



An exploration of co-creating South African city brands to revive the tourism industry post a global pandemic



Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree **Master of Arts in Creative Brand Leadership** at The Independent Institute of Education, Vega School.

Sally Sabra

Supervisor: Dr Yolandi Burger

12/03/2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must begin with expressing heartfelt gratitude to my remarkable supervisor, Dr Yolandi Burger. Articulating the depth of my appreciation for her unwavering support and invaluable insights throughout this challenging journey feels nearly impossible. Initiated amidst the turbulence of the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, this journey brought unforeseen transitions and trials, with moments of diminished resolve, but Dr Burger's persistent encouragement and wisdom were my guiding lights. I am forever grateful for her transformative impact on my personal and academic growth.

Equally, a warm thank you to the dedicated academic team at Vega. Their collective wisdom and commitment have been instrumental in shaping a conducive learning environment and pushing me to reach new heights.

My loving family, my parents, and my spouse have been my constant support, infusing me with strength and motivation, and their faith in me has been a beacon during tumultuous times.

Concluding, this thesis is a reflection of not just my efforts but also the generosity, dedication, and support of all these incredible individuals. To everyone, I extend my sincere and deep gratitude. Your imprints will remain in this work and inspire my future paths.

Thank you!

Sal

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the Master of Arts in Creative Brand Leadership Programme to The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for a postgraduate qualification.

Sally Sabra

01 October 2023

ABSTRACT

City branding is described in the literature as the practice of applying branding theory to create solid and distinct identities for cities. Although this research domain is well established and much has been said about the theoretical foundation of the practice, scholars in the field of branding widely debate the best strategic framework for crafting and implementing a city brand strategy. The variation in successful strategies worldwide suggests that the approach is very subjective to the city in question. Nonetheless, local tourism tends to benefit from this activity. Tourism is a crucial sector of the South African economy and currently (directly) employs more than 700,000 individuals. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic brought the tourism industry to a standstill for the greater part of 2020 and 2021. This standstill was due to strict lockdown regulations that enforced social distancing measures in hopes of flattening the infection curve and slowing down the spread of the virus. The South African Minister of Finance urged businesses in the sector to think of innovative ways to revive the industry once they can fully operate and focus on showcasing their readiness to work responsibly during recovery.

In response, this study explores the potential of co-creating specific South African cities to aid the revival of the tourism industry post the recent pandemic. To engage with stakeholders and obtain rich insight into their perception of South African cities and how they could be branded to revive the tourism industry, the best-suited research design is interactive, qualitative, incorporates participative action, and is multidisciplinary. The research design entails a deductive approach to the framework and strategies being applied (the literature) while maintaining an inductive approach when using data/insights generated by the research to put forward a stakeholder (co-created) suggestion of how South African cities can be branded to revitalise the tourism in the country. Facilitated co-creation workshops are used, which include various stakeholders representing a particular South African city. The workshops aim to explore their thoughts, feelings, perceptions and ideas on how branding South African cities can revive the tourism industry. A purposive sampling technique is used to identify two groups of twelve participants, each in the respective cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town. The participants are equally divided as general citizens and representatives of local tourism business operations from that city.

The findings post-workshop suggest that **co-creation and stakeholder engagement** are key contributing factors to the success of **city brand design** as they ensure the identity developed is inclusive and a genuine representation of the location and those who inhabit it. The workshops highlight the importance of involving key stakeholders in the tourism industry in the co-creation process and underscore the need for a clear vision and strategy to ensure the success of the initiative.

The study has drafted the foundations of an initial brand identity for Johannesburg and Cape Town that needs to be validated and refined further.

Keywords: Co-creation; City branding; South African cities; Tourism industry; Pandemic; Covid-19; Post-pandemic

CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

Terminology	Description
Co-branding	For this study, co-branding is defined as the collaborative effort of identified stakeholders (residents and local hospitality businesses) to brand South African cities in a co-creative workshop setting. This definition is supported in an academic article by Helmig, Huber and Leeflang (2008) titled <i>Co-branding: the science of alliances</i> which provides a detailed overview of the concept of co-branding and its benefits. It discusses the importance of considering the compatibility of brands and the needs of stakeholders in the co-branding process.
Co-creation	Co-creation refers to stakeholder engagement in co-creation city branding workshops. This is a collaborative process where stakeholders co-create solutions and ideas that address a common challenge or opportunity. In this process, stakeholders work together to generate new ideas, build on existing ideas, and develop a shared understanding of the challenge or opportunity at hand (Bocken, Short, Rana et al., 2014).
Tourism	The UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) (2020) defines tourism 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." For the purpose of this study, the term 'tourism' encompasses domestic, international, business, adventure, wildlife, medical, spiritual and cultural tourism.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>RSA</i>	Republic of South Africa
TBCSA	Tourism Business Council of South Africa
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
TBCSA	Tourism Business Council of South Africa
SAT	South African Tourism

Chapter I

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

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

Seth Godin, marketing and leadership expert

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explores the potential of co-creating city brands to rejuvenate the tourism industry in South Africa, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since 2020, the tourism industry has faced unparalleled challenges, highlighting the potential role of city branding in revitalising this critical sector of the South African economy. Despite its potential, the city branding process is complex and multifaceted, involving numerous stakeholders and requiring a nuanced understanding of each city's unique qualities and challenges. This study dives deep into the heart of the city branding process through an extensive literature review (see Chapter 2) and research design (see Chapter 3), which explores it through the lens of two distinct South African cities: Cape Town and Johannesburg.

This study aims to shed light on the complexities of city branding. It offers fresh insights into how it can be leveraged to revive the tourism industry in the two South African cities explored. The research problem was carefully dissected, and a series of research questions were posed in section 1.4, answered in the study's conclusion (see Chapter 5). The associated research objectives were used to guide the research journey through the various chapters to ensure coherency and alignment with the research questions. This introductory chapter serves as a roadmap for the study and sets the stage for the following chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The significance of tourism as a key economic sector in South Africa cannot be overstated enough. With its substantial contribution to the country's economy and its pivotal role in job creation, the sector serves as a crucial catalyst for economic growth and development (Rogerson & Mthombeni, 2015; Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2011). In South Africa, the most popular provinces for visitors are Gauteng and the Western Cape. This preference is mainly due to their social experience (which includes shopping and nightlife) and the wildlife activities available (Prayag, 2007). However, the recent pandemic has precipitated an unprecedented downturn, severely impacting the sector (Sigala, 2020). Indeed, Covid-19 has been referred to as the most significant global health disaster of this

century, posing one of the greatest challenges that humankind has faced since World War II (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020).

The tourism sector, one of the hardest hit sectors since the onset of the pandemic, was once a driving force for economic transformation in Africa (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020; Rogerson & Baum, 2020). In South Africa alone, the sector directly supported 740,000 jobs and more than 1,5 million indirect jobs across the economy prior to the pandemic (Tourism Business Council of South Africa, International Finance Corporation and South African Department of Tourism, 2020). The impact of the novel virus has been felt globally and has taken lives, destroyed livelihoods and has changed how people interact with each other (Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, 2020). The South African Government called for a swift and agile response from all industries to mitigate as many of the economic and social risks as possible while prioritising the health and well-being of the nation (Ramaphosa, 2020). South Africa was in a “state of disaster” for 750 days and although restrictions were eased in late 2020, the tourism sector was operating at between 30% to 40% capacity in 2022 in comparison to 2019 (TBCSA, 2022). Domestic travel is leading the sector recovery as leisure tourism increased in December 2021, corporate and government travel was beginning to increase in February 2022, but events and conferencing still need to be boosted. The tourism sector lost 470,000 jobs due to the pandemic with only 37% of employees receiving 100% of their salaries in February 2022 (TBCSA, 2022).

In 2018, at the International Travel Trade Show in Germany, Sisa Ntshona, the CEO of South African Tourism, underscored the vital importance of tourism to the South African economy, promoting the notion that it should be "nurtured to support sustained and inclusive growth" (Statistics South Africa, 2018). The assertion about the sector's importance is substantiated by data drawn from the *Tourism Industry Survey of South Africa: Covid-19 report* in April 2020 by the Department of Tourism and the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA). The report highlighted that tourism created more jobs in 2017 than mining and manufacturing combined, supporting 740,000 direct jobs and over 1,5 million indirect jobs as of April 2020 (Department of Tourism and TBCSA, 2022). It was also found to be a lifeline for many microenterprises, providing employment opportunities for marginalised populations across the country. In 2019, South Africa hosted more than ten million visitors, contributing R27 billion to the economy (Department of Tourism and TBCSA, 2022).

Unfortunately, the global outbreak of Covid-19 has significantly impacted the tourism sector since the disease was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (The World Travel and Tourism Council,

2020). As of April 2020, 43% of businesses in the sector in South Africa had either furloughed or made up to half of their staff redundant, affecting employees in tourism in South Africa (WTTC, 2020). In 2020, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) projected that it could take up to a year for the tourism sector to start recovering once the outbreak is over, with emerging destinations, such as South Africa, potentially taking much longer (WTTC, 2020). The tourism sector directly employed 459,533 persons in 2020 which was a decrease of 41.1% or 320,563 employees compared with 2019. The tourism share of total employment decreased from 4.8% in 2019 to 3.1% in 2020. Thus, only one out of thirty-two people employed in the tourism industry before 2020 was working within the tourism sector during the pandemic (Department of Tourism, 2023).

In addressing the challenges faced by the industry at the time of the outbreak, Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane emphasised the need for creative ways to revitalise the industry post-Covid-19 (Department of Tourism, 2019). Among the recommendations was the development of attractive packages that adhere to the new way of doing things post-Covid-19, including responsible social distancing measures (Department of Tourism, 2019). However, the socioeconomic implications of the pandemic on the South African population and their disposable income for leisure travel within or outside the borders must be considered. In this context, the branding of cities becomes crucial in communicating their readiness to welcome tourists post-pandemic and in making them more attractive to travellers.

In this context, city branding emerges as a strategic tool to revive the tourism industry (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). City branding refers to the process of creating a unique and differentiated identity for a city, which can attract tourists, businesses, and investors (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). It involves highlighting the city's unique attributes, its culture, heritage, attractions, and the experiences it offers (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). The process of city branding, while promising, presents its own set of challenges (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011). To address these challenges, this study delves into the process of co-creating city brands, exploring this strategy as a potential solution to revitalise the tourism industry of the two cities explored.

1.3 RATIONALE

This study addresses the need for understanding the role of city branding in revitalising the tourism sector, which falls under the category of Destination Tourism. The focus on city branding contributes to the understanding of tourism demand and supply, as it seeks to understand the factors that make a city attractive to tourists and the ways in which these factors can be enhanced. The rationale for this

study lies in its potential to contribute to the recovery of the tourism sector in South Africa post-Covid-19. By examining city branding strategies in Cape Town and Johannesburg, this study aims to provide insights that could be instrumental in reviving the tourism sector, enhancing the appeal of South African cities to both local and international tourists, and ultimately supporting the sustained and inclusive growth of the sector as advocated by Sisa Ntshona, South African Tourism (SAT) CEO (South African Tourism, 2020).

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The sections below provide a description of the problem statement, research questions, research aim and objectives.

1.4.1 Problem Statement

Tourism has long been identified as one of the key industries driving change and fuelling economic transformation on the African continent, including South Africa (Economic Development Department, 2012; Christie, Fernandes, Messerli et al., 2013). In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses in the tourism sector had to adapt to a new way of operating that is safe and attractive to travellers once lockdown restrictions were lifted (Department of Tourism, 2019). Branding plays a vital role in how cities are perceived by visitors (Shoaib & Keivani, 2015). Successful city branding may provide a sense of reliability, and credibility, making cities more attractive to travellers looking to visit the region (Gowreesunkar, 2019). For these reasons, it is worthwhile to explore the co-branding of South African cities to revive the tourism industry post a pandemic.

1.4.2 Research Questions

The primary research question of this study is: How can South African cities be co-created to revive tourism in the country post a pandemic?

The secondary research questions of this study are:

1. What are the theoretical foundations, guidelines, and considerations for the successful co-creation of city branding to revive the South African tourism industry?
2. What are the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders of the tourism industry post the pandemic?
3. How would stakeholders co-create specific South African cities to support the revival of the tourism industry in the country post a pandemic?

4. How can a “Value Proposition Canvas” for Cape Town and Johannesburg serve as a guideline for future city branding initiatives?

1.4.3 Aim and Objectives

This study aims to explore how South African city brands can be co-created to revive tourism in the country post a pandemic.

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Identify the theoretical foundations, guidelines, and considerations for the successful co-creation of city branding to revive the South African tourism industry (see Chapter 2).
2. Engage with stakeholders to explore their perspectives and experiences of the tourism industry during the pandemic (see Chapters 3 & 4).
3. Explore how city residents and hospitality businesses can co-create specific South African cities to support the revival of the tourism industry in the country post a pandemic (see Chapters 3 & 4).
4. Create a foundational value proposition canvas to serve as a guideline for future city branding endeavours (see Chapters 3 & 4).

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology chapter of this study provides a thorough explanation of the research procedures and methods (see Chapter 3). The research was approached from a constructivist paradigm, recognising the importance of involving stakeholders in the co-creation process and acknowledging the roles their perspectives, experiences, and knowledge play in shaping this study (see 3.2.2.1). This view acknowledges that the knowledge and understanding generated through the co-creation process are not fixed and can evolve over time as new perspectives and experiences are introduced.

The research is undertaken using a qualitative approach to gain a deep understanding of the motivations, experiences, and perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the co-creation process (see 3.2.2.2). This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the complex and multifaceted nature of the co-creation process and the development of city brands. The research design employs co-creation workshops that provide a platform for diverse stakeholders to participate in the branding process.

User Engagement for Large Scale Pilots in the Internet of Things (U4IoT, 2019) emphasises the importance of end-user involvement in the design and implementation of IoT solutions. It offers tools, techniques, and best practices to ensure meaningful user engagement, fostering a user-centric approach. This framework has been instrumental in various large-scale pilot projects, such as Smart Cities initiatives in Europe, where community involvement has been pivotal in shaping IoT implementations.

Open Space Technologies, as introduced by Harrison Owen in 1993, is a participatory workshop method that focuses on a specific and important purpose or task but begins without any formal agenda, beyond the overall purpose or theme. This method is particularly effective in situations where a diverse group of participants needs to address complex and potentially controversial topics. Open Space has been successfully applied in multiple contexts, including the "Greening of Silicon Valley" initiative, where stakeholders co-created sustainable urban development strategies.

Building on the methodologies above, these workshops, designed using elements from both U4IoT and Open Space Technologies, allowed for interactive, participatory, and multidisciplinary exploration of city branding. Such methodologies have proven effective in other relevant case studies, including the city branding initiatives of Barcelona post the 1992 Olympics and Melbourne's transformation into a cultural hub, both of which involved extensive stakeholder engagement and co-creation processes.

The methodology of the study to conduct the two co-creation workshops are structured into several phases (see 3.2.3). Each phase of the workshop was carefully planned and facilitated to achieve the aim of this study. The process involves brainstorming, ideation, reflection, feedback, prioritisation, selection, and implementation of city brands. Non-probability, purposive sampling was used to select participants, including residents and local business representatives from Cape Town and Johannesburg (see 3.2.3.2).

For data collection (see 3.2.3.3), various tools and techniques were employed. Audio-visual recording tools were used to capture discussions and interactions, ensuring no detail was missed, for a comprehensive data analysis (see 3.3) where a combination of qualitative methods was employed. Thematic analysis (see 4.4) was primarily used to identify patterns and recurring themes from the data. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of the sentiments, perspectives, and suggestions of the participants, providing valuable insights that contributed significantly to the study's findings.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché et al. (2011) specify ten ethical considerations that a researcher needs to abide by when using people as participants. These considerations are only briefly outlined below (see 3.4 for a detailed discussion):

- During the co-creation workshops, efforts were made to ensure that no participant was emotionally or physically harmed by using appropriate facilitation techniques and exercises.
- To ensure the confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of the participants, no personal details collected during the workshops were recorded. Although participants introduced themselves to break the ice and shared personal experiences, the discussions were focused on the city branding process, and all observations and comments were recorded without attributing them to specific individuals.
- At-risk groups were not targeted as participants in the workshops. The participants were selected based on their roles as residents or local business representatives in Cape Town and Johannesburg.
- Participants did not receive any monetary compensation for their participation in the co-creation workshops. Their contributions to the city branding process were considered valuable in their own right.
- No deception of participants took place. The purpose and procedures of the workshops were clearly communicated to all participants beforehand.
- Ethics clearance and institutional permission were obtained from the Independent Institute for Education (IIE) (see Appendix A).
- Informed written consent was obtained from all participants in the co-creation workshops (see Appendix B). They were informed that the findings of the study may be published in academic journals, presented at conferences, or used to inform city branding strategies.
- The potential benefits and risks of participation were clearly communicated to the participants.
- Risk mitigation was addressed by securely storing the workshop records and transcripts. Electronic data were encrypted with passwords, and hard copies of workshop materials were stored in a locked safe to which only the researcher has access.
- Participation in the co-creation workshops was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to choose not to answer any questions or engage in any activities if they felt uncomfortable. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences.

In addition to the ten ethical considerations mentioned above, the following was also considered:

- Recognising the rich cultural tapestry of South Africa, particularly in cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg, the researcher took utmost care in ensuring cultural sensitivity throughout the co-creation workshops. Facilitators and researchers were trained to be aware of potential cultural nuances, ensuring that every participant felt respected, valued, and understood. This included the avoidance of cultural biases, understanding non-verbal cues specific to certain cultures, and ensuring that discussions and activities did not unintentionally marginalise or stereotype any cultural group. By embracing an inclusive approach, the workshops aimed to create a space where diverse voices, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, felt welcomed and heard.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The trustworthiness and academic rigour of this qualitative exploration are guided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which are only briefly discussed in this section (see 3.5 for a detailed discussion). Dependability is upheld through the systematic and repeatable implementation of the research design, credibility is promoted through the data's authenticity of open and honest dialogues with the study participants, transferability through detailed and rich descriptions of the findings, and confirmability through an audit trail that provides rationales for the decisions made step by step.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study acknowledges several limitations that may impact the generalizability and applicability of its findings. Firstly, the purposive sampling technique, while effective in ensuring relevant stakeholder participation, may not encompass the full spectrum of perspectives within the city branding context, potentially limiting the diversity of insights. The focus on specific South African cities may also restrict the extrapolation of the study's outcomes to other contexts or regions, as local nuances play a significant role in the effectiveness of city branding strategies.

Additionally, the qualitative approach, although in-depth and rich in context, may not provide the level of quantitative data that would allow for statistical generalization. The reliance on subjective interpretations and experiences, inherent in qualitative research, introduces a level of bias that can influence the study's conclusions. The dynamic nature of city branding, influenced by evolving economic, social, and political factors, means that the findings may have a limited temporal relevance, potentially reducing their applicability over time.

The study's design, focusing on co-creation workshops, may also carry limitations related to participant engagement and the depth of data collected. The effectiveness of the workshops is contingent on the active participation and openness of the stakeholders involved, which cannot be guaranteed. Furthermore, the virtual or physical setting of these workshops may influence the interactions among participants and the outcomes of the co-creation process.

1.9 DISCIPLINARY DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH

The study is positioned at the crossroads of tourism management, branding, and urban studies, all of which provide essential frameworks for the research. The field of tourism management is vital, as the study investigates strategies for South Africa's tourism industry's recovery and revival (Sigala, 2020). The discipline of branding, especially the subset of city branding, is crucial for this research. Conceptual frameworks and theories by scholars such as Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) will be utilised to understand how cities can differentiate themselves, attract tourists, and stimulate economic development. As such, city branding plays a pivotal role in this study, which aims to explore how co-branding cities can aid in the revival of the tourism industry. Also, the domain of urban studies is imperative, given the focus on cities. The discipline's insights, particularly those concerning the tourism sector and the role of cities in promoting tourism, are integral for comprehending the context for city branding (Hall, Müller & Saarinen, 2008). Per the institution's requirements, a full academic paper was submitted to the Design Educators Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA) conference of 2023. The paper was peer-reviewed in August 2023, and overall positive feedback was received that highlights the research's unexpected, but welcoming contribution, to design education to expand the initial reach of the study (read more about the research dissemination pathways in Chapter 5).

1.10 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

As the researcher, I adopt a constructivist theoretical framework that aligns with my background as a brand strategist and market researcher. With extensive experience in workshop facilitation and moderation, I emphasise the importance of understanding individual viewpoints and experiences within the realm of constructivism. Drawing from my involvement in leading 50+ projects for prominent South African brands, my expertise in brand strategy and user experience informs this study's framework.

My role extends beyond that of a detached observer since I actively engage as an interpreter of participant narratives. Proficient in qualitative research and remote methodologies, I leverage my workshop facilitation skills to foster open dialogue and elicit candid responses. My diverse sector

experience and knack for crafting compelling brand experiences shape my interpretive lens, enabling me to uncover nuanced data themes and derive transformative strategies.

Personal travels enhance my interpretation by adding a global perspective. Cultural awareness from my international experiences enriches my understanding of social dynamics, ensuring strategies resonate across diverse audiences. The synergy of my professional expertise, personal encounters, and the constructivist framework defines my role and influences the interpretation of the findings of this study.

1.11 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCIPLINE

The outcomes of this study are expected to have practical implications across diverse sectors. In the tourism industry, the findings can inform city branding strategies to attract tourists and stimulate economic recovery in the aftermath of crises such as pandemics or political conflicts. Policymakers and city planners can leverage these insights to differentiate their cities and foster economic growth (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). In times of swift change, political conflicts, or crises, the findings from this study can offer a roadmap for revitalising tourism and promoting economic development through city branding. For instance, the strategic use of city branding in the post-conflict recovery of cities like Beirut, Lebanon demonstrates the potential of branding in restoring a city's image and rebuilding its tourism sector (Qureshi & Dada, 2019). Moreover, the insights gained from this research can contribute to understanding how city branding can be used as a tool for recovery and reconstruction in post-conflict scenarios. This could be particularly relevant in regions where political conflicts have resulted in significant disruption to the urban environment and the local economy (Assem, Abdelmohsen, & Ezzeldin, 2019), such as in the current case of conflict-ridden Ukraine.

1.12 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The value of this research extends beyond its immediate findings. It provides practical strategies and insights into how specific South African cities, particularly Cape Town and Johannesburg, can be co-branded to revive and strengthen the tourism industry in the aftermath of the pandemic. Drawing on the interdisciplinary framework outlined, these insights blend perspectives from tourism studies, branding, and stakeholder engagement, making them particularly useful for a broad range of industry stakeholders such as city brand practitioners, travel agencies and the local hospitality industry, municipalities and local government.

- City branding practitioners, using the intersectional knowledge from brand strategy and local city dynamics, can use these insights to develop innovative strategies that not only resonate with diverse audiences but also authentically encapsulate the unique attributes of these cities. The collaborative co-creation approach advocated in this research promotes broader stakeholder participation, fostering a sense of shared ownership and commitment to the city brand.
- Travel agencies can leverage the co-branded identity of these cities to create compelling narratives that appeal to different tourist segments. This approach, which combines aspects of marketing communication and tourism studies, can help them more effectively promote South African cities to prospective tourists.
- The local hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, and other tourism service providers, can align their offerings with the city brand. Informed by the research findings, these businesses can create experiences that not only reinforce the brand identity but also enhance the overall tourist experience, contributing to the success of the city brand.
- Municipalities and local governments can use the findings to guide their policies and initiatives related to tourism development and city branding, in line with the strategic management perspective of this study. By understanding how their city is branded, they can attract investment, stimulate economic growth, and improve residents' quality of life. The research's co-creation approach can enhance their engagement with local stakeholders, promoting a more inclusive and sustainable approach to city branding and tourism development.

1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH DISSERTATION

Table 1.1: Structure of the research dissertation

Chapter 1 Orientation to the Study	This chapter serves as a roadmap for the dissertation and includes the rationale of why this study was undertaken, the aim and objectives that guided the study, the aligned research questions that shapes Chapter 5, the value of the research and brief sections pertaining to Chapters 2, 3 and 4.
Chapter 2 Literature Review	This chapter presents an overview of the existing literature related to the research topic. It helps to identify gaps in the current knowledge that the dissertation aims to fill.
Chapter 3 Research Design and Methodology	This chapter explains the research methods used in the study. It includes details about the research design, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations.
Chapter 4 Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion of Findings	This chapter presents the data analysis, the interpretation of the analysis, and a discussion of the findings in the context of the research questions and objectives, as well as the existing literature. It includes tables, charts, and other visual representations of the data analysed.
Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Recommendations	This chapter attempts to answer the research questions of this study, the resulting implications, the limitations of the study, and future recommendations. The chapter concludes with a personal reflection of the research journey.

1.14 STUDY OVERVIEW

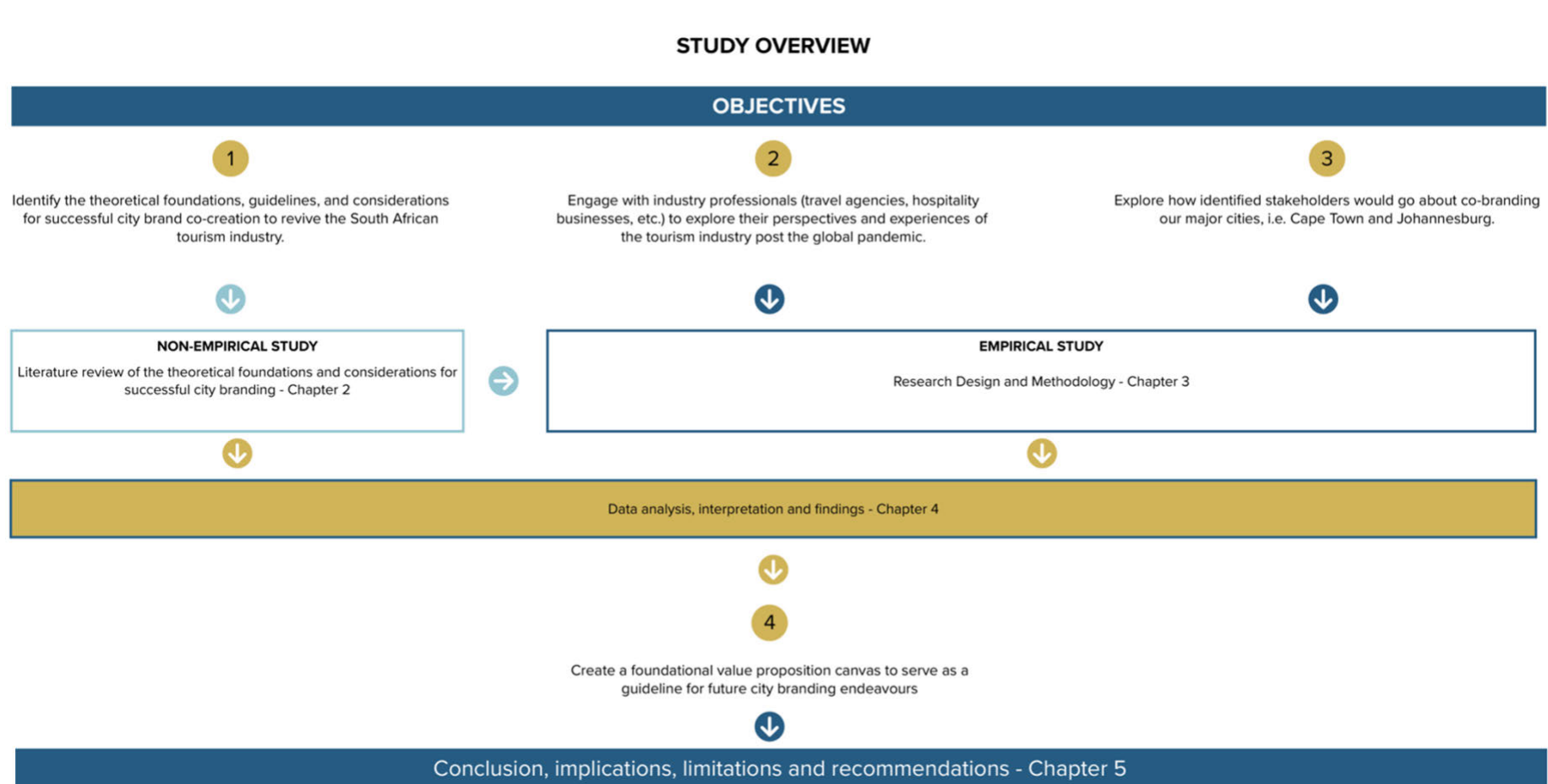


Figure 1.1: Study overview

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW (NON-EMPIRICAL STUDY)

“...branding is your fundamental promise of whom you serve, how you make them feel and what’s different about how you deliver. Marketing is how you get this message out there once you have defined it.”

Julie Cottineau, the founder of Brand School

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry has a significant impact on the world economy, providing employment and generating income for millions of people (Sofronov, 2018). However, the recent pandemic has had a devastating effect on the tourism industry, with many destinations experiencing significant declines in tourism activity (Škare, Soriano & Porada-Rochoń, 2020). In South Africa, the tourism industry is a critical contributor to the economy and the decline in tourism activity has had a profound impact on the country's overall economic well-being (Anholt, 2007).

To address this challenge, there is a growing recognition of the need to explore innovative approaches to revive the tourism industry, including co-creating city brands (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). Co-creation is a collaborative process where stakeholders come together to co-create solutions and ideas that address a common challenge or opportunity (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). In the context of city branding, co-creation involves stakeholders from different sectors working together to create a brand identity that leverages the strengths and assets of a city (Anholt, 2007).

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the concept of co-creating city brands and its potential to revive the tourism industry in South Africa. The review will explore the theoretical foundations of co-creation and city branding and will provide an overview of the key guidelines and considerations for co-creating city brands (Anholt, 2007). Additionally, the review will analyse case studies of successful city brand implementations and will examine the potential benefits and challenges of co-creating city brands (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

This literature review will provide a comprehensive examination of the existing research and knowledge related to co-creating city brands and its potential to revive the tourism industry in South Africa. The insights and lessons learned from this review will inform the development of a research framework for the exploration of co-creating South African city brands to revive the tourism industry post a pandemic (Anholt, 2007).

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF REVITALISING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

2.2.1 The Definition of Tourism

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as: “all of the activities associated with travel away from a person's usual environment” (WTO, 2000). This definition implies that there is a co-dependency between travel and tourism as, without travel, tourism (by definition) cannot occur: while a traveller might not always be a tourist, a tourist is always a traveller (Gowreesunkar, 2019). The definition also suggests that tourism encompasses many different activities that span over various industries and may, moreover, vary depending on the tourist type (travel for business, leisure or other purposes) (Lew, Hall & Williams, 2008). The definition of tourism for this study will encompass travel/transportation, hospitality services such as accommodation, entertainment, food and beverage services and other travel-related activities targeted at both domestic and international visitors.

2.2.2 The Importance of the Industry in Africa and South Africa

According to the 2018 WTTC Report, travel and tourism's contribution to overall GDP is expected to increase by 3.6% by 2028 (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2008). The tourism industry is comprised of a highly dynamic mix of businesses servicing both domestic and international visitors (McKelly, Rogerson, Van Huysteen et al., 2017). It has been identified as one of the key industries driving change and fuelling economic transformation on the African continent and in South Africa (EDD, 2012; Christie et al., 2013). Research shows that the industry is growing faster in the world's developing regions and it is predicted by analysts that the majority of international travellers will visit developing countries as destinations of choice by 2030 (this is mainly due to the increase in popularity of the adventure and nature tourism subsectors) (UNWTO, 2022). For these reasons and many others, it is believed that tourism does not always receive the credit it deserves regarding its economic and social contributions towards the development of the African countries (Christie et al., 2013).

According to multiple authors exploring sustained economic growth through tourism in Africa, there are at least ten key motivators for developing tourism (Christie et al., 2013; Jafari, 2001; Gowreesunkar, 2019). Their findings indicate that the growth in tourism can fuel economic transformation; create jobs; contribute to the development of peripheral/remote regions; encourage SMME development; encourage infrastructure improvements; increase domestic consumption while diversifying exports; empower marginalised populations (including women and youth); promote cultural heritage conservation; foster public-private partnerships; and improve the nation/region/city image. This list could be extended to include other vital contributions made by the tourism industry

such as helping fight poverty by enriching economic activity and improving social and economic inclusion (McKelly et al., 2017).

Although Africa is perceived as an impoverished continent by the developed world, it is blessed with many potential city destinations that can change this perception (Gowreesunkar, 2019). These cities can be described as African landmarks and have the potential not only to increase tourism across the continent but also to compete with popular international cities like Madrid and Tokyo (Gowreesunkar, 2019). That being said, it is important to recognise that cities in Africa face a different set of challenges from those in developed regions as many African cities have weak, young tourism industries (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017).

When looking at global competitiveness in tourism, being a strong contender entails the ability to attract foreign investment, businesses, residents, and visitors (Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005; Knežević Cvelbar, Dwyer, & Koman et al., 2016). In today's globalised and highly connected world, cities find themselves competing with other cities for their share of the world's consumers, visitors/tourists, business investments, status and attention (Kerr, 2006).

