are prerequisite for tourism visitation. Violent protests, social, unrest, civil war, terrorist action, perceived violation of human rights, or even the mere threat of these activities can all serve to cause tourists to alter their travel behavior."

Tourists are sensitive to the political climate prevailing in an intended destination. Their reasons for choosing a destination are the assurance of an uninterrupted, peaceful and relaxing holiday. Hall (1914:92), points out that to most of human history, travelling has been associated with risk and fear for the physical integrity and belongings of the traveler.

Tourists will only travel to places if their journey and stay are safe and shielded from events that threaten the positive outcomes of holiday experience. If the violence persists, countries where tourists originate will issue travel warnings against travelling to that destination. Faced with such situation, tourists will opt to choose alternative destinations with similar characteristics but in a more stable condition.

Cook (1990:14) as cited in Sonmez (1998:420) defines instability as a situation when a government "has been toppled, or is controlled by functions following a coup, as where basic functional prerequisites for social order control and maintenance are unstable and periodically disrupted." Wilson (1996:25), as cited in Poirier (1997:677) similarly regards a country as stable "if the regime is durable, violence and turmoil are limited, and leaders stay in office for several years."

Hall and Sullivan (1996:106), defines political instability as;

A situation in which conditions and mechanism of governance and rule are challenged as to their political legitimacy by elements operating from outside of the normal operations of the political system. When challenges occur from within a political system and the system is able to adapt and change to meet demands on it, it can be said to be stable.

Even then, however, the challenge of governance and rule from outside the political system is often associated with events of violence. Political instability normally goes hand in hand with political violence. Tourism destinations have a lot to lose if they lose their attraction to tourists as Richter and Waugh (1986:231) put it.

### 2.2. *Value Tourism*

While much was said on increasing the value of tourism services and products, value can also be used as part of a marketing campaign. By emphasizing the country's worthwhile proposition, Zimbabwe can now better address travelers who still like to go on vacation, but to a less-costly one. (Kotler, 2002).

### 2.3. Volunteer Tourism

Another segment that is less affected by the international financial crisis is volunteer tourism. "i-to-i", a leading international firm in the field of volunteer tourism, had recently reported a year-on-year revenue. From the perspective of tourism destinations, this implies that providing visitors with volunteer opportunities is an additional way to create and increase value. Consequently, developing and marketing volunteering products can enhance the visitor's experience, assist in maintain market share and for sure benefit the local community (Eagly and Carli, 2007).

To conclude, these recovery strategies are just an example for the various marketing strategies available for overcoming crises situations. The choice of the most appropriate strategy is based on three major factors: the crisis, the audience and the place characteristics. Naturally it is not easy choice but using the professional advice of a media strategist can assist in making the best marketing decision, overcoming this crisis and successfully attract tourist, visitors and investors.

Eran Ketter is a place marketing specialist, the director of Ketter Consulting and the author of the book: "Media Strategies for Market Place in Crisis: Improving the Image of Cites, Countries and Tourist Destinations", Elsevier (2008).

### 2.4. World Cup 2010 in Perspective

The literature review reveals a growing skepticism over the extent to which hosting mega events potentially results in economic growth or significant development impacts Black et al (2002). A host of scholars conclude that while there are some positive economic and legacy impacts Lee and Tylor (2005; Rithie (2000), the economic impact is variable, intangible and ambiguous at best Adronovich et al (2001).

There are several scholarly postulations concerning the exaggeration of benefits linked to such events. There is a suggestion that, "the increase in direct spending attributable to the games may be a gross as opposed to a net measure", Matherson and Baade (2004:1090). Mega events are transient events and long term economic impacts are Tilley (2006); Spilling (1998). Anticipated influx of supporters may crowd out business travelers in a particular region or city. Job creation is centred on around low paid and temporary employment as opposed to any meaningful long term job creation. Home and Manzenreiter (2006). Matheson and Baade (2006), suggest displacement of public funds is a key area of complaint. Budget cuts are affected in other areas to accommodate unforeseeable costs associated with mega events. These cuts affect those who are unlikely to enjoy benefits associated with such mega events.

Research into mega events and developing nations has been centered on questions of development, place promotion, signaling, identity and image building, human rights and political liberalization. Black and Bezanson (2004). While attention is focused mainly on development impacts, it is pertinent to note that, as evidenced from the case of Malaysia and its hosting of the 16<sup>th</sup> Common Wealth Games, mega events may prompt nefarious outcomes in the form of strengthening authoritarian regimes Van der Westhuizen (2004).

## 3. Study Objectives

- Assessing how far the Zimbabwean political, economic, social, technological, legal and ecological situations affected the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of current marketing tools for more effective promotion of tourist products.
- Investigating on the effects of a change in the tourism industry performance on society.
- Identifying sustainable means of boosting tourism in Zimbabwe.

## 4. Sampling Technique

The researcher used probability and non-probability samples. Probability sampling techniques was used to determine the sampling units of clients to be used in the questionnaire surveys. Non probability sampling techniques was used in the determination of the management staff to be interviewed.

## 5. Study Population

The researcher targeted the various people who are employed at the Regency Flamboyant Hotel in Masvingo. Their perspective was sought in order to get an insider perspective on the various factors that affect the operations of the Regency Flamboyant Hotel in Masvingo.

## 6. Sampling Procedure

### 6.1. Stratified Random Sampling

In stratified random sampling, the sample is designed so that a separate random sample is chosen from each stratum.

