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**Abstract**

The rising level of disposable income, good transportation networks and also increase in leisure time have motivated consumers to be influenced by a broader choice of destination. Hence, destinations managers have to effectively brand their destinations in order to have a comparative advantage over other similar destinations. Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate how Klosterheden can be branded in order to attract more German Tourists. Klosterheden is found in the city of Lemvig, which is located along the coast to Southern Jutland and North Germany. The geographical proximity shows that it could be easy for German Tourists to visit Lemvig than other areas in Denmark. Though Klosterheden is a state entity, it has many attractive natural attributes such as the beavers, the unique size of the forest, good path for biking and hiking, mushroom plants, stream, lakes, birds watching and roe deers and others, which make the tourists to feel lost in the forest. Thus the study relied on the fact that these touristic attractions could adequately be utilized if klosterheden is effectively branded. To achieve this aim, qualitative research methodology was applied in the study and data was also gathered where questionnaires and some other documents were used to collect information. Six German tourists, the Lemvig Tourist Board director and Klosterheden manager were interviewed.

The analysis result revealed that, Klosterheden is a state forest but unique as compared to the other forest zones in Denmark because of the huge size of the forest and the beaver especially. More so, Klosterheden aimed at maintaining, restoring and preserving nature’s experiences in connection with the other forest zones in Denmark in other to promote the policy of sustainability. Therefore, it would be an expensive venture to brand Klosterheden since it has to be done alongside other state forests in Denmark. Finally, it was also discovered that, there should be an extensive promotional strategies of Klosterheden in order to create a wider awareness and also to improve on the image of the forest to encourage the German tourist’s visitation. Thus, it is the researcher thought that this study can assist the manager of Klosterheden, in collaboration with other forest areas in Denmark to give proposal to the ministry of the environment on how to improve on the management of the forest to attract tourists.

**Acknowledgement**

I wish to thank the almighty God for giving me the strength to carry out this research despite the difficult process I went through. I also expressed profound gratitude to my supervisor, Assistant Professor, Karina M. Smed for her advice, diligence and patient through the period of writing of the research. May I take this opportunity to thank the Department of Tourism for making it possible for me to realise my work. A special thank to the Coordinator of Tourism, Associate professor Anette Therkelson for her immerse assistance. I give a big thank you to the Manager of Klosterheden, especially the Director of Lemvig Tourism Board Dina Overgaard and all my classmates and friends who helped me in one way or the other.

My heartfelt thanks to my beloved husband Ekangwo Kenedy Elad, who gave me the financial, moral and academic motivation and comfort in the course of my studies, and also to my children Ebika Tiffany Elad and Ekangwo Kenzani Elad and family whom I truly missed while I pursue my study. Lastly, to my late dad and mum for all their care and love.

Hannah Apai Besong

**1. Introduction**

Tourism is a growing phenomenon that has gradually become one of the largest industries of the world (UNCSD Ngo Steering Committee 1999). As asserted by (Cooper et al 2005:6), tourism is a significant industry of our time and international organisations support this activity for its contribution to world peace, poverty alleviation or the fact of “mixing” different people and cultures. Lowenthal also postulated that though tourism is by no means a novel phenomenon, travelling for pleasure, pure and simple, was not considered formally as a fully legitimate reason for travelling. Recently tourism has incredible growth throughout the world, (Lowenthal 1962:124). According to (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer 2011),

*“In 2010, International Tourism receipts are estimated to have reached US$ 919 billion worldwide (693 billion euros), up from US$ 851 billion (610 billion euros) in 2009. In real terms [...] International Tourism receipts increased by 5% as compared to an almost 7% growth in arrivals, showing the closed relations between both indicators and confirming that in recovering years, arrival tend to pick up faster than receipts”.*

The rapid development in the tourism industry and the benefits accrued in this sector has influenced tourism destinations to compete with one another in order to attract tourists to their respective destinations, (UNCSD Ngo Steering Committee 1999). Etchner and Richie claimed that as more and many areas of the world are developed for tourism, the destination choices available for tourists continue to expand, (Etchner and Richie 1999:2). They also assert that increased leisure time, rising levels of disposable income and more efficient transport network have facilitated consumers to choose from among much variety of destinations (Etchner and Richie:1999:2). Moilanen and Rainisto contended that “*competition between places is global. Competition for a skilful workforce, foreign investments and businesses, tourism income, and opportunities [...] forces places to develop their attractive and marketing, to promote their uniqueness” (*Moilanen and Rainisto 2009:8-10)*.* Crouch and Ritchie asserted that destination competitiveness recognised that for destinations to succeed destinations must ensure their overall attractiveness, and the integrity of experiences they delivered to visitors, must equal or surpass that of the many alternative destination experiences open to potential visitors, (Crouch and Ritchie 1999:139). Thus, as Echtner and Ritchie affirmed, a destination must be unique and appealing in order to be positively positioned in the minds of tourists. The key component of this positioning is the creation and management of distinctive and appealing perception or image of a destination, (Echtner and Ritchie 1991:2. Enright and Newton contended that tourism competitiveness is determined by four major components, namely the core resources and attractors, its supporting factors and resources, destination management and also qualifying determinants, (Enright and Newton (2005:341). In a similar vein, Enright and Newton argued that, due to evolution of places and destination, a fifth component of the destination determinant consists of destination development, planning and policy are equally observed (Ibid 2005:341). But the main focus is the core resources and attractors which constitute the primary elements of destination appeal. It is this “that *are the fundamental reasons that prospective visitors choose one destination over the other”,* (Richie and Crouch 1999:146)*.* Enright and Newton added that these core resources and attractors constitute physiography, culture and history, market ties, activities, special events and tourism superstructure, (Enright and Newton 2005:341). Physiography include land and climate, market ties is made up of linkage with the residents of the tourism originating regions, and tourism supernatural is comprised primarily of accommodation facilities, food services, transport facilities and major attractions (ibid). These core resources are elements that are supposed to be unique in other to brand a destination positively in the minds of the tourists.

Brand building as postulated by Moilenen and Rainisto is a long process that requires besides good substance, determination and smartness. Building a brand means strategic building of business operations and it includes many strategic solutions where the top managements are involved and responsible (Moilenen and Rainisto 2009:13). They further affirmed that brand strategy;

*“is needed for managing brands; an operation model that gathers and directs the product and service mix and the marketing package in a comprehensive and persistent way. Successful brands are, above all, image products living in the minds of the target customers and must be let in a determined and consistent way” (Moilenen and Rainisto 2009:13).* Therefore it should be obligatory for destination managers to establish strong destination brand identity and positioning to be well known outside in order to capture the international market. Thus, place branding has moved beyond treating place branding as merely marketing exercises, it is much more complex and involving since a lot has to be done in order to arrive at a given branding strategy that would be capable of attracting the targeted market. It would, therefore, be interesting and important to explore how Klosterheden can be branded to attract German tourists.

There are many attractive tourist destinations in Denmark that range from small destinations such as Bornholm, Skagen, to the major cities such as Copenhagen, Arhus, Aalborg, and Odense, just to name but a few. Whilst Lemvig is a small city that cover an area of 290 square miles and inhabited by approximately 22.300 people (www.visitlemvig.dk/area.htm). Geographically, Lemvig is located southward along the coast to Southern Jutland and North Germany, (Damgaard 1989:124). On assessing Lemvig in its historical sphere, there were peasants in the Lemvig district that were different from peasants from Eastern Jutland but have trait in common with peasants to the North and South along the West Coast of Jutland as far South of Northern Germany and FriesLand (Damgaard 1989:126). More so, Lemvig is a city with numerous attractions, namely the attractive harbour, hills scenario, game reserves, historical attributes and museums such as religious art, Lemvig museum, the Tukak theatre, the rich forest (Klosterheden) and other features that are capable of attracting tourists, (www.visitlemvig.dk/area.htm). Klosterheden is one of the attractive areas in Lemvig. Klosterheden is a combination of two forests Kloster and Kronheden, with a total area of approximately 6.400 hectares. They make up one of the largest forest areas in Denmark, ([www.naturstyrelsen.dk/Naturoplevelser/Beskrivelser/Vestjylland/Klosterheden](http://www.naturstyrelsen.dk/Naturoplevelser/Beskrivelser/Vestjylland/Klosterheden)).

Klosterheden is comprised of an existing wildlife, birds and plants of various species, coupled with natural and geological features such as water, lakes (www.visitlemvig.dk/area.htm). These natural features could be capable to attract the German tourists to visit Lemvig.

According to Weaver and Lawton tourist attractions are an essential *“pull*” factor and destination should therefore benefit from having a diversity of such resources, (Weaver and Lawton 2004: 129). Pearce also supported that different attractions may induce tourists to visit particular areas or spend their holidays in a specific region, (1998:26). These attractions are distinct between natural features such as land-form, flora and fauna and manmade object, historic or modern; in the form of cathedral, casino, monuments, historical buildings or amusement park and also culture, (Ibid). Since each of these attractions has its unique way it is marketed, this study would generally focus on marketing of the forest (Klosterheden). The study would specifically explore avenues that could be adopted to brand Klosterheden to attract more German tourists, because though Klosterheden possess all the above attributes to attract German tourists, the way to succeed is their proper development and branding.

Tourism is a competitive business and Lemvig could become competitive if only it markets its abundant human, natural, historical and culture resources wisely to attract tourists. The question that is usually posed is, how are these diverse resources efficiently branded to capture the target market? As Morgan and Pitchard argued, to be successful in positioning a tourism or leisure product today, you must touch based with reality and the only reality that matters is one that exist inside the potential consumer`s mind, (Morgan and Pitchard 2001:248). Instead of creating something new and different Morgan & Pritchard asserted, the idea behind positioning is merely to manipulate what is already in the consumers mind and re-engineer the already existing connection. This is because consumers would quickly recognize something which matches their current state of mind or connects prior experiences (Morgan & Pritchard 2001:247). Therefore the only hope for a product to make any impression through its advertisement is to be selective on an appropriate segment. And the segment that would be targeted in this study is the German Tourists.

## 1.1Problem Statement

The goal of the study is to gain an insight and understanding on how Lemvig is branded to attract tourists to the destination. Through this understanding gain further light as to how Lemvig can be branded to meet the international tourists’ expectations, especially German tourists. This is because during an innovative visit to Lemvig we were told that German tourists are the main market to Lemvig, more so, according to (2010 official report) from the Lemvig Tourism Board, Germany is the largest market, accounting for 172 million Kroner or 51 % of the total tourism consumption in the municipality, followed by the Danish market with a consumption of 113 million kroner or 33 %. Secondly German tourists are attracted to nature, and Klosterheden in Lemvig offers most of the natural features that could be attracted by the German tourists. In addition, Lemvig has some historical and geographical proximity with the Northern part of Germany due to the fact that, between the Limfjord and the North Sea an international trade route for cattlemen connect Thyholm and the North Sea Coast more closely to Northern Germany than to the rest of the Country East of Jutland ridge, (norhvestjylands-lemvig,dk).Lemvig is not far from the flying club based at Lemvig international. An old Airfield put up by the Germans during WW 11 (<http://helencoker.blogspot.com/2010/08/lemvig-dk->). These touristic advantages have made the study to decide focusing on the branding of Klosterheden as a touristic destination to German tourists due to the growing competition among different destinations to attract tourists to their respective destinations. In order for Klosterheden to target particularly German tourists a lot has to be done to portray an appealing image of the forest. Therefore to get depth into the research problem, the research seeks to address the following questions:

**Main Question:**

* How can Klosterheden in Lemvig be branded to attract more German tourists?

