AN INVESTIGATION OF VITAL ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO WORK ON A COUNTRY IMAGE

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Abstract

This paper sought to establish the vital issues that should be addressed to work on a national image. The country image is significant as it supports attracting foreign direct investment, tourists, foreign students, and expatriate workers who might bring managerial skills and technological exchange to the country. The paper tried to investigate how much political instability has impacted the national image, analyse the impact of policies on the country image and establish the effect of infrastructure on a country image, and contribute to the literature on the effect of the vital elements on the country image. The research contributes to the components of the national image. The country image is positively interrelated with a view on product integrity, pride of ownership, product gratification, enthusiasm to purchase from specific countries, and general product knowledge (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). Nations historically branded themselves through icons. Symbols like flags, military uniforms, currencies, anthems, and ideology are due to regime changes and stereotypes (Fan, 2010; Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006). This research was based on a descriptive approach methodology, combining subjective and quantitative techniques. It was based on 100 stakeholders including politicians, media personnel, community development personnel, traditional leaders, church leaders, and academics and entrepreneurs. The study established that Zimbabwe's image has been affected by political instability emanating from political activities, policy inconsistencies have affected inward investment in the country and the country's infrastructure has an immense contribution to the national image. For the country to attract meaningful investment and foreign tourists it needs to deal with its image.

Keywords: Country Image, Strategic Issues, National Branding, Policies, Infrastructure, Political Instability, Zimbabwe

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nation branding is the conformation of a distinguishable distinctive nation brand image in the minds of the target consumers and the alignment of varied stakeholders (Skinner & Kubacki, 2007; Lee & Vivarelli, 2006). It creates a distinctive country image that affects the consumer's perception by portraying the country's identity to the intended audience (Fan, 2010; Lee & Vivarelli, 2006). Numerous

countries are troubled with the image they portray to the transnational request (Echeverri, ter Horst, Molina, & Mohamad, 2019). The image of the country is the one that arouses the interest of investors as well as that of tourists to the country. Countries have used strategies like differentiation in order to lure investors and tourists to their different countries. In the case of Columbia, there are two crucial forms of association: a productive and positive result associated with the rich coffee industry and the other negative one linked to three pivotal matters as corruption, drug trafficking, and instability. The negative perception Columbia had radiated from corruption, instability, and medicine trafficking pushed the country to requital its image through nation branding (Trujillo, 2012). Columbia pursued the process of enhancing its country image in order to appreciatively place itself internationally.

The course of enriching the national image arises as a quest to attain an auspicious image abroad so that the benefits and images are necessary for the construction of the country's identity. A positive country image is essential if a country is to attract tourists, investors, endured migratory labour, and foreign students. Scott, Laws, and Prideaux (2008) are of the view that global crises that include war, genocide, ethnic and political conflict, disease, poverty, and international terrorism are likely to impact negatively on tourists and investor confidence. An image triggers an attitude. An attitude is a positive or negative assessment response toward an item or a person, shown in one's views, state of mind, or envisaged behaviour (Myers, Kwon, & Forsythe, 2012). National image can be articulated over expansive comprehensions or it can be minimised to a sequence of favourable or unfavourable attitudes depending on the impressions from inhabitants, investors, or visitors (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). Soomro, Hameed, Shakoor, Butt, and Khani (2012) distinguish four types of psychological functions that attitudes meet. These are ego-defensive, value-expressive, knowledge, and instrumental. The proposition on social judgement explains how prevailing attitudes produce falsifications of attitude-affiliated objects and how these judgements mediate attitude change.

Zimbabwe's image, as of the early years of independence in 1980, has been tarnished by the policies and actions of the government. The distributive policies that were instituted by the government during the early days of independence have affected a lot the country's current state of infrastructure. The government settled for free education, and healthy and other utilities were offered for free. This policy left the infrastructure stretched as many people accessed this for free and maintenance costs were not factored in. Zimbabwe's economy was also affected by the issuance of gratuities to war veterans because the gratuities were unbudgeted. This affected the fiscus and the inflation rate increased (McCregor, 2002). Participation of Zimbabwe in the Democratic Republic of Congo war also led to the depreciation of the local currency. The establishment of the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) party triggered another era of political instability in the country. Human rights abuses and police brutality escalated after the formation of the MDC. As the authorities were trying to silence the people who saw the injustice actions of the government.

Zimbabwe experienced a negative image for the past three decades. This negative has resulted in many issues emerging. Tourists arrivals into the country declined, the volume of new foreign investments declined considerably and some companies closed and located in neighbouring countries. The country embarked on country branding in order to correct its image but the results of the nation's branding initiatives have not been positive. The negative image emanated from the political environment obtaining in the country, policies that were enacted by the government, and the lack of investment in physical infrastructure. In this study, we would like to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyse the extent to which political instability has affected Zimbabwe's image.

2. To evaluate the effect of policies on the national image.

3. Establish the consequence of infrastructure on a country image.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 1 gives the introduction, problem statement, and objectives of the study. Section 2 reviews the literature on the country image. Section 3, analyses the methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research on the country image. In Section 4, the results of the study are presented. In Section 5, a discussion of the findings is given and lastly, Section 6 is a conclusion of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Country image

A national image is the wholeness of views, concepts, and impressions that individuals have of a country (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993). A country image is essential in the marketing of a destination or country. It's an all-inclusive paradigm that originates from an attitude towards the observed attributes (Um & Crompton, 1990). A country image denotes the total impression that a country leaves on others (Dichter, 1985). An image is a prejudiced picture of a portion of realism that is detected by an individual or a group of individuals. A national image is appreciatively interrelated with a view of product integrity, pride of possession, product appreciation, enthusiasm to procure from specific nations, and overall product information (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). Factors like economic systems, the history of a country, language, social institutions, language, structure, politics, and culture are strategic issues that need to be considered when branding a nation (Fan, 2006; Ndlovu & Heath, 2013).