Understanding the pivotal role of tourism in economic and social development, especially within the context of Africa and South Africa, underscores the urgency of revitalizing this sector. This revitalization is not just about enhancing current tourism offerings but also about delving deeper into the foundational elements that can sustain long-term growth and competitiveness in the global arena. As the research transitions from recognizing the broad-scale importance of the tourism industry to focusing on the specifics, it becomes crucial to explore the underlying fundamentals that support robust tourism development. These include innovative city branding, strategic stakeholder engagement, and the co-creation of memorable tourist experiences that resonate with both domestic and international visitors. By examining these core aspects, the study can identify effective strategies that not only address the immediate challenges faced by the tourism sector but also lay the groundwork for sustainable growth and enhanced global competitiveness of African cities in the tourism landscape.

2.3 THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CITY BRANDING

2.3.1 Introduction

Branding forms an essential part of any marketing strategy. Building a clear and intended brand perception in the mind of consumers is a key contributing factor to business success (Kemp, Childers,

& Williams, 2012). Businesses attract and retain customers by promoting value that resonates with customers through their branding efforts (Rooney, 1995). In the same way products (i.e. goods and services) are branded, places such as cities are also promoted through crafted branding strategies. Place branding (which encompasses city branding) is the process of using a branding strategy (and other marketing techniques) to enhance the economic, political and/or cultural development of places (Ryan & Silvanto, 2010).

In the aim of reaching global competitiveness goals, many cities have implemented city branding strategies to communicate strong identities and differentiate themselves from other cities (Liouris & Deffener, 2005). This goal has resulted in city branding emerging as an internationally recognised and established research domain, characterised by a multifaceted theoretical foundation (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011).

2.3.2 What is City Branding?

City branding is often defined as an effort by tourism-related businesses or authorities to market or position cities as attractive tourist destinations (Papadopoulos, 2004). The extracted table below explores the various components that make up the city brand from multiple perspectives (Green, Grace, & Perkins, 2016):

Table 0.1: Multiple perspectives of city brands

Source	Focus	City branding meaning, dimensions, considerations
Hankinson (2004)	Destination marketers' perception of destination brand images	• Activities and facilities (e.g. good shopping) • Business tourism (e.g. conference facilities) • History, heritage and culture (e.g. historical, not modern) • Ambience (e.g. cosmopolitan) • Main economic activity (e.g. leisure-oriented) • External profile (e.g. reputation) • Accessibility (e.g. transport) • People characteristics (e.g. youth-oriented) • International reputation • Economic development (e.g. recent expansion) • Industrial environment (e.g. declining industry)
Laaksonen et al. (2006)	Techniques for conceptualising the	• Observation level (i.e. themes to which perception is attached such as built environment, culture, industry)

Source	Focus	City branding meaning, dimensions, considerations
	city as people experience it	• Evaluation level (i.e. attitudes that are connected to perception such as certain areas of the city are beautiful/ugly) • Atmosphere level (i.e. subjective impression such as unkind, inflexible and feelings such as frustration)
Anholt (2006)	Measuring world city brand images	• Presence (e.g. international status, familiarity, notable achievements) • Place (e.g. physical aspects, climate) • Pulse (e.g. vibrant urban lifestyle, leisure activities) • People (e.g. nature, culture) • Potential (e.g. economic and educational opportunities) • Prerequisites (i.e. basic qualities of the city such as accommodation)
Zenker et al. (2009)	Resident sanctification and commitment	• Urbanity and diversity (e.g. shopping, cultural activities, atmosphere) • Nature and recreation (e.g. low pollution, tranquility, open spaces) • Job chances (e.g. wages levels, promotion opportunities) • Cost efficiency (e.g. cost of living)
Zenker (2011)	The concept and measurement of place (city) brand components	• Characteristics (e.g. physical environment) • Inhabitants (e.g. diversity, culture) • Business (e.g. employment opportunities, business climate) • Quality (e.g. living conditions) • Familiarity (e.g. reputation) • History (e.g. historical events)
Lucarelli (2012)	A framework to analyse and evaluate city brand equity	• Events and activities (e.g. European Capital of Culture) • History and heritage (e.g. Communism) • Process and institution (e.g. public hearings) • Artefacts and spatial planning (e.g. museums) • Graphics and symbols (e.g. logos, slogans)

This compilation highlights how many different factors can make up a city brand (depending on the perspective or theoretical framework in question) and why each city branding strategy needs to be crafted strategically according to specific goals. On the other hand, some authors have expressed that successful city branding strategies are commonly characterised by a collaborative/partnership approach to strategy formulation. This approach would involve multiple stakeholders coming together to craft a clearly defined and aligned city brand positioning (for example, Dinnie, 2011).

A city brand has also been described as the meaning given to a combination of verbal and behavioural expressions of a city specifically when they are a result of active management of perceptions and strategic efforts to push forward specific meanings (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Figure 2.1 shows an extended and adapted version of Kumar and Steenkamp's (2013) cultural branding model to nation branding (which can be adapted to city branding):

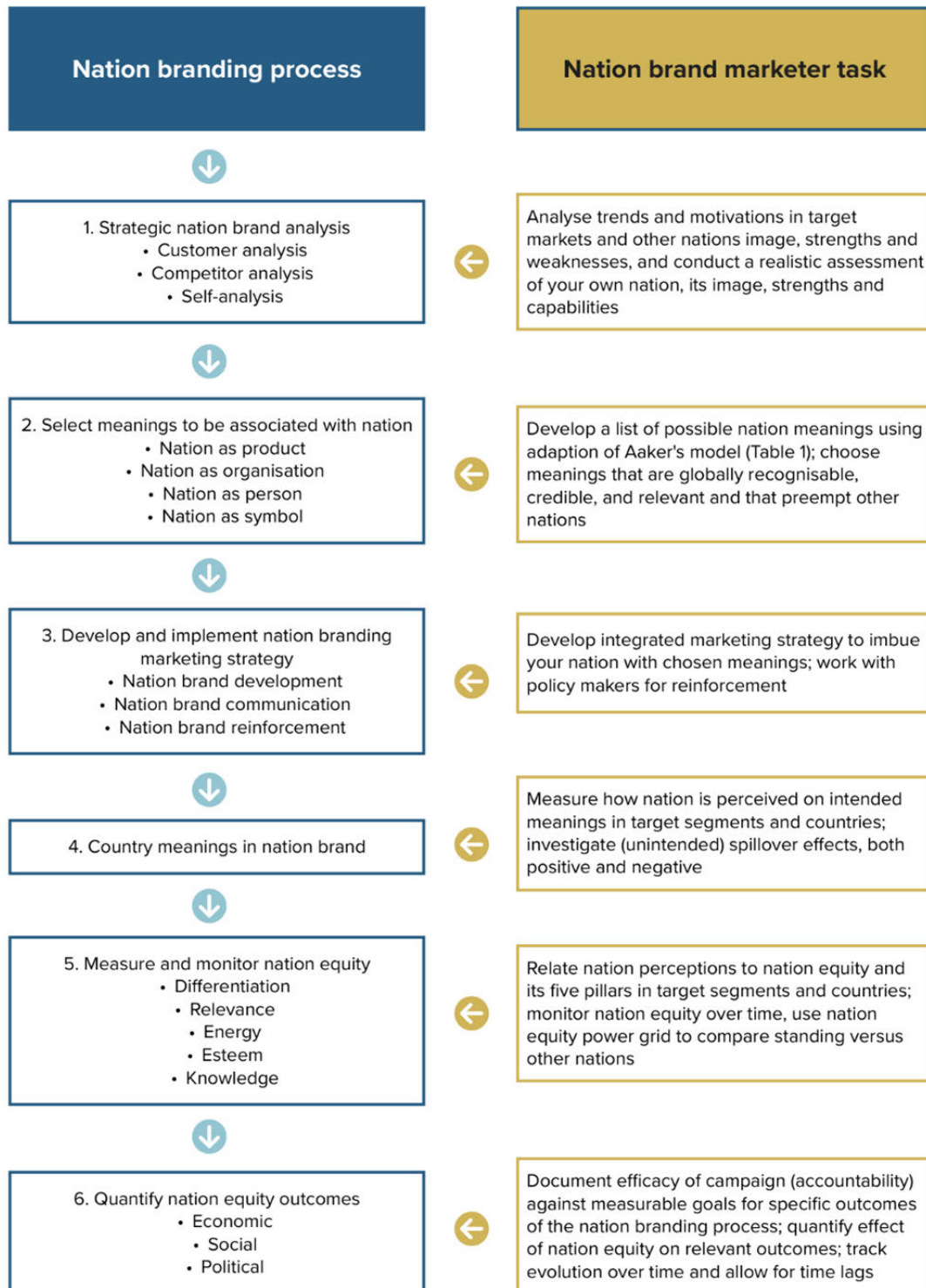


Figure 0.1: Adapted version of Kumar and Steenkamp's (2013) cultural branding model to nation branding (Steenkamp, 2019)

2.3.3 The Theoretical Foundations of City Branding

City branding refers to the creation of a unique identity for a city that represents its values, culture, and attributes (Baloglu et al., 1997). The theoretical foundations of city branding are rooted in several key concepts, including destination branding, place marketing, and place identity (Wassler, Wang & Hung, 2019). These concepts are closely related and provide a theoretical framework for understanding the process of city branding.

Destination branding is the process of creating a unique brand for a destination, such as a city, that reflects its unique qualities and strengths. The concept of destination branding has its roots in product branding, and it involves creating a consistent image and reputation for the destination that differentiates it from its competitors (Gossling et Al., 2010). As Grier and Bryant (2005) explain, the role of co-branding in the creation of city brands can lead to a deeper understanding of the city and its brand.

Place marketing refers to the process of promoting a place, such as a city, to attract residents, businesses, and tourists. Place marketing is closely related to destination branding and involves creating a positive image and reputation for the place (Kavaratzis, 2007). Place marketing can be thought of as a subcategory of destination branding, as it involves promoting the unique qualities and attributes of the place. As Storbacka, Frow, Nenonen et al. (2012) discuss, the role of co-creation in value creation in city branding can help create a more comprehensive and effective city brand.

Place identity refers to the unique characteristics and qualities that define a place, such as a city. Place identity is closely related to the image and reputation of a place and is an important aspect of city branding (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008). Place identity can be shaped by many factors, including history, culture, geography, and residents. As Wang and Ritchie (2010) explain, the concept of destination brand personality can be used to analyse the city of Shanghai and its brand identity.

In conclusion, the theoretical foundations of city branding are rooted in several key concepts, including destination branding, place marketing, and place identity. These concepts provide a theoretical framework for understanding the process of city branding and the importance of creating a unique identity for a city that reflects its values, culture, and attributes. By understanding these concepts, researchers and policymakers can develop more effective and comprehensive city branding strategies that promote the unique qualities and strengths of the city.

2.3.4 The Challenges of City Branding

It seems that the question increasingly facing cities, from a managerial point of view, is not whether to brand, but rather how to go about branding. Therefore, a clear understanding of previous and potential challenges experienced by city branding practitioners when embarking on this journey to brand their cities is critical to the development of strategic theoretical frameworks in the field (Moilanen, 2015).

Scholars and practitioners have mostly drawn from product-based branding theory to build their understanding of how to brand cities and destinations (Knox & Bickerton, 2003). However, these theories do not consider many of the challenges that surround city branding. A prominent issue is that city brands encompass abstract things like intangible goods and services, places, people, and even ideologies, all of which cannot be simply packaged, branded and sold in the same way as a product (Hankinson, 2014). Another major challenge with city branding is simply consensus among stakeholders regarding how the city should be branded. Often, there is substantial disagreement and a clash of perspective on how the city is positioned (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998).

Furthermore, while many developed countries in Europe and North America have successfully used city branding to enhance their tourism industries, different challenges exist when strategising for the developing world (Wen & Sui, 2014; Govers & Go, 2009). South Africa faces unique challenges when it comes to branding cities and needs to account for various factors that have not been considered when developing strategies in first-world countries. Many African countries are still perceived as unattractive due to political instability, visa issues, violence, crime and more (Signé, 2018). Even the “more developed” African destinations, such as South Africa, continue to have negative connotations associated with safety and security, poor infrastructure and inferior technology (Gowreesunkar, 2019).

Pike (2005) summarised key issues that make city branding a challenging task: the multidimensionality of places, varying interests among stakeholders, politics, reaching stakeholder consensus, applying traditional brand theories (such as brand loyalty) and the limited access to funding. In addition, Govers and Go (2009) point out that most of the people put in charge of implementing city branding (also referred to city branding practitioners) work in government-run organisations which means that their funding is likely to be dependent on bureaucratic processes and politics.

Castéran and Roederer (2013) put forward the following explanations for failure of city branding in delivering its economic and social mandate (or revitalising the tourism industry): the apparent

inauthenticity and homogeneity of the message being communicated, and the misalignment with the area's authentic culture and history. To counteract these reasons for failure, Apostolakis, Jaffry, Sizeland, et al. (2015) suggest that the reliance on a city's unique attributes could help foster a deeper emotional connection with its visitors which would make it more likely to achieve high customer satisfaction because of a great experience.

Upon reviewing multiple sources exploring the biggest challenges faced when undertaking a city branding exercise, the following list comprehensively outlines the most prominent challenges:

- **Competition and differentiation:** City branding is often seen as a way to differentiate a city from its competitors and to create a unique identity. However, this can be challenging due to the high level of competition between cities and the need to find a unique positioning that sets the city apart from others (Grier & Bryant, 2005).
- **Stakeholder involvement:** City branding involves many stakeholders, including residents, businesses, government organisations, and others. It can be challenging to involve all of these stakeholders in the branding process and to ensure that the resulting brand accurately reflects their needs and interests (Govers, 2011). In theory, city branding practices will be successful in places that encourage public involvement. This includes the planning, formulating and development processes of implementing the city brand. Allowing citizens to be part of the creative process will not only get their buy-in but will also empower them to become ambassadors of the city brand – which would be highly beneficial for all involved (Moilanen, 2015).
- **Brand consistency:** Maintaining consistency in the city brand can be difficult, as different departments and organisations within the city may have different ideas about what the brand should represent. Ensuring that the brand is consistent across all aspects of the city's image and marketing materials is a key challenge (Wang & Ritchie, 2010).
- **Measuring success:** Measuring the success of a city brand can be challenging as it can be difficult to quantify the impact of the brand on the city's image and reputation. Developing metrics to measure the success of the brand and to assess its impact on the city's economic, social, and cultural development is a key challenge (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997)
- **Adapting to change:** Cities are constantly changing and evolving, and their brands need to adapt to these changes. It can be challenging to keep the brand up to date and relevant as the city changes over time (Naef, 2020).

- Managing perceptions: City branding involves managing the perceptions and attitudes of residents, visitors, and other stakeholders towards the city. It can be challenging to change negative perceptions and to create a positive image for the city (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

2.3.5 City Branding Success Metrics

Below are several global indexes that can be used to measure the success of a city brand:

- The Global Cities Index (GCI): Published by the Brookings Institution, the GCI measures the competitiveness of cities based on factors such as business environment, human capital, cultural experience, and political engagement (Brookings, 2016).
- The World's Most Liveable Cities Index: Published by The Economist Intelligence Unit, the World's Most Liveable Cities Index measures the liveability of cities based on factors such as stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021).
- The World's Most Competitive Cities Index: Published by the IMD World Competitiveness Centre, the World's Most Competitive Cities Index measures the competitiveness of cities based on factors such as economic performance, quality of life, and the presence of talent and innovation (IMD World Competitiveness Centre, 2023).
- The Global Destination Cities Index: Published by Mastercard, the Global Destination Cities Index measures the popularity of cities as tourist destinations based on the number of international visitors and their spending patterns (Mastercard, 2019).
- The World Smart Cities Index: Published by IESE Business School, the World Smart Cities Index measures the smartness of cities based on factors such as sustainability, innovation, and liveability (IESE, 2022).
- The Startup Ecosystem Rankings: Published by Startup Genome, the Startup Ecosystem Rankings measure the strength of a city's startup ecosystem based on factors such as the availability of talent, funding, and market reach (Startup Genome, 2022).

Other indexes have been developed that combine various others to build a more holistic picture. An example of this is The Anholt-Ipsos City Brands Index (Ipsos, 2022). This is a ranking system that measures the competitiveness and appeal of cities around the world as brands. The index was formulated by Simon Anholt, a world-renowned expert on nation branding, and Ipsos, a leading global market research firm. Data is based on a survey of more than 20,000 respondents from around the world, who were asked to rank cities based on various criteria, such as tourism appeal, cultural

richness, and economic strength. The survey results were then used to calculate a score for each city, which is used to rank the cities in the index.

These indexes can be used as a way of benchmarking a city's performance against other cities around the world and gaining a deeper understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, these indexes can be used to inform decisions about how to further enhance the competitiveness, liveability, and appeal of the city brand.

A successful city brand is one that effectively differentiates a city from its competitors, creates a strong sense of place, and attracts tourists, businesses, and residents. The success of a city brand is determined by a variety of factors, including the city's unique strengths and assets, its history and cultural heritage, the quality of life it offers, and its economic and political stability (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The success of a city brand can also be measured using metrics such as brand awareness, economic impact, and customer satisfaction (Anholt, 2007).

Below, I will explore three successful city brand implementations that serve as good examples of the impact city branding can have:

The first case study is the city of Melbourne, Australia. Melbourne is widely regarded as one of the most liveable cities in the world (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021), and its brand reflects this reputation. The city's brand is built around its unique personality, which includes its vibrant arts and cultural scene, its thriving food and coffee culture, and its reputation for sporting events (Visit Melbourne, 2021). The city's brand is also reinforced by its commitment to sustainability, innovation, and social responsibility (City of Melbourne, 2021).

Melbourne's branding efforts have been successful in attracting tourists, businesses, and residents to the city. The city has become a hub for innovation, with a thriving startup ecosystem (Startup Genome, 2021) and a strong focus on technology and (City of Melbourne, 2021). Melbourne is also a popular tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors each year with its vibrant arts and cultural scene, excellent food and coffee, and world-class sporting events (Visit Melbourne, 2021).

The second case study is the city of Amsterdam, Netherlands. Amsterdam is known for its rich cultural heritage, its canals, and its liberal attitudes (I Amsterdam, 2021). The city's brand is built around its unique history and culture, as well as its commitment to sustainability, innovation, and social

responsibility (City of Amsterdam, 2021). The city's brand is also reinforced by its focus on tourism, with a thriving arts and cultural scene and a reputation for excellent food and drink (I Amsterdam, 2021).

Amsterdam's branding efforts have been successful in attracting tourists, businesses, and residents to the city. The city has become a hub for innovation, with a thriving startup ecosystem (Startup Genome, 2021) and a strong focus on technology and design (Amsterdam Tech, 2021). Amsterdam is also a popular tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors each year with its rich cultural heritage, its beautiful canals, and its liberal attitudes (I Amsterdam, 2021).

The third case study is the city of Copenhagen, Denmark. Copenhagen is known for its sustainable practices, its innovative spirit, and its commitment to social responsibility (Copenhagen Capacity, 2021). The city's brand is built around its commitment to sustainability, with a focus on green initiatives, renewable energy, and sustainable transportation (City of Copenhagen, 2021). The city's brand is also reinforced by its thriving arts and cultural scene, its excellent food and drink, and its commitment to innovation (Visit Copenhagen, 2021).

Copenhagen's branding efforts have been successful in attracting tourists, businesses, and residents to the city. The city has become a hub for sustainability, with a thriving green economy (Copenhagen Capacity, 2021) and a strong focus on renewable energy and sustainable transportation (City of Copenhagen, 2021). Copenhagen is also a popular tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors each year with its commitment to sustainability, its vibrant arts and cultural scene, and its innovative spirit (Visit Copenhagen, 2021).

In conclusion, city branding is a critical tool for cities in attracting tourists, businesses, and residents. The case studies of Melbourne, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen serve as excellent examples of the power of city branding and the impact it can have on economic and social development. These cities have leveraged their unique strengths and assets to create a strong sense of place and a distinctive brand that sets them apart from their competitors (Anholt, 2007). The successful city branding implementations of Melbourne, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen demonstrate the importance of identifying a city's unique strengths and assets, as well as its history and culture, in order to create a brand that is authentic and relevant (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

Additionally, it is important to ensure that the city brand is consistently communicated and reinforced through marketing and promotional efforts, as well as through the city's policies and initiatives (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The branding efforts of Melbourne, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen serve as excellent examples of how a well-executed city brand can attract tourists, businesses, and residents, and drive economic and social development (Anholt, 2007).

2.3.6 Branding South African Cities

South Africa is a country with a rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, from its rolling vineyards to its bustling cities. In recent years, many cities in South Africa have been working to establish their own unique identities and brands to attract tourists, businesses, and residents. The branding of these cities has the potential to play a significant role in their economic and social development, as well as their overall image and perception (South African Tourism, 2021).

One of the cities leading the way in branding efforts is Cape Town. In 2009, the city launched a new brand identity, which aimed to position the city as a premier tourist destination and a hub for business and innovation. The brand identity was based on research into the city's strengths and weaknesses, as well as its history and culture. The new brand included a new logo, website, and marketing materials, all of which emphasised the city's natural beauty, cultural diversity, and entrepreneurial spirit (Cape Town Tourism, 2018).

Cape Town's branding efforts have been successful in attracting tourism and investment to the city. According to a report by the Cape Town Tourism Agency, the number of tourists visiting the city has increased by 60% since the launch of the new brand. The city has also attracted a number of international businesses, including tech companies and creative agencies, which have established offices in the city (Cape Town Tourism, 2018).

Another city that has embraced branding is Johannesburg. Known as the economic capital of South Africa, Johannesburg has been working to rebrand itself as a city of innovation and creativity. In 2019, the city launched a new brand identity that focuses on its history, culture, and diversity, as well as its ability to drive growth and create opportunities. The new brand includes a new logo, website, and marketing materials that highlight the city's strengths and its commitment to the future (Johannesburg City Council, 2019).

Johannesburg's branding efforts have been successful in attracting investment and talent to the city. The city has attracted a number of international companies, including tech startups and creative

agencies, which have established offices in the city. The city has also become a hub for innovation, with a growing number of startups and accelerators focusing on technology, design, and entrepreneurship (Johannesburg City Council, 2019).

However, branding South African cities is not just about creating a new image or perception. It is also about leveraging the unique strengths and assets of each city to drive economic and social development (South African Tourism, 2017). For example, Durban has leveraged its position as a gateway to the Indian Ocean to brand itself as a hub for trade and investment. The city has developed a number of initiatives to promote trade and investment, including the Durban Trade and Investment Promotion agency and the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2017).

In conclusion, branding South African cities is a critical step in their development and growth. By establishing a unique identity and leveraging their strengths and assets, cities can attract tourists, businesses, and residents, and drive economic and social development. The branding efforts of Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban serve as excellent examples of the power of identity and place in shaping the future of South African cities.

Having explored the fundamentals of city branding, where strategic efforts are crucial in crafting unique identities and perceptions that resonate with both residents and visitors, the study now advance towards a deeper understanding of the co-creation aspect of city brands. This shift marks a progression from establishing what city branding entails to unravelling how collaborative efforts between stakeholders can enrich and authenticate these branding initiatives. Co-creation in city branding is not merely about marketing or aesthetic appeal; it embodies a comprehensive engagement strategy that integrates the insights, experiences, and aspirations of all stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensures that the city's brand is not only reflective of its unique attributes but also resonates with the collective vision of its inhabitants, businesses, and visitors. As the study delves into the theoretical foundations of co-creation of city brands, the study uncover the synergetic processes that can transform city branding from a conceptually driven practice to an experientially rich, stakeholder-inclusive strategy. This exploration will illuminate the frameworks and models that underpin successful co-creation, providing a robust scaffold upon which dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive city brands can be built.

2.4 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CO-CREATION OF CITY BRANDS

2.4.1 Introduction

City branding has emerged as a vital component in revitalising the tourism industry, contributing to the socioeconomic development of urban destinations (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). Co-creation, a collaborative approach involving various stakeholders, has been widely recognised as an essential mechanism for city branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This literature review aims to provide an overview of the theoretical foundation, metrics, and frameworks underpinning a study on co-creating city brands.

2.4.2 Key Theories

The co-creation of city brands is supported by a combination of distinct yet interconnected theories that collectively enrich our understanding of this multifaceted concept. These theories—place branding, stakeholder theory, and co-creation theory—not only provide a robust theoretical foundation but also offer practical insights into the development of city brands that resonate with various stakeholders.

- **Place Branding:** Place branding is the process of creating and managing a unique identity for a location, shaping its reputation and image (Kavaratzis, 2004). City branding, as a subset of place branding, focuses on urban areas and their various characteristics (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2016). The success of city branding lies in its ability to differentiate a city from its competitors and attract tourists, investors, and residents (Anholt, 2007).
- **Stakeholder Theory:** Stakeholder theory posits that organisations should consider and manage the interests of all stakeholders, who can be any group or individual affected by or with an interest in the organisation's activities (Freeman, 1984). Within the context of city branding, stakeholders include local governments, businesses, residents, and tourists (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015). The involvement of these stakeholders is essential to create a brand that genuinely represents the city's values and meets the expectations of the target audience (Merrilees, Miller, & Herington, 2012).
- **Co-creation Theory:** Co-creation theory, rooted in service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), emphasises the collaboration between various stakeholders in the value creation process. Co-creation allows stakeholders to contribute their unique resources and knowledge, leading to the development of a more comprehensive, authentic, and sustainable brand (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In the context of city branding, co-creation enables stakeholders to actively participate in shaping the city's image and reputation (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Integrating Additional Frameworks:

- **Aaker's Brand Personality Model:** This model (Aaker, 1997) explores various dimensions of a brand including its core identity and extended identity, emphasising the value of consistency in a brand's communication. The model could be applied to understand and structure the perspectives and ideas of the stakeholders regarding the core characteristics of Johannesburg and Cape Town that make them unique and desirable destinations. Additionally, the model could be used to assess how the proposed city branding aligns with these core characteristics.
- **Tourism Disaster Recovery Framework:** Orchiston's tourism disaster recovery framework (Orchiston, 2013) offers a theoretical lens for understanding how destinations recover from disasters, including pandemics. It outlines phases including immediate response, recovery, and long-term adaptation and resilience. This framework could provide a valuable guide for exploring the stakeholder perspectives on the impact of the pandemic on their cities, as well as their ideas for immediate and long-term strategies for tourism recovery.
- **Empathy Mapping:** This approach, popularised by Dave Gray, allows researchers to gain a deeper insight into their audience's mindset (Gray, 2021). The mapping process identifies what stakeholders are seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, saying, and doing, thereby enabling a comprehensive understanding of their perspective. In the context of this study, the empathy mapping approach can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the stakeholder perspectives and experiences, crucial for creating authentic city branding that reflects the realities and aspirations of residents and tourism businesses.
- **Customer Value Proposition (CVP) Model:** Anderson, Narus, and Van Rossum's CVP model (2006) can be particularly valuable in the context of tourism recovery. It emphasises delivering unique value to customers, outlying benefits, and providing reasons for consumers to choose one brand over another. When applied to this research, the CVP model can help in identifying and articulating the unique value propositions of Johannesburg and Cape Town city brands, thereby aiding in their differentiation and competitive positioning in the post-pandemic tourism market.

The theories discussed in the section collectively lay a comprehensive foundation for the study by intertwining key concepts essential for effective city branding. The synthesis of place branding, stakeholder theory, and co-creation theory provides a multifaceted framework that not only deepens our understanding of city branding but also underscores the imperative role of engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders in creating resonant and sustainable city brands.

Place Branding serves as the cornerstone, offering a strategic lens through which cities can craft a unique identity, setting themselves apart in the global arena while attracting tourists, investors, and residents. It's the initial step that defines the essence and overarching narrative of the city's brand.

Stakeholder Theory and Co-Creation Theory are deeply interconnected; co-creation resides within the broader context of stakeholder theory, emphasizing the active participation and integration of various stakeholder groups in the branding process. This participatory approach ensures that the branding not only reflects the city's identity but also aligns with the stakeholders' interests, aspirations, and experiences. In this setting, stakeholder theory expands to encompass the collaborative efforts crucial in co-creating a city brand, ensuring that the strategy is inclusive and representative of diverse perspectives.

Aaker's Brand Personality Model further personalizes the city brand, enabling the formulation of a distinctive brand personality. This model aids in translating the abstract concepts of city branding into tangible attributes like tone, voice, and character, making the city's brand more relatable and engaging.

The Tourism Disaster Recovery Framework offers insights into the resilience and adaptability of city branding strategies, particularly in response to crises. It guides the strategic branding initiatives during different phases of recovery, ensuring that the brand remains relevant and supportive of the city's recovery journey.

Integrating these frameworks culminates in a powerful Customer Value Proposition (CVP), which crystallizes the city's unique offerings and differentiates it in the competitive global landscape. This proposition articulates why tourists, investors, and residents should engage with the city, highlighting its unique attributes, experiences, and opportunities.

Together, these theories offer a nuanced roadmap for developing city brands capable of navigating the complexities of urban identity, stakeholder dynamics, and market positioning. They collectively contribute to the city's socio-economic vitality, enhancing its appeal and competitiveness on a global scale. By strategically combining these theoretical insights, the study is poised to deliver a city branding strategy that is not only theoretically sound but also practically viable, ensuring the city's brand is vibrant, enduring, and genuinely reflective of its unique identity.

2.4.3 Metrics

Metrics for evaluating the success of co-created city brands can be broadly categorised into two types: process metrics and outcome metrics (Govers, 2011). The integration the metrics with the theories and frameworks discussed in the preceding sections of the literature review offers a nuanced approach to evaluating the efficacy of co-created city brands. These metrics, grounded in the scholarly work of Govers (2011), Zenker, and Erfgen (2014), Kavaratzis, and Hatch (2013), serve as vital indicators for assessing both the collaborative process and the tangible results of city branding initiatives.

- Process metrics delve into the dynamics of stakeholder collaboration, resonating with the stakeholder and co-creation theories. They provide a structured method to measure the extent of stakeholder engagement, the diversity of representation, the quality of communication, and the level of shared decision-making within the branding process. This alignment with the theoretical frameworks ensures that the city branding exercise is not only inclusive but also reflective of a wide array of perspectives and expertise, thereby enriching the brand's development and ensuring its alignment with the community's values and expectations.
- Outcome metrics, on the other hand, focus on the tangible impacts of the co-created brand, particularly its influence on the tourism industry, an aspect critical to the place branding theory. These metrics, which include visitor numbers, tourist satisfaction, tourism revenue, and the overall reputation and image of the city, are crucial for gauging the success of the city brand in real-world terms. They enable an assessment of whether the strategic narratives and identity crafted through the co-creation process resonate with external audiences and contribute to the city's economic and social vitality.

Incorporating these metrics within the framework of the theories discussed—such as Aaker's Brand Personality Model (Aaker, 1997), the Tourism Disaster Recovery Framework (Orchiston, 2013), Empathy Mapping (Gray, 2021), and the Customer Value Proposition Model (Anderson, Narus, & Van Rossum, 2006)—provides a holistic view of city branding. It allows for a thorough examination of how well the city's brand personality, resilience strategies, stakeholder insights, and value propositions are realized and perceived in the competitive landscape of global tourism.

Therefore, these metrics are not standalone tools but are deeply integrated with the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings that guide the co-creation of city brands. They offer a bridge between theory and practice, enabling researchers and practitioners to quantify the effectiveness of their branding strategies and to iterate on these strategies based on empirical evidence. This

comprehensive approach ensures that the branding initiatives are strategically sound, resonate with stakeholders, and achieve the desired impact in enhancing the city's image and attractiveness to tourists, thereby supporting the overarching goals of the study and contributing to the broader field of place branding.

2.4.4 Frameworks

The co-creation of city brands has emerged as a significant area of interest in the fields of tourism, urban planning, and marketing. This literature review focuses on the frameworks proposed to guide the co-creation of city brands, drawing upon key references to elucidate how these frameworks can enhance the understanding and practice of city brand co-creation.

Kavaratzis (2004) provided an early framework for understanding city branding, highlighting the shift from city marketing to city branding. This shift is characterised by a more holistic approach to promoting cities, encompassing not only economic development but also sociocultural and environmental aspects. Kavaratzis' framework emphasises the importance of engaging various stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and tourists, in the process of co-creating city brands.

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) introduced the concept of co-creation experiences, arguing that value creation occurs through the interactions between companies and customers. While not specifically addressing city branding, their work offers insights into the potential of co-creation as a strategy for developing city brands, as it underscores the importance of engaging various stakeholders in the process.

Zenker and Erfgen (2014) presented a participatory place branding approach, highlighting the importance of involving residents in the branding process. They argue that involving residents not only provides valuable insights but also enhances the credibility and authenticity of city brands. Their approach can be applied to the co-creation of city brands by emphasising the role of residents as key stakeholders in the branding process.

Hatch and Schultz (2010) advanced a theoretical framework for brand co-creation, focusing on the interplay between organisational identity, culture, and image. They suggested that the co-creation of city brands can be facilitated by aligning these three elements, engaging both internal and external stakeholders in the process. This framework can inform the co-creation of city brands by highlighting the need for a coherent brand strategy that considers the diverse interests of various stakeholders.

Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013) examined the different roles of residents in place branding, identifying three main roles: brand ambassadors, co-creators, and brand detractors. They argue that engaging residents as co-creators can enhance the authenticity and credibility of city brands, as well as foster a sense of local ownership and pride. This perspective emphasises the importance of involving residents in the co-creation of city brands to ensure the development of more effective and sustainable branding strategies.

