

**BRAND NAMING PRACTICES:
AN ASSESSMENT OF HOTELS IN ADDIS ABABA**

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ABSTRACT

A brand in general and brand name in particular form the perception or personality consumers attach a company. A brand name is a core indication of the brand. Therefore a careful selection of a brand name could communicate various product or service attributes desired by the producer/provider like ruggedness, sophistication, friendliness or sincerity. For the hotel industry in particular, the brand name is an integral component of all marketing efforts. Research also suggests that a hotel's brand name should be intense and vibrant that is able to relate to multiple level of the senses while at the same time serve as a reminder of pleasant experience. Despite the rapid growth of the hotel industry in Addis Ababa, a peculiar observation suggests that a well thought of branding/brand naming practice is not in place. This research therefore tried to understand the brand naming practice of hotels in Addis Ababa with the aim of improving the practice. A questionnaire was used to gather information about the importance of brand names from owners/managers and the process they used to develop the brand names for their hotels. Another set of questionnaire was used to understand how the brand names of those hotels were perceived by their clients. The findings indicate that owners/managers associate a lot of importance to the brand name but do not actually think guests use it to choose hotels. It was also found that majority of them use no particular process to develop a brand name. On the other hand, guests indicated that brand name is very helpful for the selection of a hotel but is does not particularly apply to the hotels they selected implying that the names being developed by owners/management are not distinctive enough to assist in the selection of a hotel by guests.

1. Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The concept of brands and branding has been around for a long time. It cannot however be said that all present-day businesses have mastered it. A brand is name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers (American Marketing Association). Chiaravalle and Schenck(2015, p.12) on the other hand defines it as “a promise about who you are and what benefits you deliver that gets reinforced every time people come in contact with any facet of you or your business”. A brand comprises tangible and intangible features of a business that it stands for. A successful brand is an identifiable product or services that customers perceive as relevant or unique. A brand is the sum total of all functional and emotional assets that differentiate it among the competition and distinguish it in the audience’s mind. A brand therefore develops characters in the minds of its audience such as a brand identity which is the visual and verbal articulation of a brand, brand image the customer’s beliefs about what the brand stands for, brand equity which is the value of the brand as an asset (Landa, 2006).

Branding on the other hand is a process in which the organization uses a name, phrase, design, symbols, or combination of these to identify its products and distinguish them from those of competitors (Kerin and Hartley,2013). It include the entire development process of creating a brand, brand name, brand identity, and, in some cases, brand advertising(Landa, 2006).

A brand is a valuable asset for any company that its product or service marketing success hangs on it. A well-established brand is an intangible asset creating a strategic advantage. A successful brand communicates a message about the quality, cost, performance and distinction from other

competing products. For the customer a brand must be reassuring or risk minimizing which in return improves the likelihood of purchase.

Brands in general influence or form the perception or personality consumers attach to it. According to Murphy (1987) on Wai-sum Siu and Yi Zhang (n.d.), a brand name is a core indication of the brand. Klink and Athaide (2012) on the other hand has indicated that a careful selection of a brand name could communicate various product or service attributes desired by the producer/provider like ruggedness, sophistication, friendliness or sincerity. Understanding the significance of brand names, many research have attempted to develop a guideline to develop the appropriate brand name ((Klink, 1999; Klink, 2000; Klink and Athaide, 2012; Siu and Zhang, n.d.; Shipley, Hooley, and Wallace, 1988; Kohli and LaBahn, 1997). Research also suggests the consideration of the firm's marketing strategy in developing a brand name.

The choice of a brand name also applied to the hospitality industry where perception and image are of vital importance. Research also suggests that a hotel's brand name should be intense and vibrant that is able to relate to multiple level of the senses while at the same time serve as a reminder of pleasant experience (O'Neill and Mattila, 2010).

Yibeltal (2014) indicates that Addis Ababa is the third largest host of diplomatic missions and UN organizations stressing the need to a hotel industry ready to serve this community. The General Assembly of the European Council on Tourism and Trade (ECTT) has also recently selected Ethiopia as World Best Tourist Destination for 2015 (MOCT, 2015). Addis Ababa being the only gate way to Ethiopia for the international community, this brings significant traffic to Hotels in Addis Ababa.

According to Addis Ababa City Administration Culture and Tourism Bureau, the hotel industry in Addis Ababa at its current level have 128 star level hotels which are not yet given their stars pending the final outcome of the current rating attempt. The industry can be considered booming with a 20% growth from last year. Twenty five newly constructed hotels have joined the industry in the last two years only (AACA Culture and Tourism). The primary market these hotels tend to serve is foreign nationals. Hence, the role of branding and brand image to these hotels is of significant importance. The brand name is an integral component of their branding efforts. A high level of observation around the city however shows mostly functional brand names that mean more to the owners themselves than the potential customers. Foreign sounding hotel brand names are also plenty.

The aim of this research was therefore to explore the brand naming practice of these hotels with an intention of understanding the thinking behind the brand names. The research assessed the perceived importance of brand names by the hotel management, explored the brand naming process followed, and observed the performance of the brand names through the eye of customers' with an aim of understanding their impact.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

O'Neill and Mattila (2010) claim that the value of brand names in hospitality industry is undisputed. Brand name has been a well endorsed component of the marketing strategy in the hotel industry. O'Neill and Mattila (2010) further suggest a brand name should be intense and vibrant that is able to relate to multiple levels of the senses while at the same time serve as a reminder of pleasant experience. A brand names ability to expand geographically is another consideration. Research in the area of sound symbolism also suggests that a carefully constructed brand name brings inherent strength to a brand and adds other desirable characters to services.

The highly expanding hotel industry in Addis Ababa is seeing lots of new brand names every day. In contrast to research findings and guidelines, a simple stroll in the streets of Addis Ababa shows hotel brand names such as 'Bed and Breakfast Hotel', 'KZ Hotel', 'NT International Hotel', 'Top Ten Hotel' ... where the intension of the names is just to signal that the facility is a hotel. Such types of hotel names are neither catchy nor does not speak about the character of the hotel. For example, out of a sample of hotel names considered majority are names of historic places, names of individuals and towns (Lalibela Hotel, Kaleb Hotel, Pacific Hotel, Dessie Hotel, Washington Hotel). Although one cannot claim an inherent problem in those brand names, it signals a loss of great opportunity to develop a brand name that could grow to become the hotel's strong asset while at the same time raises the question about the process followed in developing those brand names.

This research tried to answer the following questions:

- What was the level of importance placed on the brand naming by the management or owners of those hotels?
- What was the process followed in developing hotel brand names?
- How have the brand names been perceived by customers' of those hotels?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In light of the importance of image in general and brand name in particular in the hospitality industry, this research in general intended to understand the brand naming practice of owners or managers of hotels in Addis Ababa with the aim of improving the practice.