The purpose of country branding is to give the country a positive character in the eyes of the transnational community. This aids the country in getting implicit investors, tourists, expatriates, and foreign students. A country that has a positive image benefits its citizens in that it gives them quality and the citizens will be the most sought after by employers globally.

Branding evolved from a way of identifying ownership to including family names as brands of products they manufacture that exhibit quality (Blichfeldt, 2003). Examples of family-owned brands include Ford, Walmart Inc., and BMW (Shtovba,

Shtovba, & Filatova, 2019). A good brand confirms the brand's credibility in the market, emotionally connects target prospects with a product and motivates buyers to make a purchase. Nations are being more business-oriented in response to pressure from global competition (Alvarez & Campo, 2014). Nation branding is a sub-field of place marketing that builds a positive image and positions a nation as the market leader in a certain category (Anholt, 2007; Dinnie, 2008; Handayani & Rashid, 2013). The basic affiliation of a country's name is reflected within the products and services related to that nation moreover impacting choices with respect to investing, purchasing, travelling, and doing business (Giraldi, 2016). Nations branded themselves for time immemorial through currencies, military regalia, national anthems, flags, and belief systems due to administration changes and stereotypes (Fan, 2010; Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006). Authors who oppose this idea of the country's brand have proposed a term like "place brand" (Braun, Karavatzis, & Zenker, 2013). Authors who subscribe to the country's brand image are of see that it is solid and conceivable to actualize. Dinnie (2008) attests that brand image is determined by a country's brand identity which is actualized by suitable communicators.

2.2. Strategic issues that have to be amended so as to progress Zimbabwe's brand

Zimbabwe experienced a negative image due to a failing economic system, political instability, failure to attract foreign direct investment, policy inconsistencies, and dilapidated infrastructure. This led to poverty, inequality, hunger, environmental degradation, and infrastructure dilapidation. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority's "Africa's Paradise" campaign was flawed by depictions of financial issues, sanctions, political flimsiness battles, and conflicting laws and controls (Chibaya, 2013). Components like infrastructure, legislative issues, social institutions, culture, language, economic systems, and the history of a nation are vital issues that ought to be considered when branding a country (Fan, 2006; Ndlovu & Heath, 2013).

Destination branding is additionally a political act, so most organizations have acknowledged national branding in order to facilitate the growth of a nation (Vatahov, 2006; Daszkiewicz, 2017). Zimbabwe is a magnificent tourist destination caught up in a political marsh and insatiability of the political authority (Ndlovu & Heath, 2013). Zimbabwe needs rebranding to provide it with a positive image but ought to create a positive story, to begin with (Abel & LeRoux, 2017). Countries are starting to appreciate that no nation will be able to neglect the way that other countries see it (Durand, 2016). In political turbulence, financial trouble, and social ills, nation branding may be a cure for these issues. This is supported by Eppel (2009) who indicated that the introduction of the Government of National Unity (GNU) rebranded Zimbabwe, brought political stability, promoted trade, and re-established the country's relations with a few Western countries. During the GNU era, there were economic reforms, such as the multi-currency regime and the cash budget, to restore macroeconomic stability and support economic recovery.

The financial services sector also benefitted from the GNU. Total bank deposits grew rapidly reaching US$1.35 billion by December 2009 and US$2.3 billion by September 2010 from US$2976 million as of 31 January 2009 (Chigora & Guzura, 2011). So, legislative issues may be a vital factor, important in country branding. Radu (2015) stipulates that governments are capable of the political and financial advancement of their particular nations. Post-GNU era has been characterised by contradictory political undertones adversely affecting Zimbabwe's image. Based on their personal experiences and information from the media, most Zimbabweans and foreigners recognized that Zimbabwe's image on the international map is negative (Mugobo & Wakeham, 2014). This damaged the country's reputation as a destination for tourists and inward investment. This concurs with Kotler and Gertner (2002) who state that media intensely impacts people's picture approximately places and nations. Mugobo and Wakeham (2014) argue that successful rebranding of the country should involve the transformation of its image. The media should report positively about Zimbabwe through positive stories. Zimbabwe's negative picture globally substantiates the Nation Brand Index (NBI) position of 112[1].

Zimbabwe's infrastructure is the other vital factor that is deteriorating rapidly constraining investment and eroding competitiveness. The infrastructure that includes roads, air transport, rail network, urban water supplies, and electricity needs attention (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). Legal and policy issues are strategic matters that need redress for the country to return to normalcy. The implementation of the Indigenisation Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA) triggered an unintended economic slowdown. The IEEA provides for indigenisation in the mining sector by requiring mining businesses to dispose of 51% equity to designated entities. The indigenization policy demands that all foreign-owned businesses with a share capital over US$500,000 working in Zimbabwe are to give up 51% of their offers to local Zimbabweans (Munzara, 2015). However, there were policy inconsistencies that drove foreign investors away.

Through the laws such as POSA (Public Order and Security Act) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which limit the right of occupants to freedom of discourse and affiliation, a larger part of citizens have been arrested and tormented for not complying with the legislation (Moyo, Osunkunle, & Chabwinja, 2014). The government ought to produce a climate that allows citizens to openly participate and contribute to the country's discourse without fear of being arrested and detained by authorities. This validates Anholt's (2007) view that the creation of a common reason within the nation leads to the establishment of a competitive identity for the nation's brand.