To assist in addressing the main problem above calls for the following sub-questions

* What is the current brand used by Klosterheden?
* What are the expectations of the German tourists**?**

In order to pay visitation to a given attraction international tourists have their required expectations, and if the desired expectations of the tourists are achieved, it will encouraged them to choose the destination as their destination choice to pay constant visitation. The study employs qualitative research method to look at the above questions. In this wise, the empirical data of the study would be generated through semi-structured interviews with the Lemvig Tourists Board, the Manager of Klosterheden and the German Tourists. This would also include secondary data such as articles from the internet, books, and official documents from the Lemvig Tourists’ Board and brochure from the forest (Klosterheden). It will also examine various theoretical considerations on destination branding, and concepts on market segmentation and marketing communication strategies.

**2. Methodology**

This section of the study would deal basically on the methodological framework which has been used. It would therefore require an entity of techniques and procedures that have been adopted to achieve the aim of the study. As noted in the study, destination branding, market communication strategies and market segmentation are the primary theories in relation to the study`s problem formulation, therefore an explanation for choosing these theories would be given.

**2.1 Scientific method**

This project cannot be comprehended without drawing allusion to some aspect of scientific method that would concern with the systematic and reflective thinking on concepts used in the project. Epistemology focuses on what is regarded as an acceptable knowledge in a discipline. The question whether the social world be studied with the same principles, procedures and ethics as the natural sciences has brought a lot of debate and discussions in the social sciences, (Bryman 2008:13). The positivist therefore, advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond, (Bryman 2008:13). The study would stand for interpretative or Hermeneutic approach in contrast to positivist. The interpretative approach shared the view that people and their institution is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences, as such the study of the social world requires different logic of research procedures and techniques, (Bryman2008:15). **Hermeneutics** is concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action, (Bryman 2008:15). The emphasis of this study is not on the “*explanation of human action*”, rather is concerned with the empathic “*understanding of human action”,* (*Bryman 2008:15)*.

As further postulated by Kvale “*although the subject matter of classical hermeneutics was the texts of literature, religion, and law, there has been an extension of the concept of “text” to include discourse and even action”,*(Kvale 1996:49). Therefore the analyses of the research would be interpreted in relation to the hermeneutic cycle which Kvale suggests that the understanding of the text takes place through a process in which meaning of the separate parts is determined by the global meaning of the text, as it is anticipated. The closer determination of the meaning of the separate parts may eventually change the original anticipated meaning of totality which again influences the meaning of separate parts and so on, (Kvale 1996: 49). This cycle implies that neither the whole text nor any individual part can be comprehended without reference to one another thus it indicates that the study will move from theory, to the discussion of the empirical data collected and back again in order to understand the whole research. The concept of hermeneutic is prominent in the study when the study moves from specific statements put forward by the respondents in order to understand the whole. That is, in light of how Klosterheden could be branded to attract more German tourists, in the context of destination branding, market communication strategies and the market segments. Here I try to make sense of the whole through these statements given by respondents. My intention is that this approach of the empirical analysis can assist the study to have a clear interpretation. However, due to the nature of social sciences, the respondents’ statements are formed by their individual interpretation and opinions, and this could have some limitation on the study outcome. But the study strives to be objective, therefore interpretation are formed in the light of pre-understanding and are limited to the researchers interpretation.

On the other hand the study will employ the **constructivism** approach which takes into consideration an ontological stance, an approach that asserts that “*social phenomenon and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors, that is social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interactions but they are in a constant state of revision”, (Bryman 2008:19)*. It means that people do construct reality through social interactions. Constructionist considers culture as an emergent reality in a *“continuous state of construction and reconstruction“, (Bryman 2008: 19).* Meanwhile, Becker as quoted in Bryman added that “*it is necessary to recognize that culture has a reality that persists and antedates the participation of particular people and shapes their perspectives”,* (ibid:). This implies that social reality could easily be portrayed within individuals or people of the same group. In relation to the study it is assumed that the inhabitants of Lemvig, the management of the Klosterheden and even the German tourists are significant in building the Klosterheden brand identity for the advantages of everybody, regardless of their function in Klosterheden.

**2.2 Deductive approach**

The deductive approach used in the study is to help to show a link between theory and social research. Bryman argued that with the inductive approach theory is the outcome of research, (Bryman 2008:9). The deductive methodological approach is well indicated by Bryman who cited that *“the researcher, on the basis of what is known about in a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces hypothesis that must be subjected to empirical scrutiny*” (Bryman 2008:9). In another sense deduction begins with an existing theory or model and applies this to a particular situation to see whether it is valid in that case, (Weaver & Lawton, 2006:380). The study would use the existing theories that would be applied in the context of Klosterheden. In this regard the deduced problem formulation is: “How can Klosterheden be branded as an attraction in Lemvig to attract more German tourists”. This problem formulation is said to be the researchable area and is aided by empirical data that will be got from the various interviews. To further illuminate the analysis, sub questions have been generated to aid the comprehension of these concepts and theories that are used in the project.

## 2.3 Qualitative research design

The differences between qualitative and quantitative research could be observed to form two distinctive clusters of research strategy, (Bryman 2008: 21). The quantitative research method is usually associated with the natural sciences, and emphasizes on quantification in the production of empirical data, knowledge, and stressing on measurement, (Bryman 2004:19). This quantitative method has the possibility to investigate issues by including many informants in the form of filling questionnaires that appears to be inadequate in the context of this research because it would limit the informant freedom of expression and restrict the opportunity to comment in detail on complex issues. Whereas, qualitative research as postulated by Bryman,is a research approach that usually emphasizes words in data collection and analysis, (Bryman 2008),. This embodies the generating of knowledge and empirical framework through interviews, participant observation, just to mention a few. It also emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theories and research where emphasis is focused on the generation of theories. It also embodies a view of social reality as constantly shifting emergent property of individual creation, (Bryman 2008:22). However, the qualitative research used in the study is linked to deductive method; it has employed the theory of destination branding, market segmentation and market communication. The choice of this method is relevant base on the fact that the study concern about testing rather than to generate theories.

The qualitative method is implemented because this would enable the study to come out with a detail examination involving complex issues pertaining to branding a destination, by focusing with few respondents in order to acquire a detail response from respondents and also to allow them to freely express their feelings and perception about the subject matter.

## 2.4 Case study research strategy

Many types of research strategies are available. According to (Yin 1994:12), the five different kinds of research strategies entail experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study. Thus, this study would make use of the case study research strategy. As Bryman postulated, a basic case study is consisted of the detail and intensive analysis of a single case, (Bryman 2008: 52). Yin added that a case study “is an empirical enquiry that investigates *a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context, are not clearly evident” (*Yin 1994:13). As argued by (Darke et al 1998:275), case study can be used to provide various research aims such as to provide description of phenomenon, develop theory and also to test theory. A case study may adopt single case or multiple case designs. As cited by Yin as quoted, a single case study is appropriate where the case meets all the required conditions for testing theories, where it is a unique case or a revolutionary case, (Yin as quoted Darke et al 1998:277). And this allows researchers to investigate phenomenon in-depth to have rich description and understanding. Whereas, multiple-cases design provides cross-case analysis and comparison, couple with the investigation of a particular phenomenon in a diverse setting, (Yin as quoted Darke et al, 1998:277). In this wise the study has adopted the single cases study, where Klosterheden is used as a case study in the research, the aim is to investigate how Klosterheden could be branded in order to attract more German Tourists. And also, the study used the theories of destination branding, marketing segmentation and market communication which have been tested on the empirical data got from the various interviews.

## 2.5Validity

The concept of validity has been described in various ways by different researchers in qualitative studies. As argued by Joppe, validity determines whether the research truly measure what it is intended to measure or show how truthful the research result should be, (Joppe in Golafshani, 2003: 599). Mason asserted that reliability, validity and generalisation are the variety of ways to measure the quality, rigour and wider potential of conventions and principles, (Mason as cited in Bryman 2008:32). Two types of validity are observed in qualitative research, namely the internal validity and external validity. Bryman explains that *“internal validity is a method where there is a good match between researchers’ observation and the theoretical ideas they developed”,* (Bryman 2008:32). Thus the study estimated the validity of the research to see whether the theories and concepts used can adequately explain the phenomenon the study set out to investigate. The study fused several existing theoretical framework namely that of destination branding, market segmentation and market communication, which is deliberately done in order to draw knowledge in an area of research in which little current theory is directly applicable. With external validity, (Bryman 2008: 33) argued that the issue is concerned with the question of whether the results that is got from the study can be generalized beyond the specific research context. However the simple answer is that the findings of the research would represent only klosterheden which is the selected case. It cannot be generalized beyond Klosterheden to other forest zones in Silkeborg, Rold Skov or Slagelseskovene in Denmark. The adequacy of validity is significant to the conclusion of the research since the study can freely portray why klosterheden cannot be branded to attract German tourists. In relation to reliability, this would refer to whether or not the result of the study would consistently lead to the same conclusion if repeated. The study is believed to adequately adhere to the criteria of reliability since a number of indicators such as interviews, desk research and questionnaires were used to gather data. However, as asserted by (Bryman 2008: 32), the problem is that qualitative data is usually subjective and could subsequently leads to conclusions which are out of social reality.

**2.6Triangulation**

The triangulation approach has also been adopted. Triangulation entails “*using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena”,* (Bryman 2008:379). This technique as affirmed by Denzin, requires the uses of multiple sources of data, methodologies and theoretical perspectives, (Denzin as quoted in (Bryman 2008:379), Triangulation is used in cross checking research findings, and this technique is also used as a means to improve on the validity in the study, (Bryman 2008:379).. According to (Guion 2002: 2) there are five different types of triangulations; such as data triangulation, investigation triangulation, theoretical triangulation, methodological triangulation and environmental triangulation. Data triangulation in regards to Guions view involves the use of variety of information and sources of data, (Guions 2002: 3). Thus, sources of information used for the study is collected from several sources namely from the interviews with the Manager of Klosterheden, Lemvig Tourism Board Director and three German Tourists, questionnaires filled by three German tourists on the one hand, and on the other side of the coin, information which comprises of the exploiting of articles from internet and documents which are made-up of official reports from Lemvig Tourism Board and brochures from Klosterheden. The significant of this approach is to have an insight on their different point of view, to check whether they agree on their different perspectives concerning the branding of Klosterheden. In regards to triangulation of investigation, the study involves several investigators namely interview with the Manager of Klosterheden, Lemvig Tourist Board coordinator and German tourists, where the respondents were investigated in different angles in order to get their different views and perspectives. For methodological triangulation, the study combined different methods of data collection such as primary interviews with the manager of Klosterheden, Lemvig Tourist Board Director, German Tourists, questionnaires filled by three German tourists and documentations from secondary sources. The relevant of this method is to obtain an in-depth dimension on the difficulties involved in the branding of Klosterheden. While theoretical triangulation equally involved the use of many theoretical perspectives such as the destination branding, marketing communication, and market segmentation to interpret the information or data collected from the respondents or documents. The aim of using triangulation technique is to obtain a solid confirmation of the findings since the weakness of one method could serve as strength of another method. Thus Bryman argued that whether conscious or unconscious, when triangulations exercise is applicable, the possibility of failure to corroborate findings always exists, (Bryman 2008: 611).