Further, the specific objectives of this research were to:

- Understand the degree of importance the owners or management placed on the role of a brand name
- Identify the brand name development process used
- Explore the performance of the brand name from the view point of the customers' of those hotels

1.4 Significance of the Research

Given the lack of research in the area of brand names, particularly in this part of the world, this research was the first to explore the practice of developing brand names in the hotel industry. Further, understanding brand naming process as well as how brands were perceived by customers, will enable hotel owners and brand managers to better connect or influence their existing and potential customers. The research also created an opportunity to identify improvement areas and maximize the opportunity of creating a brand name that can assist the hotels' image and possibly expand further geographically as well as in to other products. The research can also serve as a base for further research in the area.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Research in to brand names covers linguistics and the attempt to create a better sounding brand name. Sound symbolism that looks at the direct linkage between sound and meaning is also explored in relation to brand names. The effect of the service provided on the perception of the brand name is also another study area. The scope of this study however was limited to the considerations taken or process used in developing a brand name for new hotels in Addis Ababa. The researcher was therefore only able to draw inference on the care taken or rigorousness of the methodology employed in developing the brand name and not the quality of the brand names.

On the other side, finding the primarily responsible resources that are responsible for the development of the brand names is a big challenge. Hence the quality of the findings was limited to the extent of marketing managers understanding of how the brand name was developed.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The first chapter begins with an introduction to the study and goes on to discuss the problem statement that initiated the researcher to conduct the study. The first chapter also covers the objective of the study along with other relevant considerations such as the significance of the study, as well as the scope and limitation. The second chapter covers a review of literature, canvassing the issue followed by the third chapter presenting the methodology used. the fourth chapter presents the findings and discussed their implication which lead to the conclusions and recommendations made in chapter five.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1.Brand

Landa (2006, p 4) define a brand as “... a brand is a proprietary name for a product, service, or group is used to denote a company, organization, corporation, social cause, issue, or political group”. According to Kotler et al. (2005, p. 315) a brand comprises a name, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of these elements that are expected to differentiate a product or services from other similar products (Oh and Pizam, 2008). Landa (2006) differentiates between the three integrated meanings of a brand as:

- The sum total of all characteristics of the product, service, or group, including its physical features, its emotional assets, and its cultural and emotional associations;
- The brand identity as applied to a single product or service, an extended family of products or services, or a group; and
- The ongoing perception by the audience (consumer or public) of the brand.

Lim and O'Cass 2001 cited on Hosany, et al. (2006) agree by saying that a strong brand can differentiate a product from its competitors and help the customer make easy decisions that could reduce cost of searching the appropriate product. Consumers place greater confidence in a particular brand than another brand enhancing loyalty and willingness to pay a higher price for the brand. It is therefore possible to conclude that a brand is a mean of maintaining relationship with the consumer, a promise to the consumer and source of products and services.

Chiaravalle and Schenck(2015) further list the following as a must be known terms:

Brand identity: The name and visual marks that present the brand, usually in the form of a logo, symbol, or unique typestyle, as well as all other identifying elements including colors, package shape, even sounds and smells associated with the brand.

Brand image: The beliefs about what the brand is and what it stands for that exist in the customer's mind as a result of all encounters, associations, and experiences with any aspect of your business or organization.

Brand position: how the brand fits in with and relates to various other brands within the competitive market.

Brand management: Controlling the presentation of the brand identity, message, and promise across your entire organization and through all communication channels, and protecting your brand identity against infringement or misuse.

2.2.Branding

Branding on the other hand is a process in which the organization uses a name, phrase, design, symbols, or combination of these to identify its products and distinguish them from those of competitors. Branding is therefore practically a marketing function that attempts to build a competitive advantage (Holt, 2003a). Branding has grown to include the entire development process of creating a brand, brand name, brand identity, and, in some cases, brand advertising.

2.3.Brand Names

A brand name is any word, device (design, sound, shape, or color), or combination of these used to distinguish a seller's products or services. Some brand names can be spoken while others cannot. A brand name assists a consumer in the process of recalling a brand or maintaining a favorable image to it. Research by Klink and Athaide (2012) has indicated that

consumers develop a non-neutral opinion about a product based on the brand name. Usunier and Shaner (2002) also note influence of the linguistic content of the brand name on its verbal, auditory and intellectual meaning and its interpretation by consumers. A brand name is the first experience of a brand, a good brand name can communicate with customers in a positive way and identify the service offering. A brand name is a powerful source of identity and carry an incorporated virtue in to the brand. It also differentiates a firm from its competitors, raise curiosity, and help the consumer memorize the brand. Failing to do a good job in the brand naming process, if not misleading the customer, it will fail to make a positive impression. It should also be understood that if a product or a service fails to deliver the attributes evoked in the name, it could potentially backfire.

2.4.Brand Name Selection Process

The development of a brand name should consider the core value of the organization and the characteristics it plans to project. Failing to develop a brand name right the first time might entail an expensive rebranding exercise at a later stage of the life of the company. The name should be able to connect with its target audience rather than just the personal test of the owner. The use of descriptive and abstract names are the two broader classifications of brand names.

Descriptive Names: these are names that clearly describe the goods or services being offered. According to Clifton and Simmons (2003), the use of a descriptive or abstract brand names depends on the history, culture of the organization, and the competitive situation. While descriptive names are the easiest to come up with and easily make sense, their usage and expansion to other products and geographic areas could be very constraining. For example a descriptive name that is well accepted in one region may

have difficulty getting acceptance due inability to relate to its meaning. Descriptive names are often preferable if the company runs on a limited marketing budget.

Fanciful/abstract names: this kind of names are made up or a real name used out of context. Clifton and Simmons (2003)also explains that abstract brand names are difficult to introduce but could prove to be more memorable and relatively easy to expand in to other products and geographic area. Such names are easy to trade mark because of their distinctiveness however it would require proper marketing to help customer connect with the name(Catchword, 2012).

According to Catchword (2012) a brand name could originate from other languages, acronyms, numbers or a construction from a combination of words. Developing new acronyms of an already existing brand name could possibly result in a loss of brand personality and character. Clifton and Simmons (2003)also share the opinion that brand names should be expandable. Other criteria include memorability, enable customers understand what the product/service is about, easily pronounceable on other languages as well, and have no negative connotation in other languages.

Brand naming could be a very long and expensive processs for some. For example, the use of a creative development company could be very expensive. The brand naming processs indictaes the methodical approach implimented to come up with the name. The process should follow a degree of deliberation and testing to assure the proper name is chossen. McNeal and Zeren (1981) studied the process deployed by copmpanies in developing a band name. Their study outlined a six step process followed by most. Their study noted the development of branding objective and branding criteria. Kohli and LaBahn (1997) further explored the process and came up with a more condensed five stage process. Their study identified that most managers use a formalized

process but frequently undermined a thorough adherence to it. In their conclusion they recommended the the following (figure 1) five step process to help managers undertake the naming properly.