Zimbabwe witnessed social unrest in 1998 and food riots in 2016 characterised by a wave of demonstrations, protests, stay-aways, and national shutdown across most cities and towns. The social unrest emanated from unresolved national grievances over corruption (Hodgkinson, 2019). The Zimbabwe

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[1] https://nation-branding.info/tag/futurebrand/

Republic Police has continually appeared to ignore and hate the law, legal counselors, and legal specialists to a degree that has genuinely affected the course of equity and the run of the show of law in Zimbabwe (Rickard, 2018). Police over and over brutalized government adversaries and faultfinders. One-sided policing polarises Zimbabwean society and increases uncertainty and political pressures (Rickard, 2018). Bribery and degenerate have ended up wild. Agreeing to Transparent International (2014), Zimbabwe was positioned 154 out of 182 nations in terms of corruption. Zimbabwe engaged in fast-track land reform in the late 1990s, significantly affecting the economy (Gillespie & Riddle, 2004).

Following the agrarian reform, Zimbabwe is now dependent upon the donor community's food aid programmes and buying grain from neighbouring countries and abroad to feed its people (Munyoro, Chigunhah, Kaseke, & Kandewo, 2018). Land reform means government activities proposed for a moderately fair-minded redistribution of rural arrive, must be carried out inside a legitimate system and destitute of savagery (Richardson, 2004; Mugobo & Wakeham, 2014). In Zimbabwe, the rights of the White commercial farmers were violated by the war veterans who led farm invasions. Land reform may consist of government-initiated or government-supported real estate property redistribution. The land reform was government initiated through ZANU-PF. The intention was noble at first but later was enormously affected by politics.

Vital issues affecting the Zimbabwe brand relate to the micro and macro environmental factors that include politics, economy, socio-cultural, technological, and legal. This concurs with Fan (2006) and Bivolaru, Andrei, and Purcaroiu (2009) who said nation branding accentuations on the country's whole picture on the worldwide stage encompassing political, economic, and social dimensions.

Thus, the following issues need to be addressed for the image of Zimbabwe to improve:

1. *Political stability:* This ensures confidence in potential investors.

2. *Economic reforms:* Since the Zimbabwean dollar heavily fluctuates and easily loses value.

3. *Policy clarity:* The IEEA needs refinement to remove doubt from the investors as to the sincerity of the policy.

4. *Legal and policy reforms:* To provide alignment of policies to the new Constitution of 2013.

2.3. Political instability and nation branding

Political instability relates to a state where a government has totally become less functional or has been toppled by a coup. Zimbabwe's political instability is characterised by political upheavals, demonstrations during the run-up to elections, and demonstrations during the price increase of basic commodities. Political instability affects nations negatively and limits foreign investment (Jong-A-Pin, 2009). A significant drop in traveler entries in Kenya and Fiji was a result of political instability in those nations (Fletcher & Morakabati, 2008). Political stability motivates investors to invest their funds in a country. At independence Zimbabwe did not

realise absolute peace as it was rocked by the intense conflict between the two revolutionary parties ZAPU and ZANU, resulting in *Gukurahundi* civil war (Rwodzi, 2020). About 20,000 civilians were killed. Zimbabwe has experienced perpetual and fluctuating levels of political violence. The political violence attracted the attention of global players and so Zimbabwe is perceived to be politically unstable and labelled as having a negative image (Rwodzi, 2018).

In Zimbabwe, signs of political instability in the ruling party ZANU-PF and government were vividly shown. Mnangagwa took over the presidency on the back of military intervention in November 2017 (Zimbabwe Independent, 2018). This increased political uncertainty, which affected negatively investor confidence, the country image, and economic activity. Be that as it may, financial dissolve down contributed to the low take-up of household merchandise and administrations, open obligation rose, a reliable adjustment of installments shortage, destitute framework, and outside stuns. All these variables contributed colossally to the negative picture of the nation. Wasteful assessment of organization and control, arrangement inconsistences, lacking remote cash, lacking foundation and prohibitive work directions are the variables that have influenced trade in Zimbabwe (Moyo & Mandizwidza-Moyo, 2017).

2.4. The impacts of a national image on country branding

Environmental aspects, the country's economic circumstances, cultural relations with other nations, labour circumstances, and political system outline what consumers view as a national image (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Allred, Chakraborty, & Miller, 2000; Jenes, 2005). Anholt (2007) concludes that tourism is one of the key components of the national image. Concurring to Kotler and Keller (2015), defining and maintaining a successful image is crucial to investment promotion. Targeted policy to form an attractive national image helps in the protection of a country's national interest and fulfillment of its foreign policy. A country's political image is established within the political exercises of the government as seen by its citizens and foreign audiences. The political image is formed from the interaction of subjects of economic matters, and social and political life within and outside of the nation (Ingenhoff & Klein, 2018).

2.5. Factors that influence the image

Variables that impact the picture incorporate subjective, objective, temporal, and communication components. The political tip-top and the picture of the pioneer of the nation are the subjective variables that help within the arrangement of a national image. The country's political administration, the picture of popular government, or the nearness in social and financial components are the objective factors that are reflected in the arrangement of the formation of the image of the nation (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). The temporal factors include political occasions and social and historical factors that offer assistance in the formation of political forecasting. The communication factors

model sets the national image from a communication point of view that is, it impacts the broadcast to channels. A positive image of a nation is connected to the expectations of citizens and is conditioned by coherent requirements, interests and sociocultural patterns, stereotypes of mass consciousness (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015).

