

# Factors and Challenges Affecting the Tourism Sector: An In-Depth Analysis of Botswana's Tourism

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*The main objective of this study was to conduct an in-depth analysis of Botswana's tourism, with the hopes to identify factors and challenges affecting the tourism sector in Botswana. This study utilised the interpretivism research philosophy. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews from 10 participants drawn from different segments of the tourism industry for a cross-section of perspectives. A thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the data. Results of the study revealed several factors and challenges with an impact on the tourism industry of Botswana. Chief among them includes Covid-19 (and pandemics); government policies (and regulations); economic climate and climate change. The study also revealed a number of challenges affecting the tourism sector of Botswana which includes lack of engagement within the tourism sector; limited participation of Botswana in the tourism sector; lack of skilled staff; overreliance on international tourists; lack of requisite infrastructure; limited tourism marketing; limited and inconsistent local supply of quality goods; government policies, restrictions and levies; and staff retention. The study recommended that the need for aggressive marketing and promotion, reskilling, enhancement of ICT infrastructure, improving stakeholder consultation and engagement within the sector and tourism product diversification as key enablers to enhance the tourism sector in Botswana.*

**Keywords:** *tourism, tourism marketing, Botswana tourism*

**JEL Classification:** *M30*

## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry is unique in that has a range of product and service categories, encompassing a number of sectors such as transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment and other connected industries. The advent of Covid 19 has paralysed the tourism sector across the globe. In 2020, the travel and tourism industry across the globe contributed US\$4.7 trillion to GDP, with the greatest contribution from the United States of America of US\$1.1 trillion (Lock, 2022). Undoubtedly, in this Covid-19 era, many countries' tourism sectors were hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, considering the harsh travel restrictions

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Article History:

Received 12 May 2023 | Accepted 16 August 2023 | Available online 14 October 2023

Cite Reference:

Gabasiane, A., and Chiguvi, D., 2023. Factors and Challenges Affecting the Tourism Sector: An In-Depth Analysis of Botswana's Tourism. *Expert Journal of Marketing*, 11(2), pp.118-135.

imposed as a way to minimise the spread of the disease, adversely impacting tourism and travel. From the time the pandemic started (i.e., 2019-2020) to date, the tourism sector, and related sectors, experienced a huge downfall, with some companies closing shop either temporarily or permanently. Botswana is no exception. As it was in other parts of the world, Botswana's tourism sector has adversely been affected by the pandemic, with a decrease in international tourists from the time the Covid-19 virus hit the country to date. Among the top ten most vulnerable destinations in the African continent, according to international tourism as a share of total tourism, Botswana ranked 8th in 2021, with a share of 50% of total tourism being attributable to international tourism. This indicates that 50% of Botswana's tourism is international tourism while the other half accounts for domestic tourism. The Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020, when strict travel restrictions were put in place. As the economy of Botswana suffered the effects of these restrictions, it sought ways to ease these, so as to open opportunities for international tourism. Although the sector is slowly coming back to life, it may take time to revive it to its state prior to the pandemic. Given that Covid-19 significantly reduced the number of international tourists, there was a shift towards more domestic tourism, with many Botswana learning more about what is on offer in the country and partaking in experiences they would not have done otherwise without the pandemic.

Post-pandemic, and in line with tourism trends, there is a need for thorough analysis of Botswana's tourism sector. Considering that Botswana's tourism sector is largely driven by wildlife, game and other natural attractions, there are opportunities to enhance tourism offerings of the country, decreasing the dependence on natural attractions and potentially providing growth for the sector. It seems these opportunities will reshape the sector and propel it forward. The aim of this study is to identify factors and challenges affecting the tourism sector in Botswana, as well as, to determine strategies to revitalise the sector.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review explained the theoretical foundation and the empirical literature that were used to support the study.

### 2.1 Tourism

Oftentimes, the terms tourism, travel and hospitality are used synonymously, though there are intricate differences in their meanings. Tourism can be viewed as a holistic term which speaks to all sectors and activities which produce the tourist experience while travel refers to the movement of persons from one location to another for leisure or recreation purposes (Westcott and Anderson, 2021). Hospitality is then defined as an industry which comprises accommodation, as well as food and beverage categories (Olufunke and Oghenekaro, 2020), seeking to provide service(s) which creates a welcoming, relaxed and enjoyable environment for customers (Discover Hospitality, 2015). Table 1.0 depicts the scope of the tourism industry.

*Table 1: The Scope of the Tourism Industry*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Accommodations and lodging	Hotels and Motels Resorts Campgrounds / cabins AirBnB / Home Away Timeshare
Recreation and entertainment	Gaming Theme parks Adventure and outdoor recreation
Travel services	Travel Agents / Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) Airlines Cruise ships Rail / bus Car
Food and beverage services	Restaurants Catering
Conventions and event management	Institutional meetings Expositions Social and special events
Clubs	Private country clubs

Source: (Skripak et al., 2018).

The table 1 shows the broad nature of the tourism industry, which explains why this sector tends to be referred to as the largest in the world, making up for 10% of global gross domestic product (GDP) (Skripak et al., 2018). Within the wide spectrum of the tourism industry, one will find that there are various types of tourism. These forms of tourism may be motivated by different needs, wants and interests, to name a few things. Table 2 indicates the types of tourism.