The researcher used this sampling technique for the employee base because, component parts of the sampling frame are derived from them and the precision of sampling estimates is increased as well. The researcher used a proportional allocation Boyd et al 2004.

This method was chosen because:

- It is generally more statistically efficient than Simple Random Sampling.
- There is greater assurance of representativeness in the sample.
- It offers an opportunity to study each structure and make relative comparison between strata.

## 6.2. Judgment Sampling

Researcher controlled sampling down to the element level and actively use judgment regarding the representativeness of elements. The logic is that expert judgment and past experience can ensure a representative sample. This technique was used because according to Kumar (1999), if the sample size is small such as focus group of eight to ten people, then judgmental sampling is most appropriate.

Type of Respondents	Total # in Sampling Frame	Sampling Size
Top Management	8	4
Middle Level Management	15	10
Junior Employees	50	20

Table 1: Sampling Scale

## 7. Design of the Study

Peterson (1982) defines a research design as a systematic plan, blue print or set of instruments for conducting a marketing research project. It can be any of the following, descriptive, casual or explanatory. The researcher used a descriptive research design for the field work as it provided a more objective basis for carrying out the research.

Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of study.

## 8. Tools for Collecting the Data

A questionnaire was used to solicit opinions on the challenges and state of preparedness of the province as we move towards 2010 and beyond using a five point Liker scale. Nisbet and Entwistle (1970:128) stated that; "A Likert scale is a scale consisting of a list of statements, the person answering is asked to make judgment on every question or statement judgment may simply, agree to disagree and alternatively. The degree of agreement may be indicated on a scale having up to ten values".

Below is the Likert Scale

5	SA	Strongly Agree
4	A	Agree
3	N	Neutral
2	D	Disagree
1	SD	Strongly Disagree

Table 2

On the left marked from 5 up to 1 are scores awarded for each answer. On the Likert type, a score measures scale the overall attitude, which is the sum of the weights given to each of the responses. One item at the end of questionnaire will be left open-ended for respondents to express other feelings they might have concerning music education.

A questionnaire is a set of questions designed to degenerate the data necessary for a research project. Hair 2003 defines a questionnaire as a formalized framework consisting of a set of questions and scales designed to generate raw data. These have four theoretical components namely; words, questions, formats and hypotheses. It can comprise of structured and unstructured questions. The researcher administered the questionnaires by simply issuing forms to respondents and asking them to fill in and return the forms. The researcher used both structured interviewed and closed ended questions by so doing the researcher managed to get many responses in a short period of time.

Advantages that accrue to the researcher for using questionnaires are that;

- Questionnaires are versatile and they can be used to suite any type of research regardless of the research design used. They guide the sample unit to be as objective as possible and as well maintain the course of the research as the content of the questionnaires will be guided by research objectives.
- They are less costly. Questionnaires are relatively cheap instruments in comparison with other tools such as research agents. The researcher has discretion over the entire process and can serve a large number of people without unnecessarily having to pay people to carry out interview on his/her behalf.
- Questionnaires are less time consuming that observation. Given the limited time period of the research, questionnaires provide the research with ample time to execute other duties such as at work or to work on three other chapters simultaneously.
- These questionnaires provide ease of administration because there are not many procedures involved in using them during fieldwork. This also aids in maintaining the agreed terms of carrying out the research as stipulated by Regency Flamboyant Hotel, that the researcher should not disturb the day to day operations of the organization.
- Questionnaires give respondents a clear comprehension of questions asked.
- They usually have high response rate and are easy to interpret and analyze.

However, the researcher will face the following disadvantages for using questionnaires;

- Unwillingness of respondents to provide information. Generally, respondents have a general reluctance to cooperate in the research studies especially if sensitive issues will be addressed. This is the case on the project

and the researcher has been succumbed to such resistance. The researcher however not only relied on the natural politeness and good nature of the sample but provided convincing justification for carrying out the study and the benefits that will accrue to Regency Flamboyant Hotel.

- Inability of respondents to provide information. Despite an unwillingness to cooperate, many people are unable to provide information on questions. The researcher clarified and explains the context of questions for respondents to derive meaning.
- Influence of questioning process. The effect of the questioning process on the results obtained was obviously imminent. Based on past experiences in research issues, respondents at times furnish reports quite different from the facts that judgment has to be used in some cases to weigh the credibility of respondents.

### 8.1. Interviews

Bell (1993), defines an interview as a two-way method which permits an exchange of ideas information between the interviewee and the interviewer verbally. The objective of this interview was to gather more information necessary for project write ups. In-depth interviews are defined as a formalized process in which a well trained interviewer asks a subject a set of structured questions in a face to face setting. The researcher will use personal interviews for the research study. These require the availability of field staff in the relevant language. The researcher will carry out the field work to ensure control over the quality of the interview process.

The use of interviews provided the following advantages according to Boyd (2004);

- They create room for clarification in cases of ambiguity.
- Interviews are highly flexible and provide the researcher with room to solicit the best information out of the respondents.
- Large data volumes can be collected from each subject. Given the time period of this research, there is bound to be a lot of information to be extracted from respondents, more so because no similar research has been carried out on Regency Flamboyant Hotel before.
- Once a certain comfort zone is reached in the interviewer – subject relationship, subject willingly reveals their inner thinking. This is important for the researcher because it promotes the determination of the respondent's true feelings and thus provides the most objective information as they can.