Fostering foreign investment, improving exports, and attracting, are the three aspects that help sell the nation which is the key reason for nation branding (Anholt, 2005). There are four reasons why nations ought to oversee their images, to be specific: 1) to attract foreign investment; 2) to attract skilled inhabitants; 3) to add value to the products produced within the nation, and 4) to appeal to visitors (Kotler et al., 1993; Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). Because countries are competing for investors, exports, and foreign talent, it is of paramount importance that their images are positive in order to create an opportunity for being selected. Country branding relates to a national image inclined intentionally and directed in a positive course for the nation (Nicolescu, 2008). A country's reputation is a collective judgement based on people's impression of a variety of factors including foreign policy, a responsible government, people and culture, tourism, economic strength and brands, products, and exports (Anholt, 2007). Creating effective products and services can be advantageous to the country image. For example, Germany's technological prowess in designing products has given the nation a positive image in building a beneficial image for a certain line of products or services that can be used for branding (Simon & Sullivan, 1999). Individuals see nations as products or brands of which others are strong while others are weak products or brands. A relationship exists between nations and items or brands they create (Fan, 2006).

2.6. Effects of political activities on the country image abroad

Political activities can affect the development of a country. Nations where there is political turmoil, political violence, and political intolerance, primarily lag behind in as far as development is concerned. The effects of political activities are mainly experienced in developing countries. The leaders or heads of these states are mainly interested in wielding power at all costs at the expense of the citizens. As put across by Anholt (2007), who says a negative image of a country's government might harm its national image. A nation that encompasses a history of negative notoriety influences the country's brand and this is exceptionally difficult to alter (Anholt, 2007, p. 273).

2.7. The effect of policies on nation branding

Policies or regulations are guidelines that guarantee that a plan or a goal is followed through without deviations. Nations ought to carry out their external policies from a position of strength and self-interest with the aim of gaining a prominent economic advantage. Country branding is a marketing strategy that targets outside markets and communicates a specific image of national identity to deliver economic interest of the nation such as increasing exports, tourism, investment, and the influx of gifted workforce (Kobierecki & Strozek, 2017). Policy makers should be aware of and avoid inconsistency among the nation's objectives (Kotler, Jatusripitak, & Maesincee, 1999). For nations to enhance competitiveness, government primary policies and government support policies are needed (Kotler et al., 1999).

Government primary policies include:

1. *Investment policies:* These policies persuade foreign companies to help in exports, invest in human capital, and physical capital and in providing technology transfer (Kotler et al., 1999).

2. *Industry-building policies:* Supporting industries create added value enhancement as well as play a crucial role in generating external economies.

3. *Trade policies:* Governments should formulate export promotion strategies and at the same time help direct and indirect export programmes.

Government support policies include:

1. *Macroeconomic policies:* These are a consolidated set of fiscal and monetary policies that are meant to enhance economic stability and continuity. Countries should develop macroeconomic policies that eliminate disadvantages to the country (Kotler et al., 1999).

2. *Infrastructure development policies:* This covers four major areas: a) physical infrastructure and development, b) technology infrastructure and development, c) human capital development, and d) entrepreneurs and small business enterprise development.

3. *Institutional and legal framework policies* (Kotler et al., 1999).

However, countries should not prioritise nation branding campaigns that promote images and narratives over those that may advance basic political, social, and economic changes (Anholt, 2007, p. 74). It is also important that governments should refrain from enacting populist policies that are meant to achieve political mileage at the expense of meaningful development of the country. Such policies are partisan in nature.

2.8. Social judgement theory

The social judgment theory depends on three things anchor, alternatives, and ego-involvement. The person's initial attitude on an issue gives a point of reference against which he or she assesses other opinions. These views can be considered in terms of attitudinal continuum and can be considered as latitudes. The latitude of acceptance which is the range of opinions the person finds acceptable includes the opinion that best characterises his or her position. Thus, if an individual develops an attitude toward a particular country image, he or she is likely to use it as a point of reference when evaluating images of countries. Other theories that relate to the country image include the halo effect theory and attitude formation and change.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design aimed at describing the characteristics of the population and the phenomenon being studied. The study population consisted of politicians, media personnel, community development personnel,

traditional leaders, church leaders, academics, and entrepreneurs. The phenomena being considered are vital issues that have to be attended to in order to improve Zimbabwe's brand image. The study targeted adult respondents aged 20 years and above due to the nature of the matter under study. The research was based on the survey of key informants on country branding issues, where the sample was computed by the Krejcie and Morgan test calculator. In that respect test of 110 was drawn, however, a total of 100 respondents actually participated in the study. The study was conducted in Harare city and Harare peri-urban.

3.1. Data gathering

Data were collected for a period of two months. The inquiry utilized surveys and interviews to gather essential information. The survey comprised a set of five-point Likert scale type of questions utilized to assemble essential information from respondents (partners), whereas the direct meeting was utilized for key sources. Each address on the survey was displayed as an articulation or claim where the respondents would demonstrate the degree of assertion or contradiction. The use of self-administered surveys besides individual interviews brought the preferences of triangulation (Kumar, 2011).

3.2. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) adaptation version 21.0 was utilized to clean and analyse data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the response rate and demographic distribution of the sample. Frequency analysis was used to analyse questions using a five-point Likert scale and these were presented in a percentage format. Data were presented in tables showing different responses on the vital issues that are needed to in order to improve Zimbabwe's brand.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Respondents' disaggregation

The respondents' age ranged from 20 to 61 years. There were 20 respondents of 20–25 years; 20 respondents of 26–30 years; 10 respondents of 31–35 years, and 20 respondents of 36–40 years. There were more younger respondents in this survey compared to those above 46 years old. This implies that many young people are interested in the country image issues because they see the country image as aligned with future employment opportunities from probable investors in the country.