Table 2: Types of Tourism

Type of Tourism	Definition
Domestic tourism	Occurs when residents of a country visit a destination within the borders of that country (American Hospitality Academy, 2017). Undoubtedly, this has to be outside of one's hometown or ordinary environment, otherwise it does not qualify to be regarded as tourism.
Outbound tourism	Rehman (2021) defines this form of tourism as the case where one (being a resident of a particular country) travels to or visits a destination outside of their [home] country for purposes of tourism for less than twelve (12) months. The UNWTO provides a more specific version of the definition above, which views the potential aim for this kind of travel / visit as for leisure, business or other purposes.
Inbound tourism	This form of tourism is where a destination or country receives visitors who are not residents of that country from outside the country (IGI Global, 2020).
Agrotourism / agritourism	This form of tourism ordinarily takes place on farms, giving tourists a chance to take part in farming tasks, eat local food and to get an encounter of rural ways of living (Anjana, 2022).
Cultural tourism	The UNWTO (2017) defines this form of tourism as where the tourist / visitor seeks to learn, uncover, live through tangible and intangible products or attractions of a cultural nature in a particular tourist destination.
Vinitourism / wine tourism / enotourism / oenotourism	For regions which produce wine, they may attract tourists who love to visit wineries, take part in wine tasting and / or the harvest, or any other activities in the vineyards (such as walks, bike tours etc.) (Anjana, 2022). Some parts of the world popular for such kind of tourism include, but are not limited to South Africa, France, Italy and so forth.
Ecotourism	The International Ecotourism Society (1990) defines this type of tourism as responsible travel to natural areas which hinges on environmental conservation and improving the livelihoods and welfare of local people. In 2015, this definition was refined to focus not only on environmental conservation and the sustaining of local people's wellbeing, but the revised definition added the inclusion of education and interpretation in line with natural areas and the persons who live in these environments (Smith and Pettorelli, 2020).
Geotourism	This can be defined as tourism which maintains or augments the distinct geographic personality (i.e. environ, culture, attractiveness and legacy) of a place, along with the welfare of those who reside in the area (National Geographic, 2022).
Medical tourism / health tourism / surgical tourism / medical travel	This form of tourism refers to the process of persons travelling outside the normal environment with the aim to seek and receive medical care (Mestrovic, 2018). Reasons for this travel may be to seek [more] advanced (or specialist) medical care, or to seek such services at a lower costs, or where there is little to no inconvenience of placement on waiting lists to receive medical care (Rogers, 2011).
Religious tourism / spiritual tourism / sacred tourism / faith tourism	This niche form of tourism is whereby persons travel to and / or tour places for religious reasons (Shabbir and Batool, 2021). This can be viewed as part of the cultural tourism segment (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries, 2020). Religious tourism may be for pilgrimage, missionary or worship purposes, for instance, or for leisure (or sightseeing purposes), where tourists seek to visit sacred sites and places of worship.
Sustainable tourism	According to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2022), this term speaks to practices in, and on the part of, the tourism sector, which are sustainable. It seeks to recognise positive and negative impacts of tourism, and further aims to minimise negative ones while maximising the positive impacts. An additional definition for this term, as defined by the UNEP and the UNWTO (2005) is that it is tourism which pledges an appropriate balance between environmental, economic and social-cultural elements of tourism developments to ensure sustainability in the long run, in this regard.

### 2.1.1 Tourism Marketing

In its broadest sense, tourism marketing is the business field of drawing visitors to a specific location (Bhasin, 2019). To explain this differently, this simply refers to the marketing strategies put in place in line with the tourism discipline. Kulakova (2019) defines tourism marketing as a marketing strategy which incorporates several marketing plans and technique with the aim to promote tourism offerings (e.g. lodgings,

attractions, destinations etc.). Considering that the tourism sector is a significant contributor to the GDP of many countries, many countries prioritise tourism marketing to ensure that they maximise on tourism revenues and profits. Simply put, tourism marketing can enhance the performance of a tourism industry by means of a range of marketing strategies and techniques.

### **2.1.2 The Tourism Sector in Botswana**

Botswana has a unique natural landscape, unparalleled to any other in the world, which is advantageous for the country's tourism sector, explaining why this sector is one of the largest contributors to the Botswana economy (International Trade Administration, 2022). In 2019, the sector contributed 13.1% to Botswana's GDP, a 6.8% increase from 2000 (Sunday Standard, 2022). With regards to employment, in 2019, the industry attributed 8.9% of total employment for Botswana. Considering the growth potential of this industry, the Government of Botswana included this sector in its economic diversification strategy. Tourism activities and offerings are predominantly wildlife-based (Botswana Tourism, 2021; Vumbunu et al., 2022), with the bulk of the activity concentrated in the Chobe and Okavango regions (Leechor et al., 2003); this also speaks to the need to have tourism diversification in Botswana. Part of this strategy entails broadening the geographic horizons of its tourism activities, as well as introducing new tourism products. Ordinarily, Botswana has focused its efforts on attracting high-end consumers, especially in pristine, exclusive areas such as the Okavango Delta. This was as a result of the policy which encouraged a high value-low volume approach. Unfortunately, this means that many Botswana cannot afford the high prices of many select tourism sectors (particularly in the Delta) (Morupisi and Mokgalo, 2017), reducing potential participation on the part of the average Botswana consumer. However, following the Covid-19 pandemic, the country seeks to target mid-range consumers as well in order to augment revenues and employment creation for locals. The pandemic was useful in another way: it brought about growth in domestic tourism (Sunday Standard, 2022). This is a welcome development, especially since this form of tourism had traditionally lacked in the country (Morupisi and Mokgalo, 2017). When one seeks to determine why this was the case, it may be attributed to the fact that the local choice of tourism offerings is limited, causing Botswana to opt for travel outside the country (Morupisi and Mokgalo, 2017). The Department of Tourism (2012) reported that there were 185,416 domestic trips (for leisure purposes) in 2010, while the Business Monitor International (2014) reported 634,000 outbound leisure trips, mainly to Botswana's neighbouring countries (e.g. South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe). The latter signals Botswana's propensity to travel, while a comparison of the two (2) figures signals that most Botswana prefer or tend to travel to destinations outside the country. Developing domestic tourism offerings could help improve domestic tourism consumption.

Other developments in the country are increased lodging and conferencing facilities, which have enhanced the country's ability to host international guests, tourists, conferences and events. This is critical given that certain areas of the country, such as the capital city, Gaborone, have been deemed to have insufficient accommodation capacity vis-à-vis what would be required for the sector to attract more visits from those who to the country for business purposes. Even outside of Gaborone, there is still a gap in terms of quality lodgings. For instance, the Trans-Kalahari Highway lacks facilities of this nature, as well as the Makgadikgadi Pans, the Central Kgalagadi Game reserve on more. There is an opportunity for more development in these areas not just in terms of lodgings, but also setting up other businesses in these areas. Similarly, infrastructure in areas where wildlife is protected (e.g. game reserves, natural parks) is continually being developed. Naturally, when infrastructure is developed, it also benefits the surrounding communities (Roday et al, 2009).

One of the challenges for this sector in Botswana is that of the provision of consistent, quality service. However, this is where organisations such as the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) and the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB) come in – existing to ensure that the tourism sector is well-oiled machine. The former (i.e. BTO) is a parastatal organisation which exists to oversee operations of the tourism sector, including marketing, investment promotion and tourism facilities grading (in line with international standards) (International Trade Administration, 2022). The grading system used by the BTO serves as a marketing and quality assurance mechanism (in line with international ratings) and it helps lodging facilities benchmark their standards and performance with international ones (Botswana Tourism Organisation, 2021). This also gives consumers confidence in their choices. It (i.e. the system) is mandatory for all organisations providing accommodation in Botswana. On the other hand, HATAB is not-for-profit organisation which plays the role of the hospitality and tourism industries' governing body, seeking to foster,

encourage and ensure distinction and quality in the country's tourism sector (International Trade Administration, 2022).