**2.7Theoretical Framework**

Variety of theories has been used in this area as theoretical frameworks, which concern the theory of destination branding, marketing communication strategies and market segmentation. These theories will be closely examined, different concepts and perspectives explained, strengths and weaknesses will be identified and also the areas that are relevant to this study are pointed out. Branding is a broad area of research that involves many other perspectives thus; the study would implement relevant theories on branding that would help to understand the research question such as “How can Klosterheden in Lemvig be branded to attract more German tourists”. Therefore, the work of (Moilenon & Rainisto 2009) on How to Brand Nation, cities and Destination, which emphasis on many strategies on how a destination can be branded, the importance of Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) and also the importance of building strong brand would be captured in the analyses of the study. One of his assertions is that, “*brand building is a long process that requires besides good substance, determination and smartness. Brand building means strategic building of business operations, and it includes many strategic solution where the top management are involved and responsible”* This means that to build a successfully brand it involves many financial and personal commitments. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005) on City Branding is also relevant since it also touches many areas on how a destination could have a unique attributes and their application of brand identity, position and image model that have been used in the study is equally remarkable. Keller 2001) works on Brands and Brand Management also postulate four steps in coordinating destination marketing which concern with ensuring identification and association of brand in customers mind, firmly establishing the brand`s meaning in the minds of customers, to elicit customers responses and finally convert brand response to create relationship between customers and brand. These are relevant aspects which are essential in brand building as would be applicable in the analyses of the study. Another articles on branding that have been used in the study are, Pritchard and Morgan 2001 articles on Advertising and Brand positioning, (Pritchard and Morgan 2004) Destination Branding and Lastly (Hankinson 2003) Relational network brands among others.

An overview of the concept of market communication is also relevant in the study, this deal basically with literatures from Kotler 1997, Kimmel (2009) Moilenon & Rainisto (2007) and Weaver and Lawton (2006). Kimmel (2009) theories are important in respect to marketing strategies used in the research, since it emphasizes extensively on variety of marketing communication Medias, which would be implemented in the marketing of Klosterheden. Lastly Kotler (1997) segmentation variables are equally remarkable in the research. Kotler elaborated deeply on the various types of segments such as geographic, demographic and psychographic segmentation which are significant for marketing an attraction or destination. Thus, the German tourists could be divided on the bases of these different segments which could ease the work of the marketers of Lemvig to target their desire German market segments.

**2.8 Secondary and Primary Data**

The collection of data for a research would embody secondary data collection, primary data collection or a mixture of both primary and secondary data collection. According to Weaver and Lawton secondary data collection requires the investigator to depend on materials and research that has been compiled previously by other researchers, (Weaver and Lawton 2006:391). It comprises of academic books, articles, newspapers, trade publication, statistical compilation, company materials, and internet materials, (Weaver & Lawton 2008: 295). The merit is that it virtually reduces the time and money needed to obtain the desired information. The secondary research used in the study is in combination of data from variety of sources from official documentations obtained from Lemvig Tourism Board, Klosterheden Head office and also literatures and other sources from internet. However, the disadvantage of this method as cited by (Weaver & Lawton 2007: 391) is that the user cannot be completely sure about its validity or reliability since she/he was not involved in its original collection. Thus to make-up this weakness, the study also rely on primary data that provide first hand information got from interviewees.

Primary data as Weaver and Lawton argued comprises of data which are collected instantly by the researcher. Primary data could be collected through different forms such as observation, interviews, focus group, and survey, (Weaver & Lawton 2008: 384). A major advantage of primary data is the fact that the researcher has to design a tailored research framework relevant to the specific topic and question of interest, (Weaver & Lawton 2008: 385). Hence the study used primary data in order to have an in-depth information on how to brand Klosterheden, and also to have a good knowledge about the appropriate media of communication and strategies that could be used to capture the German market, and on the other hand to know the perception of the German tourists.. However, besides the secondary research used in the study, the primary research also involves collection of data through interviews with the Lemvig Tourist Board Director and the Klosterheden Manager, and also from the German tourists.

**2.9 Interview setting**

As a technique for primary research, interviews were gathered from eight interviewees, namely the management of the forest (Klosterheden), the Lemvig Tourist Board director and six German tourists. Before the interview meetings, emails and telephone contacts were made to the Manager of the Klosterheden, Lemvig Tourist Board and the German organisations and summer houses in Lemvig seeking their concern for the interview. After acceptance of my meeting I had to discussed for almost one hour with the Forest manager who shared his experiences and points of views on the subject under investigation (branding of Klosterheden), I also discussed lengthily with the Lemvig tourist Board Director for almost 45 minutes, three Germans Tourists responded to my interview that I discussed for 15 to 20 minute to each of them as they were in a hurry, while three other German tourists decided to fill questionnaires that were translated in German language since it was difficult to communicate in English language. Therefore five of the interviews were carried out through face-to-face interviews and three on questionnaires. This method is advantageous than telephone interview since the interview can be done lengthily without any technical abstraction. More so, it would be easy to observe the emotions of the interviewees through body language. The interviewer however, had to spend much financial resources and time in order to meet the interviewees as compare to telephone interviews that involve direct communications. Thus, the information was later transcribed and kept as appendices for the study whereas those aspects of the discussion that were not relevant for the research were left out. At the beginning of each interview, the problem formulation and the purpose of the research were carefully explained to the interviewees in order to give them an insight of what would be discussed. In the cause of the interview, a lot of caution was involved in order to encourage the respondents to spontaneously and freely express their feelings, perception and impression on the subject.

## 2.10 The Interview Respondents

## The below table comprises of a visual representation of the various respondents involve in the interview.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RESPONDENT | PLACE | DUTY POST | FUNCTIONS |
| LTB | Lemvig Tourism Board | Tourist Director | -Development of tourism products of Lemvig  -communication of tourism activities to actors in Lemvig  -Marketing of tourism potentials of Lemvig |
| CEO | Klosterheden- Lemvig | Chief forest officer | -Management of klosterheden State forest District.  -Representative of the ministry of the Environment,  -Forest and Nature agency |
| Tourist 1 | Bremen | \_ | -Cycling  -Taking of photos of natural features  -Appreciates natural scenario |
| Tourist 2 | Hamburg | \_ | -To see the forest  -Hiking around the forest |
| Tourist 3 | Southern part of Germany | \_ | -To hear songs of birds  -To see red deer’s, beaver and lakes in the forest. |
| Tourist 4 | Bremen | \_ | -For beaching  -Appreciates natural environment |
| Tourist 5 | Hamburg | \_ | -He enjoys the sea-side  -likes to visit natural environment |
| Tourist 6 | Hamburg | \_ | -Enjoys the coast line  -Visits the forest for biking and mushroom harvesting |

( Fig: 1)

As seen above eight participants were involved in the interviews depending on their various roles to the development of klosterheden. Those selected are the management of Klosterheden, who is represented as CEO, one of the resource personnel to get information about Klosterheden; he holds the position of the Chief forest officer. He serves as a representative of the Ministry of the Environment and is in charge of the management of Klosterheden State forest. The Tourist Board Director represented as LTB holds the position of Lemvig Tourist Board director. Her functions comprises of the development of tourism product of Lemvig, communication of tourism activities and also the marketing of tourism potentials in Lemvig. However, the interview was successfully done although both the Manager of Klosterheden and the Lemvig Tourist Board director had busy schedules. On the other hand the German tourists were equally important because they represented the supply side of the product. Amongst the six German tourists that were concerned three were interviewed while the other three decided to fill in questionnaires. Their reason for filling questionnaires in German language is because it was difficult to communicate in English language. These six tourists were label according to numbers as Tourist 1, Tourist 2, Tourist 3 up to Tourist 6. This was done in an attempt to differentiate them and therefore would be easy to analysis their different views and perception.

At the beginning of each interview, the problem field was explained to the interviewees, as well as the purpose for which the study was conducted. The purpose of the explanation was first to seek the awareness of the interviewees and also give them a broad knowledge of what the study was about. The research used open-ended questions in a semi-structured dialogue format to elicit the participant’s views concerning research areas. All these interviews were recorded and transcribed.

**2.11 Semi-structured interview**

According to Kvale an interview is regarded as a situation of knowledge creation between the views of the two parties in a conversation, (Kvale 1997: 296). Thus interviews are rated differently between the quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research adopted a standardized approach in order to adhere to the reliability and validity of measurement, also the researcher has a clearly specified set of research questions that has to be investigated, (Bryman 2008: 437). In contrast qualitative research, there is a much emphasis in the interviewee points of view and also interviewee can depart significantly from guides that are used, where new questions can be asked that follow the interviewee responses, and this usually vary the order, (Bryman 2008: 437). Thus the source of empirical data used in the study is made of the semi-structured qualitative interview except in the situation where questionnaires where used to get information from three German Tourists who could not understand English language. As described by Kvale, semi-structured interviews are interviews that have a less meticulous structured, which mean that it doesn’t necessary has a direct question and answer sequence but develops in the course of the interview, (Kvale 1997: 9),. This approach involves a lot of flexibility, as interviewees contribute in coming up with additional issues that could be used as part of the findings. As Kvale added, the absence of a standard set of rules create an open-ended field of opportunity for an interviewer`s skill knowledge and intuition, (Kvale 1997: 84). This method embodies open questions that subsequently become easier to have an in-depth knowledge about the issue under investigation. And the questions should be brief and very simple in order to facilitate understanding from the interviewee and it also involve a lot of body language such as facial expression that also reveals the emotional stage of the interview. The interview for the study was designed as a semi-structured qualitative interview to interview the manager of the klosterheden forest, the Lemvig Tourist Board coordinator and the German tourists. This interview took into consideration the problem formulation which was in connection with the theories of destination branding, marketing communication strategies and Market segmentation. As posited by Kvale “*individual interview vary according to the content of the interview such as seeking factual information, or opinion and attitudes or narratives and life history”, (*Kvale 1997:101). Thus the interview guide was designed in order to seek opinion and attitude from the manager of the Klosterheden, Lemvig Tourist Board coordinator and from the German tourists.