However, personal interviews have the following disadvantages to the researcher;

- Inaccuracy due to potential biases. Based on past research experiences, respondents have a tendency of providing information to impress the researcher or create a favorable picture of themselves.
- It is costly to carry out personal interviews and the costs to be accrued can be time, financial and resource costs. The researcher is in a sole proprietorship business, hence rescheduling, and regular visits to the city council remove the researcher from his place of business and time is also lost in the form of potential business.
- Length of time required maybe unavailable. To derive adequate sums of data out of respondents requires the time resource. The researcher has been further warned not to interfere or disturb the normal operations at Regency Flamboyant Hotel hence it will be difficult to carryout in depth and lengthy interviews with respondents.

## 9. Field Work Details

### 9.1. Response Rate

The researcher administered a total of eighty questionnaires; forty questionnaires were administered to external stakeholders, ten to top level hotel management and thirty to middle level and peripheral employees. The researcher also interviewed eight hotel managers. This was done over five working days. Table 3 below illustrates the sample response rate.

### 9.2. Sample Response Rate

Table 3 provides an overview of the response rates from the research participants. The findings are based on the actual responses from the interviews carried out and the completed questionnaires returned by the participants.

Participant	Sample Size	Actual Response	Response Rate
Employees	30	29	97%
Management	10	8	80%
Stakeholders	40	40	100%

Table 3: Response Rate of the Research Participants

The response rate from employees was 97% showing that 3% of the employees did not respond to the questionnaires. Table 3 also shows that 80% of management responded to the questionnaires and the remaining 20% failed to submit during the period set. Stakeholders referred to on Table 3 above are the various hoteliers within the hospitality sector and tourism industry of Zimbabwe. The table thus shows a 100% response rate to the questionnaires by stakeholders and an overall percentage of the total responses pegged at 96%. The high response rate was due to the effective methodology used by the researcher that is the researcher left the questionnaires with the targeted respondents (employees and customers) and gave them three working days to fill in the relevant information and then collected them after the three days had lapsed. The high response rate enhances reliability and validity of research findings.

## 10. Findings

### 10.1. An Assessment of Zimbabwe's Micro Environmental Factors Effect on Tourism

It was the researcher's objective to identify the impact of the macro environment variables on Zimbabwe's Tourism sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on the impact of the macro environmental factors (political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal, below are their responses presented on Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1.

### 10.2. Response Rate to Political Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The aim was to assess the impact of political factors on the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.

Value	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Agree	10	13%	13%
Strongly Agree	61	76%	89%
Neutral	5	6%	95%
Disagree	4	5%	100%
Strongly Disagree	-	-	-

Table 4: Response Rate of the Research Participants

Scale: Agree: 2 to 3, Strongly Agree: 4 to 5, Neutral: -1 to +1, Disagree: -2 to -3, Strongly Disagree: -4 to -5

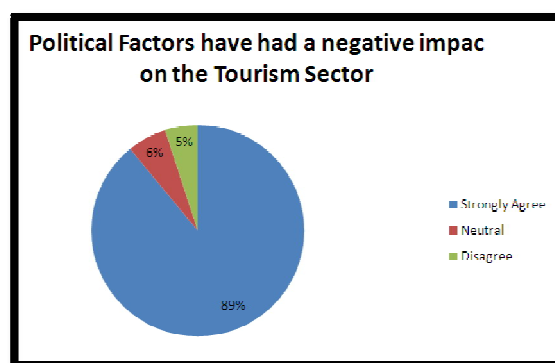


Figure 1

### 10.3. Showing Respondents perceptions on the impact of political factors

The table and Fig above shows a representation of the findings made on the impact of political factors on the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Zimbabwe. As evidenced on the information tabled, 89% of the respondents were of the view that political factors had a negative impact on the Tourism and Hospitality sector. These respondents cited political instability, suppression of human rights and irreconcilable differences between the ruling party then and the West as the main causative agents of the poor performance of the Tourism and Hospitality sector. About five percent of the respondents were in disagreement citing Zimbabweans lack of initiative and break through thinking to hedge against the poor performance of the Tourism and Hospitality sector as key to the down fall of the sector. Six percent of the respondents were neutral citing "fear of the unknown". The findings tabled above can also be graphically presented on a pie chart as in Figure 4.1.

### 10.4. Response Rate to Economic Factors Impact on Tourism Sector

It was the researcher's objective to identify the impact of economic variables on Zimbabwe's Tourism and Hospitality sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on the impact of economic factors on the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Below are their responses presented on Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2.

### 10.5. Response Rate to Economic Factors Impact on Tourism Sector

Value	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Agree	14	17%	17%
Strongly Agree	60	75%	92%
Neutral	6	8%	100%
Disagree	-	-	-
Strongly Disagree	-	-	-