Another challenge with regards to Botswana's tourism sector, referenced by Stone et al. (2017), is the mismanagement of funds. Considering how critical it is for tourism development to take place in the country, poor management of funds is detrimental to the progress which could otherwise be made to develop or enhance this sector.

In addition to the above, a challenge or weakness which the country faces pertain to the marketing and promotions conducted (Stone et al., 2017). Tourism marketing is critical to promote destinations and offerings of a country's tourism sector, as well as the provision of other key information which may be required by consumers in their decision-making processes related to tourism. Traditionally, tourism marketing has had a focus on international tourists but thankfully, more domestic marketing was put in place following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (Business Wire, 2021). When done effectively, tourism marketing can increase [domestic and international] tourists, driving activity in the sector. This marketing can also enhance visibility, awareness and knowledge of tourism offerings, potentially increasing revenue potential for this sector.

In 2020, a new tourism policy was launched – an effort by Government to encourage more participation in the tourism sector on the part of Batswana. An example of this is how this policy sets aside exclusive tourism licences for Batswana operators, as well as safari concessions. Should Batswana take such opportunities, there may be several benefits derived such as increased tourism offerings, employment creation and more. Benefits such as employment (as a result of tourism sector development) can also reduce in further advantages, such as the alleviation of poverty (Nare et al., 2017).

In addition to the above, there are a number of prospects available for this sector. For instance, given the pertinent issue of climate change, and the interest in this area, as well as the need for action in this regard, there is an opportunity for Botswana to develop and promote ecotourism as an offering. This may attract a number of tourists who seek such a form of tourism, potentially enhance revenues, reduce costs and / or maximise / augment profits (Nare et al, 2017)) for this sector. Additionally, other tourism offerings which could be added are resorts, restaurants and attractions. Adding to the above, Nare et al (2017) identified the need (and / or potential) for tourism product diversification through cultural, sports and events tourism. Using cultural tourism as a reference, Lubbe (2003) remarked that tourism product diversification, particularly in relation to cultural tourism, could provide a competitive advantage for a country (or destination), providing tourists with increased offerings and experience and spreading tourists across the country to avoid overcrowding in [certain] areas. This could also encourage more participation by rural communities in tourism activities. An additional benefit of diversifying tourism products is that it alleviates pressure, dependence and use of resources (e.g., natural resources and environments) (Agarwal and Shaw, 2007).

### 2.1.3 Factors Affecting the Tourism Sector

There are many factors which affect the tourism sector across the globe. These may be categorised as socio-economic, environmental; demographic and political (Nicolae, 2018; Gregoric, 2014), among a few others (Oban international, 2022; Nezha et al., 2021; Mogale and Oduke, 2019; Tichaawa et al., 2017; Ferreira and Hamse, 2000; Monomet, 2012). Table 3 indicates the factors affecting the tourism sector.

*Table 3: Factors Affecting Tourism*

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Factors Affecting Tourism</b>
Oban International (2022)	This source referenced inflation as one of the factors which impacts the tourism industry. When the costs of living rise, one can expect the pricing of tourism products and prices to be adjusted upward as well. This includes, but is not limited to, sightseeing fares, car rental rates and airfares (which are impacted by rising fuel prices), food and beverage prices, as well as lodging prices. This can present a challenge both on the supply and demand side, which may adversely impact the tourism industry.
Nezha et al. (2021)	The culture and historical heritage (and attractions) of a country can impact the tourism industry. This factor was also identified by Monomet (2012), stating that the historical and religious heritage of a destination, as well as the environs can have an impact on tourism, more specifically the development of tourist services. A greater presence of these may draw visitors to a particular country (or destination) for

	<p>tourism purposes. By the same token, geographical location can also be a key factor considered on the part of tourists.</p> <p>Additionally, food and lodging facilities, as well as basic infrastructure are key considerations regarding a country's tourism industry. Food has the potential to draw gastronomic tourists, which is advantageous for the tourism industry. In the same vein, unique lodging facilities have the ability to do the same. In the absence of key infrastructure (e.g. roads, public transportation, security, electricity etc.), or whether these are of a poor standard, this may deter tourists.</p>
Mogale and Odeku (2019)	<p>Regulation in line with tourism immigration is a factor which affects tourism, and it differs from one country to the next. Some countries have simple, tourist-friendly immigration regulations, while others have strenuous and / or lengthy processes in this regard, which can deter tourists from travelling to other environs. In the case of South Africa, as remarked by Mogale and Odeku (2019), those travelling to the country are required to submit visa applications in person, which comes at high costs and with sizeable inconveniences. This may discourage those seeking to travel to South Africa. Thankfully, the Department of Home Affairs later realised the importance of smooth processes where tourists are concerned, amending the 2014 <u>Immigration Regulations</u> to include a visa waiver for select countries.</p>
Tichaawa et al. (2017)	<p>Developments in Information Communications Technology (ICT) can impact development in the tourism sector, as well as socio-economic transformation. ICT can be used to automate certain business processes (Lehloenya, 2017), which can ultimately improve operational efficiencies and effectiveness, enhancing customer satisfaction. The use of ICT in tourism development and activities can also empower countries to play an active role in the global tourism value chain, drawing more tourists and socio-economic development and transformation to a nation (Mogale and Odeku, 2019). Countries should invest in ICT infrastructure for policy, legislation and mechanisms related to tourism to eradicate poverty and foster growth in tourism (and other) sectors (van Heerden et al., 2015).</p>
Monomet (2012)	<p>This author also cited environmental considerations as key factors which can impact the tourism industry, honing in on environmental pollution and hazards of this nature as threats to this sector.</p>
Spenceley and Goodwin (2007)	<p>In order to avoid missing opportunities for socio-economic transformation through tourism [activity], it is important to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to tourism development.</p> <p>Rogerson (2006) had a similar view that government should prioritise tourism development by making available sufficient resources in this regard.</p> <p>Monomet (2012) also indicated that [poor] development of the tourism sector may have an impact on the market's interest in tourism services (and products). It was added that the absence of effective incentives to encourage investment in the development of this industry may be disadvantageous for the sector, and it may cause failure to meet international standards.</p>
Ferreira and Hamse (2000)	<p>Safety and security in a country can also impact tourism (Ferreira and Hamse, 2000; Mogale and Odeku, 2019). If a state is viewed, portrayed or perceived as unsafe, it may deter prospective tourists and travellers from visiting a particular country. Thus, governments should ensure that there are robust policies and legislation, which are enforced, to protect the safety of those participating in tourism activities (Mogale and Odeku, 2019). Nezha et al. (2021) similarly reference political stability as a key factor which may encourage (or discourage) tourists to visit a destination.</p>