Table 1. Respondents' disaggregation by age

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	20–25 years	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	26–30 years	20	20.0	20.0	40.0
	31–35 years	10	10.0	10.0	50.0
	36–40 years	20	20.0	20.0	70.0
	41–45 years	20	20.0	20.0	90.0
	46–50 years	3	3.0	3.0	93.0
	51–55 years	3	3.0	3.0	96.0
	56–60 years	3	3.0	3.0	99.0
	61+ years	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

4.2. Line of work of respondents

The line of work of respondents was as follows; 16% were politicians; 10% were from the media; 13% belonged to the community development organisations; 5% were traditional leaders; 12% were church leaders; 18% were from the academia and, lastly, 26% were entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs dominated the number of respondents. The least number of respondents were traditional leaders. The respondents have experience in matters relating to nation branding and country image issues.

Table 2. Line of work of respondents

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Politics	16	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Media	10	10.0	10.0	26.0
	Community development	13	13.0	13.0	39.0
	Traditional leadership	5	5.0	5.0	44.0
	Church leadership	12	12.0	12.0	56.0
	Academia	18	18.0	18.0	74.0
	Entrepreneurship	26	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

4.3. Relationship between nation branding and political instability

Fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents strongly agree that Zimbabwe is politically stable and 10% agree that the nation is politically stable; 2% of the respondents were not sure; 46% oppose this idea with the statement that Zimbabwe is politically stable and 28% strongly disagree with this idea.

The findings indicate that Zimbabwe is politically unstable. This is supported by Kanyenze (2004) who highlighted that Zimbabwe has experienced short periods of relative peace since independence in 1980 (Kanyeze, Kondo, Chitambara, & Martens, 2011). Political stability is important as investors will be motivated to invest their funds and tourists are motivated to visit the country (Ankomah, Larson, Roberson, & Rotich, 2012).

Table 3. Country's stability and nation branding

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Agree	10	10.0	10.0	24.0
	Not sure	2	2.0	2.0	26.0
	Disagree	46	46.0	46.0	72.0
	Strongly disagree	28	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

On the effects of political activities on the country image abroad, 35% of the respondents strongly agree that the country's political activities have affected the country image. Whereas 51% agree, 10% of the respondents are not sure, and, lastly, 4% disagree. The results reflect that the country's image abroad is negatively perceived mainly on the basis of political activities, especially during harmonised election times. Anholt (2007) argues that a negative image of a country harms its national image.

Table 4. Impacts of political exercises on the national image abroad

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	86.0
	Not sure	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 5. Effects of political instability on overall brand identity

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	28	28.0	28.0	28.0
	Agree	47	47.0	47.0	75.0
	Not sure	19	19.0	19.0	94.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	98.0
	Strongly disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses regarding the effects of political instability on overall brand identity are as follows: 28% strongly agree, 47% agree, 19% were not sure, 4% disagree, and lastly, 2% strongly disagree. Most of the respondents strongly agree that political instability affects the overall brand identity. This means that products, services, and to some extent, human resources may be affected by the country political instability. Therefore, the country of origin effect might have a bearing on the consumer or investor in selecting a product from a particular country or a country to invest. Thus, investors and consumers who are sensitive to political instability may avoid countries that are politically unstable. Political instability affects growth because it increases policy uncertainty which has negative effects on economic decisions, such as investment and saving (Jalloh, Djatmika, & Putra, 2017).

Table 6. Nation branding and political stability

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	86.0
	Not sure	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

On the statement of whether nation branding is dependent on political stability, the answers are as follows. Those respondents who strongly agree are 35%; 51% of the respondents agreed with the statement; 10% were not sure and, lastly, 4% disagreed. The results reveal that most respondents agree that nation branding is dependent on political stability. Thus, for an effective nation branding initiative to take place in a country, there is a need for a politically stable environment.

Table 7. The political environment and the global image

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	61	61.0	61.0	61.0
	Agree	37	37.0	37.0	98.0
	Not sure	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the statement of whether there is a need to improve the political environment to enhance the global image are as follows: 61% of the respondents strongly agree; 37% agree and 2% of the respondents were not sure. The majority of the respondents strongly agree that there is a need to improve the political environment in order to enhance the country image globally. A toxic political

environment dispels investment. The political environment can change because of the policies and actions of the prevailing government. Political factors may be current and impending legislation, political stability and changes, freedom of speech, and protection and discrimination laws are factors affecting business operation and activities.

Table 8. The image of Zimbabwe

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	86.0
	Not sure	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses on whether Zimbabwe has a negative country image were as follows: 35% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement; 51% agree; 10% are not sure and, lastly, 4% of the respondents disagree with the statement. Most of the respondents strongly agree that Zimbabwe has a negative country image. The country image is dependent on the activities of the government. Most nations are tragically favored with negative affiliations (Wanjiru, 2006, p. 85), and among the greatest challenges are diligent negative pictures (Wanjiru, 2006, p. 86).

Table 9. Country image and nation branding

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	86.0
	Not sure	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the above statement are as follows: 35% of the respondents strongly agree; 51% agree, and 4% disagree. The finding reveals that there is a relationship between the national image and country branding. A national image represents all that a customer attaches to a nation and its inhabitants (Brijs, Bloemer, & Kasper, 2011). A country's brand can significantly shape its economic destiny as well as international competitiveness (Nicolescu, 2008). A national image/reputation is that image or reputation of a nation that can be treated without any concrete activities, whereas a country brand is the image of a nation as a result of the effort made by the country for this purpose.

Table 10. Negative country image affects nation brand

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	86.0
	Not sure	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses on whether the negative country image affects the nation's brand are as follows: 35% of the respondents strongly agree; 51% of the respondents agree, and 4% of the respondents disagree. The findings reveal that a negative country image affects a nation's brand. Therefore, it follows that if a country has a negative image it will be negatively perceived as a brand.