Step 1: Set out clear objective for the naming process that reflects the company's desider for the brand.

Step 2: Develop as many candidate names as possible to allow proper selection.

Step 3: Conduct thorough evaluation of the candidate names.

Step 4: Systematically apply the objective identified in step one to choose the final brand name.

Step 5: Register the trademark. Consider few alternative names from the final pool in case of rejection.

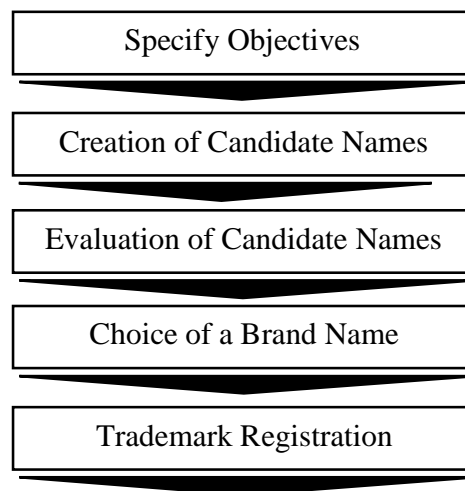


Figure 2: The brand name development process (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997)

2.5.Brand Name in the Hotel Industry

Hospitality service providers need to understand that their value propositions to their customers are communicated at every opportunity of interaction with their customers. Hospitality consumers show a clear influence by the brands and brand images and this affects the consumer behavior as it reduces the perceived risk incorporated into their hospitality purchases (Williams, 2002). For quite some time now, the concept of branding has been center stage to the hotel industry's marketing effort. For hotels, developing a brand that serves different segments has become a common experience. Permarupan et al. (2013) has revealed brand strength of hotels will provide benefit to their customers such as greater customer loyalty in choosing a hotel (Keller, 2001).

In today's dynamic hotel market place where traditional distribution channels are under threat from the online re-sellers and from new brands appearing all the time, it becomes more imperative for a hotel to build and strengthen its own brand in order to keep the hotel at the top of the traveler's mind and minimize the threat for the hotel to be commoditized and equalized with its competitors (Churchill, 2005).

Kayaman and Arasli (2007) further indicate brand names are so important in the hotel industry that majority of hotels prefer to join a well recognized hotel brands rather than be independent. This allows them to beat their rivals as well as charge a premium price over and above the other competitors.

2.6.Empirical Research in to Brand Naming Process

There are various kinds of research conducted in the area of branding and the process of brand name development. Although none of the researches conducted deny the relevance of brand

naming and the use of the right process, the empirical research conducted can be observed to follow three different issues or perspectives. Some researchers have looked at the impact of efficient marketing or the quality of service provided by the hotel on the brand name itself (Permarupanet al. 2013; Kayaman and Arasli, 2007). Other researchers have studied if brand names can carry the desired product attributes from a sound symbolism perspective (Klink, 1999; Klink, 2000; Klink and Athaide, 2012). The third groups of researchers have studied the actual processes followed in the development of a brand name (Siu and Zhang, n.d.; Shipley, Hooley, and Wallace, 1988; and Kohli and LaBahn, 1997).

2.6.1. Study in to Brand Names and the Process of Naming

Research in to the process of developing a brand name is a relatively less researched area (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997). One of the pioneers in the area were McNeal and Zeren (1981) who assessed the practice of 82 brand managers to come up with the process used. Shipley, Hooley, and Wallace (1988) followed suite and did a minor extension of the first model by McNeal and Zeren (1981). Kohli and LaBahn (1997) further explored the process and came up with a more condensed five stage process. Their study identified that most managers use a formalized process but frequently undermined a strict adhernace to it. The five steps in their process include specifying brand objective, develop candidate names, evaluate candidate names, choose the brand name and register it.

Another study that looked at Chinese enterprises have identified a four step approch(Siu and Zhang, n.d.).The steps idetified were generating brand names, screening brand names, choosing brand names and apply for registration. The research identified that the differnce in approch could be the result of differences in institutional factors, legal system or socio-cultural values. Siu and Zhang (n.d.) further indicate that the selection of brand names is based on the

consideration of cultural, linguistic and marketing potential. Cultural dimensions such as 'good luck' and 'foreign sounding' were noted to be of importance to Chinese enterprises.

2.6.2. Study in to Brand Names and Sound Symbolism

Another area of brand naming research is sound symbolism that looks at the direct linkage between sound and meaning. Plenty of research has been done in this area. For example, Klink (1999) conducted a research to see if how a brand name sounds could communicate an inherent product feature. Their study concluded that a direct relationship existed between sound and meaning. For instance a brand name with higher acoustic frequency was perceived to be smaller, faster, thinner and lighter. Such relationship was observed to hold not only for variety of products but also for service. Similarly, a research by Klink and Athaide (2012) also concluded that 'ruggedness' is better created by using vowels at the back than in the front. It also concluded that 'sophistication' and 'sincerity' are better communicated by brand names with front vowels rather than back vowels.

Such researches imply that while developing a brand name, the character or personality of the product desired to be communicated at the onset should be kept in mind. In this regard, carefully considering the brand name influences on the future of the product.

2.6.3. Study in to Brand Names and Quality of Service

Permarupan et al. (2013) argue that a brand is a valuable resource for a hotel in differentiating it from others. However, he claimed that a brand's strength is a reflection of the service. In line with this, his research evaluated what customers value the most in selection of a hotel from the brand, the service or the strategy used to influence customers. Permarupan et al. (2013) based on a survey result of 200 tourists, he concluded that the service quality weight more than the brand.

Similarly, Kayaman and Arasli(2007) also conducted a research to evaluate the impact of the seven dimensions of service quality on the customers' perception of the brand image. Their results indicated that the service quality reflects a lot on the brand.

Such findings are agreeable and make sense. The choice of a hotel for its service rather than its brand based on previous experience of the service is a common practice. However, such research does not explain the choice of hotels by tourists or foreigners with no prior knowledge the hotel industry in their destination area.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, population, the sampling technique and data collection instruments along with the method of analysis that was implemented in conducting this research.

3.1 Research Design

Research in to brand names are very few. The researcher has found no other similar research in the hotel industry late alone an Ethiopian case. In light of this, the researcher was not able to engage in test of hypothesis or model formulation to explore the issue. On the other hand, a descriptive research is generally used whenever the characteristics of a population are either unknown or partially known (Kumar and Singh, 2006). Taking the two points in mind, the research was designed as a descriptive research using both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study covers hotels in Addis Ababa city. According to the Addis Ababa City office of hotel and tourism, Addis Ababa currently have 125 registered star level hotels. Of these, about 5 are international brands or hotel chains and hence not part of the study. Since the study was attempting to explore the methodologies used in the development of those hotels' brand names, subjects of the study were required to provide their account of the naming process they used. This implied that hotels which has been in the industry for long or those that had changed hands (brand naming not done by them) could not be able to provide the information regarding the brand naming. Hence the research population considered was new hotels that

joined the industry in the last two years. According to AACA Culture and Tourism, 25 new hotels have joined the industry in 2007 while 37 new hotels registered in 2006.