### 3. Research and Methodology

This research adopted the interpretivism research philosophy and descriptive cross sectional survey research design in collecting data from the target participants. The target population for this study comprised of various players in the tourism sector, namely the Government (i.e. Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the BTO), tourism organisations and operators (i.e. HATAB and travel organisations), as well as small and medium enterprises (i.e. restaurants, accommodation and entertainment facilities). Cresswell (2014) is of the view that a sample size of 10-30 is suitable for researchers using grounded theory in their study and also proposes 15-30 for case study interviews, and a range of 5-25 under phenomenology. This study employed purposive sampling to select the ten (10) participants of the study.

Interviews were used to collect the qualitative data of this study. For purposes of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. This allowed the researchers to gather in-depth information and views from respondents. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The data collected was presented in writing to detail findings, quoting key responses gathered.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Factors affecting the Tourism Sector of Botswana

Under this theme, the researchers sought to identify the factors affecting the tourism sector of Botswana. The study results in Table 4 indicated the responses on these factors from the participants. All participants (i.e., 10/10) indicated that Covid-19 (and pandemics) and government policies (and regulations) are major factors which affect the tourism sector in Botswana. Economic climate, as well as the availability of skilled, knowledgeable persons was also referenced by the majority of participants (i.e. 7/10) as key factors with an impact on tourism as well. Although less than half of the participants (i.e. 4/10) mentioned climate change (and other environmental issues) as a key factor, this is still a significant portion of the sample size. Other factors mentioned by the minority include safety and security, political stability, technology (and its use) and bilateral agreements and partnerships.

Table 4: Factors affecting the Tourism Sector of Botswana

Factors	Owners	Executives	Total
Covid-19 (and other pandemics)	2	8	10
Government policies (and regulations)	2	8	10
Availability of skilled, knowledgeable persons	2	5	7
Economic climate (including inflation)	1	6	7
Safety and security	0	3	3
Political stability	1	2	3
Technology and its use	0	1	1
Climate change (and other environmental issues)	1	3	4
Bilateral agreements (and partnerships)	0	1	1

#### 4.1.1 Covid-19 (and Pandemics)

As shown in Table 4, all participants (i.e. 100%) interviewed indicated Covid-19 as a major factor with an impact on the tourism industry in Botswana. This might be caused by the fact that over the last two (2) or so years, the Covid-19 pandemic has had adverse effects of a great magnitude on the tourism sector, not only locally but across the world at large. Travel restrictions within and outside of countries significantly reduced tourism activity (and revenues), hence, affecting the tourism sector. Some businesses in the sector were so hard hit that they had to close shop, which also impacted the performance of the sector. Additionally, a number of workers were laid off, which also impacted operations of organisations and institutions in this sector. To put it simply, as said by one of the participants:

*“The pandemic affected companies and livelihoods in a huge way”.*

One of the executives shared the sentiments as those stated above, but stating that pandemics in general (such as the Covid-19 pandemic):

*“...can affect the tourism sector in a negative way, causing loss of business enterprises due to a decline in business”.*

The fact that all participants mentioned this factor, along with some of the quotes mentioned above, signifies that Covid-19 (and [other] pandemics) are an important consideration which can have great impacts on the tourism sector.

Additional to the statements above, one of the owners interviewed honed in on “health pandemics”, as categorised by them, as major consideration which can have great adverse impacts on the sector. One of the executives made the following remark:

*“The [tourism] industry is very sensitive pandemics, which, like in the case of Covid-19, can bring about challenges such as travel restrictions”.*

#### **4.1.2 Government Policies (and Regulations)**

Similar to the abovementioned factor, participants in their entirety (i.e. 10/10) stated government policies (and regulations) as a consideration which has effects on the tourism sector of the country, as indicated in Table 4. Given the portion of participants of who mentioned this factor, this could be considered as a key factor which can impact the tourism industry. Considering that the Government of Botswana identified the tourism sector as a vital part of its pursuits for economic diversification, it is possible that the policies and regulations crafted pertaining to this sector were a response to this (i.e. desire for economic diversification). Given this great focus on the tourism sector, this may indicate why this factor (being, government policies and regulations) was mentioned by all participants. A reason for this could also be that there is awareness (and appreciation) on the part of owners and executives in the tourism sector of tourism policies and regulations formulated by government.

One of the executives mentioned that: *“Policies, laws and regulations can have a positive or negative impact on the tourism sector”*.

An example of how policies and regulations can have negative impacts on the sector was also given, stating that:

*“Bed and breakfast / guesthouse accommodation facilities are not allowed to offer conferences and bar facilities, whereas this can be a good supplement to the accommodation offering”*.

Related to the sentiment shared above, another participant mentioned one of the positive impacts which government policies and regulations can have on the tourism sector, making reference to the fact that:

*“The high value, low volume tourism model of Botswana, particularly in the Okavango Delta, enables facilities and operators in this area to charge premium pricing and to manage the influx of visitors at a given time, so as to avoid environmental degradation”*.

The two statements above show two sides of the coin: that government policies and regulations can either work for or to the detriment of the tourism sector. Given this fact, and that all participants considered this factor, this may indicate that this is a key factor with an impact on Botswana's tourism sector.

#### **4.1.3 Availability of Skilled, Knowledgeable Persons**

As per Table 4, 70% of participants emphasised the availability of skilled, knowledgeable persons as a factor which impacts the tourism sector in Botswana. All these persons mentioned that Botswana lacks skilled, knowledgeable persons in the tourism sector, which presents a challenge for the sector. While there are a number of local higher education institutions which offer programmes in the tourism discipline, it might be said that the majority of persons working in the tourism sector do not have formal tourism-related training, whether at certificate, diploma, degree, Master's or PhD level. This could have an impact at operational level in tourism enterprises and institutions, but also at a strategic and national level. Given that tourism is dominantly service-oriented, it is critical to have skilled personnel to efficiently and effectively deliver services to customers. In the absence of skilled, knowledgeable personnel, this may present a challenge, impacting performance of the sector.