In conclusion, the frameworks proposed in the literature emphasise the importance of stakeholder engagement, particularly residents, in the co-creation of city brands. These frameworks provide valuable insights into the potential benefits of adopting a co-creation approach, including enhanced authenticity, credibility, and local ownership. By incorporating these frameworks in the study of city brand co-creation, researchers and practitioners can better understand the dynamics of the co-creation process and develop more effective strategies for revitalising the tourism industry.

Having delved into the theoretical foundations of co-creation of city brands, where collaborative approaches involving various stakeholders are central to fostering authentic and sustainable urban identities, the research now turn our focus towards the critical role these stakeholders play in the branding process. The exploration of key theories and frameworks has illuminated the intrinsic value of integrating diverse perspectives and expertise in co-creating city brands. In the next phase of the discussion, the emphasis shifts to the specific contributions of stakeholder engagement, underscoring its indispensable role in not only conceptualizing but also actualizing the envisioned city brand. This nuanced shift from theoretical underpinnings to practical implementation highlights the dynamic interplay between co-creation concepts and stakeholder engagement practices. The forthcoming section will delve deeper into how active and inclusive stakeholder participation is paramount in translating the co-created concepts into effective, resonant, and enduring city brands, thereby ensuring that the collective vision for the city's identity is not only conceived but also vividly brought to life and sustained over time.

2.5 THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL CITY BRANDING

2.5.1 Introduction

City brand practitioners are tasked with leading the branding process by facilitating a sustained consensus regarding the brand positioning, communication of the positioning and its translation into an intended tourist experience by aligning resources and image capital, which are often owned by stakeholders (Moilanen, 2015). In this light, city branding can be seen as an attempt to control the quality of experience for visitors through various city brand factors such as the classification and grading of hospitality products – it is about the philosophy of understanding and meeting unique consumer needs in a unique and dynamic environment (Prayag, 2007).

Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) suggest that treating cities as businesses aids in the development of an identity that is multifaceted and conveys a positive image to its audiences (i.e. a process similar to what a business would need to follow to align, communicate and implement strategies) should be considered. To create a thriving city brand, stakeholders need to have an aligned vision for the brand's core values (Moilanen, 2015). Moreover, Kavaratzis (2012) calls for a more participation-oriented practice, as stakeholders create meaning and legitimise place brands by being the brand ambassadors (Henninger et al., 2016).

Therefore, engaging stakeholders is necessary for the formation of an effective city branding strategy that is well represented and “lived”. A brand image or identity that appeals to stakeholders' psyche is more likely to create emotional connections with them and result in increased levels of loyalty and commitment to representing the brand (Apostolakis et al., 2015). However, this engagement presents branding practitioners with a dynamic set of challenges.

The first significant challenge associated with stakeholder involvement in the process of city branding is that it requires the participation of a variety of stakeholders from public sector organisations to private businesses and NGOs who all have different objectives (Moilanen, 2015). The challenges faced here are not only identifying who the relevant stakeholders are but also being able to effectively communicate to the different audiences who may prioritise different aspects of the city and have conflicting objectives (Trueman, Klemm & Giroud, 2004).

The second major challenge is the limited understanding of the fundamentals of branding theory among the identified stakeholders (Moilanen, 2015). Marketing in general (but more specifically

branding) is foreign to many public sector stakeholders, who reject it as being too commercial (Moilanen, 2015). Similarly, public sector representatives have a narrow view of the branding field (it is usually perceived as logo design and product packaging) or do not understand the purpose and process of branding at all. These hurdles make it difficult to gain buy-in from all stakeholders (i.e. public sector organisations, private sector and citizens) as they do not have a clear understanding of the role they play in formulating a city branding strategy (Moilanen, 2015).

When looking for ways in which to allow for this much-needed stakeholder participation in the city branding process, co-creation methods appear to be a well-documented and interactive method. Co-creation workshops have been used by the likes of *User Engagement for Large Scale Pilots in the Internet of Things* (U4IoT) in 2019 when exploring smart city initiatives in Switzerland where they were able to co-create potential solutions with input from multiple stakeholders in a short amount of time. Design participation methods like these began to emerge in the early 1970s and have since become more popular and increasingly used as a method to co-create value, be it monetary, experiential or societal (Stembert Design, 2017).

2.5.2 Brand Ambassador Behaviour

Crafting a well-formulated city branding strategy is not enough to guarantee a successful implementation. A city brand tells a story and sets an expectation for a particular experience. If the residents and businesses do not live up to this brand and identify with the brand values, the experience will not land as it was intended to. The efforts of the city branding practitioners will only go as far as the brand ambassador behaviour shown by the locals (Wassler, Wang & Hung, 2019).

In other words, businesses incentivise their employees to act based on the company's established brand identity and values. In contrast, residents of a city are not incentivised to align with whatever core values might have been crafted for them by city branding practitioners without their involvement (Hospers, 2010; Mitchell & Orwig, 2002). Furthermore, the relationship between residents and the implementation of a city brand is not regulated by contracts but rather by brand communication (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005).

It is suggested by many authors that the most fruitful stakeholders to engage in the design process are the residents of the destination in question, due to their potential for brand engagement, participation, enhancement, rejuvenation, and other positive brand-related behaviour (Konečnik et al., 2012).

Konečník et al. (2012) consider residents' brand ambassadorship role to be “constituting and living” the city brand. More recently, Wassler, Wang and Hung (2019) define brand ambassador behaviour as “planned or spontaneous promotion-related or development-related” activities carried out by residents. This enforces the idea that residents can contribute to the success of a city brand through different types of activities and behaviours (Wassler, Wang & Hung, 2019).

As the research culminate our exploration of the pivotal role of stakeholder engagement in city branding, it's evident that the interplay between city brand practitioners, stakeholders, and the broader community is fundamental to crafting a resonant and lived city brand. The nuanced understanding garnered highlights that city branding transcends mere marketing tactics; it's a strategic, multifaceted endeavour that necessitates a symphony of voices, each contributing to the brand's narrative. Stakeholders' alignment, participation, and ambassadorship are not just beneficial but imperative for a city brand to thrive and resonate authentically with its intended audiences. The challenges underscored—ranging from diverse stakeholder objectives to a limited grasp of branding principles—reflect the dynamic, complex nature of this engagement. However, the co-creative methodologies underscored, particularly the impactful use of co-creation workshops, present a promising avenue for harmonizing these diverse stakeholder inputs into a cohesive, vibrant city brand. This synthesis of stakeholder engagement encapsulates the essence of a living, breathing city brand, one that is not only designed for the people but one that is, in every sense, defined and brought to life by them.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The extensive literature found on the research topic indicates that the concept of city branding is well documented and explored. There are various strategic frameworks and a strong theoretical foundation supporting this approach to revitalise tourism industries. However, the diversity in strategies implemented suggests that city branding is very subjective to the features and traits of that particular city. Also, most of the case study examples of successful city brands that contributed to the increase in tourism activities are all based on developed cities. This means that the case studies cannot be easily replicated in emerging destinations such as those in South Africa. There is very little literature exploring the potential impact of branding local cities and, even less so, exploring the stakeholder view on how to revitalise the industry through city branding. A branding strategy for South African cities may help define a more robust positioning for tourist destinations in the country and contribute to revitalising the tourism industry.

The co-branding of South African cities with stakeholders is an important aspect of promoting and enhancing the competitiveness and appeal of these cities. The theoretical foundation of this approach is based on the principles of place branding, which is a strategic approach to marketing that leverages the strengths and assets of a city to create a unique and appealing brand identity (Anholt, 2007).

To ensure the success of the branding process, it is crucial to involve all relevant stakeholders in the branding process. This includes residents, business owners, government officials, and cultural and community leaders (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). By involving these stakeholders, the city can ensure that the brand identity accurately reflects the values, aspirations, and priorities of the local community. This can lead to increased buy-in and support for the brand and can also help to ensure that the brand remains relevant and sustainable over time (Anholt, 2007).

Another important consideration in the branding of South African cities collaboratively with stakeholders is to develop a clear and consistent brand identity. This involves creating a brand image and message that accurately reflects the city's strengths and assets, and that can be easily communicated to a global audience (Anholt, 2007). The brand identity should also be flexible enough to evolve over time as the city changes and grows, while still retaining its core elements (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

In conclusion, the branding of South African cities collaboratively with stakeholders is a complex and dynamic process that requires a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations, guidelines, and considerations involved. By involving all relevant stakeholders, conducting a comprehensive analysis of each city's strengths and assets, and developing a clear and consistent brand identity, cities can effectively promote and enhance their competitiveness and appeal.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“Brand is the sum total of how someone perceives a particular organisation.

Branding is about shaping that perception.”

Ashley Friedlein is cofounder and CEO of e-consultancy

3.1 INTRODUCTION

City branding has emerged as a significant strategy for promoting urban destinations in a highly competitive global market as advocated in Chapter 2. It involves the development of a unique identity for a city, which can be leveraged to attract tourists, businesses, investors, and residents (see 2.3.2). In recent years, scholars and practitioners have explored various approaches to city branding, with co-creation workshops emerging as a promising methodology (Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker, 2013). Co-creation workshops engage multiple stakeholders in the city branding process, fostering collaboration, innovation, and ownership of the brand (Stembert Design, 2017). The purpose of this chapter is to present the empirical research component of this study using the second and third objective to guide the research design and methodology.

Table 3.1: Summary of research design and methodology chapter

<i>An exploration of co-creating South African city brands to revive the tourism industry post a pandemic.</i>
Keywords: Co-creation, City branding, South African cities, Tourism industry, Covid-19, Post-pandemic
Research purpose and aim: From the perspective of research design and methodologies, the purpose and aim of this study is to employ qualitative research methods, including co-creation workshops and stakeholder engagement, to explore how city co-branding strategies can rejuvenate the tourism industry in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, post-pandemic.
Objectives: The research is speaking to objective 2 & 3 in this chapter (3) which is the empirical part of the study (see 1.4.3).

Research design and methodology: The study employs a constructivist paradigm, utilising a qualitative, participatory action research approach. The research involves stakeholder engagement through co-creation workshops to generate, refine, and implement city branding ideas. The methodology supports in-depth exploration, stakeholder collaboration, and iterative refinement, ultimately aiming to rejuvenate the tourism industry.

- Co-creation workshops with stakeholders to ideate aligned city brands.
- Co-creation workshops with stakeholders of South African cities to co-brand their cities for the tourism industry post Covid-19

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1 Introduction

Upon reflecting on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, it is evident that various frameworks and strategies exist regarding how a city should be branded and what a city brand entails. One of the biggest challenges for city branding practitioners to achieve a successful city brand is the number of different stakeholders and alignment among these stakeholders with the brand's positioning (see 2.3.4 & 2.5). There is an opportunity to involve stakeholders in creating a city brand strategy to assist branding practitioners to understand residents/businesses better and implement a city brand that fosters more brand ambassador behaviour due to a more authentic representation of local stakeholders (Gelder, 2011). To engage with stakeholders and obtain rich insight into their perception of South African cities and how they could be branded to revive the tourism industry, the best-suited research design is one that is:

- **Interactive:** involve in-person interaction with participants.
- **Qualitative:** gain in-depth insight into stakeholder thoughts, feelings and experiences.
- **Incorporates participative action:** collaboratively problem solve with various stakeholders to co-design/co-create a proposed branding strategy.
- **Multidisciplinary:** The existing literature suggests that the topic is multifaceted and can be explored from various perspectives. Therefore, it should not be limited to only the brand strategy discipline.

(Lucarelli & Berg, 2011)

3.2.2 Research Paradigm and Approach

The researcher must choose a research design that is consistent with their philosophical presuppositions, the purpose of the study, the current state of knowledge in the field being studied, and the intended research outcome (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). The study employs a constructivist paradigm that is complemented by a qualitative, Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach which is approached inductively and deductively.

3.2.2.1 The Constructivist Paradigm

According to Creswell (2014), the constructivist paradigm is based on the idea that interactions between researchers and participants lead to the development of knowledge and cognition. The constructivist paradigm is often employed to explore city branding (for example: Arlinda, Kriyantono & Prasetyo, 2022; Briciu, Rezeanu & Briciu, 2020; Yuksel, 2016; Campelo, Aitken & Gnoth, 2011).

Consolidating the underlying principles of the constructivist paradigm from the sources above, it can be derived that this paradigm underscores how crucial it is to comprehend how perceptions are formed. Constructivism contends that events and interactions actively influence people's knowledge. This paradigm clarifies how stakeholders generate opinions about a city's brand by recognising that each viewpoint is affected by unique experiences, producing numerous "realities" impacted by personal and social ideas. It also supports the collection of information on stakeholder interactions throughout the co-creation process. For instance, recognising the influence of the co-creation process on the growth of a city's brand and the formation of shared meaning via discussion depends on knowing how stakeholders interact during the process. Furthermore, the paradigm acknowledges the importance of stakeholder perceptions and how the distinctive environment of a city, including its social, cultural, and historical characteristics, impacts brand co-creation. In-depth interviews, participant observations, and content analysis are good constructivism-related research methods for gathering nuanced and context-specific insights from those participating in the co-creation of city brands. Co-creation is a social construct that results from social interactions and therefore may be used in research to examine how stakeholders work together to discuss co-creation practices and tactics. By considering many viewpoints, the importance of social interaction, and the dynamic nature of brand development in urban contexts, it provides a more complete understanding of city brand co-creation.

3.2.2.2 The Research Approach

The research design for this study adopts both deductive and inductive approaches to formulate a comprehensive framework and strategies while utilising data and insights generated by the research to propose stakeholder-driven recommendations for revitalising tourism in South African cities.

3.2.2.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research approach is most suitable for investigating the co-creation of city brands with stakeholders to reinvigorate the tourism industry. Qualitative research is an exploratory and interpretive method that seeks to comprehend the context and meaning behind human experiences and behaviours (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of the intricate and multifaceted nature of the co-creation process and the development of city brands. Through qualitative research, the researcher aims to gain profound insights into the motivations, experiences, and perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the co-creation process. This understanding provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities inherent in co-creation and informs the development of strategies to ensure the success of the co-created city brand.

3.2.2.2.2 Participatory Action Research (PAR) Approach

The most suitable research approach for co-creating city brands with stakeholders in the tourism industry is the participatory action research (PAR) approach. PAR involves active stakeholder involvement in the research process, with the researcher collaborating closely with stakeholders to co-create solutions and ideas for addressing common challenges or opportunities (Creswell, 2014). The PAR approach is particularly well-suited for studying the co-creation of city brands as it places a strong emphasis on involving stakeholders in the co-creation process and recognises the pivotal role of their perspectives, experiences, and knowledge in shaping the outcome. Within this approach, the researcher and stakeholders work collaboratively to identify the city's strengths and assets, co-create a brand identity that leverages these attributes, and ensure that the final brand aligns with the local community's needs and aspirations.

3.2.2.2.3 Co-Creation Workshops in PAR

Co-creation workshops serve as a pivotal component of the PAR approach, providing a structured and facilitated environment for stakeholders to collaborate and co-create solutions and ideas for reinvigorating the tourism industry. These workshops bring together stakeholders from various sectors, fostering collaborative and participatory engagement. In these workshops, stakeholders participate in a range of activities and exercises designed to facilitate the co-creation process, including brainstorming sessions, idea generation exercises, and stakeholder presentations. Co-

creation workshops ensure that stakeholders' perspectives and experiences are central to the process, resulting in a brand identity that resonates with the local community. Furthermore, co-creation workshops offer stakeholders the opportunity to learn from one another and build relationships that can support the implementation and success of the co-created city brand.

In conclusion, the use of co-creation workshops within the PAR approach offers a comprehensive and effective strategy for co-creating city brands with tourism industry stakeholders. These workshops provide a platform for stakeholders to collaborate, ensuring their perspectives and experiences are integrated into the co-creation process. The collective efforts of stakeholders, facilitated through co-creation workshops, contribute to the development of city brands that authentically reflect local needs and aspirations.

3.2.3 Research Methodology

The methodology supports in-depth exploration, stakeholder collaboration, and iterative refinement, aiming to rejuvenate the tourism industry. Facilitated co-creation workshops are used as the methodology for achieving the relevant research objectives. These workshops will include various stakeholders representing a particular South African city as outlined in the sample selection (see 3.2.3.2). The workshops aim to explore stakeholders' thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and ideas on how branding South African cities can revive the tourism industry. The following is a step-by-step description of the method employed to conduct the co-creation workshops in aid of the academic rigour and trustworthiness of this study:

1. Preparation: First, the objectives of the co-creation workshops are defined, the stakeholders are identified and invited to participate, and the workshop agenda is developed (Creswell, 2014). The materials and resources needed for the workshop are also prepared, and the physical environment is set up to support the co-creation process (Buchanan, 1992).
2. Introduction: The workshop begins with an introduction to the co-creation process and the objectives of the workshop (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). The facilitators provide an overview of the activities and exercises that will be used to facilitate the co-creation process and provide any necessary background information (Creswell, 2014).
3. Brainstorming and idea generation: The stakeholders participate in a series of activities and exercises designed to generate ideas and solutions for co-creating city brands (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). These activities may include brainstorming sessions, idea generation exercises, and group discussions (Creswell, 2014).

4. Reflection and feedback: After the brainstorming and idea generation activities, the stakeholders reflect on their experiences and provide feedback on the co-creation process (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). This step allows the stakeholders to share their perspectives and experiences and to identify any areas for improvement (Creswell, 2014).
5. Prioritisation and selection: The stakeholders prioritise and select the most promising ideas and solutions generated during the brainstorming and idea generation activities (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). This step involves evaluating the feasibility and potential impact of each idea and selecting the ones that are most likely to support the co-creation of successful city brands (Creswell, 2014).
6. Co-creation of city brands: The stakeholders work together to co-create city brands that leverage the strengths and assets of the city and align with the needs and aspirations of the local community (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). This step involves using the selected ideas and solutions as a starting point and refining and developing them into a final brand identity (Creswell, 2014).
7. Implementation and evaluation: The final step in the co-creation process is the implementation and evaluation of the co-created city brands (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). This step involves putting the co-created city brands into action and evaluating their effectiveness in reviving the tourism industry (Creswell, 2014).

In conclusion, the methodology for conducting co-creation workshops with stakeholders from the tourism industry to co-create city brands involves several key steps, including preparation, introduction, brainstorming and idea generation, reflection and feedback, prioritisation and selection, co-creation of city brands, and implementation and evaluation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Creswell, 2014). These steps should be carefully followed and adapted as needed to ensure the success of the co-creation process and the achievement of the desired outcomes. The sections to follow discuss the benefits, challenges, best practices, and emerging trends of co-creation workshops for city branding.

3.2.3.1 Co-creation Workshops

In the framework of city branding, co-creation workshops stand as a vital methodology, offering a fertile ground for stakeholder engagement, nurturing innovation, establishing authenticity, and building brand resilience (Kleber & Juusola, 2021).

3.2.3.1.1 Benefits of co-creation workshops for city branding

Co-creation workshops, as a methodology for city branding, offer several benefits, including:

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Co-creation workshops provide a platform for diverse stakeholders to participate in the branding process, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the city brand (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This can lead to increased support and advocacy for the brand among key constituencies (Braun, Eshuis, & Klijn, 2014).
- **Innovation:** By bringing together stakeholders with diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise, co-creation workshops can stimulate the generation of new ideas, insights, and solutions for city branding (Binkhorst, Den Dekker & Melkert, 2010). This can result in more distinctive, memorable, and appealing brand identities and experiences (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).
- **Authenticity:** Co-created city brands are more likely to reflect the true character, identity, and values of the city, as they draw on the insights and experiences of local stakeholders (Braun et al., 2014). This authenticity can enhance the appeal of the city to tourists and other target audiences (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).
- **Resilience:** Involving multiple stakeholders in the city branding process can create a more resilient and adaptable brand that can better withstand the challenges of a dynamic and competitive urban environment (Ritchie et al., 2019).

3.2.3.1.2 Challenges of co-creation workshops for city branding

Despite their potential benefits, co-creation workshops for city branding also present several challenges, including:

- **Coordination:** Managing the collaboration of diverse stakeholders with varying interests and expectations can be complex and time consuming (Ritchie et al., 2019). Ensuring effective coordination and communication among stakeholders is crucial to the success of co-creation workshops (Merrilees, Miller & Herington, 2012).
- **Conflict resolution:** Disagreements and conflicts may arise among stakeholders during co-creation workshops due to differing interests, priorities, and opinions (Merrilees et al., 2012). Facilitators must be skilled in conflict resolution and consensus-building to maintain a constructive and collaborative atmosphere (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).
- **Resource allocation:** Co-creation workshops can require significant resources, such as time, expertise, and funding, which may not always be available or prioritised by city authorities or other

stakeholders (Ritchie et al., 2019). Ensuring adequate resource allocation and support for co-creation workshops is essential for their success (Merrilees et al., 2012).

- Implementation: Translating the outcomes of co-creation workshops into concrete city branding strategies and actions can be challenging, particularly if there is a lack of clarity, consensus, or commitment among stakeholders (Ritchie et al., 2019). Effective follow-up and monitoring mechanisms are needed to ensure the successful implementation of co-created city brands (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).

3.2.3.1.3 Best practices and recommendations of co-creation workshops for city branding

Based on the literature, several best practices and recommendations can be identified for the successful use of co-creation workshops as a methodology for city branding:

- Inclusivity: Ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including local government, businesses, residents, and tourists, are invited and encouraged to participate in co-creation workshops (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This will help to create a more comprehensive and authentic city brand that reflects the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the city (Braun et al., 2014).
- Preparation: Prior to co-creation workshops, conduct background research and analysis to identify key issues, opportunities, and challenges related to the city's brand (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). This will help to inform the workshop agenda and ensure that discussions are focused and productive (Merrilees et al., 2012).
- Facilitation: Engage skilled facilitators who are experienced in managing diverse groups, resolving conflicts, and guiding collaborative decision making (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). This will help to create a positive and constructive atmosphere during co-creation workshops, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes (Merrilees et al., 2012).
- Follow-up: Establish clear action plans and responsibilities for implementing the outcomes of co-creation workshops, and regularly monitor progress to ensure that the city brand is being effectively developed and communicated (Ritchie et al., 2019). This will help to maintain momentum and commitment among stakeholders and ensure that the co-created city brand achieves its intended objectives (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).

3.2.3.1.4 Emerging trends of co-creation workshops for city branding and future research

The literature on co-creation workshops for city branding highlights the potential benefits and challenges of this methodology. However, there are several emerging trends and areas for future research that warrant further exploration:

- **Technology and co-creation:** The role of digital technology in facilitating and enhancing co-creation workshops, such as through online platforms, virtual reality, and social media, remains underexplored (Ritchie et al., 2019). Future research could examine the potential of technology to support more inclusive, efficient, and effective co-creation processes for city branding.
- **Cross-city collaboration:** As urban destinations become increasingly interconnected and interdependent, there may be opportunities for cities to collaborate in co-creation workshops, sharing insights, experiences, and resources (Merrilees et al., 2012). Future research could explore the potential benefits and challenges of cross-city co-creation workshops for city branding.
- **Evaluation and impact:** The long-term impact of co-creation workshops on city branding outcomes, such as tourism, investment, and resident satisfaction, is an area that requires further empirical investigation (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). Future research could employ longitudinal studies, case studies, and comparative analyses to assess the effectiveness of co-creation workshops as a city branding methodology.

By addressing these emerging trends and research gaps, scholars and practitioners can continue to advance the understanding of co-creation workshops as a methodology for city branding, ensuring that cities are better equipped to navigate the complex and competitive landscape of urban tourism and development.

3.2.3.1.5 Summary

Co-creation workshops offer a promising methodology for city branding, with the potential to engage diverse stakeholders, stimulate innovation, and create authentic and resilient city brands. However, the successful implementation of co-creation workshops also requires careful planning, skilled facilitation, and ongoing monitoring to address challenges such as coordination, conflict resolution, and resource allocation. By adopting best practices and recommendations identified in the literature, cities can harness the potential of co-creation workshops to develop unique and appealing city brands that attract tourists, businesses, and residents in a competitive global market.

3.2.3.2 Sample Selection

Purposive sampling, also known as purposeful or selective sampling, is a non-probability sampling method where the researcher selects participants based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research study (Creswell, 2014).

Purposive sampling is particularly well-suited for a study that is exploring the co-creation of city brands as it allows the researcher to select participants who have the relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise to contribute to the co-creation process. This type of sampling also allows the researcher to ensure that the participants are representative of the key stakeholders in the tourism industry and that their perspectives and experiences are considered in the co-creation process.

This type of targeted selection strategy is crucial in qualitative research and particularly effective for ensuring that the participants are optimally suited to contribute valuable, relevant, and diverse insights into the co-creation of city brands. This method involves selectively choosing individuals who possess specific characteristics, roles, or experiences that are pertinent to the primary goals of the research.

For this research, which aimed at unravelling the complexities of co-creating city brands, a detailed framework was established to meticulously select a wide range of stakeholders from the tourism sector. This approach was intended to encompass individuals with unique knowledge, expertise, or influence that could enrich the understanding and outcomes of the co-creation endeavour.

3.2.3.2.1 Selection Process:

To refine the participant selection, the researcher distributed a qualifying questionnaire through their network of contacts and directly contacted local tourism businesses using email addresses sourced online. This helped in identifying potential participants who are significantly engaged in the tourism sector. Similarly, residents were recruited through a qualifying questionnaire disseminated across various community forums and social media platforms, aiming to ensure a diversified representation.

The questionnaire for businesses was designed to identify their sector, the size of the company, location, and the respondent's role, ensuring a comprehensive grasp of the business landscape influencing the city's brand. A parallel questionnaire for residents sought information on their location, occupation, and additional background details such as age and race, ensuring the sample reflected sufficient demographic diversity.

3.2.3.2.2 *Selection Criteria for Residents:*

The selection of residents was grounded in their interaction with and insights into the local tourism environment, their communal identity, and their capacity to represent varied perspectives of the city's populace. This criterion was geared towards assembling a sample that could deliver a rich, multi-dimensional view of the city's brand, embodying both shared and individual experiences and expressing the community's ambitions and obstacles.

3.2.3.2.3 *Selection Criteria for Businesses:*

The business participants were chiefly selected from sectors like hospitality, travel services, and cultural organizations, focusing on those demonstrating innovative branding strategies, significant tourist engagement, and a crucial role in defining the city's tourism identity. This was aimed at extracting profound insights from entities pivotal in actualizing the city's brand promise and shaping visitors' perceptions and experiences.

The evaluation for each type of participant was based on their significance to the city branding initiative, their potential for providing distinctive insights, and their involvement in the tourism industry. These criteria ensured a well-rounded assembly of voices, minimizing the chance of bias by either overstating a single viewpoint or neglecting essential perspectives, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of the city branding phenomena.

The participants were sourced from diverse urban settings across South Africa, covering both metropolitan and peri-urban areas to encapsulate a broad spectrum of experiences and views. Residents offered grassroots-level reflections on the socio-cultural aspects of the city, while businesses provided professional insights into the operational, strategic, and customer-focused facets of city branding. Collectively, they contributed to a rich, layered understanding of the city's branding ecosystem, essential for a nuanced co-creation process that genuinely reflects the city's identity and its aspirational branding narrative.

This meticulous selection approach was fundamental in ensuring the study's outcomes were based on a rich, informed variety of perspectives, thereby bolstering the validity of the co-creation results and fostering a nuanced, inclusive, and effective city branding framework. By explicitly detailing the selection criteria and the rationale for choosing the participants, the study addresses potential selection bias, ensuring a comprehensive and representative co-creation process that encapsulates the diverse stakeholders vital to the city's tourism brand.

Table 3.2: Overview of sample population chosen for the research

The population included in the research	The population included in the study is composed of stakeholders of the city brand. This includes residents of the city (in question) and business representatives of SMEs operating in the tourism sector in the same city.
The inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants	The population should include different types of tourism businesses such as hospitality businesses as well as more directly involved business such as tour operators. A mixture of residents representing different ethnicities, suburbs and backgrounds should be included to avoid creating a skewed view of the city brand.
The ideal number of participants that should participate	N=12 per workshop <i>Made up of n=6 residents and n=6 business representatives</i>
The chosen sampling method	Non-probability, purposive sampling: The sample structure will be purposefully designed to include specific characteristics that are required by participants for the workshop. The characteristics of a <i>resident</i> as well as a <i>local business representative</i> will be clearly outlined. The demographics representation required will also be outlined in the recruitment specification (see 3.2.3.2).

3.2.3.3 Data Collection

3.2.3.3.1 Data collection tool and process

The primary data collection tool in this study is co-creation workshops with stakeholders in the tourism industry. These workshops serve as a platform to bring together different stakeholders as per section 3.3 to work together in a collaborative and participatory manner to co-create solutions and ideas for reviving the tourism industry in South Africa. These workshops draw upon the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Creswell, 2014) to encourage the active involvement of stakeholders.

As preparation, the data collection process was initiated with the organisation of co-creation workshops. Stakeholders were invited three to four months before the workshops. The co-creation workshops were conducted on the Microsoft Teams platform and Miro, an online collaborating platform in accordance with the emerging trends of conducting such workshops (see 3.2.3.3).

The workshop's objectives were clarified, and stakeholders were identified and invited. Comprising key individuals from the tourism industry, these stakeholders brought to the table unique insights and perspectives, shaping the co-creation process. The agenda was delineated (Creswell, 2014), based on the literature review on co-creation workshops (see 3.2.3). The workshop agenda, detailed in Appendix C, was adeptly structured to navigate a collaborative pathway towards addressing the pressing concerns in the South African tourism industry post-pandemic, grounded in two pivotal research objectives (see 1.4.3 & table 3.1).

During the introduction, the rules of engagement were set out to ensure that participants were aware of their expected conduct, including the conduct of the researcher. The rules included respect for each other's contributions and to allow everyone a chance to speak. The researcher ensured a safe space without any hostility caused by overpowering personalities. It was made clear that if any participant disrupted the group, they would have been asked aside, thanked for their time and excluded from the remainder of the workshop.

The next stage included brainstorming and idea generation. Participants were engaged in a series of structured activities and exercises intended to facilitate idea generation for the co-creation process. These included brainstorming sessions, idea generation exercises, and group discussions (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). This participatory approach allowed for an immersive exploration of the co-creation process, thereby enabling stakeholders to share their experiences, insights, and propositions for reinvigorating the tourism industry. The journey commenced with a poignant question of "why are we here today?", steering participants to introspect and align their purpose with the overarching goals of the workshop, thereby subtly initiating the discourse on stakeholders' perspectives, a crucial facet of the first objective.

This seamlessly transitioned into the co-analysis phase where stakeholders were urged to confront the glaring question: "What are the current challenges facing the tourism industry in South Africa?". This segment, grounded in the essence of the first objective, fostered a space for stakeholders to elucidate their experiences and perspectives, establishing a foundational understanding necessary for the collaborative endeavour that followed.

The co-design session built upon this foundation, pivoting towards the second objective as participants coalesced to answer the critical question: "How can we design focal points or pillars for the brand?"; thereby initiating a cooperative blueprinting process aimed at the revival of the tourism

industry in specific South African cities. The most promising ideas, gauged on their feasibility and potential impact, were then handpicked for further development (Creswell, 2014).

The co-evaluation session further refined this collaborative effort, scrutinising the prototype through a series of critical questions aimed at identifying challenges and gaps, and enhancing the blueprint, serving as a crucial step towards fulfilling the second objective.

This was followed by the co-implementation phase, where participants delineate the “How” of the implementation process, strategizing roles and responsibilities, and thus sculpting a clear pathway towards the realisation of the co-created brand, encapsulating the essence of the second research objective in its entirety.

The final stage of the data collection process was the co-creation of city brands. Stakeholders collaborated to refine and develop the selected ideas into a final brand identity. This identity was designed to leverage the strengths and assets of the city while aligning with the needs and aspirations of the community (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). The resulting co-created city brands were then put into action, and their effectiveness in reviving the tourism industry was evaluated (Creswell, 2014).

The workshop culminated with the closing segment, a space for reflection and forward-thinking, encouraging stakeholders to share their takeaways and next steps, encapsulating the collaborative spirit fostered through the workshop. This reflection phase was pivotal in refining the process and gaining deeper understanding of stakeholders' perspectives.

This strategically segmented flow ensured a diligent pursuit of the research objectives, inviting stakeholders on a collaborative journey from introspection to realisation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010), forging not just strategies but a hopeful path towards a rejuvenated future for the South African tourism industry post-pandemic.

The data collection tool and process thus consisted of co-creation workshops where stakeholders participated in a series of activities and exercises designed to facilitate the co-creation process. In preparation for the workshops, the objectives were clearly defined, relevant stakeholders were identified and invited in advance, and an agenda was developed. The workshops were thoughtfully structured through certain steps and stages, including the co-creation of a city brand, whereafter there was time to reflect and provide feedback before closing out the sessions.