Table 5

10.6. Responses to Impact on Economic Challenges to Tourism

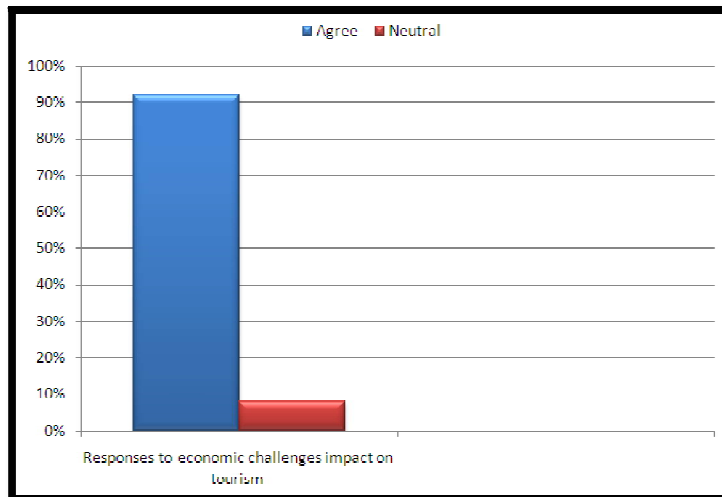


Figure 2

10.7. Showing Respondents Perceptions on Economic Hardships on the Tourism Sector

Table 4.3 and Fig 4.2 reveal a unified response to the issue of economic doldrums on the Zimbabwean Tourism and Hospitality sector. According to the findings, 92% of all respondents were of the view that economic challenges had contributed immensely to the fall of the Zimbabwean tourism sector. These respondents cited such reasons as the issue of price controls, the global financial meltdown and suspension of Zimbabwe from the IMF and Commonwealth as some of the major reasons contributing to the fall in performance of the country's Tourism and Hospitality sector. About 8% of the respondents however, still maintained a neutral view as to what could have caused the fall in economic gains of the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Findings made through interviews carried out on management and peripheral staff at Regency Hotels and Leisure Group were also consistent with the former group of respondents (92%) who were in agreement that economic variables had a negative impact on the tourism and hospitality sector of Zimbabwe. These findings can as well be graphically presented on a pie chart as shown in Fig 4.2.

10.8. Response Rate to Technological Factors Impact on Tourism Sector

The researcher's objective was to identify the impact of technological variables on Zimbabwe's Tourism and Hospitality sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on the impact of technological factors on the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Below are their responses presented on Table 4.4 and Fig 4.3.

10.9. Response Rate to Technological Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The aim was to assess the impact of technological factors on the tourism hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.

Value	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Agree	10	13%	13%
Strongly Agree	40	50%	63%
Neutral	-	-	-
Disagree	12	15%	78%
Strongly Disagree	18	32%	100%

Table 6

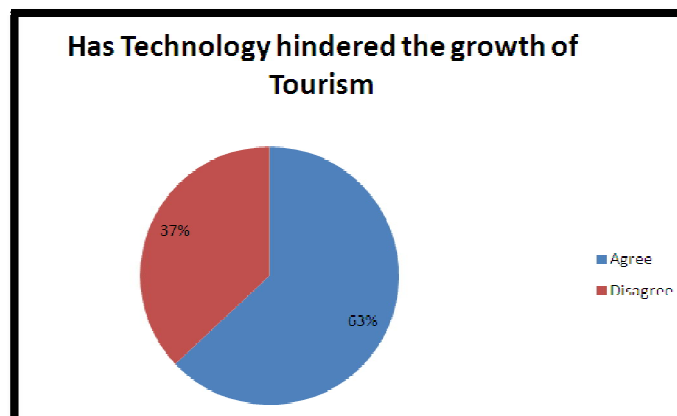


Figure 3

#### 10.10. The Responses to Impact of Technology on Tourism

Table 4.4 and Fig 4.3 reveal a somewhat diverse response to the issue of technological factors on the Zimbabwean Tourism and Hospitality sector. According to the findings, 63% of the respondents were of the view that technological challenges contributed to the poor performance of the tourism and Hospitality sector. However, contrary to findings made on the other variables of the Zimbabwean macro environment, that is, political and economic factors, where the majority of respondents were in agreement, 37% of the respondents were against the theorem that technological challenges contributed to a greater extent to the under performance of the tourism and hospitality sector. They cited such countries as Kenya and the DRC where higher revenues are gained through eco tourism and hunting.

#### 10.11. Response Rate to Socio-Cultural Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The researcher's objective was to identify the impact of socio-cultural variables on Zimbabwe's Tourism and Hospitality sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on the impact of socio-cultural factors on the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Below are their responses presented on Table 4.5 and Fig 4.4.

#### 10.12. Responses to Socio-Cultural Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The aim was to assess the impact of socio-cultural factors on the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.

Value	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Agree	7	9%	9%
Strongly Agree	45	56%	65%
Neutral	3	4%	69%
Disagree	10	12%	81%
Strongly Disagree	15	19%	100%

Table 7

#### 10.13. Responses to Socio-Cultural Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

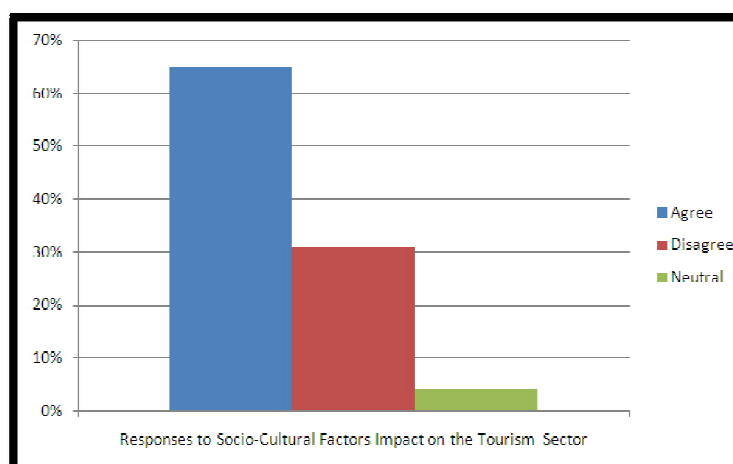


Figure 4

Table and Fig above shows varying responses to the issue of socio-cultural factors, 9% of the respondents were of the view that socio-cultural factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. About 56% of the respondents were also of the view that socio-cultural factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. 4% of total respondents were neutral while 12% were in disagreement with the view that socio-cultural factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. An additional 19% of total respondents strongly disagree with the view that socio-cultural factors contributed to the underperformance of the tourism sector. In total, 65% of the respondents were in agreement that socio-cultural factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. These respondents cited reasons such as that of a decline in standards of living that influence the rise of unethical practice amongst hoteliers, the rise of prostitution and many others. In total, 31% of the respondents were in disagreement with the view that socio-cultural factors had made an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. In fact, most of these respondents were of the view that the tourism and hospitality sector had instead affected the socio-cultural aspect in Zimbabwe.