One of the owners interviewed shared that there is a lack of skilled persons in the tourism industry, which results in “a lot of onsite management needed”. This participant shared that:

*“Only 10% of our staff have formal training from local institutions”* and even so, they still required on-the-job training given a lack of practical knowledge and skills.

One of the executives also shared that Botswana has little availability of skilled personnel.

The sentiments above signal that this factor also speaks to a challenge in the country's tourism sector. Considering this, and how many people mentioned this factor, it would indicate a major consideration (with an impact on the tourism sector), calling for people to pay mind to this.

#### **4.1.4 Economic Climate**

Economic issues were referenced as a factor which has an impact on Botswana's tourism sector, both on the supply and demand side. Of the 10 persons interviewed, 7 of them spoke to this factor. Understandably,



one can anticipate a nexus between a country's economy and its tourism industry. On the demand side, where [the economy of] a country is going through a recession or depression, this may diminish the disposable incomes (or buying power) of consumers. As consumers prioritise their expenditures, there may be a reduction in revenue and profit potential for tourism enterprises, as well as the tourism sector.

Under the dimension of economic climate, issues such as inflation were highlighted by participants, who indicated that [rising] inflation means increases costs for consumers and businesses alike. For consumers, inflation may reduce disposable income, *ceteris paribus*, and possible, the standard of living, while for businesses, inflation (without increased revenues) may reduce profits, as a result of increased costs. While other business may be able to maintain their operations despite rising costs, others may struggle, to the point where some consider scaling down operations or even shutting down operations. This could have a detrimental impact on the tourism sector, as less business could result in less revenues for the tourism sector, less employment opportunities and a decrease (or halt) of tourism development.

One of the participants of the study mentioned that: *"Inflation translates to high costs of living, limiting the number of people who can spend on tourism activities, especially in the post-pandemic area"*. From the above, it is economic conditions are among the key factors with an impact on the tourism sector.

#### 4.2. Challenges Affecting the Tourism Sector of Botswana

The challenges mentioned most by participants (i.e. 80% of them) are the lack of engagement within the tourism sector and limited participation of Batswana in the tourism sector. The results in Table 5 also show that 7/10 participants mentioned the following challenges as well: lack of skilled, well-trained persons with expertise; overreliance on international tourists; lack of requisite infrastructure and limited tourism marketing. In addition to the above, 6 out of 10 participants indicated challenges as follows: limited and inconsistent local supply of quality goods; Government policies, restrictions and levies and overreliance on natural resources. Half of the participants shared that staff retention is also a challenge in this sector. Other challenges mentioned by participants include: lack of a diverse tourism product range (40%); availability and access to funding for tourism development (20%); seasonality of the tourism industry (20%); intense competition (particularly internationally), lack of innovation (10%); poor (or no) pricing regime (10%); loss of jobs, following the Covid-19 pandemic (10%); poor environmental consciousness in the country (10%) and poor remuneration / low incomes for the working class in the sector (10%).

Table 5: Challenges Affecting the Tourism Sector of Botswana

Challenges	Owners	Executives	Total
Limited and inconsistent local supply of quality goods	2	4	6
Government policies, restrictions and levies	2	4	6
Lack of skilled, well-trained persons with expertise	2	5	7
Lack of engagement within the sector	2	6	8
Availability and access to funding (for tourism development)	0	2	2
Loss of jobs (following Covid-19 pandemic)	0	1	1
Lack of a diverse tourism product range	2	2	4
Staff retention	2	3	5
Poor environmental consciousness in the country	0	1	1
Overreliance on international tourists	0	7	7
Poor remuneration / low incomes for the working class	0	1	1
Seasonality of the tourism industry	2	0	2
Poor (or no) pricing regime	1	0	1
Lack of requisite infrastructure	1	6	7
Intense competition (particularly internationally)	0	2	2
Overreliance on natural resources (or the natural environment)	1	5	6
Limited tourism marketing	2	5	7
Lack of innovation	1	0	1
Limited participation of Batswana (especially ownership of tourism enterprises)	2	6	8

#### **4.2.1 Lack of Engagement within the Tourism Sector**

As per Table 5, 80% of participants discussed the challenge of inadequate engagement within the tourism sector. Stakeholder can be beneficial in a number of ways, such as providing invaluable insights about enhancements or developments which can be made, shifts in the market, forecasted trends and so forth. Engagement can then augment the work being done, improving performance and effectiveness, for instance. At present, it may be perceived that there is a lack of engagement in the tourism sector, especially between the public and private sectors.

One of the owners mentioned that:

*“There is inadequate consultation / engagement regarding policies and those affected by these”.*

An executive remarked that:

*“More engagement between Government and key stakeholders in the tourism industry is important, before drafting and / or changing policies”.*

From the statements shared above, and the number of participants who mentioned this challenge, it is safe to say that this is among the key challenges of Botswana's tourism sector.

#### **4.2.2 Limited Participation of Botswana in the Tourism Sector**

Table 5 indicates that 8/10 participants indicated limited participation of Botswana in the tourism sector as a challenge. Although there are a number of Botswana involved in the tourism sector, areas such as the Okavango Delta lack the presence (or ownership) of Botswana. At present, many, if not all of the camps in the Delta are expatriates. Although their employees are predominantly Botswana, it would be even better for Botswana to set up operations in areas such as the Delta, so as to contribute to the tourism sector's performance. One executive mentioned the following:

*“Over the years, Botswana's tourism industry was dominated by expatriates, but more Botswana have started participating in the sector”.*

While there is progress to address the challenge above, there is still room for more Botswana to meaningfully participate in this sector, on both the supply and demand side. Closely linked to the Okavango Delta example made above, the following was said:

*“Ownership of facilities up North is dominated by expatriates, who then channel funds (i.e. income generated) outside the country”.*

The above is to the disadvantage of the local tourism sector and the country's economy. More can be done to encourage Botswana to participate in tourism activities. The 8 out of 10 people who mentioned this challenge, as well as the sentiments above indicate why this came out as a major challenge for Botswana's tourism sector.

#### **4.2.3 Lack of Skilled, Well-Trained Persons with Expertise**

The challenge of a deficit of skilled, trained personnel with relevant expertise was discussed by 70% of the study's participants. Tourism is heavily dependent on people by virtue of the fact that its offering is predominantly services. Since these are intangible, there is a need for staff, among other things, to be impeccable in order to satisfy customers. Otherwise, where staff is not well qualified or prepared for their job, this not only affects their performance but also that of the enterprise and / or sector. One of the owners made the following statement:

*“There is a lack of skilled, highly trained people in the sector, who are dependable, reliable, committed and passionate”.*

Another owner mentioned that:

*“There are not many skilled persons in the sector, which calls for a lot of onsite management. There is a great skills gap. Most people (among the company's staff) have little to no training, which calls for on-the-job training”.*

Considering how critical it is to have well-trained staff for the provision of the best possible service to offer to customers, where there is a shortage of such, this presents a great challenge to the tourism sector, which is service-oriented. This, along with the fact that 70% of the participants spoke to this, it can be regarded as a key challenge to Botswana's tourism sector.