3.2.3.3.2 *Type of data to be collected*

In a co-creation workshop to co-create city brands with stakeholders, several types of data should be collected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the co-creation process and the development of city brands, incorporating seminal references:

- **Observational data:** This type of data involves observing the interactions and behaviours of the stakeholders during the co-creation workshop (Creswell, 2014). Observational data can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the co-creation process and the perspectives and attitudes of the stakeholders (Buchanan, 1992).
- **Verbal data:** Verbal data includes the words and statements of the stakeholders during the co-creation workshop (Creswell, 2014). This type of data can provide valuable insights into the ideas and solutions generated by the stakeholders and the reasoning behind their choices (Buchanan, 1992).
- **Non-verbal data:** Non-verbal data includes body language, gestures, and other forms of non-verbal communication that occur during the co-creation workshop (Creswell, 2014). This type of data can provide additional insights into the perspectives and attitudes of the stakeholders and can complement the verbal data collected (Buchanan, 1992).
- **Artefacts:** Artefacts are tangible items that are created or produced during the co-creation workshop (Creswell, 2014). This can include sketches, diagrams, and other visual representations of the ideas and solutions generated by the stakeholders (Buchanan, 1992). In this case, artefacts include the collaboration boards co-created in the sessions.
- **Demographic data:** Demographic data includes information about the background, experience, and characteristics of the stakeholders who participate in the co-creation workshop (Creswell, 2014). This type of data can provide valuable context for understanding the perspectives and attitudes of the stakeholders (Buchanan, 1992).

Collecting a variety of data types in a co-creation workshop to co-create city brands with stakeholders can provide a comprehensive understanding of the co-creation process and the development of city brands (Creswell, 2014; Buchanan, 1992). This data can be analysed and used to refine and develop the co-created city brands and to evaluate their effectiveness in reviving the tourism industry (Creswell, 2014; Buchanan, 1992).

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis, as introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006), is a flexible and useful research tool that provides a rich, detailed, yet complex account of data. Its emphasis on identifying and examining patterns or themes within data has made it an increasingly popular method in social sciences. It is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data and interpreting various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process, although appearing linear, is a reflexive activity involving continuous movement back and forth (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study follows an established process of thematic analysis, beginning with the collection of data. In this study, this consisted of two co-creation workshops conducted in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The following is a step-by-step process for conducting a thematic analysis of data collected in a co-creation workshop with stakeholders to co-create city brands:

1. Familiarisation with the data (see 3.3.1): This entailed repeated reading and notation of the workshop transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the nuanced information and prepare the ground for the subsequent analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
2. Coding the data (see 3.3.2): In this step, the data is divided into smaller sections or segments and assigned codes or labels based on the themes that emerge (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive coding facilitated the identification of emergent themes within the data (Thomas, 2006), whereas deductive coding was applied based on pre-established theoretical frameworks (Crabtree & Miller, 2022).
3. Searching for themes (see 3.3.3): In this step, the coded data is analysed to identify emerging themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The identified codes were then collated into potential themes, forming the central organising concepts within our data. This stage followed the iterative and reflexive process as described by Nowell, Norris, White et al. (2017).
4. Reviewing themes (see 3.3.4): Once potential themes were identified, each was reviewed meticulously for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, ensuring that the themes captured unique aspects of the data and maintained their distinctiveness (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
5. Defining and naming themes (see 3.3.4): In this step, each theme was defined and named, a crucial step towards effectively encapsulating and communicating the essence of the theme (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).
6. Interpreting the themes: In this step, the themes are interpreted in light of the research questions and the overall objectives of the co-creation workshop (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.1 Familiarising with the Data

Familiarising myself with the data was an essential step in the thematic analysis of the study. As per Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidance, I dedicated a considerable amount of time to immersing myself in the rich data gathered from the co-creation workshops. This involved repeatedly reading the workshop transcripts, making preliminary notations, and identifying initial patterns and interesting points that could later shape the coding and theme extraction process (Gibbs, 2007). It was also beneficial for me to have been in the sessions as a facilitator as it allowed me to engage with the participants and understand their perspectives. This immersive and iterative process allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the depth and breadth of the data, ensuring that the subsequent stages of data analysis were built on a solid and nuanced understanding of the stakeholders' perspectives.

3.3.2 Inductive and Deductive Coding

I applied both inductive and deductive coding/indexing to the data from the co-creation workshops. By using an inductive approach, I allowed themes to emerge naturally from the data, thereby ensuring an authentic representation of the stakeholders' perspectives and insights (Thomas, 2006). This process involved generating initial codes based on the patterns, concepts, and categories that emerged from the rich discussions during the workshops. Concurrently, I employed a deductive approach, guided by pre-established theoretical frameworks relating to the study, i.e. city branding and tourism recovery post-pandemic (Crabtree & Miller, 2022). Aaker's brand personality model, Orchiston's tourism disaster recovery framework, empathy mapping, and the customer value proposition (CVP) model was employed. This allowed me to structure the data analysis process and examine the data in light of existing research and theories. Ultimately, the combination of inductive and deductive coding provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the data, facilitating a well-rounded interpretation of the potential of co-creating city brands to revive the tourism industry.

3.3.3 Searching for Themes

After the stages of familiarising myself with the data and applying inductive and deductive coding, the process of searching for themes ensued. As per Braun and Clarke's (2006) method, this phase involved actively looking for recurrent patterns of meaning across the coded data. I sought to identify potential themes and subthemes that encapsulated the coded data's core aspects, informed by the key insights from the stakeholders and guided by the theoretical frameworks of Aaker's brand personality model, Orchiston's tourism disaster recovery framework, empathy mapping, and the customer value proposition (CVP) model. This integrative approach helped to ensure that the emerging themes were grounded in the data and appropriately situated within the broader theoretical and practical contexts

of city branding and post-pandemic tourism recovery (Boyatzis, 1998). This step was crucial in moving beyond surface-level data interpretation and towards a more nuanced understanding of the potential of co-creating city brands to revive the South African tourism industry.

Inductive and deductive theme extraction processes both offer unique insights during the data analysis phase. In the context of this study, titled "An Exploration of Co-creating South African City Brands to Revive the Tourism Industry Post a Global Pandemic", a mixed approach integrating both inductive and deductive methods would be most effective. Inductive theme extraction, a 'bottom-up' method, allows for the identification of themes grounded in the raw data itself (Thomas, 2006). This approach is particularly suitable for this study given its exploratory nature. Given that this is an investigating into the co-creation of city brands – a process that is complex, context-specific, and greatly influenced by the stakeholders' perspectives – it is paramount that the themes emerge organically from the stakeholders' input during the workshops. An inductive approach facilitates capturing these authentic, rich perspectives, adding depth to the study.

However, the inclusion of a deductive theme extraction process can supplement and structure the insights derived inductively. As a 'top-down' approach, deductive coding applies a pre-existing theoretical framework to interpret the data (Crabtree & Miller, 2022). This could involve the application of existing theories or models related to branding, tourism revival, or stakeholder co-creation as explored in the preliminary literature review. By incorporating this approach, the findings can be situated within the larger body of knowledge, providing a broader context, and enabling meaningful comparisons with previous studies.

In essence, a combined approach offers a comprehensive perspective on the research data. Inductive theme extraction ensures that novel, context-specific insights from the stakeholders are captured, while deductive extraction ensures that these insights are analysed and interpreted within the broader theoretical context, thus strengthening the overall analysis.

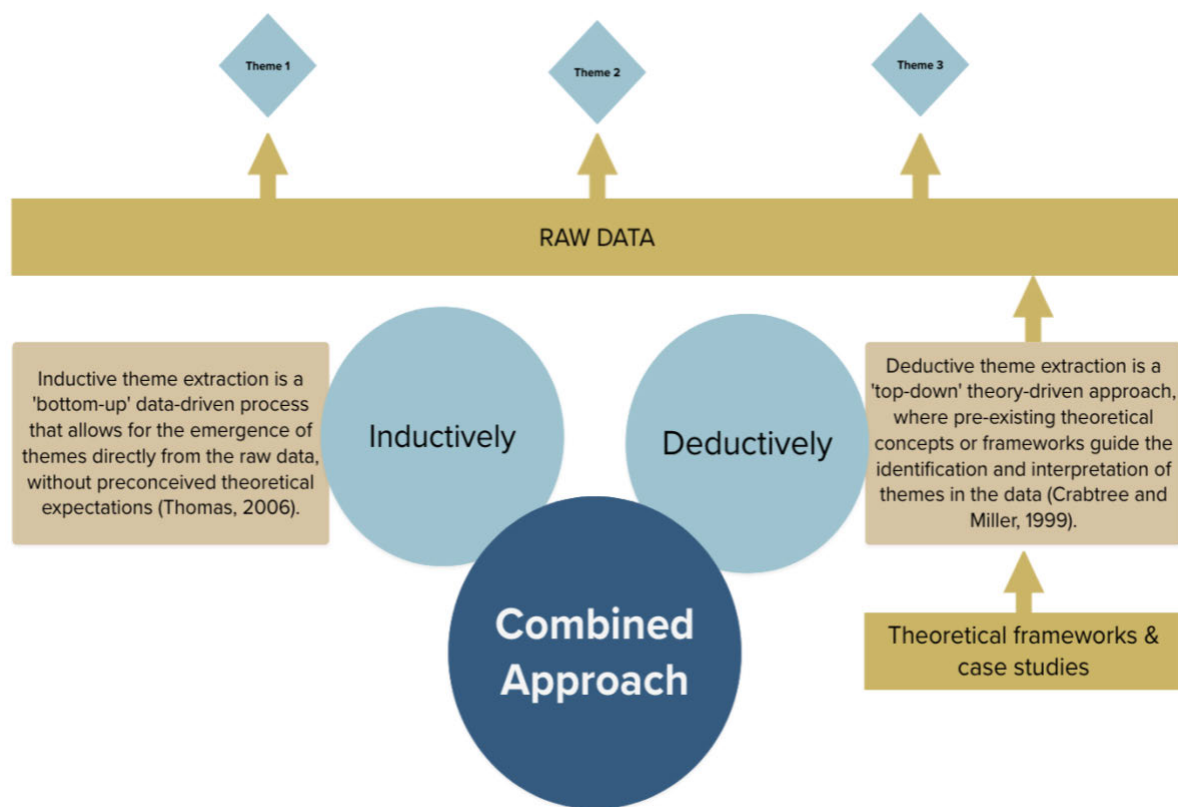


Figure 3.1: Inductive and deductive theme extraction approach

3.3.4 Reviewing, Defining and Naming Themes

Upon identifying potential themes in the research, I embarked on the stage of reviewing, defining, and naming themes, as delineated by Braun and Clarke (2006). During the reviewing phase, I scrutinised the proposed themes to ascertain their validity and relevance in relation to the coded data and the entire data set. This involved checking whether the themes accurately captured the nuances of the coded data and if the data cohered meaningfully within the themes (Patton, 2002). It was an iterative process that allowed me to refine, merge, or discard initial themes until I was left with a set of themes that accurately represented the complexities of the data.

Following this, I embarked on defining and naming the themes. In this stage, I aimed to identify the 'essence' of what each theme was about and what aspect of the data it represented (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved carefully crafting definitions and names for each theme that were clear, concise, and reflective of their core concepts, while also being cognisant of the theoretical frameworks (Aaker's brand personality model, empathy mapping, CVP model, and Orchiston's tourism disaster recovery framework) guiding this study.

This rigorous process of reviewing, defining, and naming themes allowed me to move from raw data to a set of coherent and meaningful themes that offered valuable insights into the potential of co-creating South African city brands for post-pandemic tourism recovery.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Co-creation workshops have gained prominence as an effective method for developing city brands, involving various stakeholders such as residents, businesses, and tourists in the process (Kavaratzis, 2004; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). However, involving diverse stakeholders in co-creation workshops raises ethical concerns that need to be addressed. The following section discusses key ethical considerations when conducting research in the form of co-creation workshops for city branding, drawing on relevant references to explore potential ethical issues and possible mitigation strategies. The first step in ensuring that this study was done ethically included obtaining ethical clearance from the IIE ethics committee (see Appendix A: Ethics Clearance Letter).

3.4.1 Informed Consent

One of the most fundamental ethical considerations in any research involving human participants is obtaining informed consent (Mertens, 2012). In co-creation workshops, researchers must ensure that all participants understand the purpose, process, and implications of their involvement (Brodie, Hollebeek & Conduit, 2017). This includes providing clear information about the objectives of the research, the nature of their participation, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences (Flick, 2017) (see Appendix B: Sample Consent Form).

3.4.2 Representation and Power Dynamics

Co-creation workshops bring together stakeholders with diverse backgrounds, interests, and power dynamics (Braun et al., 2013). Researchers must be mindful of potential power imbalances and strive to create an inclusive environment where all participants feel comfortable expressing their opinions (Mikkelsen, 2005). This may involve developing strategies to facilitate the participation of marginalised or underrepresented groups, as well as addressing potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the workshops (Kendon, Pain & Kesby, 2007).

3.4.3 Anonymity, Confidentiality and Privacy

Given the collaborative nature of co-creation workshops, maintaining confidentiality and privacy of participants may be challenging (Saunders, Sim, Kingstone et al., 2017). Researchers should establish

clear guidelines for the treatment of personal information and ensure that participants are aware of these guidelines. This may include anonymising data, using pseudonyms, and securely storing and handling data to protect participants' privacy (Creswell & Poth, 2017). For this reason, participant names and all confidential information were blocked out (see Appendix B: Sample Consent Form). The researcher will keep the signed consent forms safe and they can be viewed upon request.

3.4.4 Beneficence and Non-maleficence

The ethical principles of beneficence (promoting well-being) and non-maleficence (avoiding harm) should guide researchers' decisions and actions throughout the research process (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Researchers should consider potential risks and benefits to participants and the broader community, striving to maximise benefits while minimising risks. This may include ensuring that the outcomes of the research are disseminated to relevant stakeholders and that the co-creation process contributes positively to the development of city brands (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003).

3.4.5 Cultural Sensitivity

As co-creation workshops involve diverse stakeholders, cultural sensitivity is critical for ensuring ethical research practices (Liamputtong, 2010). Researchers should be aware of potential cultural differences in communication styles, values, and expectations, and adapt their approach accordingly. This may involve engaging local facilitators, employing culturally appropriate methodologies, and considering the potential implications of the research on different cultural groups (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011).

3.4.6 Incentives

Participants will be thanked for their time and for their contribution to the knowledge field but will not be incentivised as not to influence who chooses to partake in the research or how they may feel they need to answer questions. Food and beverages will, however, be made available on-site (should the workshops take place in person), and this will be disclosed to ensure participants are comfortable and dietary requirements are considered.

3.4.7 Other

As the researcher of this study, I hereby confirm that I have read and acknowledged the implication of the following ethical considerations:

- I. Falsifying information
- II. Distorting results
- III. Allowing bias to influence interpretations of the research

- IV. Misusing information
- V. Using inappropriate research methods

3.5 ACADEMIC RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

The trustworthiness of this study is a vital aspect of its quality and rigor. It is crucial to address this in order to ensure the dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability of the research. Shenton (2004) outlined strategies to address these aspects in qualitative research, which were diligently followed in this study.

The concept of credibility is paramount in a qualitative study, and it parallels internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility is about ensuring the research study's findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this research, credibility was ensured by maintaining open and honest dialogues with the participants. The researcher's experience as a facilitator and moderator helped create a trusting environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their genuine experiences and perspectives on the co-creation of city brands.

Dependability, akin to reliability in quantitative studies, emphasises the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the systematic and consistent execution of the research design and methods, informed by the researcher's experience with over 50 research projects, ensures its dependability.

The third aspect of trustworthiness, transferability, is similar to external validity in quantitative research. It refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts (Polit & Beck, 2010). Although the findings of this study are specific to the co-creation of city brands in the South African tourism context, the insights generated can provide valuable understanding for similar contexts, thus enhancing the study's transferability.

Finally, confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Shenton, 2004). Throughout this study, I have strived to maintain a high degree of objectivity and to accurately present the findings, ensuring that the results represent the participants' responses rather than the researcher's own biases or viewpoints. This contributes to the study's confirmability.

In conclusion, this study has followed established strategies to ensure its trustworthiness. Rigorous and systematic approaches were taken to uphold the study's credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, thereby ensuring the quality and robustness of the research.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 offers a blueprint for the research, outlining the pivotal role of city branding in fostering unique urban identities, a concept revisited from Chapter 2. The groundwork is laid in the introductory segment, where the city branding strategy is posited as a lever for promoting urban destinations in a highly competitive global market. The chapter embarks on a deep exploration of the research design, grounded in the constructivist paradigm which hinges on the interactive and participative nature of human experiences.

A noteworthy highlight is the adoption of a participatory action research approach, converging on co-creation workshops as a fulcrum for data collection and stakeholder collaboration. It crafts a structured pathway involving meticulous preparation, execution, and analysis phases to steer the research. The chapter brings to fore the ethical scaffolding essential to uphold the integrity and inclusivity of the research process, underscoring principles such as informed consent, anonymity, and cultural sensitivity.

It culminates with an affirmation of the study's academic rigor and trustworthiness, anchoring on credibility, dependability, and confirmability to foster a robust and reliable research outcome. Through a lens of academic and ethical integrity, the chapter crafts a research pathway that is not only methodically structured but also grounded in human-centric values, offering a comprehensive roadmap for the forthcoming research journey.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS (EMPIRICAL STUDY)

“People relate to people, and if your brand feels like people, they’ll relate to you, too.”

Laura Busche author of the Lean Branding book

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the findings from two co-creation city branding workshops conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg. These workshops were part of a broader exploratory study aimed at understanding the potential role of co-creating city brands in reviving the South African tourism industry post-pandemic. The discussions held during these workshops, enabled by various stakeholders, resulted in a rich dataset that was subsequently subjected to a thematic analysis. The emergent themes offer critical insights into the complexities, opportunities, and challenges related to the tourism industry in the two cities. This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of these findings, their implications for city branding, and potential strategies for tourism revitalisation in South Africa.

This chapter seeks to:

1. Analyse the data collected during the co-creative city branding workshops;
2. Identify key themes and patterns that emerge from participants' interactions and contributions;
3. Understand the perspectives and needs of the different stakeholders involved in city branding; and
4. Offer insights into the potential for co-creative approaches in city branding strategy development.

4.1.1 Chapter Structure

1. Reflection in Action: The Researcher's Dynamic Engagement

At the heart of qualitative research is a reflexive process where the researcher continuously engages with the data, not just as a passive observer but as an active participant, shaping and being shaped by the unfolding research process (Schön, 1983). This iterative and dynamic engagement is aptly described as 'reflection in action'.

During the co-creative city branding workshops, I was not just a detached facilitator; I was deeply immersed in the interactions, discussions, and collaborations. As the sessions progressed, I constantly reviewed the notes, gauging the pulse of the participants' perceptions, experiences, and aspirations. This allowed me to understand the emerging patterns and themes in real time (Schön, 1983).

Using these initial insights, I applied the key emerging themes to established models, notably Aaker's brand personality model, which provided a structured framework to categorise and understand the brand personalities of Cape Town and Johannesburg (Aaker, 1997). Additionally, I drew up an empathy map, visualising the emotions, perceptions, and experiences of the stakeholders, further deepening the understanding of their perspectives and needs (Gray, Brown & Macanuso, 2010).

2. Thematic Analysis: Decoding the Branding Potential

Building on these preliminary insights, I embarked on a more rigorous thematic analysis. This involved generating codes from the raw data, clustering these codes into themes, and subsequently interpreting these themes in the context of city branding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This in-depth analysis sought to decode the branding potential of the two cities, emphasising not just the overt expressions but also the latent sentiments and aspirations that could be harnessed for effective city branding.

The process of thematic analysis was not linear but cyclical, where initial codes were constantly revisited, refined, and reinterpreted in light of the broader dataset. The goal was to weave together a coherent narrative that captured the essence of Cape Town's and Johannesburg's brand identities, values, and promises.

3. Reflection on Action: A Synthesis of the Chapter and Contribution to the Field

Having navigated the complex journey of data collection, preliminary insights, and in-depth thematic analysis, it was imperative to step back and reflect upon the entire process – aptly termed as 'reflection on action' (Schön, 1983). This reflective phase served as a meta-analysis, assessing the strengths, challenges, and learnings from the research process.

Central to this reflection was the development of the value proposition canvas. This canvas encapsulated the distilled insights from the research, articulating the unique value propositions for Cape Town and Johannesburg. More than just a research output, the value proposition canvas represents the fourth research objective (see 1.4.3 & table 3.1) and stands as a tangible contribution

to the field of city branding. It bridges theory with practice, providing stakeholders with a strategic tool to shape and communicate the cities' brand promises effectively.

4.1.2 Artefacts and Data Sources

Various forms of data were collected and used in the analysis, including:

- **Transcripts:** Detailed transcripts were prepared based on the audio and video recordings of the workshops. These transcripts provided a verbatim account of what was discussed, allowing for an in-depth analysis of participants' contributions (Morgan, Krueger & King, 1998). Access to these transcripts can be requested from the researcher at sallysabara@outlook.com.
- **Video Recordings:** The workshops were video recorded to capture non-verbal cues, the dynamics of participant interactions, and the overall flow of the workshops (Ritchie et al., 2003). These video recordings are safely held by the researcher and can be accessed on request at sallysabara@outlook.com.
- **Data Sheet:** A comprehensive data sheet was compiled by the researcher, organising the raw data into a structured format. This sheet contains coded responses, thematic insights, and key observations noted during the workshops (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Topic of discussion	Verbatim	Cape Town	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Verbatim	Johannesburg	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3
2	What words do you think OTHERS would use to describe your city?		4 seasons in one day	Weather			We love the city. We got used to high crime		High crime		
3			Great Views	Beautiful	Nature						
4			Table Mountain	Nature	Mountains						
5			Beautiful city	Beautiful							
6			Amazing	Amazing							
7			Far more than just a city	More than a city	Lots to do	Activities					
8			Pictureque	Beautiful							
9		They say it's clean	Clean	Clean							
10		So in terms of crime in the city, yes	City is pretty well protected but there is crime in the townships	Safety concerns	City is protected						
11		If you look at Cape Town and you	Township (the weather)	Weather							
12			Inequality	Inequality							
13	What makes your city unique to others?		Robin Island	History	Culture	Attractions		Music and hip hop culture	Music tourism	Hip hop scene	
14		I think people love our mountains	Table Mountain	Nature	Mountains			Gold reef City, Sun City, Monte Casino	Unique experiences	Gambling destinations	
15		Beaches and surfing	Beaches	Surfing	Sports			Soweto	Culture	Heritage	Local attractions
16		The amount of activities you can do	Activities	Lots to do	Activities		Yes, I just wanted to add in the	Diversity	Diverse	Hub of different cultures	
17			Hiking trails	Hiking	Activities	Sports	We have different activities	Different activities in the area - Bungee jump, museum, game reserve in close proximity	Adventure tourism	Lots to do	
18		Some of my senior tourists one day	Rainbow of cultures and people	Diverse	Respect the past	Unique energy		Hub of different cultures	Culture	Diversity	
19		Cape Point	Attractions	Attractions			Yeah. We must always be off	Big city - big dreams	Big city	Land of opportunity	
20		People in Cape Town are very friendly	Friendly and welcoming to visitors	Friendly	Welcoming		Yeah, look, I want a Friday	Lots off small towns around town	Small towns close around		
21		I was just thinking also about the	The harmonious relationship between Muslims and Christians in the Cape Flats	A melting pot of cultures	Diversity			Night life	Active night life		
22		I'll tell them of my last experience's I've had, e.g. My first time I hired up TM and saw the city and sky from a totally different perspective with	Personal best experiences: hiking, table mountain, sunsets, city lights, natural beauty	Personal experiences	Natural beauty	City lights	Shu you can bring your family	Family friendly, active night life, entertainment and unique experiences	Something for everyone	Active night life	Art and entertainment
23		Great people, great food, great views!	Great people, great food, great award winning wines and great views!	Award winning views	Great people	Great food	Me to my home girl it's like	Exciting, food, dancing, many activities and lots of entertainment	Exciting	Lots to do	Art and entertainment
24		It's a melting pot of cultures which	It's a melting pot of cultures which makes it a must experience.	A melting pot of cultures			My city is exciting and there's	Exciting, social activities, working on lowering crime, unique experiences	Exciting	Lots to do	Working on crime
25		Demystify the myth that Africa is a	Demystify the myth that Africa is one big jungle	Demystifying Africa				Interesting people explore new spaces and cultures and have a lot	Diverse cultures	Active night life	
26		Cape town is a coastal gem. It's a gem.	Cape town is a coastal gem. It's got beautiful landscape and scenery.	Coastal Gem	Beautiful		there is never a dull night in	Night life activities, lots to do, art and entertainment hub	Active night life	Lots to do	Art and entertainment
27		The variety of activities to do. From	The variety of activities to do	Lots to do	Activities		Me to a friend: you can visit a	History, culture, friendly people	History	Culture	Friendly people

Figure 4.1: Sample artefact of the Data Sheet compiled.

- **Mural Board Screenshots and Notes:** Visual and textual data from the Mural board were also crucial components of the dataset. Screenshots were taken to capture the state of the board at various points during the workshop, and notes were made regarding the interactions and

collaborations that occurred on the board (Gray et al., 2010). To ensure the privacy of all participants, no personal information was included in the board. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the link to the board only provides access to view the board. The board can be accessed at the following link:

<https://app.mural.co/t/interactrdt2729/m/interactrdt2729/1686125953002/9428d54328ad6f18c5b8ef6fca35d43fe28663bb?sender=uddc7f178246a721794a62997>

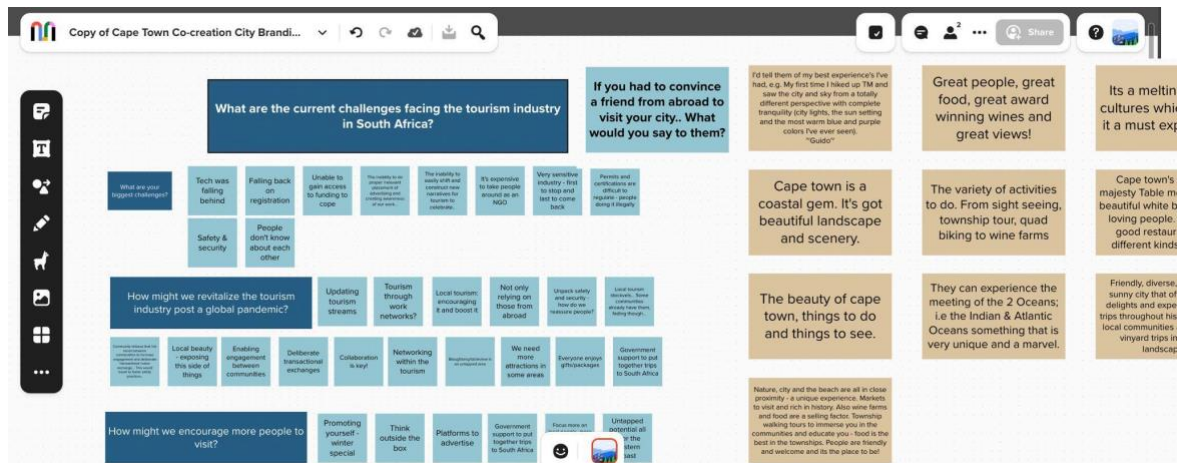


Figure 4.2: Sample artefact of Cape Town's brainstorming and idea generation board on Mural.

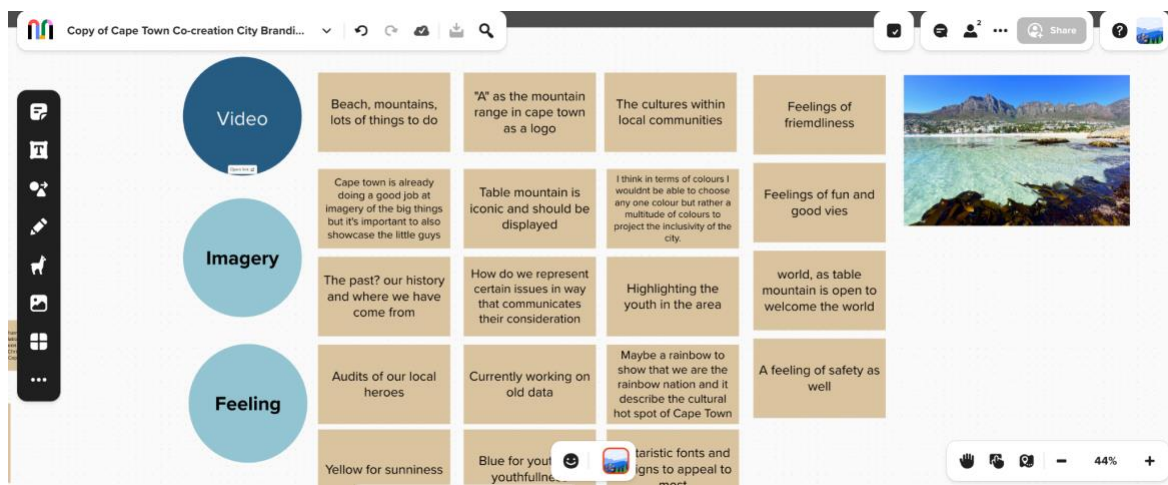


Figure 4.3: Sample artefact of Cape Town's brainstorming and idea generation board on Mural.

4.1.3 Participant Demographics

Demographic data includes information about the background, experience, and characteristics of the stakeholders who participated in the co-creation workshop (Creswell, 2014). This type of data can provide valuable context for understanding the perspectives and attitudes of the stakeholders (Buchanan, 1992). Stakeholders included residents of the city (n = 12; n = 6 per city) as well as

representatives of the tourism sector ($n = 12$; $n = 6$ per city). The tourism sector workers/business owners represented in the workshops included hotel and bed and breakfast (B&B) managers and owners, tour operators, cultural event coordinators, and restaurant industry managers/workers. Figure 4.4 shows the demographic breakdown of the stakeholders according to age, gender, background and experience.

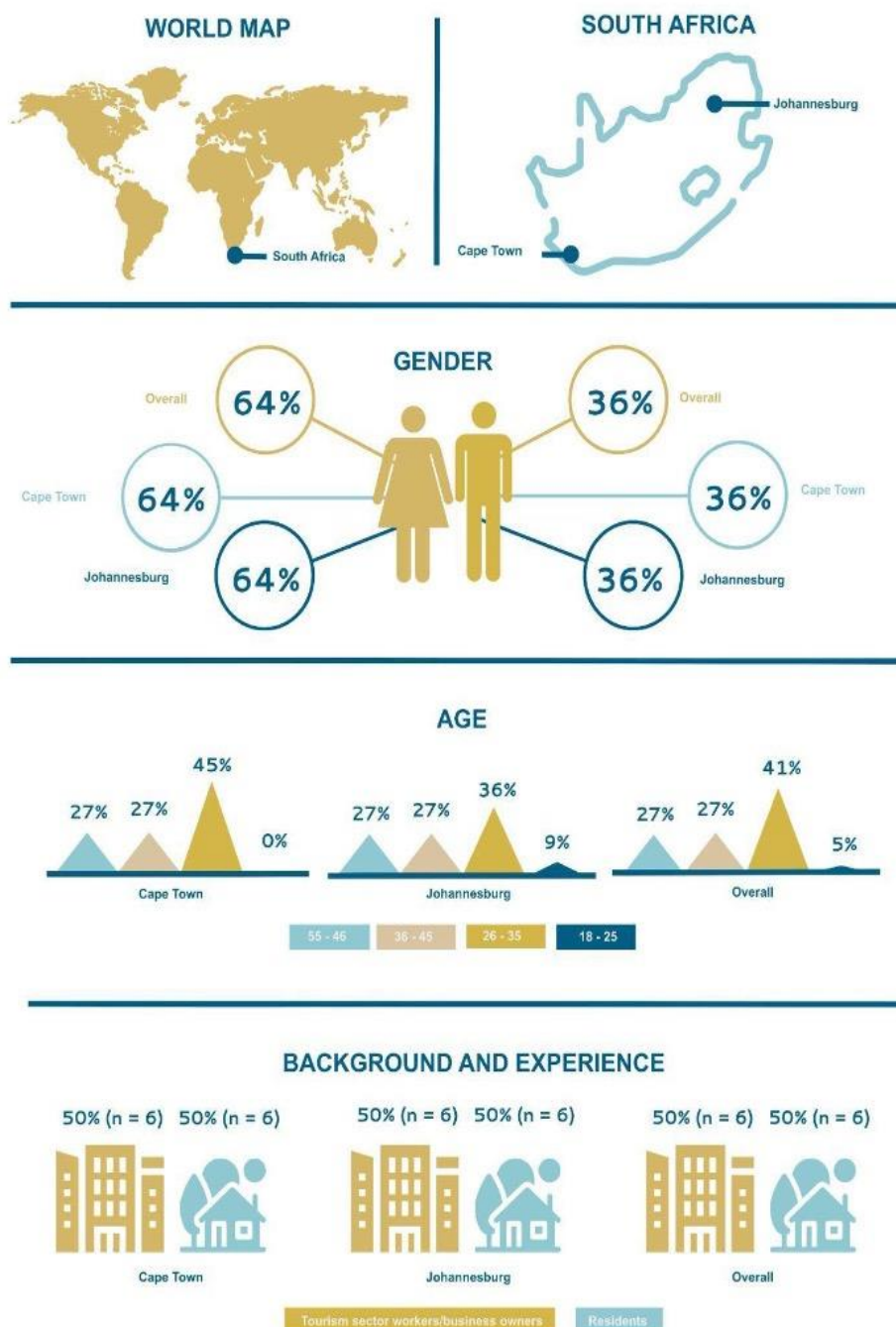


Figure 4.4: Demographic profile of the participating stakeholders ($n = 24$ breakdown of the stakeholders)

4.2 WORKSHOP DATA ANALYSIS: REFLECTION IN ACTION

City branding in the wake of a global crisis is a challenge and opportunity rolled into one. With the world now emerging from the shadows of a pandemic, cities are the vanguards in reviving the tourism industry. In South Africa, two cities, Johannesburg and Cape Town, stand at the nexus of this change. These cities, with their unique characteristics and challenges, became the focal points for co-creation workshops. The next sections delve deep into the insights harvested from these workshops.