**2.12The guide for the interviews**

The significant theories for the study, couple with the qualitative research method that have been described in the previous section of the study resulted to the construction of the questions for the interview guide. Base on my problem formulation I know the main theories to use will be branding, market communication and market segmentation. In order to decide on which themes to use, I now adopted the “*theoretical understanding interpretation technique”* that goes in-depth in relation to the theoretical background of the study (Kvale 1997:191). Since the aim of the interview is to portray aspects regarding branding of Klosterheden, the questions were divided depending on the different themes in order to approach them systematically. The sections were divided into several parts such as general information, which embodies questions related to their roles, vision and mission in connection with the forest attraction, as well as questions related to the importance of the forest to the Lemvig economy as a whole. The significant of this part of the question is to prepare the interviewee psychologically for subsequent questions. The second section of the questions entails the brand of the forest; here questions were centred on the current brand name, how the brand is characterized, the modification of the brand, positioned or identified as well as the media of communication and strategies used to target the German tourist. The relevant of these questions is to determine how they focus on their branding strategies. In addition, question on target market or segments were constructed to know the type of market that visit the forest, also to identify the particular segment of the market, the trend of visitation, as well as their accessibility to the forest. These are also relevant in order to know the appropriate communication strategies and also on how to prioritized information that could be used to target the required segments. After identifying the segment, the final question dwell on the expectation of the German tourists in order to evaluate the image and perception these segments have towards the forest attraction. These questions were centred on the satisfactory level of the German tourists to the attractions in Klosterheden, their cooperation with the tour guides and the locals as well, and also the tourism infrastructure such as roads and accommodation services.

On the other hand, questions that concerns the tourists is a bit different as it deals directly with the experiences and emotions, a more tactful design is required. Their questions ranged from their background information, this is aimed at identifying their particular segment; questions on their expectations are framed to identify their motivation in visiting the forest (Klosterheden). The last part of the questions concern with the tourist perception which is to know the different image that the Germans have towards the forest. However, due to the nature of semi-structured interviews it should be noted that the progress of the interview is usually altered which depends on the responses of the interviewees.

**2.13 Analytical Approach**

The research would take into consideration the combination of the theory of destination branding, marketing communication strategies and Market segmentation as outlined in the theoretical framework to answer the questions posed on the problem formulation. The analysis would centre on two parts such as the branding of Klosterheden and on the other hand the expectation of German Tourists. The study would therefore adopt the hermeneutic method, which requires that the process of moving back and forth should be taken, in order to reassess the analysis to the right direction, when a point to consider is taken from the empirical data. The significant of this is to come up with a clear analysis which would not be guided by unquestionable assumption about the destination. The theories and concepts of destination branding, market communication strategies and market segmentation would be used to determine how Klosterheden can be branded as a tourism attraction. This technique of data analysis is relevant because meaning is generated through content of the interpretations of the interview data.

However, the sources of data collection used for the analysis is got from a combination of interviews, questionnaires and desk research which comprises of the exploring of some articles of broader perspectives from web pages, and also documents which are made-up of official reports from Lemvig Tourism Board, brochures from Klosterheden, theories and literatures on destination branding, market segments and different strategies of communication used. This combination of data collection used in the study is relevant in order to obtain a more holistic comprehension of different knowledge and experiences used in the study. It is also aimed to answer the research question. The different methods of data collection will be illustrated below.

**Data Collection**

**Questionnaires**

**Desk Research**

**Interviews**

**Analysis**

Figure 2: (Source) Researcher`s Design

From the above illustration, in order to have an answer to the research question, a share understanding would be gathered from the various interviews, questionnaires and desk research articles that would subsequently lead to the analytical part of the study.

**2.14 Delimitation**

Some challenges were encountered in the course of this research work. These challenges involved the lack of English language speakers, time constrains, lack of materials for the research work and financial constraints. The target group for the research is limited to the German tourist which is virtually a small market and the period for my research was not their peak season that could be easy to meet too much German tourists. More so language barrier was one of the most serious issues because most of the German tourists that were available for the first trip to Lemvig refused my interview on the bases that they could not speak and understand English language, all these delayed the progress of the research. Some two tourists that could manage English told me to give them money before they could answer my questions. However, the other three German tourists decided to fill in questionnaires in German language and this pose another problem because I needed a German student to translate again in English. Also most official materials taken from Klosterheden and Lemvig tourism Board were in Danish; therefore I had to employ the services of somebody who convenient in German Language to translate before using them. In addition, the research involves a lot of financial and time constraints. On my first trip to Lemvig no German Tourist responded to my questions, I had to make a second trip to Thyboran exhibition centre and summer house where I interviewed three Germans tourists and three other German tourists decided to fill questionnaires which are translated in German language. The next limitation is that the sample did not include the local beneficiaries of Klosterheden. Only the views of the management, Tourism Board director and the German tourists were identified without any locals being interviewed. However, a future study could be conducted to explore the point of view of the local inhabitants of Lemvig. Lastly, another limitation is the small size of the study to research on as also observed. It could have been wise for the study to cover many other forests in Denmark, but due the limited time involve in the study it is limited to only Klosterheden in Lemvig.

**3. Theories**

This section will examine the theories and concepts that would be used in the study. The main theory would be branding and the study would observe the theory on branding from different researchers and perspectives. Areas that would be useful in the study would be observed. The concept of market segmentation and market communication will also be observed in the study. Market segmentation is very relevant in the research because there cannot be an effective marketing of destination without a target group in mind. Also applicable in this study is the theory of marketing communication because according to (Weaver & Lawton 2006:223), promotion tries to increase demand by conveying a positive image of the product or resort to potential customers or visitors through appeals to the perceived demands, needs, taste, values and attitudes of the market or particular target market segment, (Weaver & Lawton 2006:223). The marketing communication or promotional strategies is relevant in the study because through that information about a given destination is made known to the given target markets.

**3.1 Defining Brand and branding**

It is important to establish the terms brand and branding, since these are essential elements in destination branding. Therefore, many theories are used in this area in defining brand and branding, beside the multitude of branding theories from various contributing discipline used in the study, Kavaratzis and Ashworth recognition of the relationship between brand identity, brand positioning and brand image can be best understood. And these are the aspects that are captured in the analysis of the study.

As argued by Kotler and Gertner, the American Marketing Association defined brand as a “*name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition”* (Kotler & Gertner as cited in Morgan & Pritchard 2004:41). This definition has elements such as name, sign and symbol which distinguished one brand from another but no emotional attachment of the brand is mentioned because a brand is more than just a logo or symbol. Keller also stressed that “*a brand is therefore a product, but one that adds other dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be rational and tangible –related to product performance of the brand-or more symbolic, emotional, and intangible-related to what the brand represents “, (Keller 2003:4).* The meaning is that a branded product has attributes and elements that link a product to its consumers. What they referred as “tangible” element here is infrastructure, accommodation and other attractions while the “intangible” elements are experiences and feelings that attract a tourist to a destination. These attributes as evaluated are unique elements that categorised a brand. According to Kapferer brand attributes could be tangible, intangible, psychological and sociological features which have attachment to the product, (Kapferer as quoted in (Moilenon and Rainisto 2009: 6). This implies that beside tangible and intangible, branded product can also have emotional attributes such as psychological and sociological features. Knox & Bickerton also argued that, branding is a deliberate process of selecting and associating these attributes because they said to add value to the basic product or service, (Knox and Bickerton as quoted in Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005:508). Berry asserted that strong brand enable customers to have a good picture of intangible product, that could reduced customers` perceived monetary, social and safety risk in buying service which are difficult to evaluate before to purchase, (Berry 2000:128).. This signifies that effective branding would enable customers to have confidence when buying a product or paying for services which he has very little knowledge about. Thus, Moilanen & Rainisto affirmed that brands are created and shaped in the consumer`s mind, and exist when a segment or group of people belonging to a target group think the same way about the brand personality, (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009: 6). Hankinson also posited that, a brand is regarded as *“two-dimensional models typically categorized attributes as either functional or symbolic or functional and representational appealing to reason and emotion”* (Hankinson 2004: 109). This shows that besides functional and non-functional brand can also touch a customer`s reason and emotion, subsequently the consumer can easily identify the brand.It is all about differentiation through competitive advantage, thus, indicating the importance of a unique brand identity. Keller asserted that, branding involves not just adding value to a product but also creating differences on a product as a result of marketing activities, (Keller (2003:43).

According to Aaker, a brand equity model includes five main categories namely brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand image, perceived quality, brand associations and property rights. Places are beneficiary to these models because focus is on the most central strategic issues in marketing planning. Each of these is linked to brand name and symbol, as such generates more equity, (Aaker as cited in (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009: 12). The meaning is that a successful brand must acquire the above five elements that a customer would be capable of identifying the brand`s uniqueness. And these show how valuable the brand is portrayed to the general public. As Leuthesser relates, brand equity is seen “*as asset of associations and behaviour on the part of the brand`s customers, channel members, parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater value or greater margin than it could without the name”,* (Leuthesser as cited in Wood 2000: 663). For instant the perception the customer has of a brand might affects the profitability of the company, since image is pivotal in the building of a valuable brand. Thus, pitta & Katsanisas further suggested that brand equity boost the profitability of the brand`s choices, could lead to brand loyalty and also separate the brand measure of competitive threats pitta & Katsanisas as cited in (Wood 2000: 663),. Moilanen & Rainisto claimed that;

*“Brand equity is influenced by brand images that are connected with brand awareness and brand loyalty. Images can be based on a product, user, operational situation, quality and price. As they added, from a communication point of view, brand image, brand loyalty and brand awareness are essential in creating brand equity*” (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009:12).

These are remarkable qualities of a brand that make a destination to have a comparative advantage over another destination. As postulated by Simoes & Dibb “the brand is expressed through the company’s core mission, core values, beliefs, communication, culture and overall designs” (Simoes & Dibb as cited in Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005: 509). This shows that brand can be portrayed in variety of ways depending on how the organization wants to distinguish its brand from other similar brands; this will solely depends on how the brand has been communicated to the customers. Ekinci postulated thatas many destinations are now competing for customersan effective destination *“positioning”* strategy become relevant, (Ekinci 2003: 21). Thus, the creation and management of a distinctive and appealing destination image are the most important component of positioning process. Brand positioningas asserted by Morgan & Pritchard, is all about stressing those values and features that make the destination distinguishable from others, that is staging the brand so that it occupies a niche in the marketplace, (Morgan & Pritchard 2001:247). Brand image as argued by Moilanen and Rainisto *“is the real image developed in the receiver`s mind.[...] refers to how the brand is being experienced in reality”* Moilanen and Rainisto (2009: 7). While Moilanen and Rainisto affirmed that brand identity is how the owner wants it brand to be experienced. (Moilanen and Rainisto 2009: 7). These elements can be applicable to a destination like Klosterheden as observed in the analytical section of the study. These would be relevant because it seek to portray those features of klosterheden that gives it comparative advantage over other forests in Denmark and could therefore attract more German tourists to visit klosterheden. Thus, brand identity; brand positioning and brand image have been differentiated by (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005) as essential elements that constitute a brand as a multidimensional construct. In this light brand identity, brand positioning and brand image as (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005) distinguished them, would be highlighted below.

**3.2 From brand identity to Brand image**

Brand identity, brand positioning and brand image are concepts in branding that are interwoven to one another. Kavaratzis & Ashworth described brand identity, brand positioning and brand image as factors that make up the brand as they are connected in different dimension (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005). Aaker on his part argued that branded products need a brand identity, brand differentiation and brand personality, (Aaker as quoted in Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005: 509. Furthermore, Kavaratzis & Ashworth asserted that, brand identity, brand positioning and brand image are attributes of the same features though from different perspectives, (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005: 509). Identifying and clarifying the brand identity is an instrument of distinguishing a product from another and recognising its brand position in relationship to competing product within a competitive environment. These factors could be applicable to destination or to say attraction such as Klosterheden. The below diagram is an illustration of brand identity, brand positioning and brand image as adopted from (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005) model.