#### 10.14. Response Rate to Ecological Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The researcher's objective was to identify the impact of ecological variables on Zimbabwe's Tourism and Hospitality sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on the impact of ecological factors on the tourism and hospitality sector. Below are their responses presented on Table 4.6 and Fig 4.5.

#### 10.15. Response Rate to Ecological Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The aim was to assess the impact of ecological factors on the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.



Value	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Agree	10	13%	13%
Strongly Agree	40	50%	63%
Neutral	7	9%	72%
Disagree	8	10%	82%
Strongly Disagree	15	18%	100%

Table 8

The responses are presented on the bar graph below.

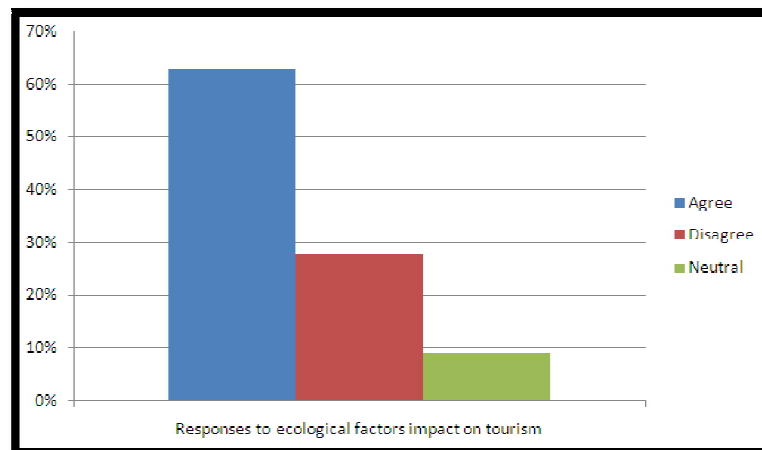


Figure 5

#### 10.16. Showing Responses to the Impact of Ecological Factors on Tourism

Table 4.6 and Fig 4.5 shows that a total of 63% of the respondents were of the view that ecological factors had made an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector of Zimbabwe. They cited the then ZANU-PF government's failure to recognize the importance of preserving the natural environment by implementing the controversial Land Reform programme, and not setting up stiff penalties for those caught promoting land degradation practices.

The failure by the Wildlife Management to control the growing population of elephants and their impact on vegetation special in the Transnational Park and surrounding areas has been a cause for concern throughout the course of this research.

About 9% of the total respondents presented a neutral view as to the extent of ecological factors on the tourism sector. They attacked pressure groups for having 'turned the other way' and not made noise when land degradation was taking place in Zimbabwe. The respondents also cited how it was also important for the Zimbabwean to get access to their land for survival, and as well recognizing the issues of climate change, urbanization and a growing population with an increased demand for living space.

Respondents constitution 9% therefore presented a non sided view to the issue of ecological factors. About 28% of total respondents were in disagreement with the view that ecological factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. These respondents postulated that it was the need to promote tourism that instead had made a negative impact on the natural environment. They cited examples such as that of the dramatic increase in new lodges and hotels since South Africa won the bid to host the 2010 World Cup.

#### 10.17. Response Rate to Legal Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The researcher's objective was to identify the impact of legal factors on Zimbabwe's Tourism and Hospitality sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Below are their responses presented on Table 4.7 and Fig 4.6

#### 10.18. Response Rate to Legal Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

The aim was to assess the impact of legal factors on the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.

Value	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Agree	20	25%	25%
Strongly Agree	45	56%	81%
Neutral	-	-	-
Disagree	15	19%	100%
Strongly Disagree	-	-	-