The research also tried to see the perception of guests on the brands names of those hotels. Accordingly, the population included guests staying at these hotels.

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

As described above the brand naming practice covered relatively new hotels in the industry that have developed their brand names recently. This gave us 62 hotels that joined the industry in the last two years satisfying the criteria. Pilot testing of the instrument indicated that much variability was not to be expected between different hotels. The researcher therefore decided no more than 25 hotels (40%) were required for this study. Due to the lack of city wide map showing geographic location of each hotel coupled with proximity challenges to the researcher, the sampling method used was a non-probability sampling method, particularly a convenience sampling where hotels located in the metropolitan area was considered.

The second group of respondents were customers' of those hotels. The customers were considered for the purpose of providing their perception of the hotel's brand name. For a descriptive study with a categorical data, Berkowitz and Lynch (n.d.) suggested the use of the formula $N = 1/E^2$ (where E stands for allowable margin of error). Accordingly, for 95% confidence with a 10% margin of error, the suggested sample size was 100. It was observed that hotels were not willing and eager to allow contact with their guests. The researcher therefore used a non-probability sampling method of convenience to collect data from those that were available. Kumar (2006) also confirms that for a descriptive study with a non-probability sampling design, sampling strategy do not play a significant role.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected using two sets of questionnaires developed. For the purpose of collecting information about the process used for the development of brand names, a questionnaire was developed based on McNeal and Zeren (1981) study of brand naming process. The second set of questionnaires that was delivered to customers of those hotels was developed by the researcher based on points raised in the first set of questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions relating to their perception of the brand name of the hotel they are staying at.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

The development of those questionnaires by the researcher raises the issue of validity and reliability. Reliability, according to Polit & Hungler (1999) refers to the degree of consistency with which the instrument measures an attribute. One way of assuring the reliability of the instrument is Cronbach's Alpha. The researcher therefore used Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability. Validity on the other hand looks at the instrument has measured what it sets out to measure. The fact that the questionnaire was developed based on McNeal and Zeren (1981) study answers the issue of validity but further principal component analysis was partially done to measure the validity of the construct.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze and characterize the demography of the participants. In addition chi-square test was implemented to see if the demographic variables had a statistically significant impact on the subjects' perception of importance of brand names. Further, since the research was designed to be a descriptive research, descriptive statistics was further used to summarize the results and derive inferences. Comparison of findings to the findings of previous empirical studies was also employed to derive inferences.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The objective of the data collection instruments (questionnaire and interview) are solely intended to understand the thinking and process used behind the brand names we see in the hotel industry in Addis Ababa. To this end, only relevant questions were asked. All responses were kept confidential unless revealing them is relevant upon which the consent of the subject is acquired. If the participating hotels/individuals are interested, a version of the finding could be shared with them.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The study targeted 25 newly (recently) set up hotels and 100 of their customers. Accordingly, the questionnaires were distributed to twenty five recently established Hotels of which about 22 returned a completed questionnaire resulting in 88% rate of return. On the other hand 100 customers were targeted of which 85% completed the questionnaire.

4.1.1. Background Information

With the intention of gathering only relevant back ground information, only three demographic questions were raised to the participants asking their level of education, their overall work experience and their particular experience relating to marketing.

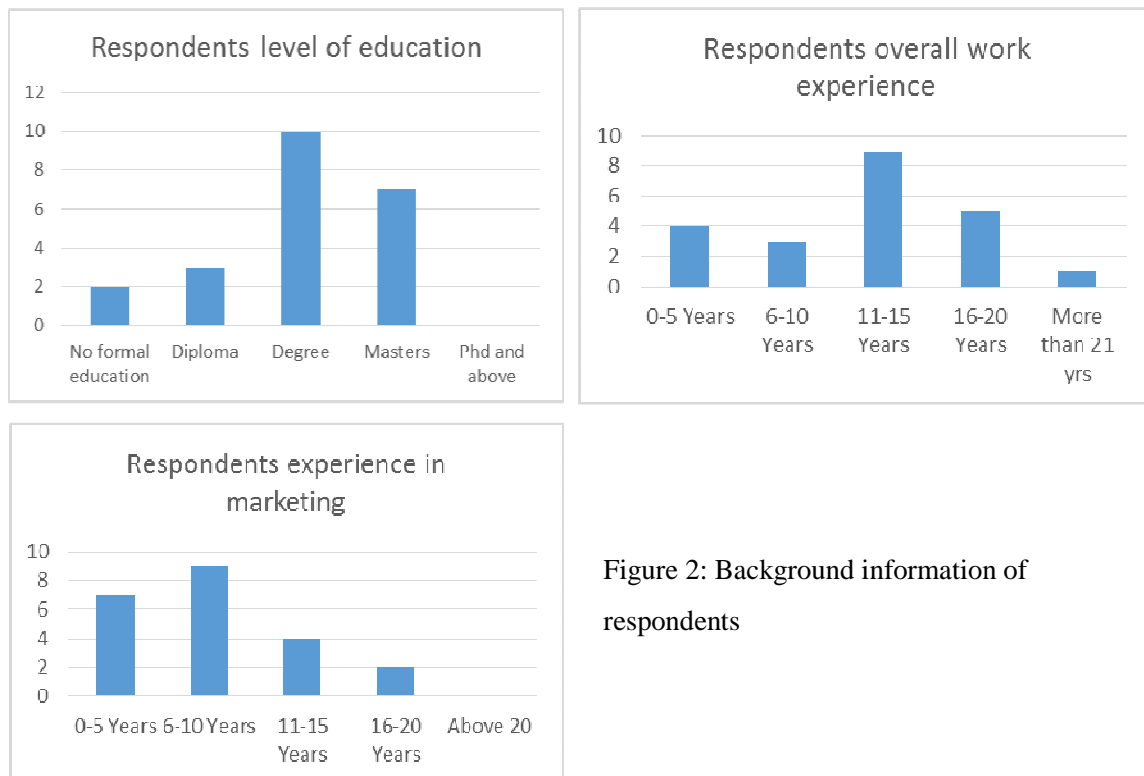


Figure 2: Background information of respondents

This three questions were intentionally forwarded to see if either their education, general work experience, or particular marketing related experience has influenced their opinions regarding brand name development. Most respondents had first degree, followed by masters. 40.5 % had an overall work experience between 11 – 15 years and 22.7 % had between 16 – 20 years of overall work experience. Regarding experience in marketing, more than 72% of the respondents had less than ten years of experience (See figure 1 above).