PRODUCT COMPETITORS MARKETS

BRAND IMAGE

TOURIST

BRAND POSITIONING

BRAND IDENTITY

Owner`s vision

Fig: 3 Adopted from (Kavaratzis & Ashworth model 2005)

From the above model, there are three angels that would be analysed in the study .The product would embodies the forest and the other products in the forest such as bird watching, beavers, sporting events, other activities which represent the owner`s vision of the brand (brand identity). These are the attributes that must be unique in other to position the brand, so as to have a competitive advantage over other similar products in order to attract the market which represents the German target markets. Brand positioning would involve an attempt to make Klosterheden distinctive or unique from other similar brand or brands. Whereas brand image, would embodies either the negative or positive perception that the German tourists (market) have toward the Klosterheden brand. Therefore by identifying the brand means that it has to be associated with attributes or qualities that would give the brand the benefits that differentiate it from other competitors.

**3.3 How to Brand a destination**

Two dynamic scholars such as Morgan and Pritchard contributed enormously on how a destination can be branded. Their theories are significant in the research because they talk on how a destination can be successfully branded and also on different stages that a destination can be perceived which would be applicable in the research. Also Keller theory is equally relevant to the study because he carefully outlined four steps that the study would implement in assessing how a strong brand can be built.

According to (Morgan & Pritchard 2004:63) in other to build an effective or meaningful destination brand, it is important to create an emotional relationship between the destination and the potential visitors. Keller arguments relies on the Customer Based Brand Equity model as he asserted that the power of a brand depends largely on what customers have learned, felt, seen and have heard about the brand in the past, (Keller 2001: 3). In other words the effectiveness of a brand resides in the customer`s mind. Keller further explained that, the challenges that marketers in brand building encountered, is to be sure that customers have the right experiences with the product and services and also accompany marketing programs in order to link their thought, feelings, image, belief, perceptions and opinion to the brand, (Keller (2001: 3). It implies that marketer has to portray a positive image about the destination that would appeal to the feelings of the tourists, thus influencing them to choose Klosterheden as attractive destination choice. Morgan and Pritchard stated that, the branding activities concentrated on conveying the essence or the spirit of the destination, (Morgan and Pritchard 2004: 64). It means that brand sell a destination to a visitor since it constantly act as a remainder to the customers. They went ahead to also affirm that,

“*Countries often show case their history, their culture and their beautiful scenery in their marketing, but many destination have these attributes and it is critical to build a brand on something that uniquely connects a destination to the consumer now or has the potential to do in the future”,* (Morgan & Pritchard 2004: 64).

This means that countries may have many of the above attributes to attract consumers to their destinations but these attributes could only be appealing to consumers if they are effectively branded. As Morgan and Pritchard, stated a good example is that other world cities may claim to be romantic or spiritual, but Roman or to say the Vatican City is the Eternal City, (Morgan and Pritchard 2004: 64). Lemvig too can use it natural attributes such as the forest to portray the uniqueness of the destination in order to stand the competitive advantages in attracting nature’s tourism. Keller postulated that building a strong brand comprises of four steps and all these steps involved accomplishing certain objectives both existing and potential. These steps are outlined as follows;

* Firstly, to ensure identification of brand with customers and an association of the brand in customer`s minds with specific product class or customers need.
* The second step is to firmly establish the brand meaning in the minds of the customers by strategically linking a host of tangible and intangible brand associations.
* The third step is to elicit the proper customers’ responses to this brand identity and brand meaning.
* The fourth and final step is to convert brand response to create an intense, active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand, (Keller 2001:5).

This by implication signified that brand building is a long process which requires a lot of caution and determination to capture the minds of customers. Thus Keller argued that questions which customers usually ask about a brand would dwell on brand identity, brand meaning, brand response and brand relationship, (Keller 2001:5). Also according to Keller the significant is that, meaning cannot be established unless identity has been created; responses cannot occur unless the right meaning has been developed; and a relationship cannot be forge unless the proper responses has been elicited, (Keller 2001:5). This means that customers has to consider these features that would finally influence them to choose a particular brand, however these elements could not be effectively implemented without an adequate communication strategies. In corroboration to this argument Moilenon and Rainisto affirmed that in the process of developing a brand for physical products, the essential factor is typically planned communication, which is implemented by the marketer and transmitted through the marketing communications media, (Moilenon and Rainisto 2009: 15). Therefore it implies that a good destination brand must be efficiently communication in order to make it unique in the minds of customers. Morgan and Pritchard continued that “*a good destination branding is therefore original and different, but its originality differences need to be sustainable*”, (Morgan and Pritchard 2004: 65)*.* Destination branding as (Morgan and Pritchard 2004:65) further explained can assist to bridge any gaps between destinations strengths and potential visitor’s perceptions. This is because place reputations cannot be made in a vacuum and neither are tourist choices. Therefore, it is the responsibility of place marketer to establish how their destination`s image compares with those of its key competitors, (Ibid). Thus, Coshall as well as Tapchai & Waryszak stated that image is all important and how a place is represented can inspire people to visit and revisit it, (( Coshall; Tapchai & waryszak as cited in Morgan and Pritchard 2004:65). It means that the image of a destination influenced the tourist decision to pay visitation to an attraction or destination. As supported by both Hunt Pearce, 1982, destination image is capable of influencing tourism behaviors (Hunt; Pearce as cited in Echtner & Ritchie 2003: 2).

Morgan and Pritchard argued that; “*On any positioning map, however, brand winners are those places that are rich in emotional meaning, have great conversation value and hold high anticipation for potential tourists.[..]”(*Morgan and Pritchard 2004:66).By implication Klosterheden could be categorized amongst destination with emotional meaning, great conversation with anticipation for tourists because klosterheden is one of the unique forests in Denmark that have many attributes such as the beavers, the huge size of the forest, and other natural attributes as such that could give emotional experiences to many tourists. Therefore, these could influenced tourists to make subsequent visitation. However, they are destinations that anticipate for tourists and emotional meaning but the problem is lack of physical and financial motivation. Thus Morgan and Pritchard added that some destinations that do not have high emotional pull but currently growing with limited celebrity value have huge untapped potentials that could be future winner`s destination brand, (Morgan and Pritchard 2004:66). This is because, as Berry asserts, customers could gain awareness and subsequently develop impression about a brand not only from company`s communication but also from independent sources offered by the company, (Berry 2000:129). This allegation shows that branding is an important aspect used by marketers to attract customers to a destination.

**3.4 The importance of branding**

The importance of branding be it destination or retail product has been captured first in order to understand the concept of destination branding. Since a thorough understanding of the importance of branding is useful in the study in order to fully understand the concept of destination branding. The works of two main personnel are dealt with here including the work of Morgan and Pritchard together with the work of Moilenon and Rainisto. Morgan and Pritchard talk about the three steps such as identifying competitive advantage, selecting the right competitive advantages and communication the position to the target market. And (Moilanon and Rainisto 2009) emphasized the importance of an effective brand building, which are relevant in the analyses of the study. The questions that are usually ask is that, does branding benefit organisations? This study is carried out with the assumption that branding is of vital importance to destination be it an attraction or city.

Therefore as posited by Morgan and Pritchard branding is considered as the most powerful marketing weapon which is available to contemporary destination marketers that are faced with tourists searching for lifestyle fulfilment and experiences, (Morgan and Pritchard 2004: 60). The meaning is that branding is a powerful tool that marketers used to influence or to position a destination in the minds of tourist irrespective of its tangible elements. Kotler et al also suggest that *“the positioning task consists of three steps: identifying a set of possible competitive advantages upon which to build a position. Selecting the right competitive advantages, and effectively communicating and delivering the chosen position to a carefully selected target market”* Kotler et al as quoted in (Morgan and Pritchard 2004: 189).For instant these elements is essential since it help marketer to develop a particular image to the minds of consumers.According to Biel, brands are problem solver, because brands make it easy for consumers to choose from variety of both functional and emotional attributes, (Biel 1997: 205). This indicates that brand reduced the risk customers perceived when buying a product. However, as Aaker also posited a brand is made up of various variables that affects the brand value credibility, proposition brand–customer relationships and ultimately the brand`s positioning. These consist of the brand as product, an organisation, a person and a symbol, (Aaker as cited in (Morgan and Pritchard 2001: 189). By implication, to successfully capture the German market to pay visitation, Klosterheden must be identified as a unique attraction that would be capable to stand a competitive advantage over other similar attractions. Aaker continued by asserting that;

“*a successful brand worldwide must be a clearly defined core personality or purpose. A brand personality as he defined, is as the set of human personality, which is both distinctive and enduring, while core identity is “the central timeless essence of the brand” which remain constant even as the brand travels to new markets and products”* (Aaker as cited in Morgan and Pritchard 2001:189)*.* This implies that, an effective brand must have a clear objective and this objectives must be remarkable in order to influence the customer`s decision. Moilanen and Rainisto claimed that “*a brand is created when the customer feels the product or the service has added value compared to other, similar competing products or services”*, (Moilanen and Rainisto (2009:13)*.* According to Morgan and Pritchard argument, the target market communication tones, advertising strategies, positioning statements and at times even the logo can all changed, but what is always constant is the core personality or the purpose, (Morgan and Pritchard 2001:189). Thus a brand`s core personality has a stronger influences on the determination of a successful branding of a destination. Henceforth Morgan and Pritchard put it again that the concept of branding also extends to tourism destination, thus the most successful destinations have achieved this in such a way that at the mention of their names it evokes mental images and perceived experiences. A glaring example is that the Seychelles promotes an exotic island experience, while UK is the world most sought-after cultural and historical destination, (Ibid). Lemvig too, is a destination with natural features, therefore Klosterheden which comprises of variety of natural features could be used as an exciting attributes to brand Lemvig as an exemplary natural environment. Moilenon and Rainisto asserted that *a brand is successful when it has been developed with a clear statement of the product`s use and its target group in mind. It also requires a commitment to offer sufficient resources for the brand, which enable it to achieve its desired position. Successful brands can satisfy the rational and emotional needs and expectations of the customers”,* Moilenon and Rainisto (2009: 13). It implies that for a brand to be effective, it entails both physical and financial commitments. Thus, they further observed that;

“*Brand building is a long process that require besides good substance, determination and smartness. Brand building means strategic building of business operations, and it includes many strategic solution where the top management are involved and responsible.[...]successful brands are, above all, image products living in the minds of the target customers and must be led in a determined and consistent way”* (Moilenon and Rainisto 2009: 13).

Thus,for Klosterheden to have a strong brand to capture the German tourists and even tourists from other countries like Norway, Sweden and Holland just to mention a few, it involves a lot of determination, collaboration and also commitment between top management and of course stakeholders. Because divergence views between these bodies might lead to differences that will slow down the branding process, this would eventually reduced the number of tourists and the community would not enjoy the economic benefit accrue from tourism.