Table 9

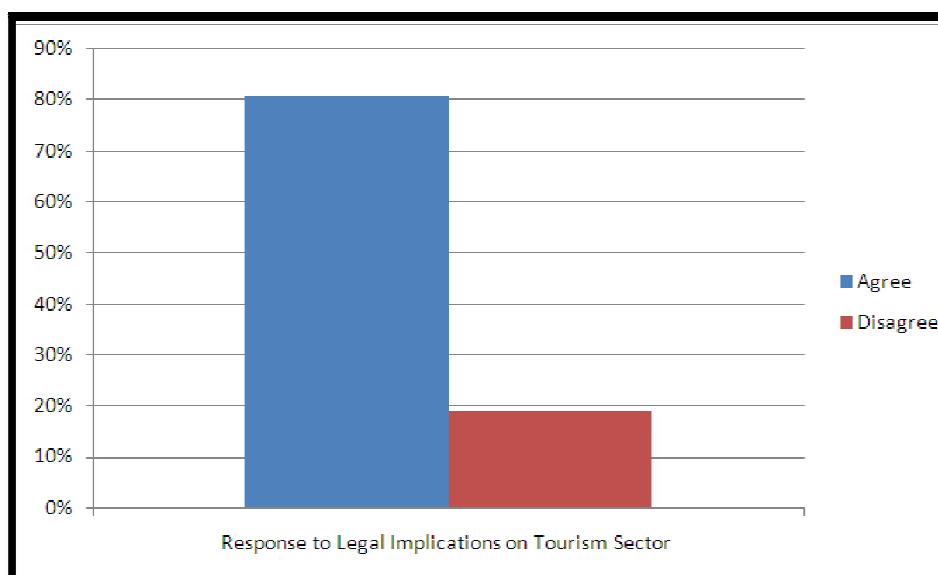


Figure 6

#### 10.18. Response to Legal Factors Impact on the Tourism Sector

Table 4.7, Fig 4.6 shows that in total, a cumulative percentage of 81% was in agreement that legal factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. Respondents cited issues such as the introduction of price controls as having led to the growth of the black market and the shortage of commodities and foreign currency. The remainder of about 19% were in disagreement with that view however. These respondents argued that every country has laws and policies that guide the smooth running of every sector hence the legal system was not to blame. Instead they blamed the players in the tourism sector for not having been initiative enough to hedge against the legal system. Some of the respondents gave the example of the insurance giant, Old Mutual, which listed on stock exchange markets abroad and mostly notably, on Wall Street. This kept the company competitive even during Zimbabwe's most trying times. The bar graph below shows representations of these responses.

The bar graph shows two kinds' response and these comprise respondents who were in agreement and those who were in disagreement with the notion that legal factors had an impact on tourism and hospitality. About 81% of the respondents were in agreement that legal factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector of Zimbabwe. The remaining 19% were in disagreement that legal factors had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector of the Zimbabwean economy.

### 11. An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Marketing Tools on Promotion

It was the researcher's objective to identify the various measures for increasing awareness of tourist products to boost Zimbabwe's Tourism sector. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on measures put in place by the government and their effectiveness. The respondents were further asked to rate the effectiveness of these measures and how best the Zimbabwean tourist products can be promoted to perform better those of other economies.

#### 11.1. Response Rate to Impact of Promotional Strategies on the Tourism Sector

The aim was to assess the impact of promotional strategies on the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe.

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Advertising	48	60%
Publicity	40	50%
Public Relations	35	44%
Sales promotion	25	31%
Other forms	20	25%

Table 10

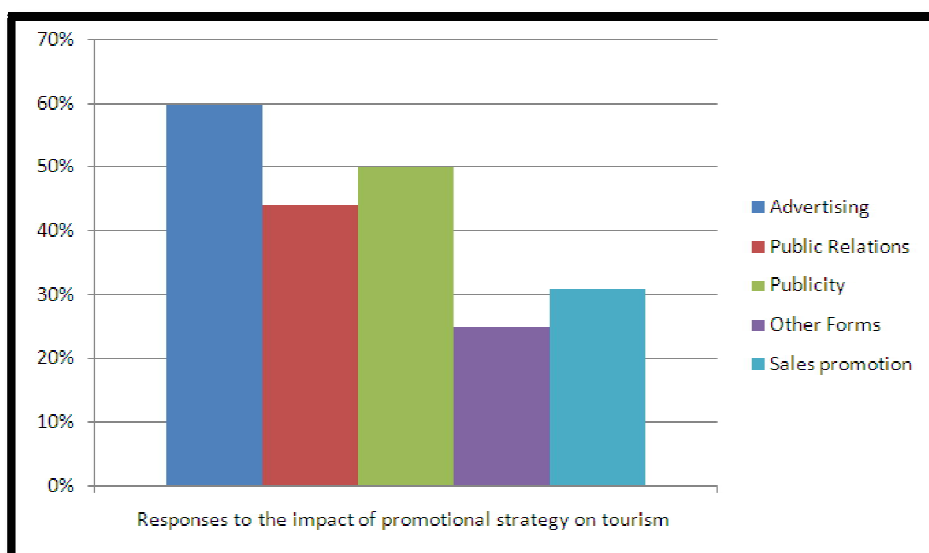


Figure 7

### 11.2. Response Rate to Impact of Promotional Strategies on the Tourism Sector

Table 4.8 and Figure 4.7 shows that 60% of the respondents were of the view that advertising had an impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. About 50% of the respondents were of the view that publicity had a positive impact on tourism during the period 2005-2009. 44% of total respondents were of the view that public relations had a positive impact on the tourism and hospitality sector, 31% backed sales promotion while about 25% supported other forms of promotion and these cited examples such as direct marketing, personal selling and branding as having been key to the promotion of most tourism products during this period. The data presented on table 4.8 above is presented graphically below.

The findings made on the impact on the promotional strategies on the tourism and hospitality sector of the Zimbabwean economy can be argued against and for with reference to written evidence by various writers and researchers. Advertising achieved a 60% response rate and has the highest percentage. According to Zikmund et al 1999, advertising objectives include: - increasing consumption of a product by current users, generating more sales leads, increasing brand awareness, increasing repeat purchase and supporting the personal selling effort. Another writer, Bell (1972) as quoted in Baker (1996) says typically new products are supported with informative and persuasive advertisements, while mature products use institutional and persuasive advertisements (sometimes called reminder advertisements). Advertising frequently uses persuasive appeals, both logical and emotional (that is, it is a form of propaganda), sometimes even to the exclusion of any product information.

However, according to other writers such as Schramm (1995) as quoted in Barker (1996) is of the opinion that advertising is said to be an unreliable guide as to value and satisfaction and it leads to oligopoly and monopoly. It is a waste of national resources. Van der Walt et al (1996) say advertising puts pressure on customers to buy products they do not need and it is expensive as it increases prices unnecessarily.