4.2.1 Introduction

Navigating the intricate maze of city branding in a post-pandemic world necessitates a deep dive into the lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations of key stakeholders. Central to the exploration are two co-creation workshops held in South Africa's iconic cities: Cape Town and Johannesburg. Each workshop, though united in its overarching goal of revitalising tourism, offered a unique tapestry of insights, reflective of the distinct identities, histories, and socioeconomic fabrics of the two cities. To retrieve these valuable insights, a systematic approach was employed, encompassing detailed observations, analysis of workshop artefacts, and a synthesis of participants' feedback and contributions. The next section will meticulously unpack these insights, juxtaposing the challenges with the opportunities, and in the process, sketching a roadmap for the cities' resurgence as global tourism frontrunners in a world reshaped by crisis.

4.2.2 Cape Town Workshop Key Emerging Themes

Backdrop: Cape Town's allure as a premier tourism destination is undeniable. Its juxtaposition of mountain and sea, colonial architecture interspersed with modern design, and a rich tapestry of cultural experiences make it a city like no other. However, beneath this veneer of beauty lies a series of challenges that the pandemic has exacerbated.

4.2.2.1 Operational Difficulties

Scope of the challenge: The onslaught of the pandemic ushered in an unprecedented era of operational challenges for Cape Town's vibrant tourism industry. Central to these challenges were the stringent travel restrictions implemented globally. These curbs, intended to contain the virus's spread, significantly dampened the inflow of both domestic and international tourists to Cape Town. The city, which thrives on its cosmopolitan appeal and draws a diverse array of tourists, found itself grappling with eerily empty streets, deserted attractions, and a palpable silence replacing the usual tourist buzz.

Furthermore, the ever-evolving health protocols, necessitated by the dynamic nature of the virus and our understanding of it, posed another layer of complexity. Establishments had to constantly adapt,

ensuring that their operations were in sync with the latest guidelines. This was not just about ensuring safety; it was also about instilling confidence in potential tourists, assuring them that Cape Town was both a beautiful and safe destination.

However, the unpredictability of the pandemic arguably posed the most significant challenge. With infection rates varying, new strains emerging, and global sentiments oscillating between hope and despair, planning became a herculean task.

Moreover, the necessity for stringent health measures added another dimension to the operational conundrum. Establishments had to invest in sanitisation equipment, reconfigure spaces to adhere to social distancing norms, train staff in new health protocols, and often operate at reduced capacity to ensure safety.

In essence, while Cape Town's tourism sector was already tasked with selling the city's allure in a challenging global environment, it also had to navigate a labyrinth of operational hurdles, each demanding resources, adaptability, and resilience.

In-depth perspectives: The workshop provided a platform for various stakeholders from Cape Town's tourism sector to share their first-hand experiences, painting a vivid picture of the operational hurdles they faced during the pandemic's peak. Their narratives shed light on the multifaceted nature of these challenges, underscoring the resilience required to navigate this tumultuous period.

Accommodation providers, from luxury hotels to quaint bed and breakfast establishments, found themselves in particularly troubled waters. The uncertainty of the pandemic meant that tourists were often hesitant to commit to travel plans, leading to a surge in last-minute cancellations. While some of these were due to changing travel advisories or personal apprehensions, others were a result of unpredictable lockdowns and quarantine mandates. These frequent cancellations wreaked havoc on the revenue forecasts for these establishments. Moreover, in a bid to reassure potential guests of their safety, accommodation providers had to invest significantly in deep-cleaning and sanitisation measures. This not only added to their operational costs but also demanded rigorous training and oversight to ensure adherence to the highest standards of cleanliness.

For tour operators, the challenges were no less daunting. The essence of most tours is the shared experience, often involving group activities, communal transportation, or guided walkthroughs. The pandemic's social distancing norms meant that these traditional models had to be rethought. Itineraries were revamped to include fewer indoor activities, group sizes were reduced, and many operators had to explore open-air alternatives to their usual offerings. These changes, while necessary for safety, often came at the expense of the immersive experience that many tourists sought.

However, perhaps the most palpable impact was felt by Cape Town's vibrant restaurant industry. Restaurants, often hailed as the heartbeat of Cape Town's cultural milieu, had to grapple with a series of restrictions. Seating capacities were slashed to ensure social distancing, which directly impacted their potential revenue. Early curfews meant that the usual dinner rush, a significant source of income for many eateries, was curtailed. This was particularly challenging for establishments that thrived on their evening ambiance, be it rooftop bars with sunset views or fine-dining establishments offering elaborate tasting menus. Furthermore, these restrictions, coupled with the general apprehension about dining out, meant that many restaurants had to pivot to delivery or take-out models, often with mixed success.

In sum, the in-depth perspectives shared by the workshop participants offered a nuanced understanding of the operational challenges faced by Cape Town's tourism sector. It was a testament to the sector's adaptability and the collective resolve to ensure that Cape Town remained a coveted destination, even in the face of unprecedented adversity.

Moving forward: As Cape Town's tourism sector grappled with the operational challenges induced by the pandemic, the co-creation workshop underscored the significance of innovation. Technology emerged as a beacon of hope, offering solutions to navigate the intricate maze of restrictions and apprehensions that stakeholders faced.

The essence of the discussions revolved around two primary objectives: ensuring the safety of both tourists and service providers and promoting local tourism within the confines of the pandemic's restrictions.

Touchless check-ins garnered considerable attention in this context. Traditional check-in processes, often laden with paperwork and direct human interactions, appeared as potential health risk points. Innovations such as mobile apps enabling self-check-in, digital key cards, and automated kiosks were

seen as the way forward. By minimising human contact and physical exchanges, these systems would not just elevate safety standards but would also offer a more streamlined, efficient experience for guests.

Online booking systems, while already a part of the tourism landscape, were identified as needing enhancements. Given the unpredictability of the pandemic and the ever-changing nature of travel advisories, the demand was for more flexible booking options. Features like easy rescheduling, transparent cancellation policies, and real-time updates regarding local health and safety protocols were emphasised. By offering potential tourists clarity and flexibility, it was believed that such systems could inspire confidence and motivate bookings, especially from local travellers wary of the pandemic's uncertainties.

Furthermore, the participants highlighted the importance of fostering a sense of safety and security for tourists. This involved disseminating clear and regular information about the steps being taken by accommodation providers, restaurants, and other tourism-related establishments to adhere to health guidelines. Showcasing testimonials from guests who had positive experiences, emphasising adherence to safety protocols, could serve as a powerful tool to reassure potential travellers.

Additionally, the need for a robust digital infrastructure became evident. This encompassed high-speed internet connectivity for seamless online interactions, secure online payment gateways for transactions, and platforms optimised for a range of devices, ensuring accessibility for all potential tourists.

In essence, as Cape Town's tourism stakeholders chart their path forward, the focus is clear: leverage technology to enhance safety, promote local tourism, and offer flexibility, all while working within the constraints posed by the pandemic.

4.2.2.2 Trust and Reputation

Reputation at stake: At the heart of tourism lies an unwavering trust. When tourists choose a destination, they're not merely seeking memorable experiences; they're placing their faith in the promise of safety and fulfilment. The pandemic accentuated this foundational need, making trust even more paramount. In this recalibrated context, safety transcends traditional concerns like crime or natural events, encompassing health assurances and adept crisis management.

For a globally renowned destination like Cape Town, this challenge took on amplified significance. While its breathtaking landscapes, dynamic culture, and storied history remain steadfast, the city's reputation now hinges on its ability to deliver a safe and enriching experience in a world recovering from the pandemic's effects.

Tour operators' trust quandary: Beyond the overarching reputation of the city, the credibility of individual tour operators has come under the microscope. Historically, the tourism industry, particularly the tour operating sector, has grappled with trust issues. Tales of misleading packages, hidden fees, and less-than-stellar experiences have often plagued the industry. In the wake of the pandemic, these concerns have deepened. With health and safety taking precedence, tourists are more cautious than ever about the authenticity and reliability of tour operators. They seek operators who not only offer value but also prioritise their well-being, transparently communicate safety measures, and demonstrate flexibility in the face of changing circumstances.

Participants' insights: The co-creation workshop, with its diverse assembly of participants, became a valuable platform for gauging the collective sentiment and apprehensions related to Cape Town's post-pandemic reputation. As participants voiced their insights, it was evident that there existed a significant undercurrent of anxiety surrounding how Cape Town would be viewed on the global tourism stage.

Many participants acknowledged the city's erstwhile status as a sought-after destination, revered for its captivating landscapes, cultural vibrancy, and rich history. Yet, they also recognised the seismic shift brought about by the pandemic, where destinations were no longer judged solely by their attractions but also by their ability to manage crises and ensure visitor safety.

A recurring theme in the discussions was the magnified global scrutiny that popular tourist destinations like Cape Town were undergoing. With international media, travel bloggers, and influencers constantly evaluating and reporting on cities' Covid-19 management strategies, there was a heightened awareness of being in the global spotlight. Participants expressed concerns that any perceived lapses or inconsistencies in Cape Town's response could quickly become magnified, thereby impacting its image.

Moreover, the discourse also touched upon the expectations of the modern traveller. In the post-pandemic era, tourists are more informed, discerning, and cautious. They seek assurances of safety,

timely communication, and evidence of well-thought-out health protocols. Participants felt that Cape Town needed to be proactive in its communication, showcasing its efforts, and being transparent about challenges.

There was also a realisation that while managing the present crisis was vital, the long-term implications on Cape Town's brand equity and reputation were equally crucial. The city's future tourism prospects would be significantly influenced by the narrative it crafts now, in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic.

4.2.2.3 Funding and Support

The financial strain: The ripple effects of the pandemic on the global economy have been profound, but for cities heavily reliant on tourism, the blow has been especially severe. Participants painted a vivid picture of the financial challenges confronting Cape Town in the pandemic's wake. Tourism, traditionally a significant contributor to Cape Town's economy, was suddenly brought to a near standstill by travel restrictions, border closures, and a pervasive sense of global uncertainty.

Many participants, representing a spectrum of businesses from boutique hotels to local artisanal shops, recounted their personal struggles during this period. The lack of tourists translated to dwindling revenues, forcing many to make difficult decisions about staffing, operations, and future investments. Several shared stories of having to cut back on staff or halt expansion plans, while others spoke of the emotional toll of seeing their businesses, often built over years, facing such an existential threat.

Moreover, the unpredictability of the situation added to the strain. While many industries faced challenges during the pandemic, tourism was particularly affected due to its reliance on forward bookings. The constant flux of regulations, combined with varying global responses to the pandemic, meant that any signs of recovery were often quickly followed by new challenges, leading to a pervasive sense of instability.

Further complicating the situation were the fixed costs many tourism-related businesses had to bear, even with reduced or non-existent revenue streams. Rent for prime locations, maintenance of historical or large-scale attractions, and keeping up with the necessary licenses and certifications were all expenses that didn't pause just because tourists were not coming.

Participants also highlighted the domino effect of this financial strain. With local businesses struggling, there was a downstream impact on suppliers, artisans, and a host of ancillary services that rely on a thriving tourism sector. The collective insights painted a sobering picture of a city grappling with financial challenges on multiple fronts, underscoring the essential role of tourism in Cape Town's economic ecosystem.

Voices from the ground: The workshop served as a poignant platform for the stakeholders deeply entrenched in Cape Town's tourism sector to voice their on-ground realities, concerns, and aspirations. The air was thick with emotion as representatives from small and medium-sized businesses took the stage, sharing their narratives which echoed both desperation and determination. Many participants recounted tales of resilience, of how they had initially weathered the storm by pivoting their business models, tapping into local markets, or offering alternative services. However, as the pandemic prolonged, these adaptive measures proved insufficient to counteract the sheer magnitude of lost revenue from international and domestic tourists. Several participants shared heart-wrenching accounts of having to lay off long-standing employees, some of whom had become like family over the years. Others spoke about the gut-wrenching decision to shutter establishments that had been passed down through generations due to the unrelenting financial pressure.

The stories were not just about economic hardships. There were tales of dreams deferred – of expansion plans put on hold, of new ventures that had to be shelved, and of the emotional toll that the uncertainty of the situation exacted. Many spoke of the sleepless nights, the constant anxiety of not knowing if their businesses would survive another month, and the challenge of keeping their teams motivated amidst the gloom.

Yet, amidst these narratives of despair, there were also stories of solidarity. Participants shared instances of local communities coming together to support ailing businesses, of competitors turning collaborators to pool resources, and of innovative grassroots initiatives aimed at reviving the tourism spirit in their own capacities.

However, the overarching sentiment was clear. The grassroots-level businesses, which form the backbone of Cape Town's tourism tapestry, were in dire need of a lifeline. The reserves, both financial and emotional, were running low, and the collective plea was for robust support mechanisms that would not only address the immediate financial concerns but also provide a roadmap for sustainable recovery in the post-pandemic world.

Solutions and strategies: As the workshop delved into potential solutions and strategies to navigate the financial challenges that the tourism sector faced, it became evident that a multifaceted approach was crucial. The participants, drawing from their diverse experiences and expertise, put forth a range of actionable ideas and interventions, centring largely on the pivotal role of the government in steering the sector towards recovery.

The clarion call for governmental intervention was unmistakable. Many participants emphasised that the scale and severity of the pandemic's impact meant that individual efforts, while commendable, would be insufficient in isolation. There was an expressed need for a cohesive, structured support system, driven by the government, to provide the necessary financial buoyancy. Suggestions ranged from immediate relief measures, like grants and subsidies, to longer-term initiatives, such as low-interest loans tailored specifically for the tourism sector. These loans, participants felt, should come with flexible repayment terms, considering the cyclical and sometimes unpredictable nature of tourism revenue.

In addition to direct financial support, participants also highlighted the importance of capacity-building and training programmes. With the tourism landscape evolving in the wake of the pandemic, businesses needed to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to adapt. Government-sponsored training programmes, focusing on areas like digital marketing, health and safety protocols, or sustainable tourism practices, were mooted as potential game-changers.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) emerged as another dominant theme in the discussions. Participants believed that while the government could provide the necessary regulatory and financial framework, the private sector brought in operational expertise, innovation, and agility. By marrying these strengths, PPPs could drive impactful tourism initiatives, be it in infrastructure development, marketing campaigns, or community engagement projects. The emphasis was on creating synergies, where both public and private entities collaboratively contribute to a shared vision for Cape Town's tourism revival.

Furthermore, there was a consensus on the importance of inclusivity in these solutions. Grassroots operators, community-driven initiatives, and local artisans should be at the heart of any strategic intervention, ensuring that the benefits of tourism revival permeated all layers of the sector.

In wrapping up this segment of the workshop, the mood was one of cautious optimism. While participants acknowledged the enormity of the challenges ahead, they also believed that with collaborative efforts, strategic interventions, and a shared commitment to Cape Town's tourism legacy, the path to recovery, though arduous, was navigable.

4.2.2.4 Cape Town's Branding Potential

Despite the challenges, the workshop was not devoid of optimism. Cape Town's inherent attractions remain unchanged, and there was a strong sentiment that the city could bounce back stronger.

Nature's bounty: The workshop resonated with admiration and genuine affection when the topic turned to Cape Town's abundant natural splendours. Participants, some with the enthusiasm of locals and others with the fresh eyes of visitors, articulated their deep appreciation for the city's myriad natural attractions. This segment of the discussion was characterised by a blend of nostalgia, pride, and awe.

The iconic Table Mountain stood as a unanimous favourite, with participants recounting their personal experiences of hiking its trails, or simply being mesmerised by its towering presence over the city. The mountain, often bathed in the soft hues of sunset or shrouded in its famous "tablecloth" of clouds, was cited not just as a geographical landmark, but as an emblem of Cape Town's unique character.

The sprawling vineyards, particularly those of the Cape Winelands, evoked tales of tranquil afternoons spent wine tasting, surrounded by panoramic views of verdant rows of grapevines stretching to the horizon. Participants emphasised how these vineyards were more than just venues for wine production; they were experiences, offering tourists a fusion of world-class wines, sumptuous cuisine, and the rustic charm of the countryside.

Discussion on the city's beaches painted vivid images of diverse experiences. From the bustling Camps Bay, framed by the Twelve Apostles Mountain Range, to the tranquil nooks of Llandudno, or the penguin-inhabited sands of Boulder's Beach, participants agreed that Cape Town's coastline was unparalleled in its diversity. The pristine beaches, with their golden sands and azure waters, were celebrated not just for their aesthetic appeal but also for the range of activities they offered, from surfing to leisurely sunbathing.

As the dialogue evolved, there was a shared sentiment that these natural assets were not merely passive attractions. They played an active role in shaping the city's culture, lifestyle, and even its

economy. Participants felt that branding campaigns for Cape Town should not merely showcase these natural wonders but narrate the stories and experiences they offer. The city's relationship with its natural bounty is symbiotic, and this interplay is what sets Cape Town apart. In the competitive landscape of global tourism, these authentic narratives rooted in nature could be Cape Town's distinctive edge.

Cultural and experiential richness: The rich tapestry of Cape Town's cultural landscape became a focal point of discussion, with participants passionately delving into the city's multifaceted offerings. The conversations revolved around the belief that the city's soul lies not just in its scenic beauty, but deeply embedded in its history, art, and culinary traditions.

Participants reflected on Cape Town's storied past, a compelling saga of indigenous cultures, colonial legacies, and the arduous journey towards democracy. The city's history is not just confined to textbooks but is palpable in its architecture, museums, and the stories of its residents. The remnants of the colonial era, juxtaposed with symbols of resistance and liberation, offer tourists a profound understanding of South Africa's past. Many participants expressed the value of curating historical walks, where guided tours could weave tales of the past, making history come alive amidst the very lanes and buildings where events unfolded.

The city's vibrant art scene also garnered significant attention. Participants spoke of the bustling streets of Woodstock, where once derelict buildings are now canvases for striking street art. They discussed the significance of galleries that house contemporary African art, offering glimpses into the continent's evolving artistic narrative. Events like the First Thursdays, where galleries and shops in Cape Town's CBD stay open late, were highlighted as exemplary experiences where art, community, and nightlife converge. The consensus was that promoting art tours, especially those that blend traditional with contemporary art, could cater to a niche of tourists seeking immersive artistic experiences.

Cape Town's culinary diversity was a topic that evoked enthusiastic responses. The city's gastronomic offerings, participants felt, reflected its multicultural lineage. From traditional Cape Malay curries simmering in Bo-Kaap, to the fresh seafood caught in the Atlantic, or the fusion dishes in gourmet restaurants, Cape Town is a food lover's paradise. The idea of culinary tours was floated, where tourists could embark on flavourful journeys, perhaps starting with a visit to a local market, followed by a cooking class, and culminating in a lavish meal. Such experiences, participants believed, offered

tourists more than just a taste of the city's cuisine; they provided a deeper understanding of Cape Town's cultural mosaic.

In essence, the participants emphasised that Cape Town's cultural and experiential richness is as much an attraction as its natural beauty. In the realm of tourism branding, there's an opportunity to craft narratives that intertwine the city's natural, historical, artistic, and culinary threads, offering tourists a holistic and unforgettable Cape Town experience.

Uniqueness and authenticity: The essence of Cape Town, as voiced by workshop participants, transcends beyond its physical beauty and attractions. It lies in the city's unique narratives, the collective memories of its inhabitants, and the vibrant spirit that pulses through its streets. The significance of these intangible elements became a recurrent theme in the discussions, with participants emphasising the need for Cape Town's branding to be anchored in authenticity.

Participants passionately shared personal anecdotes and tales from their communities, highlighting how the city's rich tapestry of stories, often handed down through generations, adds layers of depth to the Cape Town experience. These narratives span a spectrum – from tales of the indigenous Khoisan people, the struggles against apartheid, to contemporary stories of innovation, resilience, and community building. Such stories, participants felt, offer tourists a more profound, intimate connection with the city, allowing them to see Cape Town through the eyes of its residents.

Furthermore, the city's inhabitants themselves are intrinsic to Cape Town's brand, acting as ambassadors for their city. Their warmth, diversity, creativity, and resilience shape the city's character. Participants spoke of the myriad festivals, community events, and local initiatives that showcase the spirit of Cape Town's people. They suggested that incorporating these grassroots experiences into the city's branding narrative would not only highlight Cape Town's uniqueness but also foster deeper engagements between tourists and local communities.

There was also a consensus on the importance of steering clear of over-commercialised or stereotypical representations. Authenticity, they argued, means showcasing the real Cape Town, warts and all. This includes celebrating its successes and acknowledging its challenges. Authentic branding would involve a balanced portrayal, ensuring that tourists get a holistic view of the city, understanding both its triumphs and its ongoing struggles.

In essence, the discussions underscored the belief that the most memorable tourist experiences are those rooted in authenticity. Cape Town, with its unique blend of history, culture, and community spirit, offers a treasure trove of authentic experiences. By centring its branding strategy on these pillars of uniqueness and authenticity, Cape Town can offer tourists not just a visit, but a deeply personal and transformative journey.

4.2.2.5 Concluding Thoughts on Cape Town's Workshop

The Cape Town co-creation workshop served as a profound microcosm of the broader dynamics at play in the city's tourism landscape. As participants from various sectors shared their experiences, insights, and apprehensions, a multifaceted portrait of Cape Town emerged, one marked by both vulnerabilities and immense potential.

At the heart of these discussions was a palpable sense of resilience. Even as participants dissected the multifarious challenges posed by the pandemic – from operational hurdles to reputational concerns – they consistently expressed an unwavering belief in Cape Town's inherent appeal. The city's mesmerising natural beauty, its rich cultural tapestry, and the myriad experiences it offers form a formidable foundation upon which its tourism future can be built.

Yet, beyond these attractions, what stood out in the discussions was the collective spirit of the city's tourism stakeholders. Whether they were business owners, tour operators, or residents, there was a shared commitment to Cape Town's resurgence. This collective will, participants believed, would be the driving force behind the city's recovery. They envisioned a future where stakeholders from all sectors would come together, pooling resources, sharing knowledge, and crafting innovative solutions to navigate the post-pandemic landscape.

The emphasis on authentic branding also emerged as a salient theme. Participants recognised that in a world where travel choices are abundant, what sets a destination apart is its authenticity. For Cape Town, this means a branding strategy that not only showcases its picturesque landscapes and attractions but also tells its unique stories, celebrates its communities, and offers genuine experiences. By grounding its branding in authenticity, Cape Town can create deeper, more meaningful connections with tourists.

In conclusion, while the Cape Town co-creation workshop highlighted the undeniable challenges that lie ahead, it also illuminated the path forward. Bolstered by its intrinsic strengths, fuelled by the dedication of its stakeholders, and guided by a vision of authenticity, Cape Town stands poised to rise

from the adversities of the pandemic. Through concerted, collaborative efforts, there is every reason to believe that the city will once again shine brightly on the global tourism map, drawing visitors from around the world to its enchanting shores.

4.2.3 Johannesburg Workshop Key Emerging Themes

Backdrop: Johannesburg, the pulsating heart of South Africa's economy, offers a vibrant blend of culture, history, and urban sophistication. Yet, like many global cities, its tourism sector has been beleaguered by the pandemic's aftermath. Through a co-creation workshop, we dove into the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, seeking pathways for Johannesburg's post-pandemic revival.

4.2.3.1 The Lingering Shadows of the Pandemic

Covid-19, a global catastrophe, cast long shadows on almost every facet of human life, and Johannesburg was no exception. The discussions frequently circled back to the pandemic's aftermath. Participants recounted tales of once-bustling tourist spots now eerily quiet, businesses gasping for survival, and countless individuals grappling with unemployment. The tourism industry, which once thrived on international travellers and bustling local activities, felt stifled by the fear and restrictions the pandemic brought with it. Moreover, the health crisis also brought into sharp focus the city's vulnerabilities, be it in its healthcare infrastructure, socioeconomic disparities, or the sudden evaporation of business opportunities.

Depth of disruption: Johannesburg, often referred to as South Africa's pulsating economic heart, found its rhythm disrupted by the onslaught of the pandemic. The city, which seamlessly blends its rich historical tapestry with the buzz of a modern metropolis, faced a tourism setback of unparalleled proportions. As the pandemic unfurled its tentacles, Johannesburg's once-bustling streets, vibrant markets, and iconic sites like the Apartheid Museum and Gold Reef City experienced an uncharacteristic hush.

The immediate repercussions were clear: the steady stream of international business travellers, convention attendees, and tourists dwindled as borders snapped shut and flights were grounded. The O.R. Tambo International Airport, one of Africa's busiest, bore witness to this sudden halt, with grounded aircrafts and vacant terminals becoming symbolic of the pandemic's immediate chokehold on travel.

Yet, the pandemic's deeper, more insidious impacts were being felt across the city's intricate tourism ecosystem. Hotels that catered to business travellers saw precipitous drops in occupancy rates. Local attractions, from the bustling neighbourhood of Maboneng to the historic precinct of Newtown, felt the void left by absent tourists. Art galleries, theatres, and cultural hubs, which are integral to Johannesburg's identity, faced existential challenges as footfalls reduced to a trickle.

The unpredictability of the virus added to the complexity. With waves of infections, ever-evolving health guidelines, and the spectre of newer virus strains, planning for the future became akin to shooting in the dark. Businesses, unsure of when normalcy would return, were caught in a quandary: to continue operations in hope or to scale down in anticipation of prolonged downturns.

Furthermore, the psychological toll of the pandemic on the public was evident. Even as restrictions were intermittently lifted, a palpable sense of caution pervaded. The city's residents, many of whom faced economic hardships due to the pandemic, became cautious spenders, further impacting local businesses. The challenge for Johannesburg's tourism sector was not only about navigating operational hurdles but also about addressing these deep-seated anxieties and fears.

In essence, while Johannesburg's immediate challenges in the face of the pandemic were stark, the ripple effects were profound, altering the very fabric of its tourism landscape. The city, known for its resilience and dynamism, now faced the herculean task of revitalising its tourism sector amidst these unparalleled challenges.

Stakeholder insights: The Johannesburg workshop served as a crucible for in-depth deliberations, with participants from varied sectors of the tourism industry coming together to dissect the challenges and chart potential pathways forward. Their insights illuminated the depths of the disruptions caused by the pandemic and painted a vivid picture of its multifaceted impacts on Johannesburg's tourism landscape.

A recurring theme that emerged from the discussions was the dramatic shift in traveller expectations and behaviours. The once carefree traveller, who sought adventure and spontaneity, had transformed into a cautious planner, with health and safety considerations taking centre stage. Many participants emphasised that while Johannesburg had previously marketed its vibrant nightlife, buzzing markets, and lively festivals as major draws, these very attributes had become sources of concern. The city's bustling clubs, bars, and event venues, which once echoed with music, laughter, and camaraderie, were now viewed through the lens of potential health risks.

This change in perception was not limited to nightlife alone. Stakeholders from the hospitality sector shared anecdotes of travellers inquiring extensively about sanitisation protocols, room ventilation, and staff health checks before even considering a booking. The spontaneity that often characterised travel seemed to have been replaced with meticulous planning and a heightened need for reassurance.

Furthermore, the discussions also touched upon the broader global context. Many participants voiced concerns about international travel advisories that painted a broad-brush cautionary picture, often not considering the nuanced differences between regions or cities. These advisories, while well-intentioned, had the inadvertent effect of amplifying hesitancy among potential international tourists. Johannesburg, with its cosmopolitan appeal and status as a gateway to South Africa, felt this pinch acutely. The decline in international arrivals, crucial for the city's tourism revenue, was a testament to these challenges.

Moreover, concerns were raised about the long-term reputational impacts of these advisories. Would Johannesburg, once seen as a must-visit hub of culture, history, and commerce, now be relegated to the backburner in global travel plans? The very essence of what made the city attractive – its energy, its people, and its myriad experiences – was now under scrutiny.

In wrapping up this segment of discussions, a consensus emerged among participants: the path to recovery would necessitate not just operational changes but also strategic shifts in branding and communication. The challenge was not just to adapt to the new normal but to reshape perceptions, ensuring that Johannesburg's essence remained undimmed in the eyes of the global traveller.

Adapting to the new normal: The pandemic's onset brought with it a paradigm shift in the way people perceived and engaged with travel, necessitating a transformation in how destinations, including Johannesburg, presented themselves. The workshop discussions illuminated the nuances of these shifts and underscored the importance of adapting swiftly to meet the evolving demands of the contemporary traveller.

Participants highlighted the increasing importance travellers were placing on sanitised accommodations. Beyond the standard cleaning practices, there was an expectation for establishments to adopt rigorous sanitisation protocols, ranging from deep-cleaning rooms to ensuring common areas like lobbies, dining spaces, and recreational zones were frequently

disinfected. Stakeholders from the hotel industry shared insights into the heightened demand for transparency in these processes. Travellers wanted to know not just that the places were clean, but how they were cleaned. Demonstrations through videos, certifications, and guest testimonials were proposed as effective ways to instil confidence.

The discussions also emphasised the rising demand for contactless services. From touchless check-ins and digital room access to contact-free dining options, the shift was evident. The digital transformation, already underway in many sectors, seemed to have been accelerated by the pandemic in the realm of tourism. The integration of technology was no longer just a luxury or an added feature; it had become a vital component of the guest experience. Participants discussed the potential of apps that could handle everything from bookings to room service orders, all while minimising human contact.

Additionally, the concept of curated travel experiences took centre stage. With the pandemic making large group activities less appealing, there was a notable surge in demand for personalised, smaller group engagements. Participants spoke of curated city tours, private art gallery viewings, and bespoke cultural experiences that allowed tourists to immerse themselves in Johannesburg's richness while maintaining a safety buffer. These curated experiences, they felt, offered dual benefits – they met safety criteria while also providing a more intimate and authentic connection to the city's essence.

In conclusion, as Johannesburg navigates the intricacies of the post-pandemic travel landscape, the focus is evident: creating a balanced synergy between safety and experience. The discussions during the workshop reinforced the idea that while the pandemic posed challenges, it also presented opportunities to reshape and refine the city's tourism offerings, ensuring they resonate with the demands of the new normal.

4.2.3.2 Safety Concerns

Johannesburg, despite its myriad attractions, has often been on the receiving end of safety concerns, both from domestic and international tourists. The workshop saw this topic being fervently discussed. Participants reflected on how, in addition to the existing challenges, the pandemic-induced economic downturn might further exacerbate crime rates. The city's brand perception as an economic hub often clashes with its reputation regarding safety, a dichotomy that the participants felt needed to be addressed earnestly.

Perennial challenges: Johannesburg, the pulsating heart of South Africa, has always been a city of contrasts. With its rich history, cultural melting pot, and dynamic economic landscape, it stands as a testament to the nation's resilience and aspirations. However, beneath the city's vibrant façade, certain challenges have persistently impeded its full realisation as a premier tourist destination, with safety concerns being paramount among them.

Long before the world had ever heard of Covid-19, Johannesburg's reputation was often tarnished by concerns related to personal safety and crime. Reports of muggings, pickpocketing, and more severe criminal activities made headlines, creating a sense of apprehension among potential tourists. For many, the narrative of Johannesburg as a city of opportunity was overshadowed by its portrayal as a city of risks.

Participants, many of whom had deep roots in the city, expressed their frustrations over these perceptions. While they acknowledged the undeniable reality of certain safety issues, they also emphasised that these challenges weren't unique to Johannesburg alone. Like any major global city, Johannesburg has its safe havens and its problematic areas. However, the generalisation of the entire city as unsafe was seen as an unfair representation, often stemming from isolated incidents rather than a pervasive reality.

Moreover, the discussions delved into the origins of these safety concerns. Many participants pointed to socioeconomic disparities, unemployment, and historical factors as contributing elements. They emphasised that while addressing safety on a superficial level – like increasing police presence or improving surveillance – might yield short-term results, the long-term solution lay in addressing these root causes.

The tourism and hospitality sectors, they noted, played a crucial role in this. By driving tourism, creating jobs, and fostering community engagement, the industry could serve as a catalyst for positive change. Local community initiatives, where residents are actively involved in tourism activities – be it through guided tours, cultural exchanges, or artisanal showcases – could serve a dual purpose. They could provide authentic experiences for tourists while also empowering communities, reducing crime driven by economic need.

Furthermore, participants discussed proactive measures that could be implemented to reassure tourists. Enhanced security in popular tourist areas, collaboration between businesses to share best practices on safety, and transparency in communicating safety measures were some of the strategies discussed.

In essence, while safety concerns have historically been a hurdle for Johannesburg's tourism, the collective will of its stakeholders, combined with strategic initiatives, holds the promise of reshaping this narrative. The city's potential is vast, and with concerted efforts, its image can transition from a place of caution to one of celebration.

Voices of concern: The vibrancy of Johannesburg, with its rich cultural tapestry and historical landmarks, has long beckoned travellers from across the globe. Yet, as the workshop discussions unfolded, it became clear that the city's allure was often eclipsed by pervasive concerns about safety. The participants, representing a diverse cross-section of stakeholders from the tourism industry to residents, shed light on the tangible impact of these concerns on the city's tourism potential.