Table 11. Political and country image

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	86.0
	Not sure	10	10.0	10.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the statement of whether political activities affect a country image are as follows: 35% of the respondents strongly agree; 51% of the respondents agree; 10% of the respondents were not sure, and 4% of the respondents disagree. The findings reveal that political activities affect the country image. Activities like violence as a result of political disturbances, police brutality to victims of political violence, *coup d'états*, strikes, and general unrest may affect the image of a country.

Table 12. Country image and national brand identity

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Agree	15	15.0	15.0	24.0
	Not sure	11	11.0	11.0	35.0
	Disagree	33	33.0	33.0	68.0
	Strongly disagree	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the statement that Zimbabwe's country image gives it a favourable national brand identity are as follows: 9% of the respondents strongly agree; 15% of the respondents agree; 11% of the respondents were not sure; 33% disagreed, and 32% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The results reveal that Zimbabwe's country image gives it a favourable national brand identity. Both brand identity and brand image are considered as key elements of improved brand equity among brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, and brand association. Effective brand identity should therefore help in promoting a destination's character and value proposition with emphasis on conveying on a unique character delivering both emotional strength and mental image (Kotler et al., 1993).

Table 13. Human rights policies and a national brand

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	50	50.0	50.0	90.0
	Not sure	3	3.0	3.0	93.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	97.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the statement that human rights policies adversely affect a national brand are as follows: 40% of the respondents strongly agree; 50% of the respondents agree; 3% are not sure, and 4% strongly disagree. The findings reveal that human rights policies adversely affect a nation's brand. Human rights are basic standards of treatment to which all individuals are entitled, regardless of nationality, sex, race, financial status, or religion. Nations that abuse human rights are more likely to earn a negative image. Promoting greater enjoyment of human rights and avoiding practices that violate human rights can contribute to broader respect for the rule of law.

Table 14. Property rights and nation branding

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	44	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Agree	47	47.0	47.0	91.0
	Not sure	3	3.0	3.0	94.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	98.0
	Strongly disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

On whether property rights adversely affect nation branding, the following responses were obtained: 44% of the respondents strongly agreed; 47% agreed; 3% were not sure, and 2% strongly disagreed. The results indicate that property rights affect nation branding. In countries where property rights are not observed, the investors are not interested in investing there, thus, they are afraid of political risks like expropriation, domestication, and nationalisation.

Table 15. The impact of Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act on inward investment

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	50	50.0	50.0	90.0
	Not sure	3	3.0	3.0	93.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	97.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses regarding the impact of Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act negatively on inward investment are as follows: 40% of the respondents strongly agreed; 50% of the respondents agreed; 3% were not sure, and 3% strongly agreed. The findings reveal that the Act had a negative impact on inward investment. Foreign investors developed cold feet to invest in the country due to the hostile law. The Act favoured locals in most sectors and hence the investments mainly come from China following the Look East policy that the country embarked upon after being side-lined by the Western countries.

Table 16. Country and rule of law

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Agree	15	15.0	15.0	23.0
	Not sure	12	12.0	12.0	35.0
	Disagree	37	37.0	37.0	72.0
	Strongly disagree	28	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the above statement of whether Zimbabwe upholds rule of law are as follows: 8% of the respondents strongly agree; 15% of the respondents agree; 12% of the respondents are not sure; 37% of the respondents disagree, and 28% of the respondents strongly disagree. The results reveal that Zimbabwe does not uphold the rule of law. This is evidenced by violations of law by the state examples include "Operation Murambatsvina", the eviction of commercial white farmers from their farms, and many other violations. These violations left many citizens in distress. Vast and radical violations of human rights to property, security of people, well-being, education, shelter, and even livelihood without regard to basic procedural fairness requirements (Hannum, 2016).

Table 17. Country and tolerance for corruption in the public sector

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Agree	14	14.0	14.0	20.0
	Not sure	9	9.0	9.0	29.0
	Disagree	38	38.0	38.0	67.0
	Strongly disagree	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the above statement that Zimbabwe has zero tolerance for corruption in the public sector are as follows: 6% of the respondents strongly agreed; 14% of the respondents agreed; 9% were not sure, and 33% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The results reveal that there is no tolerance for corruption in Zimbabwe's public sector. Zimbabwe has experienced widespread corruption in virtually all sectors of the economy. In the post-1990 period, there have been several allegations of corruption in areas of public procurement, land acquisitions, housing for civil servants, public works, social welfare, mining, and the health and education sectors (Zinyama, 2021).

Table 18. Citizens and the passing new country legislation

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	66.0
	Not sure	16	16.0	16.0	82.0
	Disagree	9	9.0	9.0	91.0
	Strongly disagree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the statement of whether citizens consulted before passing new country legislation are as follows: 26% of the respondents strongly agree; 40% of the respondents agree; 16% are not sure; 9% of the respondents disagree, and 9% of the respondents strongly disagree. The results reveal that citizens are consulted before the passing of new legislation. Before new bills are put into law public hearings are carried out throughout the whole country. It is the timing and to some extent the venues that prevent some citizens to attend.

Table 19. Country and upholding of property rights

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Agree	15	15.0	15.0	24.0
	Not sure	11	11.0	11.0	35.0
	Disagree	33	33.0	33.0	68.0
	Strongly disagree	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the statement that Zimbabwe upholds property rights are as follows: 9% of respondents strongly agree; 15% of the respondents agree; 11% are not sure; 33% of the respondents disagree, and 32% of the respondents strongly disagree. The results suggest that Zimbabwe does not uphold property rights. The major incident that made respondents have this notion is the way the land reform was undertaken.