The graph also shows that 44% were of the view that public relations had an impact on the tourism sector, 50% were of the view that publicity had been effective during the period, another 31% had been in agreement that sales promotion had been effective in promoting the tourism and hospitality sector. Other forms of promotion such as direct marketing, personal selling had been backed by 25% of the total respondents.

### 11.3. Identification of Sustainable Measures of Boosting Tourism

It was the researcher's objective to identify sustainable measures of boosting tourism in Zimbabwe. Respondents were asked to cite their perceptions on given alternative measures of boosting tourism sustainably. The respondents were further asked to rate the effectiveness of these measures and to provide justifications for their choice of rating.

### 11.4. Showing Response categories for boosting tourism

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Indigenisation	15	19%
Decentralization	60	75%
NPD	45	56%
Foreign Investment	80	100%
Foreign Policy	55	69%

Table 11

Table 4.9.1 shows responses to categories given as measures for boosting sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe. About 19% of total respondents were of the view that indigenization could be key to boosting sustainable tourism.

## 12. Financial Performance Trends for Regency Flamboyant Hotel during the Period under Study

The trends in the superstructure of the overall economy are also well represented at local level. Regency Hotel Flamboyant the organization used as the case study has tangible evidence of the effect of the economy, political trends, legal trends, social trends some of which can be directly attributed to the presentation. Room occupancies will give a picture of frequencies in tourists visiting; on the other hand financial reports will show how the economy was functioning with a lot of alarming figures blossoming in the shadows of Guinness Book-deserving hyperinflation. Share of Arrivals

Country	Share of Arrivals
Angola	1.4
Botswana	7.1
D.R.C	0.2
Lesotho	1.4
Madagascar	1.8
Malawi	3.6
Mauritius	4.5
Mozambique	6.1
Namibia	4.5
South Africa	46
Swaziland	5.7
Tanzania	3.7
Zambia	3.9
Zimbabwe	9.5

Table 12

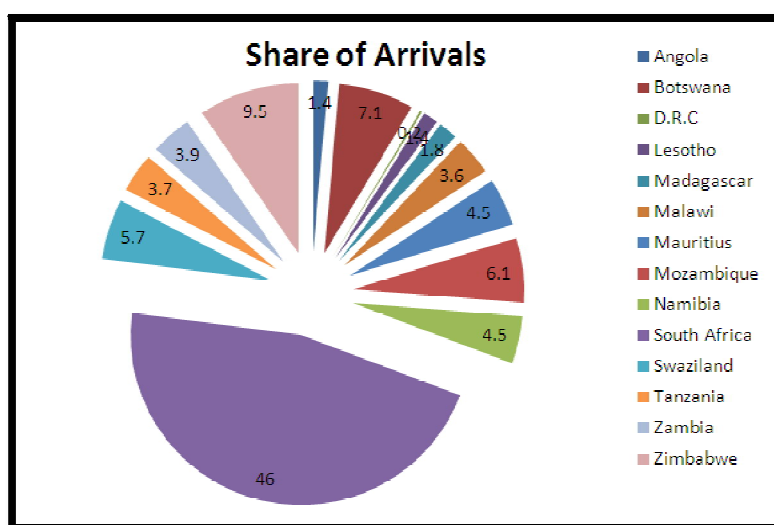


Figure 8: Share of Arrivals

According to RETOSA (2010) figure 4.9 reflects the trends discussed and clearly shows how certain RETOSA member states have managed to attract high spending visitors. This seems to support the hypothesis formulated that the multipliers might be substantially higher in other countries than those for South Africa. Similarly, these figures substantiate the point that in less developed countries there is a definite opportunity to attract higher spending tourists.

Countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, Tanzania, Namibia, Madagascar and Angola have attracted higher percentages of total tourism receipts compared to their respective shares of arrival. This implies that have managed to attract higher spending tourists compared to other member states. The relative performance of Mauritius and Tanzania stand out. Mauritius attracted more than 11.4% of total receipts in SADC and only 4.5% of the arrivals in 2008 at a ratio of 2.53 receipts/arrivals. Similarly, Tanzania attracted 10.6% of the total receipts with fewer arrivals (93.7%) for a best in group ratio of 2.86. Their relative performance outpace that of South Africa, which still managed to attract 59.9% of a total spend compared to 46.5% of the total arrivals at a ratio of 1.29.

Swaziland has the worst ration in the group of only 0.052. Both Zimbabwe and Mozambique have ratios of less than 0.25. While this type of analysis provides a good indication of the state of affairs care should be taken when interpreting the figures, given the limited quality of statistics of some countries.

## 12. Showing A Summary of Room Sales, Incomes, Total Expenses and for the Period Year 2005 To 2009

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Room Sales	10976	8890	5934	1007	18790
Gross Profit	35%	86%	71%	88%	92%
Total Expenses	21%	74%	48%	45%	30%
Profit	14%	12%	23%	43%	62%