Many expressed their frustrations, recounting anecdotes of potential tourists choosing alternative destinations due to fears of crime in Johannesburg. These were not just isolated incidents; they painted a picture of a consistent pattern where the city's reputation for crime deterred would-be visitors. For local businesses, especially those reliant on tourist footfall, this posed significant challenges. Reduced visitor numbers translated to lost revenue, job cuts, and in some cases, businesses shutting their doors.

But beyond the economic implications, there was a sense of sadness among participants. Many felt that the narrative around Johannesburg was unfairly skewed, focusing disproportionately on its challenges rather than its numerous offerings. They spoke passionately about the city's music scene, its art galleries, the buzzing markets, and the warmth of its people – all facets that often got overshadowed by the looming shadow of safety concerns.

However, the discussions were not just cantered on voicing concerns; they were also about seeking solutions. There was a unanimous agreement on the need for proactive measures to bolster safety, especially in areas frequented by tourists. Participants discussed the possibility of increased police patrols, better-lit streets, and community watch groups. The idea of creating "safe zones" – areas with

heightened security measures, where tourists could explore with a reduced sense of apprehension – was also floated.

Additionally, many emphasised the importance of collaboration. This included businesses banding together to share resources for security, liaising with law enforcement agencies for regular updates, and even partnering with technology companies to explore innovations like surveillance drones or security apps tailored for tourists.

In essence, while the voices of concern were loud and clear, they were also imbued with a sense of determination. The collective sentiment was that, with strategic interventions and a unified front, Johannesburg could tackle its safety challenges head-on, paving the way for the city to realise its full potential as a tourism powerhouse.

4.2.3.3 Economic Impacts and Unemployment

The city, with its skyscrapers and bustling business districts, stands as a testament to South Africa's commercial aspirations. Participants, especially those from the tourism industry, emphasised the city's potential as a business tourism hub, tapping into its image of dynamism and opportunity.

Financial fallout: Johannesburg, often hailed as the economic heartbeat of South Africa, experienced a seismic disruption due to the pandemic. The city, which had been a bustling hub of commerce, culture, and tourism, suddenly found itself grappling with an unforeseen economic downturn. As participants recounted their experiences, a vivid picture emerged of the scale and depth of this financial fallout.

Many businesses, especially those in the tourism and hospitality sectors, faced unprecedented challenges. Hotels that were once fully booked months in advance now grappled with alarming vacancy rates. Tour operators, who had meticulously curated experiences for international tourists, were faced with cancellations and a dearth of new bookings. Restaurants, cafes, and entertainment venues, which contributed to the city's vibrant nightlife, witnessed a drastic drop in footfall. The repercussions were not just limited to lost revenue; many establishments were forced to make difficult decisions, which included staff layoffs, salary cuts, and in some unfortunate cases, permanent closures.

The ripple effect of these business disruptions was palpably felt in the job market. Johannesburg, already battling pre-pandemic unemployment concerns, saw these figures soar. The tourism sector, which had been a significant employer, particularly for the city's youth, was now haemorrhaging jobs at an alarming rate. Many workshop participants, representing both employers and employees, spoke of the personal toll this took. Stories of long-serving staff being let go, young professionals unable to find their first job, and families grappling with the loss of income painted a sombre picture.

Yet, amidst these challenges, the discussions also highlighted the resilience and adaptability of Johannesburg's business community. Many spoke of innovative strategies they had employed to stay afloat. This ranged from pivoting to local tourism, offering staycation packages, reconfiguring dining spaces to cater to social distancing norms, and even venturing into entirely new business avenues like producing sanitisation products or offering virtual experiences.

Furthermore, there was a strong emphasis on collaboration. Businesses were exploring synergies, pooling resources, and forming partnerships to weather the storm. There was a call for greater support from both local and national government bodies, be it in the form of financial aid, tax breaks, or relaxed regulations to spur business growth.

In summary, while the financial fallout from the pandemic was undeniably severe, the discussions during the workshop showcased both the challenges faced and the indomitable spirit of Johannesburg's business community. There was a collective resolve to not just survive but to rebuild and thrive in the post-pandemic world.

Ground realities: The repercussions of the pandemic were not just statistical figures or economic projections; they were deeply personal and felt at the grassroots level by those who had invested their heart and soul into Johannesburg's tourism industry. As entrepreneurs and business owners took the floor during the workshop, their stories provided a poignant insight into the ground realities of the crisis.

Dwindling revenues were not just about lost profits; they translated into challenges that spanned multiple dimensions of business operations. Entrepreneurs spoke of the heartbreak of scaling down their ventures, which they had painstakingly built over the years. Many recounted the difficult conversations they had to have with their staff, some of whom had been with them since the inception of their businesses. The challenge was not just about managing finances but about upholding the morale of their teams amid uncertainty.

Retaining employees emerged as a significant concern. With revenues plummeting, many businesses faced the unenviable task of either laying off staff or implementing severe salary cuts. These decisions were not made lightly. For many business owners, their employees were akin to family, and these measures took a significant emotional toll on both employers and the affected staff.

Johannesburg's iconic hubs, which had been the lifeblood of its tourism and cultural sectors, felt the impact acutely. Areas like Maboneng, celebrated for a vibrant mix of art galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, were now shadows of their former selves. Entrepreneurs from these areas shared tales of empty streets, closed storefronts, and an eerie silence that replaced the once-bustling ambiance. These hubs, which had been platforms for local artists, culinary talents, and innovative startups, were now grappling with existential challenges.

Yet, amidst these stories of struggle, there were also tales of resilience. Business owners spoke of how they innovated to stay afloat – be it by pivoting to different business models, leveraging online platforms, or tapping into new customer segments. Many emphasised the importance of community support, highlighting initiatives where residents patronised businesses to keep them running. There was a sense of camaraderie, a shared understanding that while times were tough, the spirit of Johannesburg's entrepreneurial community was tougher.

In essence, the workshop painted a multifaceted picture of the challenges faced by Johannesburg's tourism sector. It underscored the human element behind the economic numbers, emphasising the tenacity, adaptability, and collective will of the city's business community to navigate the storm.

Stimulus strategies: As the workshop transitioned to solutions-oriented discussions, the gravity of Johannesburg's economic challenges became a focal point. With businesses reeling from the pandemic's impact and unemployment rates soaring, there was a pressing need for effective and immediate interventions. Participants, a mosaic of business owners, industry experts, and stakeholders, engaged in dynamic discussions, brainstorming strategies to provide the much-needed economic impetus to the city's beleaguered tourism sector.

The foremost call from many was for tangible economic relief measures. The pandemic's sudden onset meant that many businesses, especially smaller enterprises, were caught off guard, lacking the financial reserves to weather the storm. Hence, the demand for grants was pronounced. These grants,

participants felt, could provide immediate liquidity, helping businesses cover essential expenses like rent, salaries, and utilities without further indebting them.

Alongside outright grants, the idea of soft loans or low-interest loans also gained traction. Such loans, tailored with flexible repayment terms and grace periods, could provide businesses the financial breathing room they desperately needed. Moreover, they would ensure a continuous flow of capital, enabling businesses to invest in innovations, expansions, or revamps that could make them more resilient in the face of future crises.

Tax reliefs, both immediate and staggered over the next fiscal years, were another proposition. By reducing the tax burden, the government could ensure that businesses retained a larger share of their revenues, which could then be reinvested into operations, expansions, or even into employee welfare initiatives.

However, beyond these immediate financial measures, there was also a broader discussion about the structural changes needed to rejuvenate Johannesburg's tourism landscape. This is where the potential of public-private partnerships (PPPs) came to the fore. Participants envisioned a model where businesses, both big and small, could collaborate with governmental agencies to co-create tourism initiatives. These initiatives could range from marketing campaigns showcasing Johannesburg's diverse attractions to infrastructure projects enhancing the city's tourist-friendly amenities. PPPs, many felt, could combine the agility and innovation of the private sector with the scale and reach of governmental agencies, creating a synergy that could fast-track the city's tourism revival.

Additionally, participants emphasised the need for continuous dialogue between the government and the private sector. Regular feedback loops, they believed, would ensure that policies and relief measures were always in tune with the ground realities, evolving as the situation demanded.

In essence, the strategies discussions highlighted a collective resolve to not just weather the pandemic's economic storm but to emerge from it stronger and more resilient. The emphasis was on collaborative efforts, leveraging both public and private sector strengths, to chart a sustainable and prosperous path forward for Johannesburg's tourism industry.

4.2.3.4 Johannesburg's Branding Potential

4.2.3.4.1 *Diversity in activities*

Johannesburg's multifaceted appeal became evident during the workshop, which spotlighted the city's expansive range of activities and attractions. Its rich cultural fabric, epitomised by neighbourhoods like Maboneng and Braamfontein, is complemented by its musical pulse, with numerous venues and festivals celebrating genres from jazz to kwaito and a South African hub for hip hop. Furthermore, Johannesburg's luxurious casinos and gaming hubs cater to those seeking the thrill of gambling, adding another dimension to the city's entertainment offerings. The city's historical landmarks, serving as poignant reminders of South Africa's tumultuous past, further enrich its tourist appeal. Participants were fervent in their belief that this diversity, from music and gaming to history and culture, should be harnessed to sculpt a comprehensive and captivating brand image for Johannesburg.

Music tourism and vibrant soundscape: Johannesburg has carved out a distinctive niche in the world of music tourism. The city's soundscape is dominated by the beats and rhymes of a flourishing hip hop community. This genre, once an underground movement, has now exploded into the mainstream, championed by a passionate new generation of artists who draw inspiration from Jozi's vibrant streets and rich history. This musical renaissance has placed Johannesburg on the global map, turning it into a magnet for music aficionados from different corners of the world.

Prominent festivals, such as Ultra, epitomise this transformation. These events, which are attended by thousands, serve as platforms where international electronic music maestros converge with local luminaries, creating a melting pot of sounds and styles. But it is not just the grand festivals that capture the essence of Johannesburg's musical spirit. Dive a little deeper, and you will discover a network of underground hip hop bars, intimate venues, and bustling street performances that echo the city's diverse musical heritage and contemporary innovations.

Moreover, the intertwining of Johannesburg's music scene with its cultural tapestry offers a unique proposition for tourists. Visitors are not just passive listeners; they embark on immersive auditory journeys, exploring narratives of the city's past, its aspirations, challenges, and triumphs, all articulated through powerful lyrics and compelling beats. In essence, music tourism in Johannesburg is more than just an entertainment facet; it is an experience that resonates with the soul, amplifying the city's multifaceted allure and reinforcing its position as a must-visit global musical destination.

Gambling destination: Beyond its cultural vibrancy, Johannesburg offers another facet of entertainment that attracts a distinct set of tourists: its world-class gambling destinations. These establishments, characterised by their luxurious settings, cutting-edge gaming facilities, and top-notch services, have made Johannesburg a premier destination for both casual and seasoned gamblers. A prime example is Sun City, a sprawling resort not far from Johannesburg, which offers not just gaming opportunities but a holistic entertainment experience. It is a haven that combines the thrill of slot machines and gaming tables with opulent accommodations, gourmet dining, and a range of recreational activities. Such destinations have augmented Johannesburg's appeal, catering to those seeking high-stakes excitement in an ambiance of sheer luxury. As these gambling hubs continue to evolve, offering more diverse entertainment options and integrating the rich local culture, they further solidify Johannesburg's reputation as a city where every visitor can find an activity tailored to their tastes.

Active nightlife: When the sun sets over Johannesburg, the city truly comes alive, revealing another dimension of its multifaceted personality. The night-time allure of Johannesburg is undeniable, with its eclectic mix of venues and events that cater to a broad spectrum of tastes and preferences. From the pulsating beats of hip hop clubs in Braamfontein to the elegant jazz lounges echoing with soulful tunes, the city offers a musical journey that is as diverse as its population. Rooftop bars provide panoramic views of the city's skyline, where locals and tourists mingle, sharing stories under the African night sky. Trendy districts like Maboneng come alive with a youthful vibrancy, offering everything from avant-garde art events to gastronomic delights in chic restaurants. And for those seeking a more theatrical experience, the city's playhouses and theatres showcase world-class performances, reflecting both local and international narratives. Johannesburg's active nightlife isn't just a testament to its desire to entertain; it's a reflection of the city's enduring spirit, its passion, and its ceaseless energy. For travellers, this means every night in Johannesburg promises a new adventure, a new story, and a new memory to cherish.

4.2.3.4.2 Vibrant city experiences

Johannesburg, colloquially known as 'Jozi', is not just a city; it is an experience. Its vibrant nightlife, eclectic mix of cultures, art galleries, theatres, and music festivals make it a melting pot of experiences. The participants felt that this vibrancy needed to be the cornerstone of any branding initiative, capturing the essence of what it feels like to be in the heart of Jozi.

Amid challenges, the workshop was a testament to Johannesburg's enduring appeal and its potential to bounce back stronger.

City of Gold: Johannesburg, often referred to as the 'City of Gold', owes much of its urban genesis and economic dynamism to its gold mining heritage. This rich tapestry of history, interwoven with tales of fortune-seekers, mining magnates, and the transformative power of the precious metal, has left an indelible mark on the city's character and landscape. Participants fervently explored the potential of this golden legacy as a cornerstone for tourism. Envisioned were immersive mine tours that plunge visitors into the depths of the earth, letting them experience first-hand the conditions of yesteryear miners and the thrill of striking gold. Beyond the underground adventures, the city could host gold-themed events, from exhibitions showcasing the evolution of gold mining techniques to festivals celebrating the cultural significance of gold in South African society. There is also potential for curated routes, linking historical sites, museums, and artisanal workshops where visitors can witness the art of goldsmithing. By capitalising on this rich history and crafting authentic experiences around it, Johannesburg can offer tourists a golden journey, blending education, adventure, and a deep connection to the city's roots.

Cultural tapestry: Johannesburg's cultural fabric is as diverse as it is vibrant, making it a city where every street corner, every sound, and every colour tells a story. The art galleries of the city are more than just exhibition spaces; they are windows into the soul of Johannesburg, capturing its history, its challenges, and its aspirations. From contemporary pieces that resonate with global themes to indigenous art that reflects South Africa's rich traditions, these galleries offer a visual feast for art enthusiasts. Besides the cultural allure of visual arts, the city pulsates to the rhythms of various music festivals that celebrate everything from indigenous African beats to international genres. These festivals serve as platforms where local talents shine alongside global stars, fostering a sense of unity and shared musical joy.

Participants emphasised the richness of this cultural dynamism and the opportunities it presents for tourism. They envisioned thematic tours that delve deep into Johannesburg's mosaic of cultures, traditions, and histories. Imagine walking tours that trace the evolution of local music, from the tribal drums to the contemporary hip hop beats, or guided visits to artisanal workshops where traditional crafts come alive. Culinary trails could be curated, introducing visitors to the myriad flavours of Johannesburg, each dish telling a tale of migration, fusion, and innovation. By weaving these

experiences together, Johannesburg can offer visitors a multilayered cultural journey, one that not only entertains but also educates and connects them to the very essence of the city.

Authentic storytelling: In an age where authenticity is prized, the true stories of a city resonate far more deeply than any glossy marketing campaign. Workshop participants fervently underscored this sentiment, pointing to Johannesburg's rich tapestry of tales that reflect its undying spirit, its multifaceted identity, and its relentless journey forward. The city, once primarily known for its gold mining legacy, has transformed over the years, and every facet of this metamorphosis carries a story worth telling.

Johannesburg's resilience is evident not just in its skyline but in the spirit of its people. From overcoming apartheid's dark shadow to tackling modern-day challenges, the narratives of perseverance and unity are both humbling and inspiring. Participants saw immense value in bringing forth stories of community initiatives where neighbourhoods have come together to foster education, arts, or even urban farming. Such tales not only showcase a community's self-reliance but also highlight the bonds that tie its members together.

Furthermore, the grassroots innovations emerging from Johannesburg's vibrant streets are testament to its ingenuity. Whether it is a local entrepreneur crafting sustainable solutions or artists using their craft to voice societal concerns, these stories are gold mines of authentic branding potential. The essence, participants believed, lies not in presenting an idealised image of Johannesburg but in capturing its raw, real, and radiant spirit. By integrating these genuine narratives into its branding, Johannesburg stands to offer visitors not just a trip, but an immersive journey into the heart and soul of a city that has faced challenges head-on and has emerged with stories that inspire, educate, and resonate.

4.2.3.5 Concluding Thoughts on Johannesburg's Workshop

The Johannesburg co-creation workshop served as a profound reflection of the city's multifaceted essence. The discussions underscored the challenges faced, but also illuminated the city's vast potential waiting to be harnessed. Participants, with their diverse backgrounds and experiences, brought forth a tapestry of ideas, strategies, and narratives that painted a hopeful picture for Johannesburg's future in tourism. The city, with its rich history, vibrant cultural scene, and relentless spirit, stands at a crossroads. While the shadows of the pandemic and perennial challenges loom large, the collective will of its stakeholders and their unwavering commitment to innovation and collaboration shine even brighter. The insights gleaned from this workshop not only lay the

groundwork for strategic interventions but also reiterate Johannesburg's potential to rise, adapt, and reclaim its place as a premier urban destination on the global tourism map. The journey ahead is undoubtedly filled with challenges, but with a roadmap informed by authentic voices and grounded insights, the path to resurgence appears not just possible, but promising. The insights from this workshop can serve as valuable signposts, guiding its trajectory from turbulence to triumph.

4.3 WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

4.3.1 Cape Town Workshop

The Cape Town workshop created an open dialogue for participants, including both residents and professionals from the tourism industry, to delve into the challenges and opportunities facing the city's tourism sector. The wide array of topics discussed revealed the complex realities of the industry, including operational difficulties, trust and reputation concerns, and challenges around funding and support. Participants also shared their perceptions of Cape Town's brand, highlighting the city's natural beauty, diverse activities, and unique experiences as its main attractions.

"The amount of activities you can do in the space of a day in Cape Town is literally unbelievable. You can go from one coast to another in a matter of an hour. There are hiking trails. There's obviously the Table Mountain cable car. There's a diverse, enormous amount of things you can do in a day, which I think is a very unique, I think, for a city." (Cape Town Stakeholder 9)

"People in Cape Town are very friendly to visitors and they're very welcoming and they always highlight that. And as someone also have travelled in different cities around the world, actually appreciated Cape Town and how tourists and visitors given like a very cool treatment. So it's really warm and friendly city when it comes to visitors as well." (Cape Town Stakeholder 4)

"Cape Town have the majestic Table Mountain. The beautiful white beaches. Fun loving people. And really good restaurants with different kinds of foods." (Cape Town Stakeholder 6)



Figure 4.5: Word cloud of emerging themes and codes of the Cape Town workshop

4.3.2 Johannesburg Workshop

The Johannesburg workshop echoed many sentiments shared in the Cape Town session, but with a unique focus influenced by the city's distinctive characteristics and broader national and global challenges. Participants discussed the lingering impacts of Covid-19 on tourism, safety issues, and unemployment, underscoring the multifaceted challenges the tourism industry faces. Participants' perceptions of Johannesburg's brand centred on its status as an economic hub, the diverse activities available, and the vibrant experiences the city offers.

"...if we put our branding out there as a money city, a big money city, unlimited job, unlimited, a money place, money that can only be good for all the tourism operators because you're going to get tourists coming in with that already programmed into their mind, money. So you're going to attract money, tourists, people with money to spend from all over the continent of Africa..."

(Johannesburg Stakeholder 2)

"Bru you can bring your family to Gold Reef... it's amazing. You can jol in so many spots at night... you can also make a day trip to Sun City... and if you want there's tons and tons of places and shows you can see in Joburg that you can't see in your city." (Johannesburg Stakeholder 2)

“My city is exciting and there are many social activities, you won't get bored and there are many places for you to visit. We are also working on lowering the crime. We have many historical and heritage sites that are worth visiting! We had two noble prize winners on one street! It's the place to be.” (Johannesburg Stakeholder 4)



Figure 4.6: Word cloud of emerging themes and codes of the Johannesburg workshop

4.3.3 Empathy Mapping for the Co-Creative City Branding Workshops

Empathy maps are a powerful tool for gaining insights into the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders. Originally used in user-centred design, empathy maps help teams develop deep, shared understanding and empathy for other people (Dam & Siang, 2019). In the context of co-creative city branding, empathy mapping serves as a method to understand the various stakeholders –residents, tourists, business owners, and officials – who are vital in shaping a city’s brand (Merrilees et al., 2012).

4.3.3.1 Core Components of an Empathy Map (Gray, Brown & Macanufo, 2010)

- **Think and feel:** Captures what participants are thinking and feeling.
- **Hear:** Illustrates what participants are hearing from others.
- **See:** Depicts what participants are observing in their environment.
- **Say and do:** Enumerates what participants are saying and doing.
- **Pain points:** Outlines the challenges and frustrations participants are experiencing.
- **Gains:** Defines the positive outcomes participants seek.

4.3.3.2 Methodology: Applying Workshop Data to Empathy Mapping

To construct the empathy map, the data from the co-creative city branding workshops conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg had to be analysed first. This data came in the form of a data sheet containing coded responses and insights, a chapter detailing the analysis and findings from the workshops (see 4.2), and transcripts of the workshop sessions (Houghton & Stevens, 2011).

By carefully analysing the transcripts, key phrases and comments that align with each component of the empathy map were identified (Gray, Brown & Macanufo, 2010). For instance, participants' comments about their concerns and hopes, as well as their observations about the city, were mapped onto the relevant sections of the empathy map. This allowed the creation of a visual representation of the stakeholders' perspectives and to better understand the complex interplay of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours that influence their engagement with the city brand (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).

This methodology integrates qualitative data with a design thinking tool, thus fostering a comprehensive and empathetic understanding of stakeholders' experiences and needs. It also provides a structured, visually intuitive framework that city branding teams can use to identify strategic opportunities and challenges (Houghton & Stevens, 2011).

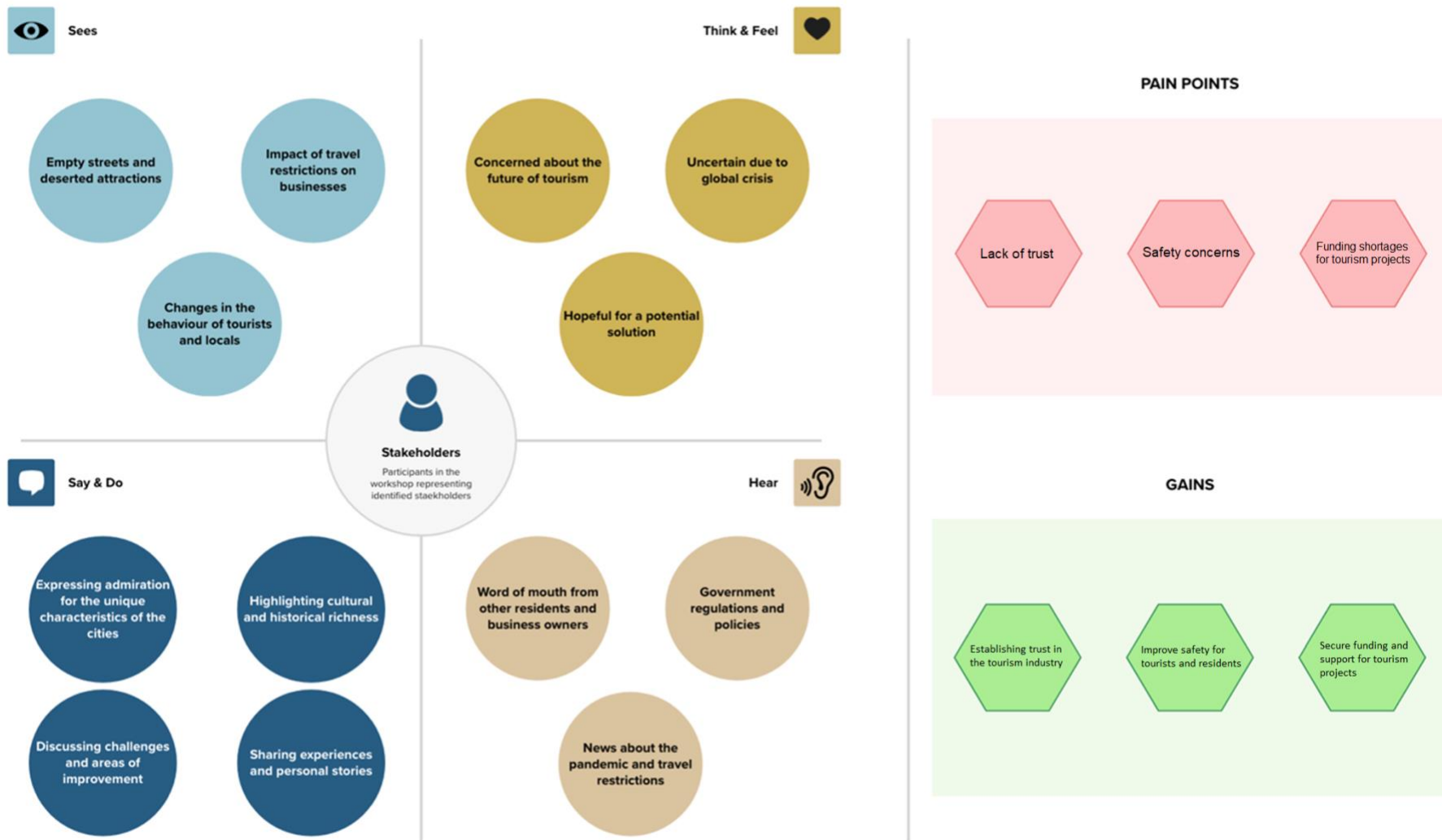


Figure 4.7: Stakeholder empathy map

Think and feel

Participants' emotional and psychological state during the workshop.

- **Concerned about the future of tourism:**
 - Due to the impact of the pandemic and the challenges facing the tourism industry, participants feel a deep concern about what the future holds for tourism in their cities.
- **Uncertain due to global crisis:**
 - The ongoing effects of the pandemic have left participants feeling uncertain about when and how tourism will recover.
- **Hopeful for a potential solution:**
 - Despite the challenges, participants are engaged in the workshops because they are hopeful that co-creation can lead to effective solutions.

Hear

Information and feedback participants are receiving from others based on their interactions during the workshops.

- **Word of mouth from other residents and business owners:**
 - Participants are actively listening to insights and suggestions from fellow residents or businessowners.
- **Government regulations and policies:**
 - Participants are hearing about new and existing government regulations that affect their operations and the broader tourism industry.
- **News about the pandemic and travel restrictions:**
 - Participants are constantly exposed to news updates about the pandemic, which are shaping their understanding and expectations.

See

Observations participants are making in their environment based on the themes and insights from the workshops.

- **Empty streets and deserted attractions:**
 - The tangible, visible decline in tourism is a stark reality that participants are observing in their cities.
- **Impact of travel restrictions on businesses:**
 - Participants are witnessing firsthand how travel restrictions have led to a decrease in business for hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related establishments.

- **Changes in the behaviour of tourists and locals:**

- Participants note that the few tourists who do visit are behaving differently, as are residents, due to health and safety concerns.

Say and do

Actions and statements of participants based on their verbatim quotes and actions during the workshops, extrapolated and summarised as follows.

- **Expressing admiration for the unique characteristics of the cities:**

- "Cape Town has this amazing blend of nature and urban life. From Table Mountain to the vibrant streets of the city centre..."
- "Johannesburg is like the heartbeat of South Africa's economy. It's bustling, and there's an energy you can't find anywhere else."

- **Highlighting cultural and historical richness:**

- "Both cities have such a rich tapestry of history and culture. It's like every street has a story to tell..."
- "The diversity is what makes these cities so special. From the arts and music scenes to the culinary delights, there's something for everyone."

- **Discussing challenges and areas of improvement:**

- "While there's so much to love, there are challenges too. Infrastructure, safety concerns, and economic disparities are realities we can't ignore..."
- "The potential is immense, but we need to address the pressing issues to truly make these cities global brands."

- **Sharing experiences and personal stories:**

- "I remember my first visit to the V&A Waterfront. The vibe, the people, the setting... it was magical."
- "Maboneng in Johannesburg is such a testament to urban regeneration. From dilapidated buildings to this hub of creativity and entrepreneurship."

Pain points

Challenges and frustrations participants are experiencing based on the themes and insights identified.

- **Lack of trust:**

- Participants express that there is a significant lack of trust between various stakeholders.

- **Safety concerns:**
 - Safety for both tourists and residents is a recurring concern, especially in the context of crime and health.
- **Funding shortages for tourism projects:**
 - A critical issue raised was the lack of funding available for tourism projects, which is exacerbating the challenges faced due to the pandemic.

Gain

Positive outcomes participants want to achieve based on the themes and insights identified.

- **Establish trust in the tourism industry**
 - Participants are keen to rebuild trust among stakeholders and with the public, which they see as foundational for the industry's recovery.
- **Improve safety for tourists and residents:**
 - A key desired outcome is the establishment of the cities as safe destinations for both residents and visitors.
- **Secure funding and support for tourism projects:**
 - Participants express a strong desire for financial and institutional support to help revitalise the tourism sector.

This empathy map provides a comprehensive and nuanced picture of the participants' realities, synthesising insights from the workshop outputs. It aims to reflect not just what participants are saying, but also what they might be thinking, feeling, seeing, and experiencing, thereby offering a deep, empathetic understanding of their perspectives.

4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: DECODING THE BRANDING POTENTIAL

The thematic analysis of the data from the workshops revealed three main themes relevant to city branding: the challenges of branding cities, the stakeholders that should be involved, and the strategies for successful implementation of city branding.

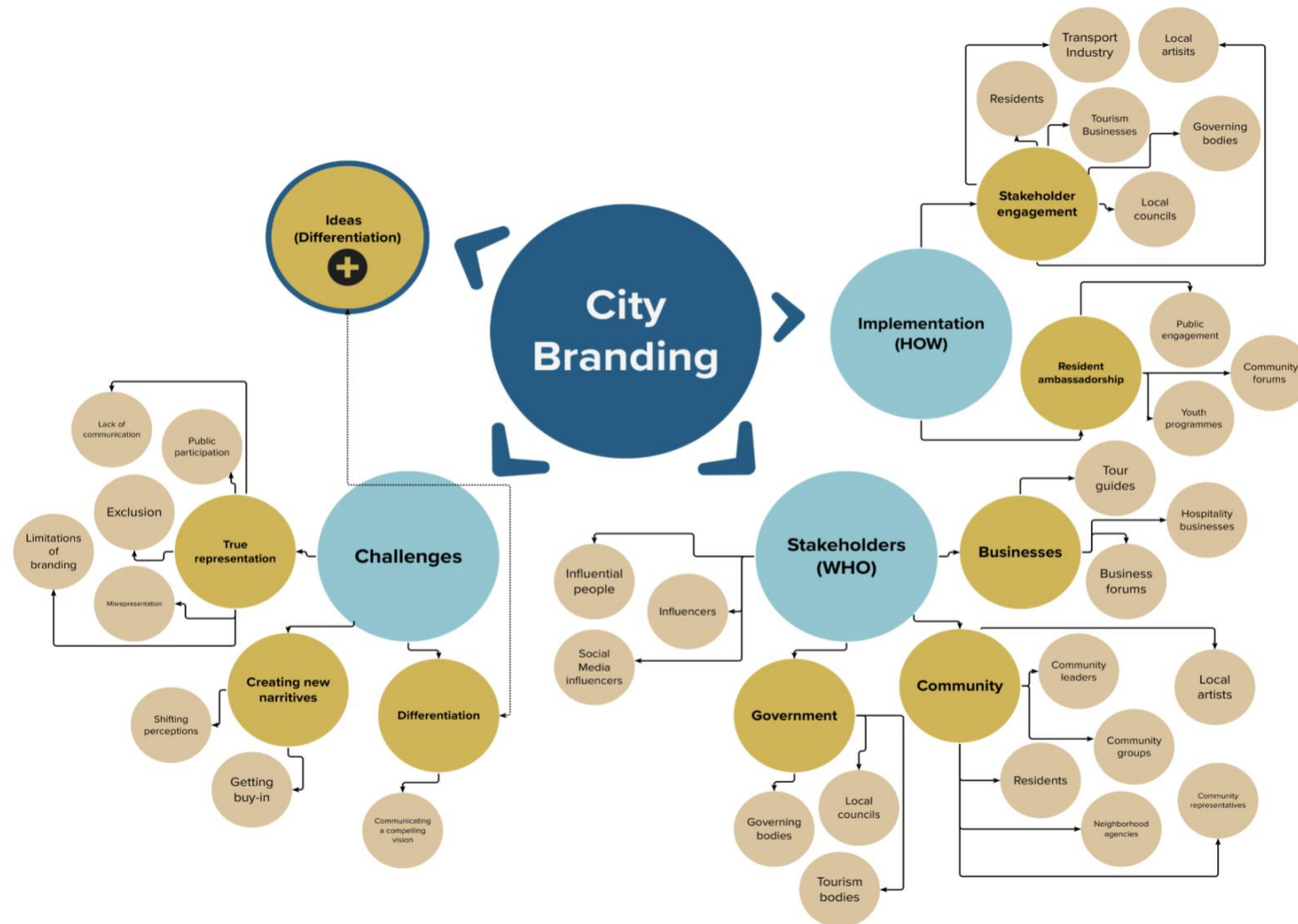


Figure 4.8: Qualitative themes and codes emerged from the two co-creation workshops.