According to Berthon et al, branding provide many other functions for both buyers and sellers, because brands virtually serve as “*symbols around which relationship are built”*,(Berthon, Hulbert and Pitt as cited in Blain et al 2005:329)*.* Therefore, the logo design can be considered as the most essential component of branding. In the same vein Blain et al, contended that while the symbol of the brand may comprises of a distinguished name, logo, trade mark or package designed, logo is regarded as the central brand image that represent a product, destination or service, (Blain et al 2005:329). However, according to Keller “*the goal is to locate the brand in the minds of consumers such that the potential benefit to the firm will be maximized. Competitive brand positioning is all about creating brand superiority in the minds of consumers* (Keller 2003:44)*.* Blain et al, further added that successful destination brand awareness would result to reduction for the frequent need of detailed information search and contributes to the destination becoming the selected choice for the visitors (Blain et al (2005: 331). As Blain et al, added, a destination logo is essential since it facilitates the activities of the DMOs to establish brand image and identity before actual visitors experience, can stimulate awareness and communication desire attributes effectively to visitors, as such reducing search costs and influencing visitors choice behaviour especially if the logo connects with the target market that the DMO is trying to attract, (Blain et al 2005: 332). In this sense the logo of a destination ease the work of DMO to make known the destination by communicating its attributes to consumers without the waste of resources and times. According to Weaver and Lawton, communication strategies used could be in the form of marketing programs as observed in (Weaver and Lawton 2006:221), in the form of product strategy, price strategy, channel strategy and communications strategy. These are strategies that Klosterheden has to adopt that would make it to stand out to attract more tourists from Germany and tourists from other parts of the world. However, as Blain et al also observed destination branding study is significant in other to implement and determined the extent to which the concept of destination branding is applied by DMO and also how the current destination branding practice is being implemented, (Blain et al 2005: 329).

***3.5 Perspectives of Destination Branding***

Having considered the concepts of brands and branding and the importance of branding the study has also looked at the concept of destination branding. According to (Blain 2001:5) destination branding is a relatively modern concept, and although *'branding*' has been used continuously by retail and service organizations, the concept has recently been applied to destination marketing. Many definitions of destination branding have been proposed by different marketing researchers, but Blain posited, it as;

“a *marketing activities that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination, convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination and serve to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the experience: all the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers decision to visit the destination in question, as opposed to an alternative* (ibid:13).

The above definition entails aspects such as the importance of identity and image and also emotional experiences which are common aspects, it does not explain the process of using or implementing the brand this shows complexity of the tourism industry. Hankinson as revealed a framework on destination branding which is centred on the concept of *“brand networks*” whereby place branding performed four main functions, (Hankinson as quoted in Blain et al, 2005: 329). These functions as Hankinson stipulated are:

* Brand as communicator where it portrays a mark of ownership and product differentiation,
* Brand as perceptual entities where it appeal to customers senses, reasons and emotion,
* Brand as value enhancer, which is link to the brand equity.
* Brand as having personality which enables it to form relationship with customers.

These functions of destination branding proposed by Hankinson touches the essential components that qualify a brand to have personalities that seek to be unique from other product and services. Moilanen & Rainisto on his part argued that the fact that destination compete for skilful workforce, foreign investors, and business, tourism income, and opportunities has drastically influenced the field`s public diplomacy and forces places to develop their attractiveness and marketing, to promote their uniqueness, (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009:8). It implies that as places are being developed many criteria would be considered in order to choose destinations that are not only emotional appealing but also destination with added advantages. Thus destination has to be unique in order to attract more visitors. To Kavaratzits and Ashworth place branding is not just using the place qualities in the promotion of local products in national and international markets but it involves making use of the qualities of local products to ascribe meaning and association to a particular place, (Kavaratzits and Ashworth 2005:511). Thus, there are many products in Klosterheden inclusively such as bird watching, beavers; mushroom harvesting that are really essential to the sustainability of the place. Some researchers asserted that two significant features of destination branding are the fact that; a tourism destination is created by a network of independent companies and actors that collaborate in producing the facilities and services of the destination product. And the consumption of tourism products at a destination is assembled from available product and services conducted by the consumers (Ritchie and Ritchie 1998; Ashwoth & Goodall 1990; Flagestad & Hope 2001; Laws 2002 as quoted in Moilanen & Rainisto 2009:113) .Therefore if destination branding is not a brand of one single company`s product it means that there must be co-ordination between DMOs or network of independent companies participating in the tourism product production and marketing of this products. Therefore the management of Klosterheden has to co-operate with marketing organisations in Lemvig especially on the perspectives of marketing of their products. Hankinson affirmed that building relationships with stakeholders from different angles, such as target visitors, residents, and government, can be crucial to the success of the core brand, because successful and effective relationships is tantamount to the value of the brand, (Hankinson 2004:). Thus cooperation between the tourist board, Klosterheden and even other bodies is equally important to build a successful brand of Klosterheden.

**3.6 Destination branding and communication strategy**

Branding a destination cannot be done in isolation, therefore, there must be an adequate communication strategies used by DMOS or those concern in the marketing of an attraction and destination in order to target desire markets. Thus, communication strategy is significant in the study as would be observed. In this light many theories that are relevant to communication strategies are implemented in this section, but the most essential is Kimmel theory on marketing communication in the New millennium. As noted, the various types of communication portrayed by (Kimmel 2009:1) in building a strong communication is remarkable to this study because implementing these traditional and non-traditional media, would make it more easier for the Destination marketers such as the Lemvig Tourism Board to know the different types of messages to send to the appropriate segment of the German market that are attracted to products as beavers, birding tour, sporting activities and even the forest.

As asserted by Kimmel marketing communication or promotional mix is made of advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing which stands for a critical mediating process that linked a company`s offerings to its intended consumers, (Kimmel 2009:1). Kotler claimed, “*Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individual and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others”,* (Kotler 1997:9)*.* According to Hankinson except a consistency identity is portrayed through marketing communication channels such as advertisement, publicity and public relations and through organic channel as art and education, the core brand will deem to fail, (Hankinson 2004: 117). This shows the relevant of the role play by marketing communication in branding a destination product or services. Weaver & Lawton also supported that, *“marketing involves the interaction and interrelationships among consumers and producers of goods and services, through which ideas, products, services and values are created and exchanged for the mutual benefit of both groups”, (*Weaver & Lawton 2006:203). They continued that, marketing emphases the two-way interaction between these producers and the actual as well as potential tourist market, successful marketing depends on feed back such as customer satisfaction, which flow from the market to the producer, and offers financial and other benefits to both parties concern, (Weaver and Lawton 2006: 203). As Kotler suggested, “*communicators also need to think about their audience awareness that the communicator is attempting to persuade them. People who have been exposed to previous persuasion attempts have a different response to persuasion than those who have not been exposed to such attempts*, (Kotler 1997:607). Whereas, Anderson posited that communication is viewed as the human act of transferring information to others and make it understood in a meaningful ways. The meaning is that, message communicated must only be successful when it has an effect or impact to the consumers, which is appealing to the consumers’ emotion (Anderson 2001: 168). Moilanen and Rainisto*,* added that a good place image need good communication and communication gives promises that are unique, reliable, and desirable, (Moilanen and Rainisto 2009:12)*,*. These are important factors that could be used in Klosterheden to carefully portray all the other products to target the German tourists, therefore seek to differentiate (Klosterheden) forest from other forests in Denmark. Moilanen & Rainisto posited that, this communication that gives unique and reliable promises can be portrayed in the form of logo, name, printed material, business gifts and also to sponsorship, media publicity, image advertisement and PR events (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009:13). This means that variety of communication media should be implemented because it is an essential tool in marketing since it focuses the target group to know about the particular brand. And also constant communication will instil a positive image perception in the minds of customers. Hence, to target the German market to choose Klosterheden as their destination choices, different advertisement media should be sent to them. This would make them to be conversant with the Klosterheden brand offerings. According to Solomon & Stuart the message is the actual communication that links a sender to a receiver. This message has to carry all information necessary to persuade, inform, remind or build a relation; these messages may be verbal or non-verbal, (Solomon & Stuart 2003: 402-403). Hankinson added that, the role of effective public relationship is vital to the portrayal of positive organic image since frequent organic image processes developed through the arts, education and the media have the strongest and most pervasive influence on the image of a destination, (Hankinson 2004: 117). Thus it implies that variety of communication channels should be used by Lemvig marketer to portray the uniqueness of the forest above all order forests, to be able to get their message across to more German Tourists, since effective advertisement help in building a positive image. Therefore other recent media of communication should also be implemented to capture more German tourists. As argued by Kimmel formally marketing communication relied on the traditional forms of communication, such as television, radio, print, and outdoor advertising, but now the choice has increased where significant budget could be allocated to target direct marketing effort as public relation campaigns, sponsorships, events management, internet advertisement, product placement and other novel methods for message transmission, (Kimmel 2009:2),. Kimmel further postulate that recently non-traditional context of marketing messages include televised sporting events, underground parking garage billboards, coupon distribution, digital outdoor billboard, marketing messages imprinted on the sand by beach cleaner, pop-up and pop down adverts that appear when customers visit certain websites, (Kimmel 2009: 2). All these different mediums of communication could be implemented to attract more German tourists to know about the variety of offerings in Klosterheden.

Weaver and Lawton supported that services’ marketing is another important aspect which “*applies to service sector activities such as tourism and is fundamentally different from goods”, (*Weaver and Lawton 2006: 204). As argued by Kotler et al, the key marketing characteristics that distinguished services from goods are intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability, (Kotler et al as quoted in Weaver & Lawton 2006: 204),. Among these characteristics intangibility and variability are the two elements that would be relevant in the study. Weaver & Lawton asserted that in contrast to physical product and goods, service have intangibility, which means that they cannot be directly seen, tasted, felt or heard prior to their purchase and even consumption, (Weaver & Lawton 2006: 204). Due to the intangible nature of the service sector as they further added, word of mouth is especially important as a source of product information since it involved assess to those who have already experienced a particular destination or know of someone who has experienced, (Ibid). “Talk factor” or “word of mouth” as Kotler termed it, comes from expert and social channels in the generation of new businesses, (Kotler 1997: 616). To Morrison, word of mouth has a high degree of influence among potential customers as an image formation agent, (Morrison as cited in Weaver & Lawton 2006: 205). Another characteristic is variability posited by Weaver & Lawton. It implies that the interaction between the producer and the consumer is a unique experience that is influenced by a large number of often unpredictable `*human element`* factors, (Weaver & Lawton 2006:206). This includes the mood and expectations of each participant at a particular time during which the service encounter takes place. Weaver and Lawton further asserted that;

*“The problem for manager is that these incongruities can lead to unpleasant and unsatisfying encounters, and a consequent reduction in customers’ satisfaction levels [...] Often, just one such experiences can sour a tourist`s view about a particular destination, offsetting a large number of entirely satisfactory experiences during the same tourism experiences that, because they were expected do not make the same impression”* (Weaver and Lawton 2006: 205-206). This explains the heterogeneous nature of tourists because what could be interesting to one tourist could displease other tourists.