#### **4.2.4 Limited and Inconsistent Local Supply of Quality Goods**

Out of 10 participants, 6 made reference to a challenge of limited and inconsistent local supply of quality goods. Botswana's economy is not production-driven. The country imports a number of goods, with limited offerings manufactured locally. As such, it is understandable that participants would speak to limited supply of quality goods. Where goods are produced locally, there tend to be inconsistencies; the same applies to service provision in the country. If these goods and / or services are used as inputs, whose quality is inconsistent, one would expect the outputs (whether a good or service) to have inconsistent quality as well. This adverse effect on the quality of tourism offerings could then impact the performance of tourism enterprises and institutions, as well as tourism sector performance. One of the owners mentioned that:

*"There is limited supply of fruits and vegetables, which affects the company given that it changes its menu offerings on a weekly basis. There is also difficulty with sourcing some requisite items, although neighbouring countries can easily source these".*

Another sentiment shared was as follows: *"It is a challenge to source a number of tourism-related products locally, such as amenities. The poor local availability of requisite supplies then forces importation of goods"*.

Considering the above, it is evident that limitations of Botswana's supply chain, specifically with regards to the tourism sector have a negative impact of the sector and its performance. Given this fact, and the number of people who mentioned, one may say this is a key challenge for Botswana's tourism sector.

#### **4.2.5 Government Policies, Restrictions and Levies**

As per Table 5, government policies, restrictions and levies were cited by 60% of participants as a challenge for the tourism sector in Botswana. Undoubtedly, enterprises and sectors have to abide by laws and policies set out by the government. Where these are not favourable to [certain] businesses or sectors, they are likely to have an impact on the running of these businesses (or sectors).

One of the owners mentioned that:

*"Recent policy changes (i.e. the ban on agricultural imports) has adversely impacted the business. When local supply is diminished (or poor), there is no option for people to import"*.

This participant added that:

*"The alcohol levy causes alcoholic beverages to be exorbitantly priced, which may impact offerings and the targeted audience / market"*.

Additionally, an executive referred to the same policy change as above, stating the following:

*"There has been a recent change in government policy regarding imports of certain food produce. A lack of supplies (locally) then impacts the delivery of food services"*.

Considering the above, one can see that while certain policies, restrictions and levies may be put in place by the government, these can, at times, be disadvantageous to companies and sectors, diminishing performance of these. These changes may impact the offerings of companies, as well as the operations of these firms.

#### **4.2.6 Staff Retention**

Table 5 highlights that half of the participants stated staff retention as a challenge in the tourism sector of Botswana. Where staff retention is poor, this may be detrimental to a business / sector in a number of ways. For instance, where a firm has invested resources into the training and development of staff, only for the worker(s) to leave shortly after (or before completing this), it may bring about losses for the company. One

owner mentioned that: “*Oftentimes, those who are experienced tend not to like working in the bush (i.e. outside of urban areas), so when opportunities are presented to them to work elsewhere, they do not hesitate to accept the offers*”. Considering the above and that half the participants mentioned the issue of staff retention, it may be said that this is a key challenge in Botswana’s tourism industry.

### 4.3. Strategies to Enhance the Tourism Sector of Botswana

The participants of this study had a number of recommendations for ways in which the tourism sector of the country can be enhanced. The main recommendation made was with regard to the diversification of tourism offerings. This was mentioned by 80% of the participants, as per Table 6. The second-highest ranking recommendation pertained to enhancing tourism marketing at a domestic and international level, mentioned by 70% of the participants. Of the 10 participants interviewed, 6 of them put forth the following strategies: empowerment of Botswana (through education and platforms) on tourism and tourism marketing; improving stakeholder consultation and relations (between the public and private sector) (in order to inform policies and strategies). Half of the participants proposed: the development and implementation of robust environmental policies (to maintain and protect the environment and its natural resources); the development and / or enforcement of tourism quality assurance policies, procedures, strategies and mechanisms and the development of guides (e.g. policies, standards or criteria) for tourism product pricing. Other strategies put forth by the minority include: better conditions to attract foreign direct investment and skilled expertise (4/10); investment in infrastructural development (4/10) and supporting the establishment, development and sustainability of tourism enterprises (4/10). Additional to these, the following strategies were also mentioned: establishing collaborative partnerships to drive and develop the sector [further] (2/10); conducting benchmarking exercises (comparing Botswana with other countries) on a regular basis (2/10) and increasing innovation levels in the sector (1/10 participants).

Table 6: Strategies to enhance the Tourism Sector of Botswana

Strategies	Owners	Executives	Total
Enhance innovation levels in the sector	1	0	1
Better conditions to attract more FDI and skilled expertise	1	3	4
Conduct regular benchmarking exercises, comparing Botswana with other countries	0	2	2
Empowerment of Botswana (through education and platforms) on tourism and tourism marketing	1	5	6
Develop and implement robust environmental policies (to maintain and protect environment + natural resources)	1	4	5
Improve stakeholder consultation and relations (public and private), (to inform policies and strategies)	2	4	6
Tourism product diversification	2	6	8
Enhance tourism marketing at domestic and international level	2	5	7
Develop and / or enforce tourism quality assurance policies, procedures, strategies and mechanisms	1	4	5
Establish collaborative partnerships to drive and develop the sector	0	2	2
Invest in infrastructural development	0	4	4
Support the establishment, development and sustainability of tourism enterprises (e.g. through financial assistance and education)	1	3	4
Develop guides (e.g. policies or criteria) for tourism product pricing	1	4	5

#### 4.3.1 Tourism Product Diversification

Tourism product diversification was the most common strategy mentioned, stated by 8/10 of the participants, as indicated in Table 6. Considering that Botswana is reliant on wildlife and the natural environment for its tourism offerings, one would agree that there is a need for tourism product diversification. Considering how rich Botswana’s culture is, cultural tourism could be developed, seeking to draw local and international tourists and / or visitors. This is only one other form of tourism which could be added to Botswana’s tourism product portfolio. An executive mentioned a unique form of tourism, stating the following:

“*Caves could be explored more (for tourism purposes) in order to have additional tourism products and / or packages*”.