One of the main issues of interest in this study was the level of importance respondents placed on brand name. To see if the any of the background information had any impact on this variable, cross tabulation along with chi-square test was conducted. None of the testes indicated any statistically significant difference in the importance of brand name due to the background data (see Table 1). This implies that the respondents reply to questions regarding the brand name did not show a statistically meaningful difference due to the respondents’ difference in background information such as education, work experience or experience in marketing.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.884 ^a	9	.094
Likelihood Ratio	16.558	9	.056
Linear-by-Linear Association	.138	1	.710
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 16 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

Table 1: Result of Chi-Square Test for significance of background information

4.1.2. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

The research used two sets of questionnaires, one for the Hotels and the other for the customers of the Hotels. The questionnaire delivered to the Hotels included eight questions that varied

between choices and Likert scale questions. Factor analysis was done for the question six which had seven sub-questions with a five point Likert scale and question eight with thirteen sub-questions with a five point Likert scale.

Principal component analysis was conducted on the seven sub-questions under question six to see if each of them are measuring the same aspect of the issues. The PCA with varimax rotation resulted only one component was extracted indicating a single dimension. Similarly, for the thirteen dimensions under question 8, eleven of the dimensions load on the same dimension with the exception of three items. We can therefore assume that the instrument is valid.

Component Matrix^a	
	Component
	1
EstablishImage	.897
Personal sentiment	.754
Product differentiation	.923
Market positioning	.844
Express character	.888
Market segmentation	.810
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Table 2: Result of PCA for naming criteria

Rotated Component Matrix^a			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Memorable			.891
Personal Interest		.883	
Desired Image		-.870	
Market position	.811		
Promotable	.813		
Modern	.947		
Attractive	.890		
Name availability	.899		
Persuasive	.923		
Description of service	.871		
Understandable	.924		
Ease of pronunciation	.667		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Table 3: Result of PCA for evaluation criteria

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the instrument. Accordingly an alpha of 0.927 was observed which is well beyond the acceptable value of 0.7 (Stien, 2001). Hence we can assume that the instrument used was reliable.

4.1.3. Analysis of importance of brand name and processes used

The research set out with the objective of looking into three issues; understand the degree of importance the owners or management placed on the role of a brand name, identify the brand name development process used if any as well as explore the performance of these brand names from the view point of the customers' of those hotels.

4.1.3.1 Importance brand name for owners or management

One of the primary objectives of the research was to see what level of importance hotel owners or marketing managers responsible for the brand name attach to it. Owners/marketing managers were asked to rate the importance of 'brand name' for their success and if a brand name affects customers' choice of a hotel on a five point Likert scale ranging from none to very high. 7(31%) think brand name is very important for their success followed by 7(31.8%) who thinks it has high importance. In contrast to this however, a total of 18 (81.8%) of them think customers' choice of a hotel is not affected, has very little or little effected by the brand name.

	None	Very Little	Little	High	Very High
Importance of brand name for their success	-	3 (13.6%)	5 (22.7%)	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)
Effect of brand name on customers' choice of a hotel	7 (31.8%)	5 (22.7%)	6 (27.3%)	1 (4.5%)	3 (13.6%)

Table 4: Importance and effect of brand name

4.1.3.2 Use of a brand name development process

The second important question this research raised was the use of a brand name development process in developing a brand name. Respondents were asked if they have used a specific process in developing their brand name. The result shows only 40.9% used a process while 59.1% did not use a process.

This point was further explored to see if the respondents have used any element of a name development process with or without considering them as a process. They were given a yes or no choice for each activity.

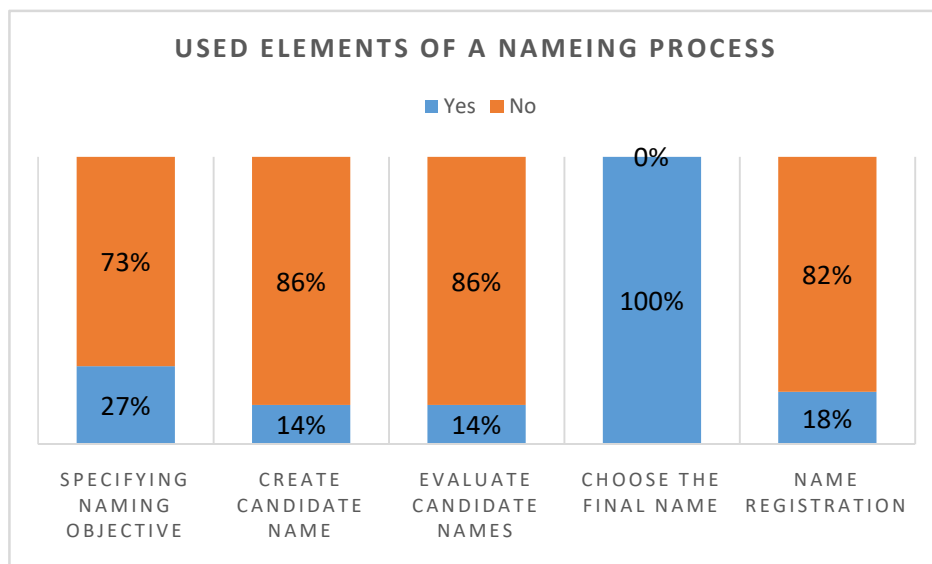


Figure 3: Use of elements of the naming process

As can be seen in figure 2 above, only 27% of the respondents developed a naming objective before they developed their brand name. Development of candidate names as well as evaluation of candidate names were not also a popular activity with only 14% of respondents indicating they have done both. The choice of a final name however done by all respondents whether it was preceded by any activity or not. Registration of the brand name is another activity that is not done by most where only 18% indicating they have done it.

Although most had indicated that they have not developed a naming criteria, all respondents were asked to rate potential naming criteria to see what they think is relevant in developing a brand name. In a five point Likert scale indicating a criteria being not useful, slightly useful, useful, very useful as well as extremely useful, expressing a character was rated the highest with a mean of 4 and sd of 1.6. Establishing image and product differentiation were second highest with a mean of 3.9 and sd of 1.29 and 1.57 respectively (see table 5 below); the three can therefore be considered very useful criteria in brand name development.

	Naming criteria	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Establishing Image	3.95	1.29
2	Personal sentiment	3.27	1.16
3	Product differentiation	3.90	1.57
4	Market positioning	2.95	1.39
5	Express desired character	4.00	1.69
6	Marketsegmentation	3.00	1.66
7	Carriesovertotherlanguages	3.14	0.99

Table 5: Rating of potential naming criteria

Although the use of a process was seen to be very minimal, the naming criteria is different from evaluation of the available alternatives. Similarly, a five point Likert scale indicating a potential evaluation points from not useful, slightly useful, useful, very useful to extremely useful were given to the respondents. Once the potential name is known, evaluating the name from the perspective of establishing image, the name's availability and attractiveness were considered very useful and extremely useful with a mean of 4.72, 4.40 and 4.10 respectively.

		Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Memorable	3.86	0.83
2	Personalinterest	2.63	0.90
3	Establishing a particular image	4.72	0.45
4	Market positioning	3.95	1.39
5	Promotable	3.81	1.25
6	Modern	3.68	1.08
7	Attractive	4.18	1.25
8	Nameavailability	4.40	1.18
9	Persuasive	4.36	1.17
10	Description of service	3.68	1.46
11	Understandable	3.86	1.24
12	Pronunciation	3.22	1.19

Table 6: Rating of proposed brand name evaluation criteria

Another element of the naming process explored was the source of the brand name. Here, except a single respondent, all indicated that the idea for the name came from the individual creation of the owner. This might suggest a lack of creativity, a fresh look or professional touch on the brand names developed.

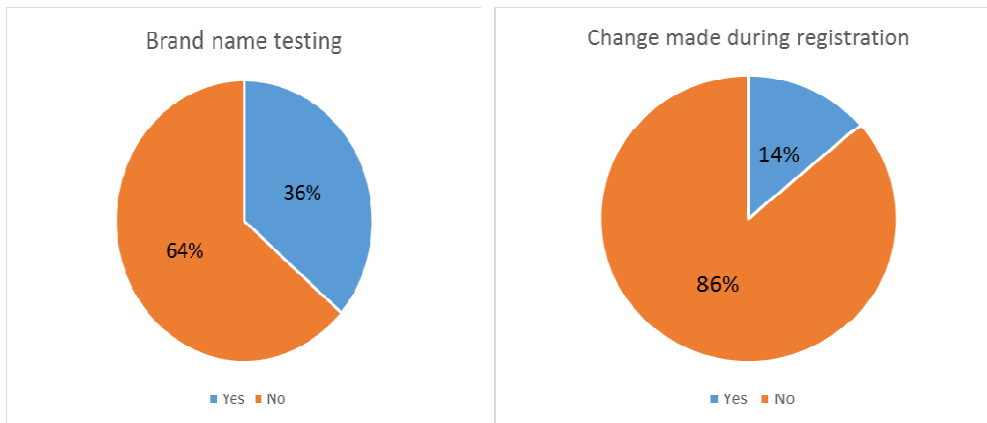


Figure 4: Brand name testing and changes made during testing

Brand name testing was also looked at within the process of brand name development. The chart above indicates that only 36% of the respondents conducted testing of the brand name. To see if difficulty was encountered in the registration process, only 3 respondents were forced to make changes during registration. Here it should be kept in mind that the majority do not go for registration.

4.1.3.3 Perception of customers' on the brand names

Another objective of this research was to look at how the brand names were doing from the perspective of the guests of those hotels. Those customers were asked if a brand name matters to them in general as well as the particular case of the hotel they are staying at. Particularly, they were asked how useful a 'brand name' is in their choice of a hotel in general and in the selection of the particular hotel they were staying at. A five point Likert scale was given to the guests to rate from not useful, slightly useful, useful, very useful up to extremely useful.

	Not useful	Slightly useful	Useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
Importance of brand name in selection of a hotel	7.0	12.0	25.0	31.0	7.0
	8.5%	14.6%	30.5%	37.5%	8.5%
Importance of brand name in the selection of the hotel they are staying at	21.0	37.0	4.0	16.0	4.0
	25.61%	45.12%	4.88%	19.51%	4.88%

Table 7: Importance of brand name in hotel selection for guests

Majority (37.5%) indicated that brand name is very useful in selection of a hotel in general followed by 30.5% who think it is useful. In contrast to this however, when asked if the brand name was important in the selection of the hotel they are staying at, 45.12% said it was slightly useful and 25.61% said it was not useful.

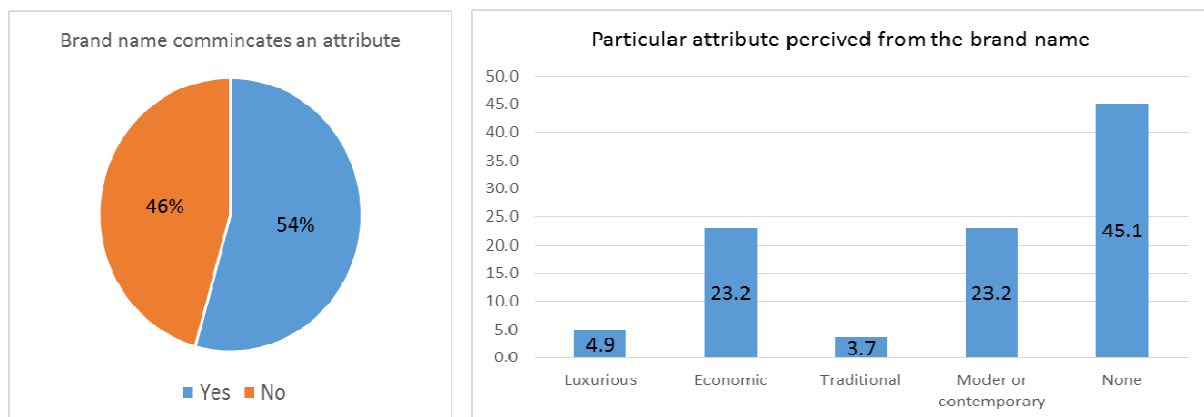


Figure 5: Guests' perception of attributes from the brand name

The next question raised to the guests was if the brand name of the hotel they are staying at was able to communicate any kind of attribute to them. A significant portion (54%) indicated it did communicate an attribute to them. Keeping in mind 46% of them didn't feel any attribute, the follow up question of what kind of attribute was perceived by those who did was forwarded. From the brand name, those who perceived economic hotel and modern/contemporary hotel were similarly 23.2%. Those who felt luxurious from the brand name were only 4.9%.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Easy to recall	3.42	1.03
Attractive	3.28	1.24
Projects a particular image	3.41	1.01
Enable Market positioning	3.36	1.46
Compatible with Service	3.25	1.15
Promotable or advertisable	3.28	1.19
Modern or contemporary	2.91	1.12
Descriptive of the service attribute	3.14	1.03
Persuasive	3.17	1.17
Understandable	3.12	1.10
Easy to pronounce	3.30	1.25

Table 8: Customers rating of brands against brand name evaluating criteria

Guests were also asked to rate the brand names of the hotels they were staying at against brand name evaluation criteria given to the hotel owners. The highest rated criteria was ease of recall with a mean value of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.03. This was followed by ability to project a particular image and enabling market positioning with mean values of 3.41 and 3.36 respectively. It can therefore be assumed that all the brand names are rated as ‘fair’ with regard to the evaluation criteria.

4.2. Discussion

The research set out with the objective of looking into three objectives:

- Understanding the degree of importance the owners or management placed on the role of a brand name

- Identify the brand name development process used if any
- Explore the performance of the brand name from the view point of the customers' of those hotels

As presented above, a total of 62% of owners/marketing managers thought brand name was very important or highly important. But at the same time, (81.8%) of those owners/marketing managers think customers' choice of a hotel is not affected by or has very little to little effect. Empirical assessment of other research however shows those who are responsible for brand name development indicate choice of an appropriate brand name was critical in assisting customers' choice (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997).