4.4.1 Challenges of City Branding

City branding involves a complex interplay of various elements, and the stakeholders participating in the workshops identified several challenges to this process. The main challenges discussed were representation of the city, differentiation from other cities, and creating new narratives for the cities.

4.4.2 The Representation of the Cities

Participants emphasised the need for an authentic and genuine representation of the cities in the branding process. They acknowledged the unique characteristics of Cape Town and Johannesburg, including their cultural heritage, diversity, and vibrant energy. Participants stressed the importance of avoiding stereotypical narratives and instead presenting a comprehensive image that captures both the appealing and challenging aspects of the cities.

4.4.3 Differentiation of the Cities from Others

Participants recognised the intense competition among cities worldwide in attracting tourists, business opportunities, and talent. They discussed strategies for setting Cape Town and Johannesburg apart from other cities by emphasising their unique qualities and advantages. Participants acknowledged that achieving differentiation requires a delicate balance between highlighting shared qualities and emphasising the unique selling points of each city.

4.4.4 Creating New Narratives for the Cities

Participants agreed on the need for new, compelling narratives that challenge existing perceptions and attract diverse audiences. They discussed the importance of shifting away from ingrained myths and negative stereotypes associated with the cities and the continent, such as the association with high crime rates and past inequalities.

4.4.5 Stakeholders in City Branding

Participants identified various key stakeholders that need to be involved in the city branding process. These include government entities like local councils and tourism bodies, community members including residents and local leaders, and businesses such as hospitality enterprises, tour operators, and the transport sector. Participants underscored the importance of including these stakeholders to ensure the brand authentically represents the aspirations, values, and unique qualities of the city.

4.4.6 Successful Implementation of City Branding

For successful city brand implementation, participants highlighted two critical elements: stakeholder engagement and resident ambassadorship. They emphasised the need for involving a diverse range

of stakeholders in the branding process and empowering residents to become ambassadors for their city. They believed that this inclusivity and collaboration would result in a brand that is more authentic, relatable, and effectively communicated.

4.5 CITY BRAND FEEDBACK AND KEY THEMES

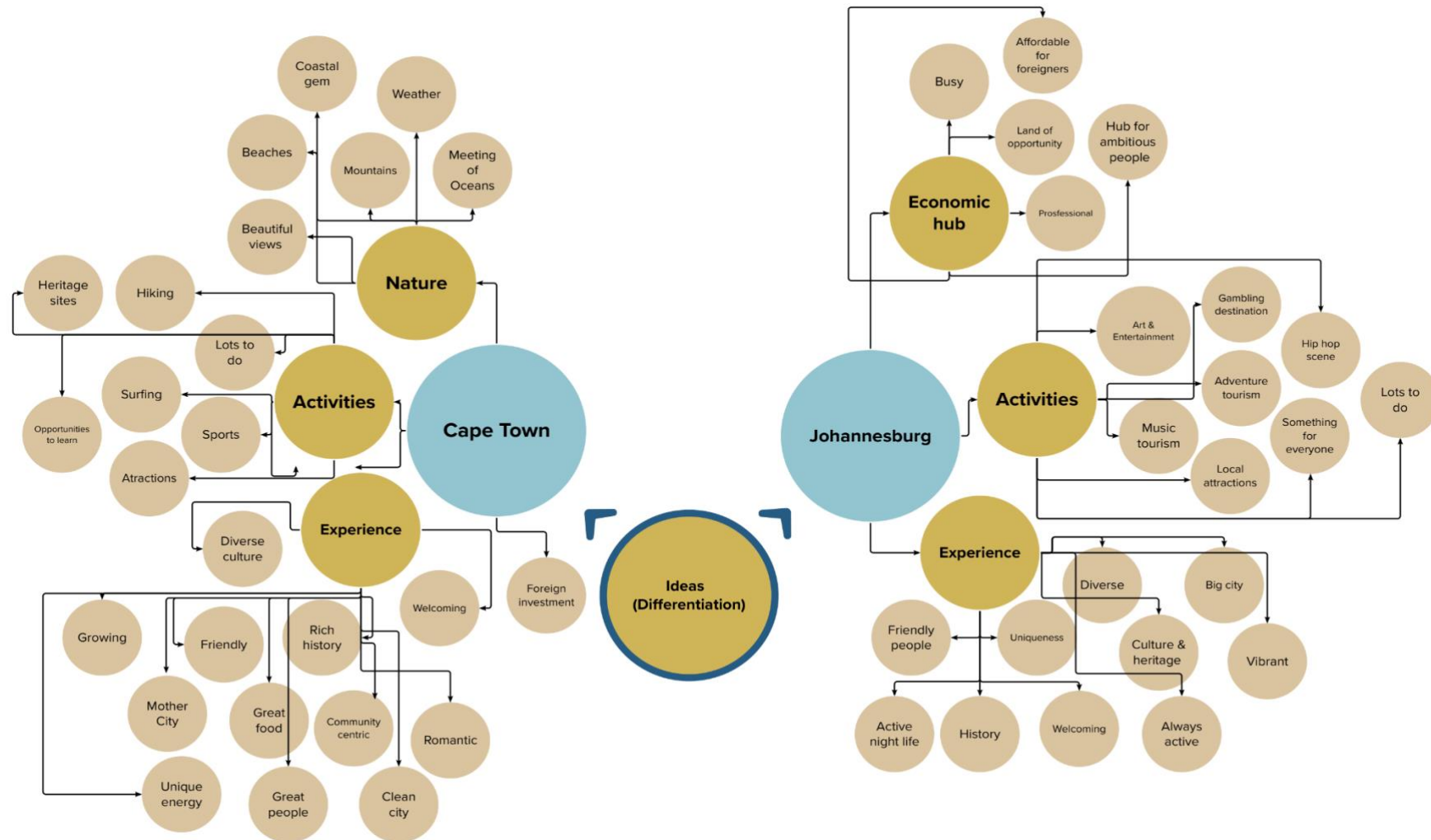


Figure 4.9: Ideas for the differentiation of the city brands of Johannesburg and Cape Town.

4.5.1 Cape Town

From a city branding perspective, the key themes identified include nature, activities, experience, and opportunities for foreign investment. Participants celebrated Cape Town's natural beauty, its breathtaking landscapes, and favourable weather. They also highlighted the diversity of activities available, from sports and hiking to visiting heritage sites and learning about the city's diverse culture. Participants described Cape Town as a welcoming city with a friendly atmosphere, diverse food culture, unique energy, and opportunities for foreign investment.

4.5.2 Johannesburg

The key themes identified for Johannesburg include its status as an economic hub, the range of activities available, and the city's vibrant experiences. Participants acknowledged Johannesburg as a land of opportunity, attracting ambitious people and serving as a bustling business and professional centre. They noted the city's thriving art and entertainment scene, vibrant music tourism, and attractions that cater to a wide range of interests. Participants described Johannesburg as a friendly and diverse city with a vibrant nightlife, adding to its allure as a dynamic urban destination.

4.5.3 Aaker's Brand Personality Model Application

Aaker's brand personality model, developed by Jennifer Aaker in 1997, is a framework that helps to understand and describe the personality of a brand in human terms. The model is grounded in the belief that just as humans have personality traits that define their behaviour and distinguish them from others, brands can have similar traits that differentiate them in the marketplace (see 2.4.2). Aaker identified five core dimensions, each divided into a set of specific facets. These dimensions help to systematically categorise and articulate the personality traits of a brand:

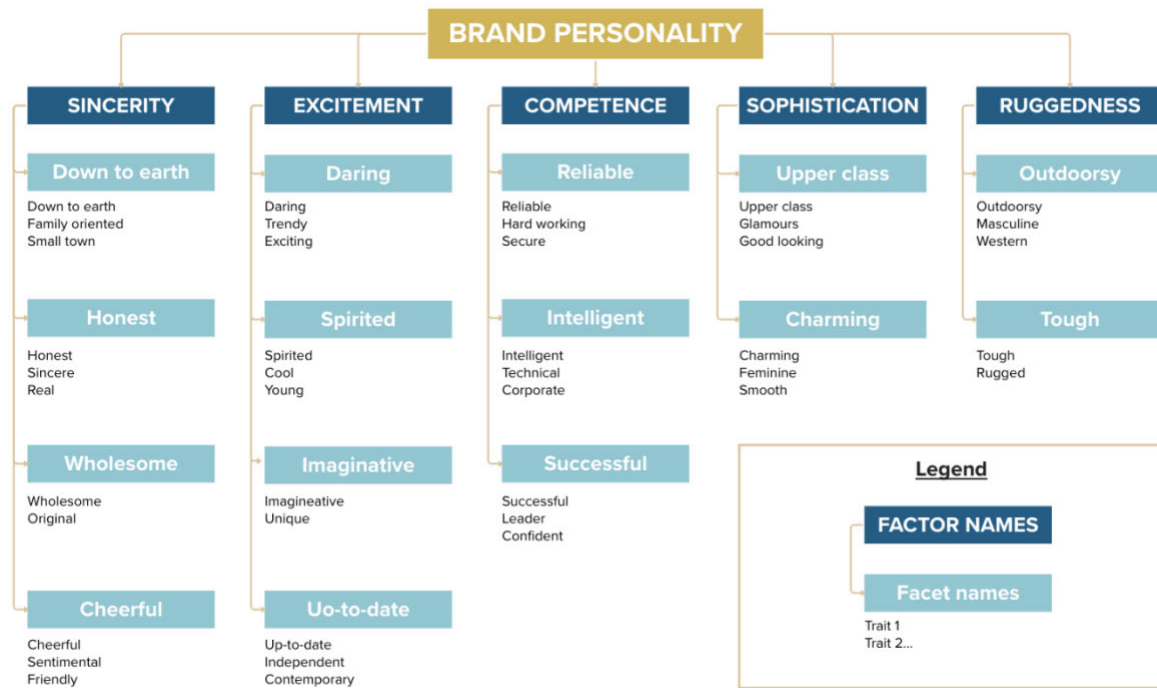


Figure 4.10: Aaker's brand personality model

Sincerity: Brands that are perceived as genuine, down-to-earth, and wholesome.

Facets: Down-to-earth, Honest, Wholesome, Cheerful

Excitement: Brands that are perceived as daring, spirited, imaginative, and up to date.

Facets: Daring, Spirited, Imaginative, Up to date

Competence: Brands that are perceived as reliable, intelligent, and successful.

Facets: Reliable, Intelligent, Successful

Sophistication: Brands that are perceived as upper class and charming.

Facets: Upper class, Charming

Ruggedness: Brands that are perceived as outdoorsy and tough.

Facets: Outdoorsy, Tough

Aaker's model provides a structured way to analyse and develop the personality of a brand, which can influence consumers' decisions and attitudes towards that brand (Aaker, 1997).

4.5.3.1 Mapping Cape Town's Identified Descriptors to Aaker's Model



Figure 4.11: Word cloud of Cape Town's identified descriptors

- **Sincerity:**
 - Great people (Facet: Down-to-earth, Honest)
 - Mother city (Facet: Wholesome)
- **Excitement:**
 - Two oceans, Nature, Romantic (Facet: Spirited, Imaginative)
- **Competence:**
 - Growing (Facet: Successful)
- **Sophistication:**
 - Romantic, Beautiful (Facet: Charming)
- **Ruggedness:**
 - Nature, weather (Facet: Outdoorsy)

4.5.3.2 Mapping Johannesburg's Identified Descriptors to Aaker's Model



Figure 4.12: Word cloud of Johannesburg's identified descriptors

- **Sincerity:**
 - Friendly, Welcoming (Facet: Down-to-earth, Honest)

- **Excitement:**
 - Vibrant, Art and Entertainment, Always Active (Facet: Spirited, Imaginative, Up to date)
- **Competence:**
 - Professional, Hub for Ambitious People (Facet: Reliable, Successful)
- **Sophistication:**
 - Vibrant (Facet: Charming)

Below is a visual representation for both Cape Town and Johannesburg to illustrate where each city would fall on Aaker's brand personality model based on these descriptors:

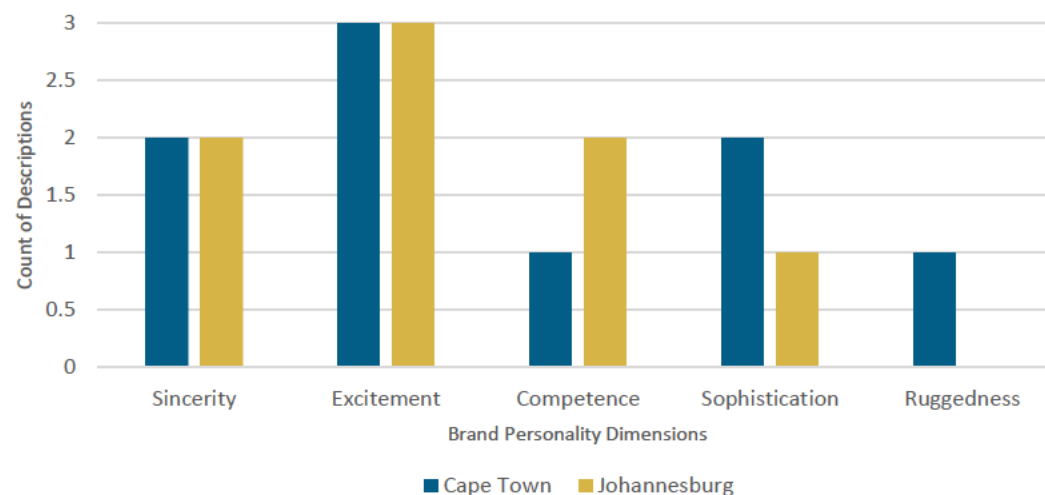


Figure 4.13: Aaker's brand personality model for Cape Town and Johannesburg

The bar chart above visualises how Cape Town and Johannesburg are positioned on Aaker's brand personality model based on the descriptors provided. Each bar represents the count of descriptors that were mapped to each of the five dimensions of Aaker's model for the respective cities. The following are insights and positioning for each city:

Insights and positioning

Cape Town

- Cape Town strongly aligns with the **Excitement** dimension, as depicted by descriptors like "Two Oceans," "Nature," and "Romantic", which evoke a spirited and imaginative personality.

- The city also resonates with **Sincerity** and **Sophistication**, with descriptors like "Great People" and "Mother City" reflecting a wholesome and down-to-earth personality, and "Romantic" and "Beautiful" indicating a charming and sophisticated vibe.
- The descriptor "Growing" positions Cape Town in the **Competence** dimension, suggesting a sense of success and reliability.
- The descriptor "Nature" aligns with the **Ruggedness** dimension, indicating an outdoorsy character.

Johannesburg

- Johannesburg, similar to Cape Town, prominently falls under the **Excitement** dimension. Descriptors like "Vibrant", "Art and Entertainment," and "Always Active" depict a spirited, imaginative, and lively personality.
- The city is perceived as **Competent** through descriptors like "Professional" and "Hub for Ambitious People", indicating reliability and success.
- "Friendly" and "Welcoming" map to the **Sincerity** dimension, suggesting a down-to-earth and honest personality.
- The descriptor "Vibrant" aligns Johannesburg with the **Sophistication** dimension, indicating a charming personality.

This visualisation and analysis allow us to compare the brand personalities of Cape Town and Johannesburg systematically. While both cities are perceived as exciting and vibrant, Cape Town is additionally seen as more romantic and beautiful, contributing to its sophistication. Johannesburg, on the other hand, stands out as a hub for ambitious people, emphasising its competence.

These insights, based on Aaker's brand personality model, provide valuable information for city branding initiatives. They can guide the development of marketing and communication strategies that align with and enhance the cities' perceived personalities, thereby fostering more effective and resonant city branding efforts.

4.6 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

While the main themes emerging from the workshops were consistent across Cape Town and Johannesburg, there were differences in the emphasis and specific issues raised in each city. This suggests that while there are common challenges and opportunities across the South African tourism industry, there are also city-specific nuances that need to be considered in city branding initiatives.

In Cape Town, the discussion was more focused on the operational aspects of the tourism industry. For example, the participants expressed concerns about the slow technology adoption in the registration process for tour guides and the challenges of conducting tourism operations during the pandemic. These issues highlight the need for digital transformation in the industry and the potential of technology to enhance operational efficiency and resilience.

In contrast, the discussion in Johannesburg seemed to be more focused on the broader socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. Participants highlighted the pervasive fear of the virus and the impact of safety concerns on tourism activities and employment. These issues underscore the need for clear and reassuring communication about safety measures, as well as initiatives aimed at enhancing safety and creating employment opportunities in the tourism sector.

4.7 INTERPRETATION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings from the workshops provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the South African tourism industry. They underscore the potential of co-creating city brands as a strategy to address these challenges and revitalise the tourism industry.

The themes emerging from the workshops suggest that there are several key areas that city branding initiatives need to address. These include accelerating digital transformation in the tourism industry, enhancing the trust and reputation of tour operators, providing funding and support to businesses in the industry, enhancing marketing and branding skills and capacity, and creating new narratives for the cities.

From a city branding perspective, the feedback received for both Cape Town and Johannesburg indicated that the cities have unique strengths that could be leveraged in their branding efforts. For Cape Town, these strengths include its natural beauty, diverse range of activities, welcoming atmosphere, and opportunities for foreign investment. For Johannesburg, its status as an economic hub, the diverse activities available, and the vibrant city experience stand out as key selling points.

However, it's crucial to note that these strengths need to be presented authentically and in a balanced manner, acknowledging the challenges and complexities that each city faces. This authenticity is a critical factor in creating a city brand that resonates with both residents and visitors and can contribute to a sustainable and resilient tourism industry.

The importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders in the city branding process was a key theme that emerged from the workshops. This inclusive approach can ensure that the city brand truly represents the aspirations, values, and unique qualities of the city, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among the stakeholders.

The workshops also highlighted the potential of empowering residents to become ambassadors of their own city. This strategy can foster a stronger connection between the residents and the brand, making the brand message more authentic, relatable, and effectively communicated. The resident ambassadorship can also contribute to enhancing the reputation of the city and attracting more visitors.

4.8 REFLECTION ON ACTION

This chapter has presented a rigorous data analysis of the findings obtained from the co-creation city branding workshops conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The workshops' aim was to uncover the potential role of co-creation in city branding as a strategy to revive the South African tourism industry post-pandemic. Thematic analysis, incorporating both inductive and deductive methods, was utilised to unpack the rich dataset, revealing salient themes that extend our understanding of the complexities, opportunities, and challenges faced by the tourism industry in both cities.

The analysis led to the identification of three primary themes relevant to city branding: the challenges of branding cities, the stakeholders that should be involved, and the strategies for successful implementation of city branding. These themes are interrelated and provide an overarching narrative that highlights the importance of authentic representation, differentiation, and the creation of new narratives for the cities, as well as the critical role that diverse stakeholders play in shaping city brands.

The study also brought to light the unique strengths of both Cape Town and Johannesburg, which can be leveraged in their branding efforts. Yet, it was emphasised that these strengths must be communicated authentically, acknowledging the cities' challenges and complexities. This authenticity is key to crafting a city brand that resonates with residents and visitors alike and can contribute to a sustainable and resilient tourism industry.

The findings from this chapter underscore the importance of an inclusive approach to city branding, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among stakeholders. The potential of residents as city brand

ambassadors was highlighted, demonstrating how this could make the brand message more genuine, relatable, and effectively communicated.

This data analysis has also illuminated the multifaceted nature of co-creating city brands in the South African context. The findings point to the value of collaboration, authenticity, and inclusivity in the co-creation process and highlight the potential of this approach for revitalising the tourism industry post-pandemic. These insights contribute to our understanding of city branding and stakeholder co-creation, providing a solid foundation for future research and practical action aimed at boosting South Africa's tourism sector. Furthermore, they underscore the importance of an ongoing dialogue, calling for regular workshops that bring together a diverse range of stakeholders to continuously evolve and improve city brands.

Upon reflecting on the data analysis and the insights drawn from the empathy map and thematic analysis, I recognised the potential to craft a value proposition canvas. This canvas captures the unique selling points of both cities, offering a blueprint for their branding strategies. Essentially, the canvas provides a structured framework that distils the essence of the cities, presenting clear value propositions for stakeholders. The value proposition canvas is not just an output of this research; it represents a tangible contribution to the field of city branding, serving as a guideline for future research and practical implementations. The canvas underscores the importance of marrying deep insights with strategic thinking, providing a roadmap for cities to communicate their brand promise effectively (Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the city branding workshops conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg have provided valuable insights into the potential role of co-creation in city branding. The findings underscore the complexities and opportunities associated with city branding and highlight the importance of an inclusive, collaborative, and authentic approach to brand creation. These insights can inform future research and action aimed at revitalising the tourism industry in South Africa and beyond.

4.9 VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS APPLICATION

The application of the value proposition canvas in the context of co-creative city branding represents a significant and novel contribution to the field of urban studies and destination marketing. Traditionally used in the business domain to align a product or service with customer needs and wants, this research pioneers the adaptation of the value proposition canvas to the complex, multistakeholder environment of city branding. This adaptation provides a structured, visually

intuitive framework that enables city officials, tourism boards, business owners, and residents to collaboratively identify and articulate their roles, challenges, and aspirations within the city branding initiative. It serves as a tool to clearly illustrate the 'jobs' that stakeholders are trying to accomplish, the 'pains' they are experiencing, and the 'gains' they hope to achieve, and how the co-creative city branding initiative can address these aspects. This approach not only facilitates effective communication among diverse stakeholders but also fosters alignment between stakeholder needs and the strategic actions undertaken in city branding efforts. In practical terms, this tool can be employed by cities globally as a blueprint for designing and implementing co-creative city branding strategies that are deeply rooted in the lived experiences and aspirations of their communities. From an academic perspective, this research enriches the literature on co-creative strategies in urban development, offering a tangible, empirically grounded model that can be further tested and refined in diverse urban contexts (Osterwalder et al., 2015; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).

The value proposition canvas is divided into two main sections:

1. **Value proposition** describes the products and services a company offers, and how they alleviate customer pains and create gains.
 - **Products and services:** The set of products or services that help the customer complete a job or that address customer pains and gains. This will be adapted to explore city differentiators.
 - **Pain relievers:** The features of a product or service that specifically address customer pains.
 - **Gain creators:** The features of a product or service that create gains for the customer.
2. **Customer profile** describes the customer's jobs, pains, and gains.
 - **Customer jobs:** The functional, emotional, and social tasks that customers are trying to accomplish. This will be adapted to explore stakeholder jobs to be done.
 - **Customer pains:** The problems, negative emotions, and risks that customers experience while trying to get their jobs done.
 - **Customer gains:** The outcomes and benefits that customers want to achieve.

The findings from Chapter 4, the data sheet, and the transcripts will be applied to construct a foundational value proposition canvas for the co-creative city branding initiative.

4.9.1 Cape Town Value Map

4.9.1.1 Value Proposition

Products and services (city differentiators)

- **Natural beauty:** Cape Town's unique juxtaposition of mountain and sea, offering both beach experiences and hiking opportunities on the famous Table Mountain.
- **Cultural tapestry:** A rich mix of cultures and histories, reflected in its architecture, festivals, and local events.
- **Diverse tourist attractions:** From the V&A Waterfront to Robben Island, Cape Town offers a range of attractions for different tourist preferences.

Gain creators

- **Authentic branding:** By grounding its branding in authenticity, Cape Town can create deeper, more meaningful connections with tourists.
- **Diverse experiences:** From historical tours to adventure sports, Cape Town offers experiences that cater to a wide range of tourist interests.
- **Stakeholder unity:** The collective will of the tourism sector, which is committed to the city's resurgence, ensures consistent and high-quality tourist experiences.

Pain relievers

- **Safety protocols:** Proactive communication about safety and health measures to assure tourists in the post-pandemic world.
- **Resilient infrastructure:** Despite challenges, Cape Town has infrastructure in place to support tourism and handle crises.
- **Stakeholder collaboration:** Joint efforts from all sectors to ensure seamless tourist experiences, addressing any concerns or challenges that arise.

4.9.1.2 Customer Profile (Stakeholders)

Jobs to be done

- **Residents:** Promote and uphold the city's brand, engage in tourism activities, and provide authentic experiences to tourists.
- **Tourism businesses:** Offer unique and safe experiences to tourists, adapt to changing tourism trends, and uphold Cape Town's reputation.

- **Tourists:** Explore the city's attractions, engage in cultural experiences, and enjoy their stay in a safe and welcoming environment.

Pains/challenges

- **Residents:** Potential overcrowding of popular spots, ensuring their narratives and experiences are genuinely represented, and dealing with the economic impacts of fluctuating tourism.
- **Tourism businesses:** Adapting to post-pandemic operational challenges, managing reputational risks, and staying updated with global tourism trends.
- **Tourists:** Safety concerns in a post-pandemic world, seeking authentic experiences over generic tourist traps, and navigating the city efficiently.

Gains (outcomes they want to achieve)

- **Residents:** Economic benefits from tourism, a genuine representation of their culture and history, and a sustainable balance between tourism and daily life.
- **Tourism businesses:** Consistent tourist inflow, positive global reputation, and successful adaptation to changing global trends.
- **Tourists:** Safe and enriching travel experiences, authentic engagement with local culture, and value for money.

This value proposition canvas provides a foundational representation of Cape Town's branding endeavours. It captures the essence of what the city offers and aligns it with the needs and desires of its stakeholders.

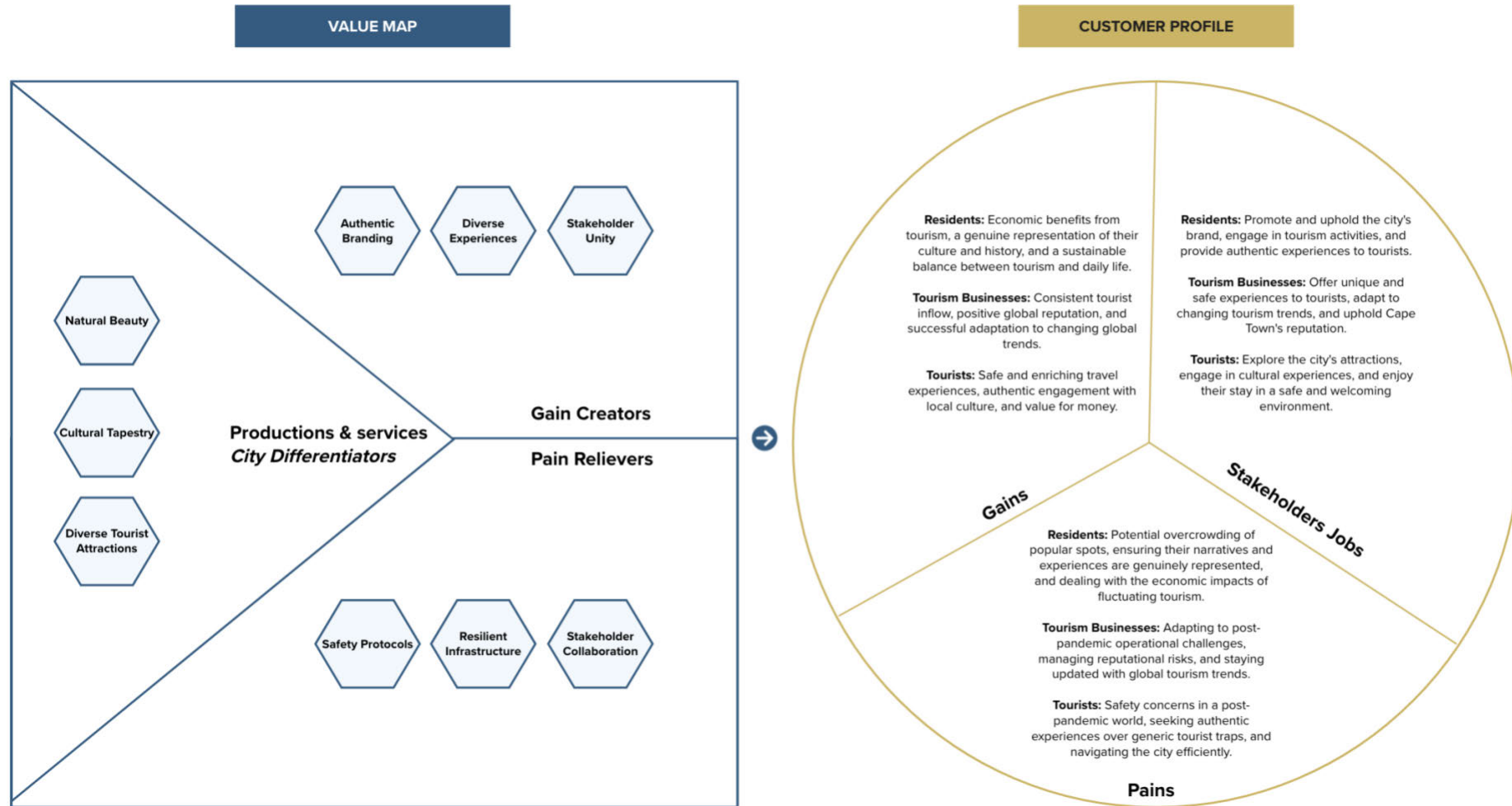


Figure 4.14: Value proposition canvas for Cape Town

4.9.2 Johannesburg Value Map

4.9.2.1 Value Proposition

Products and services (city differentiators):

- **Cultural nexus:** Johannesburg offers a rich mix of traditions, histories, and stories, with museums, art galleries, and cultural hubs like Newtown.
- **Vibrant city experiences:** Known as 'Jozi', the city is alive with vibrant nightlife, eclectic mix of cultures, art galleries, theatres, and music festivals.
- **City of gold legacy:** The gold mining heritage is deeply embedded in the city's character, offering potential immersive mine tours and experiences related to this golden legacy.

Gain creators

- **Diverse nightlife:** From jazz lounges to rooftop bars and trendy districts, every night in Johannesburg promises a new adventure.
- **Local stories:** Emphasis on championing local experiences and narratives, bringing forward the tales of ordinary residents.
- **Eclectic mix of cultures:** The city's cultural diversity offers tourists a chance to explore varied traditions and histories.

Pain relievers

- **Promotion of local experiences:** Highlighting the stories of the city's residents, making the tourist experience more genuine and relatable.
- **Safety protocols:** Addressing concerns and ensuring the safety of tourists in the city.
- **Revitalisation initiatives:** Efforts to rejuvenate and promote the city's unique attractions and districts.

4.9.2.2 Customer Profile (Stakeholders)

Jobs to be done

- **Residents:** Share and celebrate the diverse cultures and histories, promote the city's unique offerings, and engage with tourists to provide genuine experiences.
- **Tourism businesses:** Cater to a diverse range of tourist preferences, ensure the safety and satisfaction of visitors, and promote the city's vibrant experiences.

- **Tourists:** Delve deep into the city's cultural richness, engage in vibrant city experiences, and explore the legacy of the 'City of Gold'.

Pains/challenges

- **Residents:** Balancing the promotion of local culture with commercial interests, ensuring safety in certain city areas, and integrating the diverse cultures and histories into a unified branding narrative.
- **Tourism businesses:** Overcoming post-pandemic challenges, managing operational hurdles in a rapidly changing environment, and ensuring the city's offerings remain relevant to global tourists.
- **Tourists:** Safety concerns in certain city areas, seeking experiences that are both authentic and modern, and navigating the city's diverse offerings.

Gains (outcomes they want to achieve)

- **Residents:** Economic growth from tourism, a genuine representation of their diverse cultures and stories, and economically sustainable tourism practices.
- **Tourism businesses:** Recognition of Johannesburg as a premier global destination, successful adaptation to global tourism trends, and consistent tourist engagement.
- **Tourists:** Authentic and enriching travel experiences, diverse cultural engagements, and memorable city experiences.

This value proposition canvas for Johannesburg captures the city's vibrant offerings and aligns them with the aspirations and challenges of its stakeholders.