In addition to the above, the following was mentioned by one executive interviewed: *“Other forms of tourism which could be developed in Botswana include caves tourism, food tourism, cultural tourism and dam tourism (especially in urban areas)”*.

The statements above show that there is more to tourism offerings than just those which focus on wildlife and the natural environment. This makes the proposed strategy a good consideration for enhancing the tourism sector of the country, as mentioned by 80% of the participants.

#### **4.3.2 Enhancing Tourism Marketing (at Domestic and International Level)**

The majority of participants interviewed (more specifically, 70% of them) referenced the enhancement of tourism marketing (as a domestic and international level) as a strategy which could enhance Botswana's tourism sector. In the past, the main focus of tourism marketing was international tourists, with little effort into tourism marketing at a domestic level. However, following the outbreak of Covid-19, which imposed travel restrictions, the tourism sector was sourced to look inwards in order to draw customers from within the borders of the country. There was more dedicated and focused marketing towards Botswana. Post-pandemic, it would be best not to go back to what the norm was before the pandemic but rather; to come up with comprehensive tourism marketing plans and strategies to target both local and international audiences using a range of platforms. A statement shared by one of the study's participants:

*“Improving tourism marketing is needed to better promote the country's tourism products”*,

A challenge with tourism marketing, as stated by one of the executives is as follows:

*“Tourism marketing is limited by tourism funding constraints, limiting activities which can be done in this regard. Other promotional channels could be explored if funding was available.”*

A possible link could be identified here between tourism funding, tourism marketing and tourism performance. Funding capacitates organizations (or the sector at large) to conduct better market their products and the sector which, in turn, augments revenue and profit potential. Given the above, along with the fact that a good portion of participants mentioned this strategy, it should be taken as a key consideration for strategies to enhance the tourism sector of Botswana.

#### **4.3.3 Empowerment of Botswana on Tourism and Tourism Marketing**

As per Table 6, 60% of participants suggested that Botswana be empowered, through education and other mechanisms / platform, on the tourism sectors, its offerings and tourism marketing. This strategy could be critical to further developing the tourism sector of Botswana. A [perceived] lack of knowledge and understanding, on the part of Botswana, may result in people not taking an interest in the tourism sector (and its activities) and as such, not participating in this sector. One participant stated the following:

*“There should be tourism education from grassroots level, just as it is the case with subjects such as agriculture, design and technology and so forth, which are offered in schools. Revising the syllabus in this way would expose people to tourism and its various segments”*.

In addition to the above, the following was stated, similar to the point above but with a narrower lens:

*“A proposed strategy is to educate Botswana on the care of the environment; many Botswana have limited to no knowledge on [key / pressing] environmental issues so educating them could encourage them to take action”*.

The statements above, as well as the portion of participants who spoke to this recommendation, gives the feeling that this should be taken into consideration as a way to enhance the tourism sector of Botswana.

#### **4.3.4 Improvement of Stakeholder Consultation and Relations**

Of the 10 participants interviewed, 60% of them made a recommendation for the improvement of stakeholder consultation and relations (in and between the public and private sectors) so as to inform policies and strategies [pertaining to tourism]. For development to take place [effectively], participation from both the public and private sectors is needed. The researcher believes that this is easier where persons (and

organisations) have been involved in the process [of development] right from the outset, as opposed to having their work dictated (or tricked down) by higher structures (such as Government). Given this hypothesis, one would understand (and support) the proposed strategy, in order to enhance tourism in Botswana. A statement made by one of the participants was as follows:

*“There should be engagement from grassroots level to the highest structures within the sector and / or country”.*

This remark views the need for engagement at all levels, which could possible results in persons at all levels doing their part to ensure the effective implementation of policies and strategies. In addition, the following was mentioned:

*“The Government needs more people with a better understanding of the sector, and with relevant knowledge and experience, to guide the sector to ensure progression of the industry”.*

Understandably, a ship needs a skilled and knowledgeable captain to guide the way, to ensure the desired destination is reached. This does not imply that at present, Government does not understand anything about the sector; what the participant meant is that those who are on the ground, conducting tourism activities and operations on a daily basis may be able to provide [more] detailed, comprehensive knowledge, skills and expertise about certain segments of the sector, which can then inform policy and strategy formulation, making these more robust. Considering the above, this recommendation could be beneficial in the pursuit of augmenting Botswana's tourism sector.

#### **4.3.5 Development and / or Enforcement of Quality Assurance Policies, Procedures, Strategies and Mechanisms**

In order to enhance the tourism sector of Botswana, half (i.e. 5/10) of the participants expressed that quality assurance policies, procedures, strategies and mechanisms should be developed for the tourism sector. Where these have been developed, it should be ensured that these are enforced within the sector. Too often, guiding documents of this nature are produced but not implemented (or they are poorly executed). This then make it redundant to have these. Where guiding documents such as these are produced, there should be monitoring and evaluation checks on a regular basis to ensure these are put into practice. One such example is the decision made by Government years ago to use the tourism sector for economic diversification; years later, there is still much left to be desired given the narrow range of tourism offerings.

Following Government's decision to ban agricultural imports, this had a huge impact on tourism enterprises which have a food-related product or service. Many items cannot be found on shelves in-store, which impacts the food offerings of enterprises in the sector. For instance, one participant mentioned the following:

*“The recent policy change [regarding agricultural imports] does not speak to the need for vetting of the quality of local ingredients or in other words, no quality grading. It appears Government is solely satisfied with [increased] local production, not paying mind to the quality of this produce”.*

The above is an example of the need for a policy to be developed (or refined) and enforced to ensure quality in the sector. Considering the intangible nature of the services sector, it is critical to ensure that quality is delivered to the customer. This [services] sector could lose out on business where quality assurance falls short (e.g. through policies, procedures, strategies, mechanisms and so forth). One of the owners shared that:

*“Regular monitoring of standards (e.g. by the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO)) is necessary to ensure that they are upheld”.*

The above statements signal the possibility for the development (or refinement) and enforcement of guiding documents (for the tourism sector), in terms of quality assurance, which could be used to further develop tourism in Botswana.