Table 20. Zimbabwe and media laws

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Agree	16	16.0	16.0	23.0
	Not sure	16	16.0	16.0	39.0
	Disagree	35	35.0	35.0	74.0
	Strongly disagree	26	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

On the statement that Zimbabwe has favourable media laws, the following responses were obtained: 7% of the respondents strongly agree; 16% of respondents agree; 16% are not sure; 35% of the respondents disagree, and 26% strongly disagree. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents disagree with this claim. Zimbabwe has oppressive media laws. The laws restrict the media environment. The laws incorporate the AIPPA, the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, and the Broadcasting Administrations Act. These laws require revoking (Onali & Sanomat, 2018).

Table 21. Media and corruption

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	31	31.0	31.0	31.0
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	65.0
	Not sure	15	15.0	15.0	80.0
	Disagree	11	11.0	11.0	91.0
	Strongly disagree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The following responses were obtained on the above statement that the media points out social ills like corruption: 31% of the respondents strongly agree; 34% of the respondents agree; 15% are not sure; 11% of the respondents disagree, and 9% of respondents strongly disagree. The results confirm that the media points out social ills like corruption. The media informs the executive about corruption in the country, especially in the public service but how this is dealt with remains a worry to the citizens. It seems the law is selectively applied, thus the political elite is left unscathed whereas the general public is incarcerated for corrupt activities.

Table 22. Racism, tribalism, and/or nepotism in Zimbabwe

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	66.0
	Not sure	16	16.0	16.0	82.0
	Disagree	9	9.0	9.0	91.0
	Strongly disagree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The following responses were obtained from the above statement that there is no racism, tribalism, and nepotism in Zimbabwe: 26% of the respondents strongly agree; 40% of the respondents agree; 16% of the respondents are not sure; 9% of the respondents disagree, and 9% of the respondents strongly disagree. The results indicate that there is no racism, tribalism, and nepotism in Zimbabwe. The cases of racism, tribalism, and nepotism are not rife although they exist, they are not widespread.

Table 23. The value of human rights in Zimbabwe

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Agree	32	32.0	32.0	56.0
	Not sure	16	16.0	16.0	72.0
	Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	87.0
	Strongly disagree	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The following responses were obtained from respondents on the statement that Zimbabwe values human rights: 24% of the respondents strongly agree; 32% of the respondents agree; 16% are not sure; 15% disagree, and 13% strongly disagree. The results indicate that Zimbabwe values human rights. This is because the country has a commission that deals with human rights issues, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. This legal entity is in place to investigate human abuses in the country. However, the problem is that this body does not have arresting powers but it only sensitises the cases of abuse and recommends to the legal arms of the state for further action.

Table 24. Social policies and country image

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly agree	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
	Agree	43	43.0	43.0	75.0
	Not sure	18	18.0	18.0	93.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	97.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the above statement of whether revision of social policies improves a country image are as follows: 32% of the respondents strongly agree; 43% of the respondents agree; 18% of the respondents are not sure; 4% of the respondents disagree, and 3% of the respondents strongly disagree.

The findings reveal that the social policies are not favourable to Zimbabwe's image, especially regarding human rights abuses and the bad treatment of political violence victims. Citizens ought to unreservedly take part and contribute to national talk without fear of exploitation. This is proved by Anholt (2007) and Rickard (2018), that the creation of a common reason within the nation leads to the foundation of a competitive character for the country's brand.

Table 25. Power infrastructure and new investment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly agree	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	78.0
	Not sure	9	9.0	9.0	87.0
	Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	94.0
	Strongly disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the above statement that power infrastructure is starved of new investment are as follows: 42% of the respondents strongly agree; 36% of the respondents agree; 9% of the respondents are not sure; 7% of the respondents disagree; 6% of the respondents strongly disagree. The findings indicate that power infrastructure lacks new investment. Zimbabwe's inability to maintain and rehabilitate infrastructure since when the country became immersed in economic and political turmoil in the late 1990s. The neglect of all sectors due to the crises has resulted in a generalised lack of investment in the power and water sectors (Pushak & Briceno-Garmendia, 2011).

Table 26. Erratic power supply and losses in mines

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly agree	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	70.0
	Not sure	12	12.0	12.0	82.0
	Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	90.0
	Strongly disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The responses to the above statement that erratic power supply in mines results in losses are as follows: 36% of the respondents strongly agree; 34% of the respondents agree; 12% are not sure; 8% of the respondents disagree, and 10% of the respondents strongly disagree. The results indicate that erratic power supply in mines results in losses. Mines and other industries have suffered losses due to power outages caused by obsolete power stations in the country. This is so because the machinery in these entities runs continuously on electric power, if interrupted it affects the production targets, hence a loss is derived.

Table 27. Unreliable power supply and risk to the economy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly agree	47	47.0	47.0	47.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	83.0
	Not sure	5	5.0	5.0	88.0
	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	94.0
	Strongly disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The following are responses from the above statement that unreliable power supply poses major risks to the economy: 47% of the respondents strongly agree; 36% of the respondents agree; 5% of the respondents were not sure; 6% disagree, and 6% strongly disagree. The findings reveal that unreliable power supply poses major risks to the economy. The power outages have affected service delivery, especially in hospitals where lives are lost. Also, manufacturing companies have been greatly affected as production has been affected as well as their bottom line.

Table 28. Country and sound infrastructure

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Agree	14	14.0	14.0	19.0
	Not sure	11	11.0	11.0	30.0
	Disagree	39	39.0	39.0	69.0
	Strongly disagree	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The following are responses to the above statement that Zimbabwe has a sound infrastructure: 5% of the respondents strongly agree; 14% of the respondent agree; 11% of the respondents are not sure; 39% of the respondents disagree, and 31% of the respondents strongly disagree. The results indicate that Zimbabwe does not have a sound infrastructure. Zimbabwe's infrastructure is moribund due to a lack of maintenance, repair, and upgrading. With independence, the country inherited functional infrastructure has left to deteriorate over time.