However the marketing communication concept has been relevant in the study because, it create awareness and gives out clear information and a concise image of the product offering in Klosterheden and also how the desire German segment could benefits from the products found in Klosterheden.

## 3.7 Segmentation of the tourist market

## Branding a destination product or services, and later communicating these to the required segments would be an expensive and difficult venture without a target segment or market in mind. This is one of the arguments that enable the study to implement the concept of segmentation and subsequently how it is significant in marketing tourism destinations or tourism attraction like Klosterheden. Many theories on segmentation would be implemented in this section, but the inclusion of Philip Kotler strategies on segmentation criteria especially is significant in the sense that Kotler elaborated deeply on this concept by bringing in the different criterion of segmentation. Through these different criterion marketers would be guided on what segment of the German tourists could be valuable to target as its potential market with the brand that is to be offered.

Kotler asserted that a market segment is made up of a large identifiable group within a market. Segmentation practices recognise that buyers differ in their wants, purchasing power, geographical locations, buying attitude and even their habits of buying, (Kotler 1997: 250). According to Kim & Jogaratnam in *Campiranon & Arcodia, segmentation is* customer group that share problems of the same natured and respond to market stimulus in an identical way, (Kim & Jogaratnam in *Campiranon & Arcodia, 2007:2)*. Thomas regarded market segmentation simple as “*subdividing a market along some commonality, similarity or kinship”,* (Thomas 2007:2). As Kotler added the major variable for segmentation are classified under geographic, demographics, psychographics and behavioural segmentation (Kotler 1997:250). These variables would be captured on the following graph.

SEGMENTATION

MARKET

Fig :2. Inspired by Philip Kotler

Fig :4: Inspired from Philips Kotler (1997)

## Georgraphics segmentation according to Kotler, would involve the division of the market into different geographical units such as nation, state, region, countries, cities or even neighbourhoods (Kotler 1997: 259). This segment is neccessary in the analysis of the study because it would make it easier for marketers of Klosterheden to focus their target on a particular country like Germany that would not incur too much financial resources since it is near by. Seaton and Bennett affirmed that one of the first functions of segmentation for any given organisation is that of carefully evaluating the geographical origin of its customers or potential customers, (Seaton & Bennett as cited in Campiranon & Arcodia 2007:155). Campiranon & Arcodia, further explained that, a company may decide to operate in one or few geographical areas, or to operate in all areas but emphases more on geographical differences in needs and wants, (Campiranon & Arcodia 2007:155). This implies that to attract more German tourist to visit Klosterheden, marketer could choose to market the forest brand entirely to Germany or to particular geographical area but focus on variation depending on their needs and their preference.

## The next is psychological segmentation where Kotler asserted that, buyers are divided into various groups on the basis of lifestyle or personality since people within the same demographic group can portray different psychological attitude, (Kotler 1997: 259). For instance, in the cause of the promotion of sporting activities that usually takes place in the forest, marketer has to target German sport lovers to visit this attraction. Kotler also talked of demographic segmentation where the market is usually grouped into variables such as age, family size, family life cycle, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, race, generation, nationality or social class, (Kotler 2005: 258). This is one of the most popular segmentation group and the most significant that has to be targeted in the study in order to carefully understand the market size and subsequently the type of media that could be effectively used to reach the required German market. Lastly, behavioural segmentation is another relevant variable which Kotler posited that buyers are divided into various groups on the basis of their knowledge, attitude, use or response to the particular product, (Kotler 1997: 260). This variable is equally important since it requires a careful research on the perception of the target group towards the product offered. This criteria is also significant in the study because it would help the marketers of Klosterheden to know properly the desires and expectations of the German tourists, therefore seek to up-grade these attractions to encourage further visitation.

**3.8 Summary**

This section has been concern with the entire concept of branding, concept of marketing communication strategies and market segmentation as applicable to a tourism destination. The aim of this section is to highlight some areas of the theories that could be applicable to a destination as Klosterheden.

In order to comprehend how a destination could be brand, several elements of a brand were discussed in this section. The point of departure is the different views on branding and brand which centred on the name, signed, logo or symbol that seek to differentiate one product from another. Moreso, the different component such as brand identity, brand positioning and brand images that make up a brand although connected to each other was also examine. Thus a destination can be successfully branded when an emotional relationship is created between the destination and the potential visitors. As such an effective branding would comprises of required steps such as identification of the brand to the minds of the customers, firmly established the brand in the customers minds, evoking the customers to response to the brand`s meaning and identity and finally, to convert the brand`s response in order to develop an active relationship between customers and the brand. Therefore many attractive attributes of a destination such as natural environment, culture and even history could only be made appealing or interesting to consumers when is properly portrayed through branding. This shows that branding is regarded as the most powerful instrument used by marketers to position a destination in the minds of consumers and if destination is effectively branded it would instill a positive image in the minds of consumers. Brand position is concern about emphasizing on those attributes and features that make a brand to have competitive advantages over other destinations. Therefore, Klosterheden have a competitive advantage over other similar state forests since it has beavers that would attract many tourists to pay visitation than other forests. Furthermore, a destination brand is said to achieve it purpose if the communication strategies used is effective in order to target the desire markets. Thus, both traditional and non-traditional media of communication strategies has to be implemented in the advertisement of Klosterheden in other to target the German segment to pay visitation to Klosterheden. However, word of mouth especially is important as a source of product information since it involved assess to those who have already experienced a particular destination. Conclusively, the different segment that is discussed in this section is made of the geographic, demographics, psychographics and behavioural segmentation.

**4. Analysis**

A combination of the theoretical framework would be established in the study in an attempt to answer the question of “how can Klosterheden in Lemvig be branded to attract more Germans Tourists”. Thus, the analysis would be divided into two perspectives, the brand used by Klosterheden and the expectation of the German Tourists. Under the brand used by Klosterheden emphasis would be laid on the following;

* Organisation and ownership
* State-owned brand
* The German market
* Problems encountered in marketing

On the other hand, the later part would concern with German expectation that would be discussed as listed below:

* The motivation and experience of the tourists
* The perception of the German tourists

These would help in the analysis in other to answer the question of how Klosterheden can be branded in other to attract more German tourists and it will subsequently lead to the conclusion. The structure of the analysis can be illustrated below in a graph.

**EXPECTATION OF THE GERMAN TOURISTS**

**PERCEPTION OF THE GERMAN TOURISTS**

**MOTIVATION AND EXPERIENCES OF TOURIST**

**Analysis**

**MARKETING**

**PROBLEMS**

**GERMAN**

**TOURIST**

**ORGANISATION AND OWNERSH**IP

**STATE**

**BRAND**

**CONCLUSION**

**BRAND USED BY KLOSTERHEDEN**

Figure: 5. Source: Researcher`s design

**4.1 The Brand used by Klosterheden**

As illustrated in the model above, the brand used by Klosterheden would looked at empirical data gathered from interviews, theories and articles in order to guide the study to the question on how Klosterheden can be branded to attract more German tourists. Branding is a differentiating element used by any organisation whether private or public unit, thus the relevant of this section is to highlight the brands used by Klosterheden and why the brand is unique to the organisation. The area of concern here would centre on organisation and ownership of Klosterheden, state-owned brand, the German target market and problems that would involve in the marketing of Klosterheden. Some of the questions that would be asked consist of; what is the mission and vision of the forest? Does the forest have a brand? What is the brand name? What characterized the brand? What is the brand identity? How often is the brand modified? Which media of communication are used to market the forest and its activities, what segment visit the forest? The relevant of these questions is to generate a share understanding of how Klosterheden could be branded, these has been discussed below.

**4.1.1 Organisation and ownership of Klosterheden**

In the course of the different interviews gathered from the Manager of Klosterheden (CEO) and the Director of Lemvig Tourism Board (LTB) it was unveiled that Klosterheden is under the organisation and ownership of the government, at the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment. As revealed by the manager of Klosterheden forest he functions as “*a local CEO, taking care and responsible for all the activities that the Ministry of the Environment is carrying out on the state-own forest”.* (Appendix1: 1) This means Klosterheden is a state-owned forest and all the activities and functions of Klosterheden is guided by regulations therefore they work in partnership with other similar state-owned forests and national parks. As he further explained

*“We do not only mention Klosterheden but a number of forests and nature`s areas in the region that means we cooperate with a number of state-owned forest areas but we don`t cooperate with private owned forest. [...]The purpose for private owned forest is to provide hunting ground for the owners to make money, so they are not interested in cooperating with us”.*

By implication the aim of Klosterheden is not to make money but to work in collaboration with other state forests and public administrators to provide sustainable nature experiences which is not in line with the objectives of private forests. This is contrary to Hankinson (2004) theory on destination branding (P: 31), which stipulates that building relationships with stakeholders from different angles, such as target visitors, residents, or government, can be crucial to the success of the core brand because successful and effective relationships is tantamount to the value of the brand. It means to build a strong relationship with stakeholders from both public and private organisation is essential to the successful brand. But this allegation is different from the policies of the state-owned forest regulations. As the LTB puts in “*More activities should be included in the forest where there can be action or say fun. We have many lofty ideas but our hands are tied since it is a state own forest there is nothing we can do. I think that in general they could be interesting parks in the forest where you can still have that element of getting lost and silence”,(Appendix 2:14).* This implies that Klosterheden is an attractive destination which can attract many tourists if the state works in collaboration with other stakeholders, but since it is a state-owned forest most of the ideas that could cumulate for the development of the forest are not implemented*.* This can also be linked to Moilenon and Rainisto (2009:113) postulation on destination branding (P:31), which portrayed that tourism destination are typically not created by one single company, but instead a network of independent companies and other actors which jointly produced the facilities and services required in creating the tourism destination product.Therefore it is understood that Klosterheden is a state-owned forest but the government should cooperate with the private organisations that would create avenues for more developmental knowledge and private investment to crop in for the benefits of the locality.

When the manager is further asked about the mission and vision of the forest he added that “*the whole body belongs to the Ministry of the Environment, we have mission to provide nature experiences and nature values [...] we managed the whole area in other to provide nature experiences. We have guided tours, passage, shelters, riders, runners, and fire- places. We apply close to nature forestry”(Appendix 1:1).* It therefore implies that the government purpose for the forest is to provide nature`s experiences and also to preserve nature`s value for future generation. And also render some activities and services in the forest which are environmentally friendly. The CEO further reveals that, the forest has many potential natural resources such as beavers, bird watching, attractive environment, lake and many plants but their vision is to ensure the promotion and preservation of nature`s experiences free of charge to the general public, (Appendix 1:2). Whereas, Kavaratzits and Ashworth (2005:511) theory on destination branding on (p:32), asserted that place branding is not just using the place qualities in the promotion of local products in national and international markets but it involves making use of the qualities of local products to ascribe meaning and association to a particular place. The different arguments here have a link because they both agreed on the fact that natural features of Klosterheden should not be used for commercial purposes but to give meaning and value for sustainable development.