#### **4.3.6 Development of Guides for Tourism Product Pricing**

Much like the proposed strategy above, 50% of the participants of the study (as indicated in Table 6) proposed that guides (such as policies, criterion and so forth) be developed in order to inform the pricing strategies employed by organisations and / or institutions within the tourism sector of Botswana. While

Botswana has a free market economy, it is important to ensure that prices charged to consumers are fair and acceptable, looking at a number of factors such as quality, quantity, production and / or overhead costs and more. Ideally, there should be some sort of structure to not only guide pricing of tourism offerings, but also to monitor and evaluate pricing. Among the participants interviewed, one of them stated the following:

*“There is a poor (or even non-existent) pricing regime [in the tourism sector]. This then enables people and / or organisations to price as they please”.*

The participants above gave an example for illustrative purposes, sharing that often, enterprises get away with exorbitant pricing, even where the standards or quality are subpar, making it difficult to understand the pricing charged. One of the executives also mentioned that:

*“Pricing strategies should be well-informed (e.g. by star rating or grading of facilities) to avoid a mismatch [between price and quality], and to avoid a situation where a consumer fails to get value for their money”.*

No consumer wants to spend money on a good or service which is exorbitantly priced without a basis for this. Additionally, it would be helpful to have a pricing regime to ensure that like products are priced similarly. This is a good consideration for a way in which the tourism sector can be enhanced.

## **5. Discussions**

From the responses gathered, many factors affecting the tourism sector of Botswana were identified. Chief among them are the following: Covid-19 (and pandemics); government policies (and regulations); economic climate, as well as the availability of skilled, knowledgeable persons and climate change (and other environmental issues). The finding is supported by Oban International (2022), who mentioned that inflation (as part of a country's economic climate) is a major factor which affects the tourism sector. The findings were also in line with the view of Monomet (2012), who cited environmental considerations as a key factor which can impact the tourism industry; this includes climate change. Although identified scholars cited economic conditions as a key factor, another factor which impacts the tourism sector is safety and security (Ferreira and Hamse, 2000; Mogale and Odeku, 2019). This factor can deter tourists from visiting a particular country or destination. It is therefore important for a country to portray itself as safe and secure for the comfort of tourists. Countries plagued with crime, wars and so forth are likely to have international tourists as they would if there were no (or limited) safety and security risks. The literature reviewed did not make mention of Covid-19 (or pandemics in general) as a key factor. Understandably, a good portion of the literature examined was published prior to the pandemic and as such, it may not have occurred to scholars that pandemics could be detrimental to the tourism sector. Additionally, literature which examines the tourism sector, in light of the pandemic, especially in Botswana, is still limited. Given the effects of Covid-19 witnessed to date, it is the researcher's view that this is indeed a key factor, as shown by the fact that the majority of participants mentioned this factor.

## **6. Conclusions**

The research undertaken shone light on a number of factors and challenges with an impact on the sector, along with opportunities and threats pertaining to tourism in Botswana. The findings signalled that a number of political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors affect the tourism sector in Botswana and beyond. A number of challenges were also identified like lack of engagement within the sector, deficit of skilled and well-trained staff with relevant expertise and so forth. The gaps identified in this study revealed a number of areas which need improvement for the country. Invaluable insights were drawn not only from the literature review but also from the input of participants interviewed. The study findings revealed that Botswana's tourism sector, which contributes significantly to the country's GDP, is a key focus area given the nation's desire (and pursuit) for economic diversification. It was also found that the country relies heavily on wildlife-based tourism, with limited activity and development with regard to other forms of tourism (e.g. cultural tourism, gastronomic tourism etc.). This dependence on natural resources was deemed to be highly concentrated in areas such as the Chobe and the Okavango. The study also made known a number of developments in the country with regards to the tourism sector, such as increased accommodation facilities, the growth of domestic tourism and more.

## 6.1. Contribution of the Research

It is recommended that tourism enterprises and institutions take cognisance of the factors, challenges, and strategies discussed in the study, so as to guide tourism planning, development, marketing and other tourism-related activities in the short-, medium- and long-term. Challenges and threats could be ranked looking at the most pertinent (or the ones with the greatest potential impact on the sector), right down to the least, crafting strategies to address these. These could then be included in planning documents such as policies and strategies, and even if Gantt charts to plan for their implementation. On a continuous basis, reference should be made to the factors affecting the tourism industry to ensure that these are well-managed. One of the key desirables for this research was to provide recommendations for strategies which could be put in place to ameliorate Botswana's tourism sector. The study puts forth the following recommendations; develop more tourism offerings (to diversify tourism products: instead of relying on wildlife and the natural environment, Botswana can broaden its tourism sector offerings. Forms of tourism which can be explored include dam tourism, sports tourism, cultural tourism, events tourism and more.

There is abundant potential to develop the tourism sector in this regard. Additionally, while to date, Botswana tourism has focused almost exclusively on high-end consumers, the government should expand into the mid-range market (medium income earners) in an effort to increase revenue and jobs for local Botswana. Develop more infrastructure: in areas such as the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve, this is a shortage of accommodation facilities, indicating the need for more infrastructure in this regard. In addition to this, transportation infrastructure can also be developed further, such as improving the roads to and from tourist destinations, as well as establishing cheaper alternatives for travel in the country (as opposed to exorbitantly priced air fares. Integrate the use of technology in tourism sector: given the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its tech-conscious / savvy consumers, it would be beneficial to use ICT to aid the development of the tourism sector.

Certain processes / components of product / service delivery could be automated to enhance efficiencies and effectiveness, augment customer satisfaction. Tech can also play a role in enhance the value chain, which could transform the tourism sector of Botswana. Allocate adequate resources for tourism marketing and development: one of the challenges mentioned is that there is inadequate funding by Government towards tourism marketing and development. It was noted that limited funding in this regard then inhibits activities for tourism marketing and tourism development, which limits performance of the sector. Provision of quality service: the players in the tourism sector in Botswana should provide consistent quality service in order to attract both foreign and local tourists. Consolidation of tourism policy: The new tourism policy that was introduced by the government of Botswana in 2020 must be consolidated in order to empower citizen to fully participate in the tourism sector. Establishment of new ventures: The government encourages new investments and joint ventures in tourism and continues to play a major role in developing tourism projects. For example, creating joint ventures for hotel expansions and start-ups along the Trans-Kalahari Highway, joining Botswana and Namibia, and development of lodges in the Kgalagadi Trans-Frontier Park, Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Magadikgadi Pans National Park, and forest reserves surrounding Chobe National Park.

**Author Contributions:** Amagolo Gabasiane: Writing original draft preparation, data analysis and conceptualization. Douglas Chiguvi: Validation, Methodology Writing- reviewing and editing, visualization.

**Conflicts of Interest:** There are no competing interests to declare.

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