Table 13

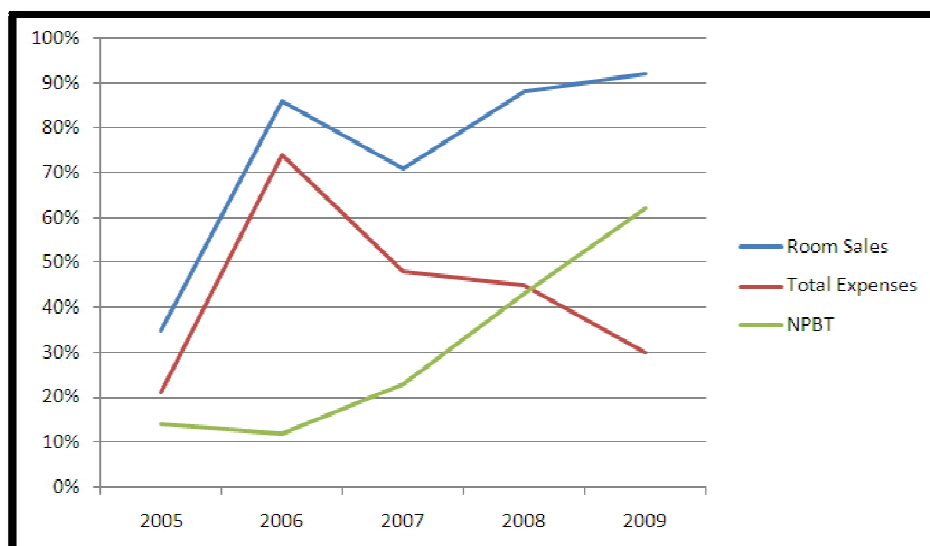


Figure 9: Co-Relation between Room Sales, Total Expenses and Net Profit

Table 4.9.3 and Fig 4.10 above shows a summary of gross profit, total expenses, and net profit before tax percentages as given in the various secondary data sources of the Regency Hotels and leisure group. Room sales are also given to show the impact of the hotel's core business on hotel operations during the period under study. The data shows a fluctuating trend on the net profit before tax, total expenses and gross profit. There was however an upward trend in total gross profit and net profit percentages during the period 2007 to 2009, first; owing to the devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar and a great influx of nongovernmental organizations and journalists.

According to company reports for the period 2007 to 2009, total expenses were on a downward trend owing to the increased usage of cheaper supplier sources of hotel stocks and the increase in local luxuries given the lucrative business performance on the black market at the time.

Figure 9 above shows a co-relation of room sales, total expenses and net profit. According to the Regency Hotels and leisure group's yearly company reports, the year 2005-2006 was marked by a more stable Zimbabwean dollar as compared to succeeding years; 2007-2009. The graph shows a 53% increase in total expenses and a 2% decline in profits before tax. This was justified in company reports and business review reports as caused by the slump in business activity during the year 2007 and a disproportionate increase in total expenses caused by shortages of supplies such as power, water, guest supplies, food and beverages, high staff turnover, and the emergence and gradual dominance of the black market. The years 2008-2009, saw a decline in total expenses and a desirable increase in net profit. Secondary sources attributed these trends to the further devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, hyper inflation that has reached 231%, price controls and an increase in formal and informal suppliers attributed to efforts to reinforce indigenization by the ruling party at the time.

## 13. Study Conclusions

The survey findings and other supporting materials showed that there was no single factor which was responsible for the decline in performance of the tourism sector in Zimbabwe. The political dimension was probably deemed to be the most influential of all the factors. This is because the vast majority of the frosting of relations between Zimbabwe and the western bloc which included the United Kingdom, Western Europe and the United States of America as well as Australia, New Zealand and the other countries allied to these players. The land reform and indigenization caused a deep rooted animosity between the western and Zimbabwean governments.

As a result of the actions of Zimbabwe, many western countries imposed a regime of sanction on the country and this had a negative impact on the economic performance of the country. The weakening of the economic performance in turn led to various forms on dysfunction in the areas of public goods and also the functionality of the market. Various corporations shipped out and settled in neighboring countries. The economic meltdown also affected the currency

situation in the sense that the Zimbabwe dollar eventually collapsed and was replaced by a multi-currency system at the time of writing this thesis.

The social impacts were quite huge as well for the tourism sector. The loss on incomes as a result of the various changes on the economic front implied that many people resorted to alternative means to earning living. Some resorted to prostitution and this increased the levels of the AIDS epidemic. It also resulted in increased crime which tarnished the image of the country and made it less attractive to tourists to visit.

The legal issues that affected the situation manifested in various dimensions. Firstly, the formulation and implementation of the indigenisation laws gave a lot of power to hitherto underpowered people who took a huge amount of ownership of the various tourism industries. This resulted in an outcry in some business circles and affected the image of the country. The various legal reforms on financial laws also affected how the local currency performed against other currencies. The tourists were also affected by the fact that the different countries who had imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe had also put some restriction on specific transactions and some of them affected the tourism industry.

Technology also played a huge role in many ways. The international media from the various countries that put economic sanctions on Zimbabwe aired a lot of damaging accounts of the developments taking place in Zimbabwe. As a result, this affected the perception of various tourists who could otherwise have managed to travel to the country. The usage of social media also enabled some people to post some very damaging feed from recording sin cases when there were challenges like violence among others. This resulted in a further demonization of the country in terms of international perspective.

#### 14. Recommendations

There is no way the Regency Flamboyant Hotel can take care of the vast political challenges that the country is facing at an international level. However, they can also use the same media which is used to demonize the country to carefully profile their hotel and post footage of peaceful environment with people enjoying themselves at the hotel. They could also interview the different people who come to stay at the hotel so that they can be first hand witnesses to the fact that the hotel can be used for recreational purposes.

The hotel can also take an initiative whereby they call specialist in media to generate content which seeks to distinguish between the official positions taken by governments which may seem rather exaggerated than the situation obtaining on the ground. This can also be done on a continuous basis.

The hotel could also reach out to the different stakeholders like transport operators and representatives of business and captains of industry to give them preferential terms which will increase traffic to the hotel particularly because it is on a major route to South Africa.

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