The guests on the other hand indicated a total of 67.7% indicated that a brand name is useful and very useful. This clearly indicated a mismatch between owners/management of the hotels and their guests. As a result the brand names of the hotels are not helping the guests make their choice using brand names. This is further indicated in the fact that 45.12% and 25.61% of the guests indicated the brand name of the hotel was not effective in their selection of the particular hotel they were staying at.

Coming to the use of a particular process for the development of a brand name, it was indicated above that only 40.9% used a process while 59.1% did not use a process. In contrast, studies elsewhere indicated that Companies followed a detailed and systematic process (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997). Shipley, Hooley, and Wallace (1988) and Shipley and Howard (1993) in their attempt to develop a brand naming process have found out that companies already are using defined processes.

For those who used a process or otherwise, which activities they performed out of Kohli and LaBahn (1997) five step process, only the fourth step of ‘selecting the final name’ was done by all. Very limited use other steps was observed (27% developed naming objectives, 14% developed alternative names and evaluated alternatives, 18% registered their name). In contrast to this, studies elsewhere showed an average of 46 names were created as an alternative while use of individual creative thinking and brainstorming were most commonly used to generate alternative names (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997; Siu and Zhang, n.d.).

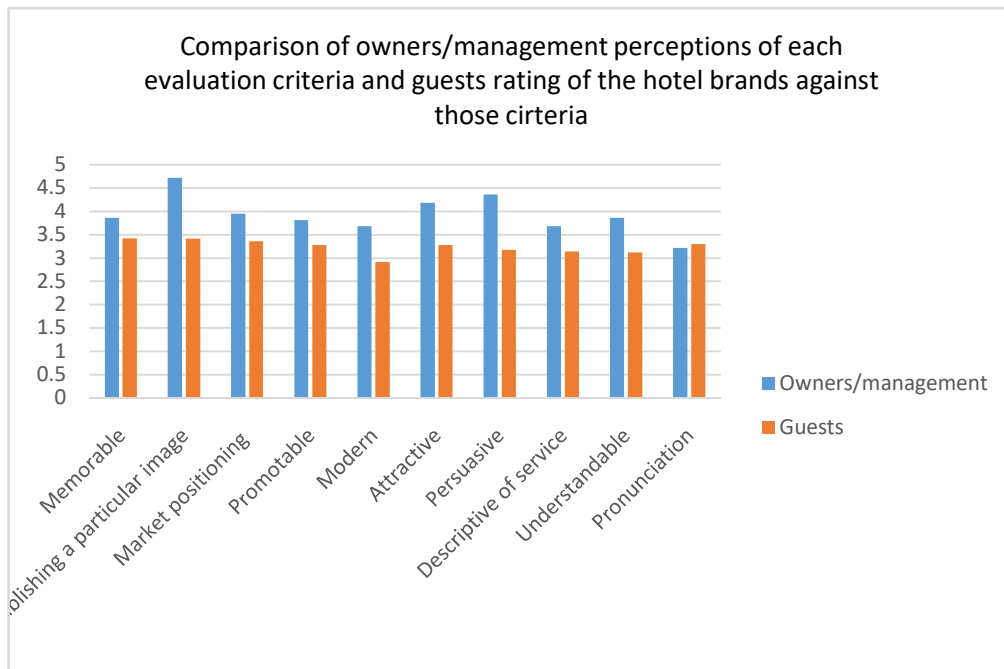


Figure 6: Comparison of evaluation criteria

Another interesting point explored was to see how owners/management of the hotels rate brand name selection criteria and how guests rated the hotel brands on those criteria. The owners/management rated projecting a particular image, attractiveness and persuasiveness of the brand name higher. However, guests rated the brand names much less than the importance attached to it by the management. The guests thought the brand names did better in pronunciation than the importance the owners/management has given it. Similar research showed

conveying the intended positioning of the product and establishing product differentiation were the most commonly specified naming objectives (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997).

Further the guests also indicated that the brand names of the hotels they stayed at were able to project a certain attribute and were able to judge whether the hotels were luxurious, economic, modern/contemporary or traditional from their brand names. In addition, a majority of the guests agreed the brand names matched the service they received (56%).

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

From the presentation of findings and the discussion made above the following conclusions can be made:

- Majority of owners think brand name is important for their success but they do not think guests' choice of a hotel is affected by the brand name.
- Guests on the other hand indicated brand names are important in their choice of a hotel but they were not able to make their selection based on brand names. This indicates a missed opportunity by hotel owners/managers to develop a distinct brand name that could help their guests make their choice.
- Majority of the owners/managers did not use a particular process in developing a brand name. Further, four of the steps suggested by Kohli and LaBahn (1997) are not practiced by the significant portion of the hotel owners/management except directly selecting the final name.
- Eventhough the majority did not indicate the use of alternative brand name evaluation criteria, hotel owners/management considered in evaluating alternatives establishing image, the name's availability and its attractiveness very useful and extremely useful.
- Guests were able to perceive a certain attribute (luxury, economic, traditional or modern/contemporary) from the brand name.
- Guests thought based on alternative brand name evaluation criteria, the brand names of hotels they were staying at were doing better in memorableness (ease of recall), ability to project a particular image and enabling market positioning.

The above findings suggest that no particular approach, particularly a scientific, exercise of developing a brand name is not being practiced by most hotels entering the industry. This represents missed potential advantages that hotel owners could have gained from developing appropriate brand names. Further, since brand names have long term implications, hotel owners are also missing on an initial opportunity to develop a brand name for the future even if hotel owners think the name is not highly important at this stage of the development of hotel industry in Addis Ababa.

5.2. Recommendation

The importance of brand names was seen to be an important activity by many however it was also observed the use of appropriate process is not given due attention. Whether the brand name is of the highest importance for competitive purposes or not at this point in time, new hotels are missing out on an opportunity to develop a standout name that can carry their brand for a very long time in the future. In this regard, owners/managers should use a systematic approach to develop a brand name. Particularly:

- Set out clear objectives for the naming process based on their competitive strategy and the market position they envision.
- Develop a list of alternative names which they think are suitable to represent their objectives. Here, using various sources can be helpful to assure creativity and out of the box thinking.
- Follow a systematic evaluation of the candidate names. It is important to consider the list of criteria deemed appropriate for the service being introduced.

- Further consider testing of the brand names to see if the potential pool of customers perceive the name as intended.
- Another over looked practice is the registration of the names a protected brand name.

From a research perspective, further exploring the brand name development practice to see if in fact the guest's perception of the names is similar to the owners/management perception is a further area of research. Further expanding this research to include other products and services could also help increase the practice and general understanding.