Table 29. Infrastructure development and country image

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Strongly agree	37	37.0	37.0	37.0
	Agree	33	33.0	33.0	70.0
	Not sure	12	12.0	12.0	82.0
	Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	92.0
	Strongly disagree	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The responses to the above statement of whether infrastructure development improves a country image are as follows: 37% of the respondents strongly agree; 33% of the respondents agree; 12% of the respondents are not sure; 10% of the respondents disagree, and 8% of the respondents strongly disagree. The findings indicate that infrastructure development improves the country image.

Infrastructure is deteriorating rapidly constraining investment and eroding competitiveness. Roads, rail networks, urban water supplies, and electricity need attention (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). To lure investment, there is a need for the expansion of power stations, construction of road networks, and upgrade of water and sewer infrastructure (Ruhode, Owei, & Maumbe, 2008; Chitiyo, Dengu, Mbae, & Vandome, 2019).

Infrastructure has been perceived as a component that positively contributes to country branding, there is a need to ensure that the public infrastructure may be a competitive state compared to other countries in the region and globally (Chigora, Kapesa, & Svongoro, 2021).

5. DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the vital issues that are needed in order to improve Zimbabwe's brand. Zimbabwe's brand has suffered from a negative image for almost two decades. Zimbabwe's brand has suffered from a negative image for almost two decades. The respondents agreed in principle that there is a relationship between country branding and political instability. If a country is politically unstable, investors will avoid the nation as an investment destination. Moreover, the government may fail to implement some of the major capital projects in the country. As much attention will be focused on creating a stable political environment. The political environment can change because of the policies and actions of the prevailing government. Political factors may be current and impending legislation, political stability and changes, freedom of speech, protection, and discrimination laws are factors affecting business operations and activities.

It was established that a negative country image affects nation branding. A national image speaks to all that a consumer connects to a nation and its inhabitants (Brijs et al., 2010). A country's brand can significantly shape its financial predetermination as well as universal competitiveness (Nicolescu, 2008). A national image/reputation is that image or reputation of a nation that can be treated without any concrete activities, whereas a country brand is the image of a nation as a result of the efforts made by the country. Therefore, in that respect investors will tend to shun any product related to Zimbabwe thus the associative theory will apply. The country of origin effects tend to play a major role since buyers will evaluate the country's products using the national image. Nations are "products" whose image may influence the choices of investors (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002).

The country's policies were found to have an effect on nation branding. In particular, the media laws, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act. These pieces of legislation gave the country a negative in the global arena. The laws restrict the media environment. The laws incorporate the AIPPA, the Criminal Law (Codification and Change) Act, and the Broadcasting Administrations Act. These laws require revoking (Onali & Sanomat, 2018). Although the country upholds human rights in principle the enforcement part is still lacking. The government established the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission with a mandate to deal with human rights issues. But once the issues have been identified little is done to vigorously act on them.

Lastly, the country's infrastructure is moribund and lacks fiscal attention. Zimbabwe at independence inherited a sound infrastructure but due to neglect and lack of timeous maintenance the infrastructure got dilapidated. Infrastructure has a lot of bearing on investors and visitors to the country. Infrastructure has been recognised as

an element that positively contributes to nation branding, there is a need to ensure that public infrastructure is a competitive state compared to other countries in the region and globally (Chigora, Kapesa, & Svongoro, 2021).

The findings of the study relate to the halo impact and summary theory. There are many theories and models that are utilized to clarify the national image. The halo effect is one of them. Han (1989) distinguishes two major functions of the national image. Buyers may utilize a national image for product evaluation in case they cannot ascertain the quality of the country's product before buying. Hence, the national image indirectly affects product attitudes through inferential beliefs. This is often called the "halo effect". When this effect happens the customer links country-specific associations to products and certain product traits. The second function, "the summary effect" represents associations based on accumulated experience with the product from a nation over time. It is said that the summary effect occurs mostly under conditions of high product-country familiarity. A national image is paramount in that consumers utilize it when choosing products to procure, a nation to invest in, a destination for a holiday, and a host of all other activities.

6. CONCLUSION

For country branding to be fruitful, national brand quality ought to be assessed within the areas of brands, that is, products, policy, culture, people, tourism, and investment (Fan, 2006; Anholt, 2007).

So, brands should elicit considerable consistency in these six areas. It is evident that the infrastructure of a nation has a noteworthy effect on its economic development and its competitiveness in the world market (Quadir, 2013). Inferior infrastructure restrains a country's economic growth and debilitates foreign direct investment (Chirisa, Bandauko, & Kawadza, 2015). Avraham and Ketter (2008) found that negative news coverage includes a strong negative effect on a national image. The development of technology infrastructure gives a nation a competitive advantage (Baker & Ballington, 2002).

Given the findings, it can the concluded that the vital issues that are needed to improve Zimbabwe's brand, incorporate, among other things, creating a stable political environment that is conducive to freedom of speech, movement, and association. This calls for the revoking of a few pieces of legislation that are a cause for inequality and discrimination. The amendment of such policies will empower the engagement and re-engagement process with our erstwhile colonisers to be possible and meaningful. Infrastructure desperately needs urgent attention, in rail, road, power, information communication technology (ICT), and a host of all types of infrastructure needs urgent overhauling or a total makeover.

The study has some limitations: the sample size was small, and also the analysis should have used advanced analysis methods like explanatory factor analysis.

Future researchers should consider nation branding strategies that Zimbabwe can use in order to improve its current negative country image.

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