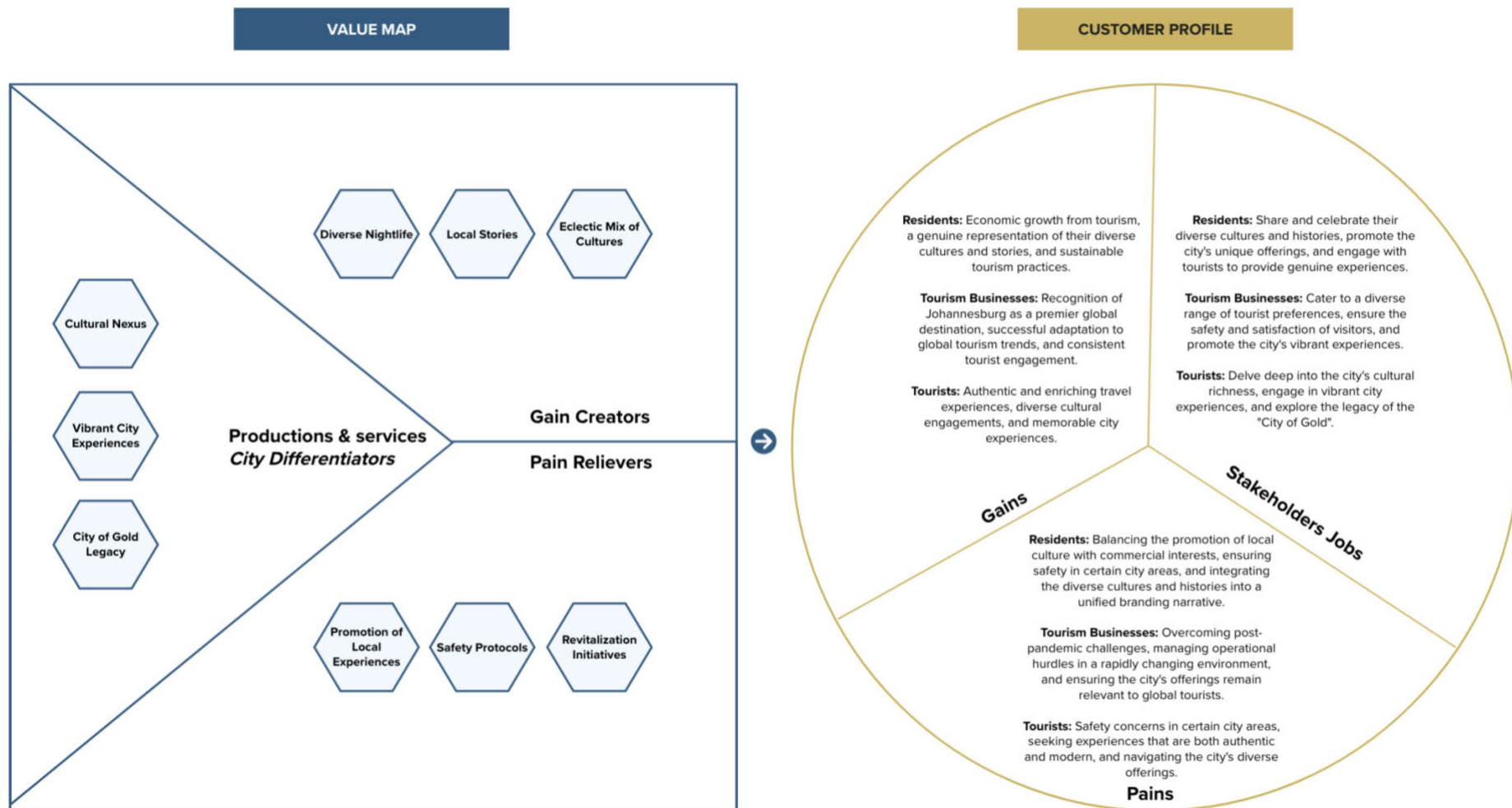


Figure 4.15: Value proposition canvas for Johannesburg

Engaging with the literature review in the context of the findings from Chapter 4 reveals a complex interplay between theoretical frameworks and empirical data. The chapter's findings not only corroborate significant aspects of the existing literature but also extend the understanding of city branding, particularly in the post-pandemic context of South African cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Corroboration with Existing Literature:

The findings underscore the pivotal role of co-creation in city branding, aligning with the literature that advocates for stakeholder engagement in developing place brands. This engagement is crucial for ensuring that the branding reflects the diverse perspectives and experiences of those it aims to represent, a principle consistently highlighted in the literature (Kavaratzis, 2004; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). The workshops' emphasis on inclusivity and collaborative brand development echoes the theoretical assertions regarding the significance of multi-stakeholder involvement in creating authentic and resonant city brands.

Moreover, the emphasis on adapting city branding strategies in response to the changing tourism landscape, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic, resonates with the literature's call for dynamic and responsive branding approaches. This necessity aligns with the frameworks suggested in the literature, such as the Tourism Disaster Recovery Framework (Orchiston, 2013), which advocates for adaptive strategies in the face of crises.

Contradictions and Extensions:

While the literature provides a solid foundation for understanding the principles of city branding, the findings from the workshops offer novel insights into the specifics of applying these principles in the unique context of South African cities post-pandemic. The discussions revealed a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that are perhaps underexplored in the broader literature, such as the specific socio-economic conditions in Johannesburg and Cape Town and their implications for city branding.

The findings extend the existing literature by emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach that considers the local context's specificities. While the literature advocates for the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, the findings highlight the critical importance of this inclusivity in the South African context, where historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors play a significant role in shaping the city's brand.

Integration of Theories and Frameworks:

The findings integrate the theories and frameworks discussed in the literature review, demonstrating their practical application in the South African context. The Aaker's Brand Personality Model (Aaker, 1997), traditionally used for product branding, is effectively applied to the city branding context, illustrating how cities can be personified to resonate with target audiences. This application not only corroborates the literature's suggestions but also extends them by providing a concrete example of how theoretical models can guide the practical development of city branding strategies.

The use of the Empathy Mapping tool during the workshops is another instance where theoretical tools are applied in a novel context, providing deep insights into the stakeholders' perspectives and experiences. This tool's application corroborates the literature's emphasis on understanding stakeholders' views but extends it by offering a structured methodology to integrate these insights into the city branding strategy.

Practical Implications and Future Directions:

The findings suggest that city branding in the post-pandemic era requires a balanced approach that acknowledges the cities' unique attributes while addressing the challenges highlighted by the pandemic. This balance is crucial for developing a brand that is not only attractive but also realistic and grounded in the city's actual offerings and potential. The insights from the workshops offer valuable directions for future city branding initiatives, suggesting that a focus on authenticity, inclusivity, and adaptability will be key to their success.

In summary, the findings (Chapter 4) along with the literature review (Chapter 2) both reinforce the importance of co-creation, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability in city branding. The findings extend the existing literature by providing contextualized insights into the challenges and opportunities of city branding in the South African context, demonstrating the practical application of theoretical frameworks and offering valuable directions for future research and practice in the field.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Products are made in a factory, but brands are created in the mind.”

Walter Joseph Landor, brand designer and the founder of Landor & Fitch

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter of the dissertation offers an opportunity to answer the research questions by drawing together the emerging insights, the contribution to the field of city branding and tourism revitalisation, a critique of the research conducted, recommendations for further research and a concluding reflection on the research journey and the associated skill set gained in alignment with the ninth level of the Higher Education Qualification Framework.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH

The primary research question of this study was how can South African cities be co-created to revive tourism in the country post a pandemic? This question is answered through the answers to the secondary research questions in the sections to follow.

5.2.1 What are the theoretical foundations, guidelines, and considerations for the successful co-creation of city branding to revive the South African tourism industry?

City branding is a multifaceted endeavour that revolves around the intricate interactions of various elements. Successful city branding often grapples with challenges such as accurate representation, differentiation from other cities, and crafting genuine narratives. A review of literature was completed in Chapter 2 in an attempt to answer this research question. While there's a shared essence in branding South African cities, each city's unique context is nuanced and faces distinct challenges. The following are the proposed theoretical foundations, guidelines, and considerations for the successful co-creation of city branding to revive the South African tourism industry:

- **Aaker's Brand Personality Model:** This model provides a structured approach that can guide branding initiatives and offer a theoretical foundation (see 2.4.2). It explores various dimensions of a brand including its core identity and extended identity, emphasising the value of consistency in a brand's communication. The model can be applied to understand and structure the

perspectives and ideas of the stakeholders regarding the core characteristics of Johannesburg and Cape Town that make them unique and desirable destinations. Additionally, the model could be used to assess how the proposed city branding aligns with these core characteristics.

- **Orchiston's Tourism Disaster Recovery Framework:** Guidance for these challenging times also comes in the form of established frameworks. This structured approach delineates phases from immediate response actions to strategies for long-term resilience. Adhering to such frameworks ensures that businesses are well prepared to navigate post-pandemic challenges (see 2.4.2).
- **Complex Interplay in City Branding:** City branding involves intricate interactions of various elements (see 2.3.4). Key challenges include ensuring the accurate representation of the city, differentiating from other cities, and crafting new narratives.
- **Key Stakeholders in City Branding:** City branding requires engagement with multiple stakeholders (see 2.5). Participants identified government entities, community members (residents and local leaders), and businesses (like hospitality enterprises and tour operators) as crucial. Engaging these stakeholders ensures the brand genuinely reflects the city's aspirations, values, and unique characteristics.
- **City Branding Implementation:** Insights based on the theoretical frameworks are valuable for city branding (see 2.4.2). These insights can guide the development of marketing and communication strategies that align with the cities' perceived personalities, fostering effective city branding efforts.
- **Specific Challenges for South African Cities:** While some themes were consistent across Cape Town and Johannesburg, each city had its distinct emphasis and issues. This underscores the need for a nuanced approach tailored to each city's unique context (see 2.3.6).
- **Limitations and Context:** Any co-creation efforts for city branding, especially in the post-pandemic era, are bound by the context of time and place. It's essential to recognise the limitations and provide context for interpreting findings.
- **The Role of Co-creation:** The research highlighted the potential of co-creation as a vital tool for city branding. It emphasised the importance of diverse stakeholder involvement, the potential of resident ambassadorship, and the necessity for authentic, inclusive branding narratives to rejuvenate the tourism industry.

5.2.2 What are the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders of the tourism industry post the pandemic?

In the aftermath of the pandemic, the tourism industry faces an era of heightened caution and scrutiny as reported throughout this research. South African tourism and hospitality businesses are the

bedrock of a city's tourism milieu and had to adapt their business activities in an attempt to revive tourism in the country post the pandemic. Empirical evidence was collected as per the research design and methodology in Chapter 3 in an attempt to answer what stakeholders' perspectives and experiences are after the pandemic. Empathy mapping serves as a method to understand the various stakeholders — residents, tourists, business owners, and officials — who are vital in shaping a city's brand (Merrilees et al., 2012).

- Participants' emotional and psychological state during the workshop was overall negative with a deep concern about what the future holds for tourism in their cities, and they felt uncertain about when and how the tourism industry will recover. However, despite the challenges they face, participants were engaged in the workshops because they were hopeful that co-creation can lead to effective solutions.
- Participants were actively listening to insights and suggestions from fellow residents or businessowners. They also constantly hear about new and existing government regulations that affect their operations and the broader tourism industry as well as news updates about the pandemic which are shaping their understanding and expectations.
- Participants see tangible and visible decline in tourism which is the stark reality of the industry in their cities. They witnessed firsthand the impact of travel restrictions on their industry, city and community. They also see the few tourists who do visit are behaving differently, as are residents, due to health and safety concerns.
- During the workshop, participants expressed their admiration for the unique characteristics of the two cities by highlighting their cultural and historical richness. They discussed the challenges in their cities and areas of improvement by sharing experiences and personal stories.
- Participants identified the following pain points: 1) there is a significant lack of trust between various stakeholders; 2) safety for both tourists and residents is a recurring concern, especially in the context of crime and health, and 3) a critical issue raised was the lack of funding available for tourism projects, which is exacerbating the challenges faced due to the pandemic.
- The positive outcomes from the phenomena explored was that participants were keen to rebuild trust among stakeholders and with the public which is seen as foundational for the industry's recovery. A key desired outcome is the establishment of the cities as safe destinations for both residents and visitors. Participants expressed a strong desire for financial and institutional support to help revitalise the tourism sector.

5.2.3 How would stakeholders co-create specific South African cities to support the revival of the tourism industry in the country post a pandemic?

Post-pandemic recovery for the tourism industry underscores the necessity of co-creation involving city residents and hospitality businesses. Empirical evidence was collected as per the research design and methodology in Chapter 3 in an attempt to answer this research question. The analysed data from the co-creation workshops were interpreted and discussed using the theoretical foundations, guidelines, and considerations from Chapter 2. The research found that stakeholders can co-create specific South African cities in support of the revival of the tourism industry through the following means:

- **Trust and Reputation:** In the wake of the pandemic, trust and reputation have become paramount. Tourists are more cautious and prioritise the authenticity and reliability of tour operators. They prefer operators who prioritise their well-being, transparently communicate safety measures, and are flexible.
- **Building City Brands from the Ground Up:** Grassroots businesses are advised to co-create the identities of cities with a variety of stakeholders to craft narratives that resonate with a wide array of tourist segments in an attempt to recalibrate their communication, highlighting their preventive efforts while being forthright about challenges.
- **Resilience Through Stakeholder Engagement:** One of the key lessons from the pandemic has been the value of resilience. By engaging diverse stakeholders in co-creating city brands, a more resilient and adaptable brand can emerge. Such resilience is especially vital in the dynamic landscape of urban tourism, which can be swayed by unforeseen global events.
- **Modern Traveller Expectations:** Post-pandemic tourists are more informed, discerning, and cautious. They want assurances of safety, timely communication, and clear health protocols. Therefore, cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg need proactive communication that showcases their efforts and addresses challenges transparently.
- **Support for Grassroots-Level Businesses:** These businesses form the backbone of cities like Cape Town's tourism landscape. They need robust support mechanisms that address immediate financial concerns and provide a sustainable recovery roadmap for the post-pandemic world.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** PPPs have been identified as potential mechanisms to address some of the challenges faced by the tourism industry. Such partnerships can play a pivotal role in co-creating city brands and rejuvenating tourism.

- **Empowerment of Residents:** The study highlights the importance of involving diverse stakeholders in the city branding process. One key emphasis is on empowering residents to become city brand ambassadors, promoting authentic and inclusive branding narratives.
- **Co-creation as a Tool:** The research underscores the potential of co-creation as a tool for city branding. This approach provides valuable insights for revitalising the tourism industry, not only in South Africa but also globally.

5.2.4 How can a value proposition canvas for Cape Town and Johannesburg serve as a guideline for future city branding initiatives?

While the research doesn't delineate a concrete "value proposition canvas", several components emerge as crucial for city branding initiatives. Recognising the complexities inherent in city branding and emphasising co-creation's potential can lead to a comprehensive value proposition that effectively guides future branding endeavours. The study's thematic analysis of the co-creation workshops in Cape Town and Johannesburg revealed several key findings. It became evident that successful city branding is a complex process, requiring the management of several challenges, including genuine representation of the city, differentiation from other cities, and the creation of new narratives.

- **Challenges of City Branding:** Addressing challenges is pivotal. City branding involves complex elements, and the primary challenges include representation of the city, differentiation from other cities, and creating new narratives.
- **Key Stakeholders in City Branding:** Engaging diverse stakeholders, including government entities, community members, and businesses, is essential. Their involvement ensures that the brand authentically represents the aspirations, values, and unique qualities of the city.
- **Successful Implementation of Emerging Themes:** From a city branding perspective, certain themes have been identified as crucial, such as nature, activities, experience, and opportunities for foreign investment. These themes can guide the development of marketing and communication strategies.
- **Insights from Established Models:** Using models like Aaker's brand personality model can provide valuable information for city branding initiatives. They offer a structured approach to understanding and developing city branding efforts.
- **Regular City Branding Workshops:** Regular workshops that bring together stakeholders from different sectors can be beneficial. They serve as platforms for dialogue, collaboration, and co-creation, contributing to the ongoing evolution of city brands.

- **Complexities and Nuances:** City branding is multifaceted. Recognising the diverse stakeholders, varied perspectives, and the intricate interplay of historical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors is essential.
- **Potential of Co-creation:** Emphasising co-creation as a tool for city branding can provide significant value. It underscores the importance of involving diverse stakeholders, harnessing the potential of resident ambassadorship, and crafting authentic, inclusive branding narratives.

5.2.5 Summary

The study concluded that creating an authentic and balanced brand representation involves acknowledging both the positive aspects and the challenges each city faces. The necessity of such an approach was underscored by the participants' emphasis on the need to avoid stereotypes and present an image that resonates with both the residents and visitors. Differentiating cities from others in an increasingly competitive global tourism market necessitates highlighting the unique selling points of each city while also emphasising shared qualities. The study found that participants recognised this challenge and were aware of the delicate balance required to achieve differentiation. Creating new narratives for cities was identified as a crucial aspect of branding. Participants acknowledged the need to move away from ingrained negative stereotypes and myths and create stories that capture the cities' potential and ambition. The study also concluded that the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders is crucial to the city branding process. These include government entities, community members, and businesses, whose perspectives and insights ensure that the city brand authentically represents the city's aspirations and values. Finally, the study highlighted the potential of resident ambassadorship for the successful implementation of city branding. Empowering residents to become ambassadors for their city can foster a stronger connection between the city brand and its residents, making the brand message more authentic, relatable, and effectively communicated.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

This research enriches the interdisciplinary discourse, particularly at the juncture of urban tourism, post-pandemic recovery, and city branding methodologies. Theoretically, it extends the domain of city branding literature by empirically validating the co-creation approach's efficacy in sculpting resilient, authentic city brands that resonate with the stakeholders' collective vision.

The study bolsters theoretical frameworks in place branding by demonstrating the successful application of collaborative workshops in urban South African contexts, thereby contributing novel insights to the field (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). It aligns with stakeholder theory by evidencing the positive outcomes of stakeholder inclusivity in city brand co-creation, enriching the understanding of participatory brand development processes (Freeman, 1984; Merrilees, Miller, & Herington, 2012).

Moreover, the findings provide a nuanced exploration of theoretical models, challenging and extending them through the practical lens of Cape Town and Johannesburg's experiences. This contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding and provides a substantiated basis for future research in similar urban and post-crisis contexts.

5.3.2 Practical/Managerial Implications

Practically, the implications are multifaceted, influencing sectors from tourism to local governance. For tourism marketers and hospitality managers, the study offers strategic insights into leveraging city branding for enhanced visitor engagement and economic revitalization, echoing the pivotal role of branding in tourism recovery (Govers, 2011; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).

Urban planners and policymakers can harness these insights to craft distinctive city identities that attract investment and tourism, thereby driving socio-economic development (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). The study serves as a strategic resource for navigating urban branding in rapidly evolving or recovering settings, offering a blueprint that can be adapted for cities globally facing similar challenges.

At a municipal level, the findings underscore the value of embedding co-creation in urban development and tourism strategies, ensuring that city branding initiatives are grounded in community engagement and reflect a shared vision (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015).

Educationally, the study informs design and urban planning curricula, highlighting the real-world application of theoretical concepts in city branding and post-crisis urban recovery, thereby preparing future professionals to employ design thinking in practical, impactful ways (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

In summary, this research delineates a comprehensive framework that cities, particularly in emerging economies, can adopt to leverage branding for post-pandemic rejuvenation and long-term

tourism growth. It underscores the synergy between theoretical insights and practical applications, offering a guide for implementing effective, inclusive city branding strategies.

5.4 FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This research not only provides a foundation for the advancement of the field of city branding and its influence on urban tourism revitalisation but also paves the way for numerous avenues of future exploration. Based on the implications highlighted through this research study, several valuable recommendations for future research and practical applications can be proposed:

- **Interdisciplinary Approaches in Tourism Recovery:** The study's multidisciplinary convergence creates opportunities for future researchers to investigate the synergistic potential of interdisciplinary approaches in tackling difficult problems like the recovery of post-pandemic tourism. The understanding of interdisciplinary problem solving would be expanded by looking at how ideas from diverse domains might be used to create practical solutions for other areas or sectors.
- **City Branding Strategies for Resilience:** Further investigation into the precise processes that contribute to improving a city's resilience through branding might build on the results about the influence of city branding in times of crisis. This may include not just economic aspects but also social and cultural ones, offering a more comprehensive view of how city branding affects resilience.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Co-creation:** The importance of stakeholder participation in city branding is underlined by the study's focus on collaborative co-creation workshops. Future studies might go deeper into the dynamics of stakeholder engagement, examining the best ways to include the opinions of various stakeholders into city branding plans for the best results.
- **Cross-cultural Application of City Branding:** The study's findings, especially those based on South African cities, may inspire more investigation into the viability of co-branding and collaborative strategies in other cultural settings. Global city branding initiatives might benefit from examining how cultural quirks affect the effectiveness of such techniques and how they may be tailored to different contexts.

- **Tourism Sector Resilience Beyond Crises:** While the study's primary focus is on post-crisis recovery, there is room to expand this investigation to look at how successful city branding affects the tourist industry's long-term resilience to a range of threats. This may include attempts to promote sustainability, changing consumer tastes, and shifting geopolitical terrain.
- **Education Integration and Curriculum Enhancement:** Future research might focus on the practical application of incorporating city branding principles into design curriculum given the study's relevance to design education. In order to have a greater educational impact, this research might examine efficient teaching strategies, student results, and how such integration could be extended to other fields.
- **Economic and Social Impacts of City Branding:** Future research might examine the consequences of good city branding on regional economies and communities, going beyond tourism. A more thorough knowledge of its many effects would result from looking at whether improved city branding is associated with elevated civic pride, community involvement, and general quality of life.

In future recommendations for South Africa's co-creation and branding efforts, it's imperative to consider the country's unique political and socio-economic environment. The historical context of apartheid and ongoing socio-economic disparities significantly influence the effectiveness and reception of branding strategies. Therefore, it's crucial to develop city branding that authentically represents South Africa's diverse cultural landscape and complex history while promoting economic inclusivity and social cohesion.

Incorporating South Africa's socio-political narrative into branding is essential. Future initiatives should aim to integrate the nation's rich historical and cultural diversity into the branding narrative, portraying a story of resilience and unity. This approach requires a nuanced understanding of the country's past and present, ensuring that the branding efforts celebrate diversity, acknowledge historical struggles, and foster a positive image that resonates with all South Africans.

The co-creation process in this context must prioritize inclusivity, actively involving various stakeholders, especially those from historically marginalized communities. This inclusive approach ensures that the branding reflects a collective vision, resonating with the broader populace while addressing social and economic disparities. Recommendations should emphasize strategies that

contribute to local empowerment, align with community values, and enhance the residents' quality of life, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the city's brand.

Economic factors are also pivotal. Given the stark economic contrasts within the country, branding strategies should not only aim to attract external investment and tourism but also stimulate local economic development and inclusivity. Future strategies should balance external appeal with internal benefits, offering economic opportunities to local businesses and communities and ensuring that the city's branding promotes sustainable growth and social upliftment.

- **Comparative Studies in Conflict Zones:** Researchers might do comparative evaluations of city branding initiatives in conflict-ridden regions. This may provide insight into both general guidelines and regional considerations that affect effective brand rehabilitation.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research assumes that the perspectives gathered through qualitative methods, while rich and in-depth, accurately reflect the broader phenomena of city branding and tourism revitalisation. It presumes that the chosen theoretical framework and methodologies are appropriate for capturing the complexity of these phenomena. The study also relies on the assumption that the stakeholder participants, though purposefully selected, are representative of the wider community involved in city branding. Moreover, it is presupposed that the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the qualitative data are robust and transferable to similar contexts, despite the inherent uniqueness of the case study setting. Lastly, the research is based on the premise that the dynamic and multifaceted nature of city branding can be sufficiently understood and addressed within the scope of a single study, acknowledging that each study can only illuminate certain aspects of such complex systems.

Every research study has its limitations, and this investigation is no exception. Although the study offers insightful perspectives on city branding and tourism revitalisation, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations that could affect the interpretation and the generalisability, although this was not the purpose of the study.

First and foremost, the limits of this study are related to the research design and the qualities inherent in qualitative research approaches. Although this study's qualitative methodology and constructivist paradigm allowed for deep exploration of a complex phenomenon, they were inevitably susceptible to the limitations of subjectivity. Despite the researcher's best attempts to minimise bias, the

researcher's own experiences, prejudices, and assumptions nevertheless affect how qualitative data is interpreted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Furthermore, the results obtained are not easily generalised due to the small, purposeful samples often used in such research. The intensive nature of data collection and analysis in qualitative studies can require significant resources, presenting another potential limitation (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Thirdly, limitations of representation and factors beyond the control of the researcher should also be considered. It is possible that stakeholders will not be properly represented, which might limit the range and depth of viewpoints considered. Additionally, the study's scant examination of external factors and their possible influence on city branding outcomes may restrict our ability to grasp the phenomena holistically. Also, the vulnerability of city branding initiatives to contextual changes since unanticipated changes in the socioeconomic or political environment may affect the viability and efficacy of the suggested techniques.

Lastly, academic research as a whole is constrained by its iterative nature, where each study contributes a piece to a larger puzzle. While each study advances the field of knowledge, no single study can provide a complete understanding of a complex issue. Furthermore, academic research is often limited by the availability of resources and the current state of knowledge in the field (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY: THE RESEARCHER'S REFLECTION

Every research voyage represents not just academic exploration, but also personal growth. The master's programme aims to educate researchers in critically evaluating theory, creative problem solving, research assessment, and effective communication. My journey through this research has been profoundly transformative, marked by challenges, triumphs, and introspection. Amid the global upheaval of the Covid-19 pandemic, I delved into the crucial realm of city branding and tourism revitalisation. As cities grappled with pandemic fallout, the significance of these areas grew even more apparent. The research process defied my linear expectations, evolving dynamically with twists and turns. Data collection and analysis informed each other iteratively, revealing participants' aspirations and challenges. While illuminating, the findings underscored the intricate nature of city branding due to diverse stakeholders and historical factors. Life introduced its own challenges; I battled Covid-19 and navigated personal life events like marriage and relocation, adapting research plans along the way.

In hindsight, the research's non-linearity was an asset, fostering adaptability and deeper engagement. The dynamic process enriched the findings, grounding them in reality. As the research journey concludes, I reflect on its myriad experiences, challenges, and learnings. From pandemic struggles to personal milestones, this journey has been transformative, affirming perseverance's power and authentic research's value. While the dissertation chapter ends, the insights gained will shape my future pursuits. This journey, with its ups and downs, has been invaluable, and I am grateful for every moment.

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APPENDIX A

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

"Every interaction in any form, is branding."

Seth Godin, marketing and leadership expert

Reference: M.04112020
Enquiries: [REDACTED]

20 November 2020



Student name: Sally Sabra
Student number: [REDACTED]
Brand and campus: IIEVega



Approval of Master of Arts in Creative Brand Leadership Proposal

Thank you for submitting and defending your proposal titled:
An exploration of the co-branding of South African cities to revive the tourism industry post a global pandemic.



We are pleased to inform you that the Research and Postgraduate Committee considered and has approved your research proposal. Ethics clearance has also been granted.



The Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee made some further suggestions that can assist you with your study. These should be attended to under the guidance of your supervisor.

The Committee confirms that **Dr Yolandi Burger** has been appointed as your supervisor.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the campus staff or your supervisor directly.

All the best with your research.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Dr B. van Wyk
Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies
The Independent Institute of Education



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APPENDIX **B**

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

"A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is—it is what consumers tell each other it is."

Scott Cook, director of eBay and Procter & Gamble

CITY BRANDING CO-CREATION WORKSHOP

Q1. What is your email address?

Q2. Do you currently own or manage a business operating within the tourism sector? (i.e. hotel, guesthouse, restaurant, café, shuttle service, tour operations, activity based services etc.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q3. Please confirm the following information on your business:

- Name:
- Services offered:
- Monthly turnover (estimate):

Q4. Please confirm your age bracket:

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ Over 55

Q5. Please confirm your monthly personal income bracket:

- ☐ R5 000 – R9 999
- ☐ R10 000 – R14 999
- ☐ R15 000 – R19 999
- ☐ R20 000 – R24 999
- ☐ R25 000 – R29 999
- ☐ R30 000 – R34 999
- ☐ Over R35 000

Q6. Please confirm your gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Other

Q7. Have you participated in research before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q8. Do you confirm that you have received a participation consent form?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

POPI CONSENT FORM

I/We, the undersigned _____ (Full names and surname) with Identity Number _____,

hereby declare, agree and undertake the following towards Sally Sabra (Hereinafter 'the Researcher'):

1. I/We the undersigned, acknowledge that the researcher wishes to conduct research as outlined in the declaration form
2. I/We hereby give consent to the Research absolute right and permission to make use of my information an aggregated format for research purposes
3. I/We also acknowledge that the Researcher is committed to protecting and promoting the privacy of my/our Personal Information and to give effect to the constitutional right to privacy and to fulfil its obligations under the Protection of Personal Information Act No 4 of 2013 (Hereinafter 'POPI').
4. I/We hereby give consent to the Researcher to process my/our Personal Information where the processing is necessary and only for purposes of conducting sample fulfilment criteria.
5. The Researcher acknowledges and agrees that the Personal Information will not, under any circumstances, be processed for purposes prohibited by POPI and/or the principles contained in POPI and that the processing of Personal Information will be done fairly and in accordance with legal provisions, given that the purpose for which processing of the Personal Information is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
6. I/We herewith defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Researcher from any action or claim of any nature whatsoever that might be brought by any person whatsoever against the Researcher as a result of any personal loss, injury or damage arising directly or indirectly from any act or omission on my/our part relating to or incidental to the failure from my/our part to honour the above provisions, or otherwise, as the case may be.
7. I/We acknowledge and agree that I/We have read this consent form in its entirety and that

I/We fully understand the nature, content and implications hereof and agree hereto, and that
I/We shall be fully bound hereto from date of signature hereof.

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Signature

Participant Consent Form

CITY BRANDING CO-CREATION WORKSHOP

Consent to take part in research:

I _____ ID Number _____
voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my participation in the workshop within two weeks after the workshop, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves participating in a co-creation workshop (either virtually or in-person) which will entail group discussions, activities pertaining to the research topic, individual and group worksheets and presenting my thoughts and opinions in a group setting/
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research but will be made to feel comfortable and provided with food and beverages should the workshop be in-person.
- I agree to the workshop being audio and video recorded for note taking purposes. The recording is solely for note taking purpose and will not be distributed or shared.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from the workshop may be quoted in a research dissertation, presentation, published papers or journal articles.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained on the researcher's secure cloud server until the research received confirmation of the results of their dissertation. They will then be deleted.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for until the research received confirmation of the results of their dissertation. They will then be deleted.
- I understand that I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information. I also confirm that I have been provided with the relevant contact information should I wish to do so.

Signature of research participant

Date:

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Date:

APPENDIX

WORKSHOP AGENDA

"Design is the silent ambassador of your brand."

Paul Rand, art director and graphic designer

Title: **Proposed Co-creation City Branding Workshop Structure & Agenda**

Duration: 4 hours

Item	Section	Description	Instruction/activity	Outcome	Tools	Time
1	Introduction	Facilitator will introduce themselves and set expectations for the workshop: - Why are we here today? - Icebreaker and participant introductions - Rules of engagement - How to use Mural (if the workshop is virtual)	Ice breaker: "Once upon a time" Respondents will be asked to share their first-ever job with the group along with one thing they loved about it, and one thing they hated.	The team has a clear idea of what to expect from the workshop.	- PowerPoint Presentation - Mural - Microsoft Teams	20 minutes
2	Co-analysis	What are the current challenges facing the tourism industry in South Africa? - An exploration of stakeholders' biggest challenges - Grouping these challenges into themes and identifying common challenges - Prioritising the challenges that need to be addressed (what are the critical issues?)	- Lightning-talk sessions with How Might We (HMW) statement drafting - Evaluating and grouping HMW statements - Voting on the most pressing problems to solve for	A clear and deeper understanding of what the biggest challenges are while creating some common ground for the stakeholders to encourage them to start collaboratively thinking towards solutions to these challenges.	- PowerPoint Presentation - Sticky notes - Markers - Mural - Microsoft Teams	45 minutes
3	Co-design	How do we brand the city (JHB/CT) to revive tourism? - Allowing stakeholders to collaborate creatively using strategic templates and discussion to draft prototype city brands - Addressing any concerns and disagreement that may arise	- Outlining a city-brand blueprint - Understanding the thinking behind the brand - Identifying the focal points or pillars the brand is built on	A prototype city brand and city brand blueprint based on the collaborative efforts of the stakeholders.	- PowerPoint Presentation - Sticky notes - Markers - Mural - Microsoft Teams	90 minutes
COMFORT BREAK						15 minutes
4	Co-evaluation	What do we think about our proposed city brand? - Identifying the perceived challenges that participants feel the brand poses - Brainstorming ideas for how to improve or address any shortfalls	- Identifying problematic areas and gaps in the proposed brand - Refining the proposed brand accordingly	Acknowledging the team's thoughts, feelings, and suggestions regarding the ideal city brand and refining the prototype.	- Voting stickers - Sticky notes - Markers - Mural - Microsoft Teams	30 minutes

5	Co-implementation	How do we make this happen? Identifying key roles and responsibilities associated with a successful Implementation of the proposed brand	Allocating tasks to various key stakeholder/players to determine what it would take to achieve a successful implementation of the city brand	A clear strategy regarding how stakeholders feel that the implementation of their proposed brand should be managed.	- Sticky notes - Markers <i>Mural</i> <i>Microsoft Teams</i>	30 minutes
6	Closing	Thanking participants for their time and concluding the workshop	Opening the floor for concluding thoughts	N/A	<i>Microsoft Teams</i>	10 minutes
TOTAL						240 minutes

APPENDIX **D**

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

"A brand is a promise. A good brand is a promise kept."

Muhtar Kent, ex-chairman and chief executive officer of The Coca-Cola Company

To whom it may concern,

I, Carine Miller, assisted in the editing and proofreading of the dissertation *An exploration of co-creating South African city brands to revive the tourism industry post a global pandemic* by Sally Sabra.

The editing included fixing grammatical and spelling errors. A final proofreading was done to ensure that there are minimal mistakes. The tables and figures were only edited if there were spelling errors and the numbering of tables and figures were checked to ensure that they follow chronologically. The in-text references were compared with the reference list and the reference list was edited according to the standard Harvard style.

None of the research, data or ideas portrayed by the author were changed during the editing and proofreading phase and it only focused on the language use for easy readability.

Kind regards

Carine Miller

01 October 2023

APPENDIX E

TURNITIN REPORT

"A brand is a promise. A good brand is a promise kept."

Muhtar Kent, ex-chairman and chief executive officer of The Coca-Cola Company

IIE Masters Final Dissertation - Sally Sabra

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