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Annexes

Annex I: Questionnaire for Hotel owners and marketing managers involved in the brand name development

Dear respondents:

This questionnaire is intended to gather information for the purpose of a research in title “**BRAND NAMING PRACTICES: AN ASSESSMENT OF HOTELS IN ADDIS ABABA**”. Please note that the information gathered will only be used for the purpose of the research project.

Below you will find few demographic questions and questions regarding the brand name development process. Please give your frank opinion to each of the questions as appropriate to your experience.

Thank You in advance for your kind co-operations!

Part I: Demographic data

1. Level of Education

Only experience Diploma Degree Masters Phd and above

2. Overall experience in business.

0-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 More than 21

3. Particular experience in marketing.

0 - 5 6 - 10 11 15 16 - 20 More than 21

Part II: Brand Name development

1. How important is a ‘brand name’ for your success?

None Very Little Little High Very high

2. Do you think your brand name affects your customers' choice of a hotel?

None
 Very Little
 Little
 High
 Very high

3. Did you use a specific set of process to develop a brand name?

Yes
 No

4. If yes, what kind of process was it?

5. Mark any of the activities below that applied to your process.

Specifying objective Create candidate name
 Evaluation of candidate names Choice of name final name
 Trade name registration

6. What was the brand name objective? Rank as appropriate.

Brand naming objectives		Not useful	Slightly useful	Useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Establish a particular image					
2	Express personal sentiment					
3	Establish product differentiation					
4	Establish market positioning					

5	Express the desired characters of the service					
6	Establish market segmentation					
7	Carries over to other languages					

7. How many alternative names were proposed?

0 – 5
 6 - 10
 11 - 15
 16 - 20
 Above 20

8. Importance of brand name screening criterion.

Brand naming objectives		Not useful	Slightly useful	Useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Memorable					
2	Personal interest					
3	Establish a particular image					
4	Establish market positioning					
5	Compatible with required image					
6	Promotable and advertisable					
7	Modern or contemporary					
8	Attractive to customers					
9	Trade mark availability					
10	Persuasive					
11	Descriptive of the service attributes or benefits					
12	Understandable to customers					
13	Ease of pronunciation					

9. Source of idea for the brand name

Individual creation by owner

Marketing department

Advertising agencies

Existing brand names

Market research agencies

Customers

Other company employees

Salesforce

Dictionaries, books, magazines

R&D department

10. Was a brand name selected tested in any way?

Yes

No

How?

11. Was a change made to the brand name during registration?

Yes

No

Annex II: Questionnaire for guests of Hotels under study

Dear respondents:

This questionnaire is intended to gather information for the purpose of a research in title “**BRAND NAMING PRACTICES: AN ASSESSMENT OF HOTELS IN ADDIS ABABA**”. Please note that the information gathered will only be used for the purpose of the research project.

Thank You in advance for your kind co-operations!

Below you will find questions regarding attributes of a brand name that is considered by many as important considerations in developing a brand name. Please give your impression of those elements as indicated below.

1. How useful is ‘brand name’ in your choice of a hotel in general?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely useful
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2. Was the decision to stay at this particular hotel influenced by the brand name?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	Affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very much affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely affected
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3. Did the ‘brand name’ communicate a specific attribute to you?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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4. If your reply was ‘yes’ for question 3, what was the attribute you perceived?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Luxurious	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traditional
<input type="checkbox"/>	Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modern or contemporary

Any other _____

5. Were the attributes perceived from the ‘brand name’ congruent to the service received?

Yes

No

6. Please rate the 'brand name' for the following characters.

Brand naming characters		Not at all	Slightly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Easy to recall					
2	Attractive					
3	Project a particular image					
4	Enable market positioning					
5	Compatible with the service					
6	Promotable and advertisable					
7	Modern or contemporary					
8	Descriptive of the service attributes or benefits					
9	Persuasive					
10	Understandable					
11	Ease of pronunciation					

7. Any other comments

Annex III: Cross tabulation and Chi-square test of demographic variables with importance and impact of brand names

Level of Education vs Importance of Brand Name

		Importance of Brand Name				Total
		Very Little	Little	High	Very High	
Level of Education	No formal education	0	1	1	0	2
	Diploma	0	1	1	1	3
	Degree	3	1	2	4	10
	Masters	0	2	3	2	7
Total		3	5	7	7	22

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.010 ^a	9	.636
Likelihood Ratio	8.767	9	.459
Linear-by-Linear Association	.201	1	.654
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 16 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

Level of Education vs Effect of brand name on Customers' Choice

		Effect of brand name on customers' Choice					Total
		None	Very Little	Little	High	Very High	
Level of education	No formal education	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Diploma	1	1	1	0	0	3
	Degree	1	4	2	0	3	10
	Masters	5	0	1	1	0	7
Total		7	5	6	1	3	22

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.382 ^a	12	.080
Likelihood Ratio	21.239	12	.047
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.065	1	.302
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

Over all work experience vs Importance of Brand Name

		Importance of Brand Name				Total
		Very Little	Little	High	Very High	
Over all experience	0-5 Years	1	1	2	3	7
	6-10 Years	0	1	0	1	2
	11-15 Years	1	1	4	2	8
	16-20 Years	1	2	0	1	4
	More than 21 yrs	0	0	1	0	1
Total		3	5	7	7	22

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.770 ^a	12	.722
Likelihood Ratio	10.457	12	.576
Linear-by-Linear Association	.626	1	.429
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .14.

Over all work experience vs Effect of brand name on customers' choice

		Effect of brand name on customers' choice					Total
		None	Very Little	Little	High	Very High	
Over all work experience	0-5 Years	2	2	0	1	2	7
	6-10 Years	0	0	1	0	1	2
	11-15 Years	4	2	2	0	0	8
	16-20 Years	1	1	2	0	0	4
	More than 21 yrs	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		7	5	6	1	3	22

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.682 ^a	16	.548
Likelihood Ratio	17.925	16	.328
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.137	1	.286
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Marketing Experience vs Importance of Brand Name

	Importance of Brand Name	Total
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		Very Little	Little	High	Very High	
Marketing Experience	0-5 Years	2	2	5	4	13
	6-10 Years	0	1	2	0	3
	11-15 Years	1	0	0	3	4
	16-20 Years	0	2	0	0	2
Total		3	5	7	7	22

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.884 ^a	9	.094
Likelihood Ratio	16.558	9	.056
Linear-by-Linear Association	.138	1	.710
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 16 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

Marketing Experience vs Effect of brand name on customers' choice

		Effect of brand name on customers' choice					Total
		None	Very Little	Little	High	Very High	
Marketing Experience	0-5 Years	4	3	2	1	3	13
	6-10 Years	0	2	1	0	0	3
	11-15 Years	3	0	1	0	0	4
	16-20 Years	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total		7	5	6	1	3	22

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.222 ^a	12	.230
Likelihood Ratio	16.616	12	.165
Linear-by-Linear Association	.498	1	.480
N of Valid Cases	22		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.