More so, CEO added that, they also cooperate with the nature interpretation school as he said “*We have special obligation towards young people given them an education to take care of nature where we have special activities for kids” (Appendix 1: 6).* As he puts it again in this quote, “*We have mission and vision to provide natures experiences for the public and taking care of existing values and also re-establishing natures property on the land of Denmark”(Appendix 1: 2).* While Morgan and Pritchard (2004:64) theory on branding (P: 25), states that “Countries *often show case their history, their culture and their beautiful scenery in their marketing, but many destinations have these attributes and it is critical to build a brand on something that uniquely connects a destination to the consumer now or has the potential to do so in the future”*. These arguments present a different view from branding, according to the manager of Klosterheden, the aim of the forest is for preservation of nature and nature`s experiences, thus they strived to maintain the principles of sustainability which is an essential element in any given destination. However, it is contrary to Morgan and Pritchard`s views that countries should portray their beautiful scenery or attributes in marketing. This implies that Klosterheden has many touristic attributes that could be used to portray it attractive environment to both local and international tourists. But for the fact that, it is under the national brand this forest has to keep to the regulation as any other state forests thereby restricting the exposure of the forest.

**4.1.2The State brand (Klosterheden)**

As illustrated in (Fig: 5), the state brand referred to the current brand used by Klosterheden. Thus, branding is an essential element used by private or public organisations to differentiate their product or services. In relation to the question of whether the forest has a brand, the manager (CEO) response is that *“we have just changed the brand to nature Agency which is our new brand. The former brand was forest and nature Agency that was our name until 1st January that we changed our brand from forest and nature Agency to Nature Agency.* (Appendix 1:1). This implies that the forest brand name was forest and nature Agency but it has been changed to Nature Agency. As he explained *“two agencies merged together on the 1st of January and so we actually changed the name, the branding and the logo [...] as you can see a leaf here and also another leaves, so it has something about nature and the little dots here is an icon so it got some history as you can see it. We don`t want to have brand name for each forest, it is not allowed.”(Appendix I: 3).* The change of the brand`s name was a decision of more than one agency since it is a state-owned property that concern many other forest zones. Thus the leaves and icon on the forest logo is an attributes that distinguish and identify the state forest brand from other private brands. This is in relation to Blain et al (2005) assertion on branding (P:25), stipulated that, while the symbol of the brand may comprises of a distinguished name, logo, trade mark or package designed, logo is regarded as the central brand image that represents a product, destination or service. In a nutshell, the brand used by Kosterheden and other states forest carry the same logo which is labelled by the Ministry of the Environment, that could easily identify and distinguished the forest from other brands used by the private forest. This is directly linked to Blain theory on using a brand as a means to distinguish name, logo trade mark and package designed.

The CEO further explained on the question of branding of the forest that “*we don’t want to make a brand for Klosterheden, and another for other forest, we have one brand since our concern is to brand the Ministry of the Environment not a single forest. It is a brand that states both for the nature areas, the forest and the more legislative work of the central office in Copenhegen.[...]. We manage the whole of Denmark with the same brand”,(Appendix1:3).* This state-brand seeks to identify values of nature protected environment since all the areas that bear this name have the same purpose which is the protection and preservation of nature`s environment. In correspondence with Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) theory on branding (P: 23), a brand is expressed through the company’s core mission, core values, beliefs, communication, culture and overall designs. Therefore, the logo and brand used by the Ministry of the Environment is a broad national brand used not only by Klosterheden but all other forests in Denmark such as Central Jutland, Western Jutland, Himmerland, Northern and Central Zealand among others, couple with natural areas such as the national park which are under the auspices of the ministry. In this manner, the Ministry of the Environment portrays it core value or organisational culture as Kavaratzis and Ashworth argues, amongst the different forest zones, thereby promoting its nature’s experiences in Denmark.

Furthermore when the question of brand identity was asked CEO responded that *“there are specific roles for the state owned forest, you are allowed to do more things there, so we want an easy way to tell people that now you are on a public own area that you are allowed to stay at night, you are allowed to walk where ever you want and this is different from a private owned forest because there you are only allowed to be in the day time and only to stay on the street, road or path”.* As CEO infers, the public forest is completely different from the private forest in that the roles and regulation warrant everything to be free, one can move freely to the forest at every hour of the day, whereas with the private forest since their sole motives is to make money it involves a lot of restrictions. By implication these aspects make the public forest to have a unique quality and image as compared to the private forests. This argument tie together with Leuthesser postulation as stipulated on the theory of branding (P: 23), which regarded brand equity as “*an asset of associations and behaviour on the part of the brand`s customers, channel members, parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater value or greater margin than it could without the name” (Wood 2000:663).* Thus, the above allegations agreed on the fact that the regulation of the public forest gives Klosterheden superiority in quality and reliability since is freely used and priceless than the private forest.

Besides the differences between Klosterheden and the private forest, Klosterheden is equally unique from the other public forest. As the CEO explains, “*Klosterheden is unique, they will say it is very special because we have beavers, a large number of roe deers, we have the biggest plantation forest in Denmark, we have a lot of good recreational facilities like shelters, roads for mountain biking, walking, running, ridding, we have good facilities for picnicking, nice landscape and for the German tourists mushrooms [...]”(*Appendix 1:4). The fact that Klosterheden has this rare species of animal such as the beaver, the huge size of the forest, other facilities like mushroom harvesting that encouraged the German tourists to choose Klosterheden as an ideal forest to visit, is another aspect of differentiation that make Klosterheden to possess a unique attributes against other public forests. Whereas Knox and Bickerton as quoted in Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005: 508) theory on branding (P: 22) stipulate that, branding is a deliberate process of selecting and associating the attributes since they are assumed to add value to the basic product or services. These different assertions are relational since the features in the forest such as flora, fauna, sporting activities; especially the beavers and the huge size of the forest are the attributes that make Klosterheden to be unique amongst other forest zones therefore more tourists will like to visit Klosterheden than other forest in order to enjoy these experiences. In a similar vein this is linked to Moilenon and Rainisto theories on branding (P: 22), that referred to“attributes as the tangible, intangible, psychological and sociological features related to the product. Thus the experiences, feelings, couple with the beavers, the forest scenery are linked to the tangible and intangible features of the forest.

As cited in ([www.Nordvest360.Dk](http://www.Nordvest360.Dk)), Klosterheden is Denmark largest forest and in the middle of Klosterheden, Denmark first and largest beaver population leaves, together with over one hundred animals. According to Charrin, in 1999, 18 Eurassian beaver were brought from Germany and re-introduced in Klosterheden state forest in two successful releases. The introduction area covers the upstream part of Flynder A stream catchment area inside Klosterheden State District Forest, (Charrin 2008:3). The introduction of beaver in Klosterheden is a mark of differentiation between the forest and other state forests, thus many tourists will prefer Klosterheden because of the present of beavers. The Lemvig Tourism Board director (LTB) also highlights the uniqueness of Klosterheden as follows;

“*The main difference is that is very huge, it is a forest which is completely in one block. If you go to Silkeborg where you have a very large forest area is a combination of variety of forests that add together to make Silkeborg a large forest area in Denmark but here is one block which you have different kind of forests. It is really unique in this way since you have the beavers, large number of animals like deers, streams some lakes [...]”(Appendix 2:11).*

It means that though Silkeborg is a big forest because of the different parts that make up the forest, Klosterheden is unique and appealing since it has many features and nature`s experiences that tourists could enjoy within the same arena or vicinity. Hence, most tourists could arguable prefer to visit Klosterheden than Silkeborg because they could enjoy nature`s experiences in one stop. As asserted on the brochures from Klosterheden, the large size of the forest gives a play ground that could content 25.000 children and adult visitors, which makes the forest a good touristic attraction. This special attributes or features has positioned Klosterheden above other destinations, this is in line with Kotler et al as quoted in Morgan and Pritchard (2004) postulation on branding (P: 27), which states that, positioning task consist of identifying a possible competitive advantages in which to build a position, selecting the right competitive advantages and effectively communication and delivering the chosen position to a carefully selected target market. Thus, Tourists would prefer to visit Klosterheden forest because the unique features such as the beavers, the size of the forest which is made of many other attractions, made Klosterheden to have a competitive advantage over other forest zones in Denmark.

More so, as LTB further reveals “*They have various foresters that control the forests but klosterheden itself doesn’t have a specific brand” (Appendix 2:10).* If different foresters control the various forests under the national brand name or logo they may be problem of management or coordination between the various headquarters. That is why when the question of modification of the brand was asked; CEO postulated that “*we do not do it often. The 1st of January was a big turnaround for the organisation. The last time we change our name was 22 years ago. It is changing slowly” (Appendix 1:4).* He reiterated that it is a political decision made by the government, (Ibid). Since it is a political decision it involves a lot of bottlenecks and processes before decision is finally arrived at. That is why it took almost 22 year to modify the Klosterheden brand or logo. This supports (Moilenon & Rainisto 2009: 13) assertion on branding (P: 29), that brand building is a long process that requires besides good substance, determination and smartness. Brand building means strategic building of business operations, and it includes many strategic solution where the top management are involved and responsible. Both arguments reside unanimously on the fact that branding involves a lot of process and the involvement of different personalities. This implies that financial commitment and fragmented decision making from various headquarters is some of the elements that slow down the decisions of the Ministry of the Environment to build or modify the Klosterheden brand.

**4.1.3The German target market**

The interview data reported that they focus on German tourists as an important segment to pay visitation to Klosterheden because as postulated by the Lemvig Tourism Board Director (LTB) “*Germany is a closed-by country, it is our neighbour and especially Hamburg is a town of about 5.million people which is much closer to Denmark. So we attract them because of their numbers to come and visit and spend money in Lemvig. They also like nature [...], also they have a long tradition of visiting Denmark and especially the West Coast” [Appendix 2:12*]. It implies that according to their observation Germany is one of the main tourist markets that visit Lemvig and it would be less costly and more beneficial to attract Germans to Lemvig. In addition, according to Tourism Economic Report on (VisitDenmark.com 2009:7) from Lemvig Tourism Board, Germany is the largest market accounting for 172 million Kroner or 51 per cent of total tourism consumption in the Lemvig municipality. Therefore, since they are so attracted by nature, Destination Marketing Organisation (DMOS) should target more German tourists to visit the forest as one of the top attractions in Lemvig, this is in accordance with Kotlers (2005: 259) theory on marketing segmentation (P: 37), which view geographic segmentation as the division of the market into different geographical units such as nation, state, region, countries, cities or even neighbourhoods. Therefore, the German tourists, especially the city of Hamburg are targeted as a segment to visit Klosterheden because it is a neighbouring country or City to Lemvig. Thus, it would be easier and cheaper for marketers to target German tourists who have generational history of constantly visiting Lemvig, and also due to the fact that Hamburg especially has a geographical proximity with Lemvig, it would be less expensive to attract tourists in this area to choose Klosterheden as one of their destination choice than other areas.

On the part of the CEO when the questioned on what particular segment targeted is posed, he expressed the idea that, “*No particular segment is targeted. We usually have those who live in summer houses, those who love nature, no specific segment concerning hunters or young Germans” (Appendix 1:6).* This implies that they don’t pay particular focus on those Germans segment who visit the forest, since the forest is a free zone for any visitor and as he said they don’t market the forest therefore is difficult to keep records on those German tourists who visit the forest on quarterly or annual bases. The LTB further explained how essential it could be to have a good knowledge of what segment to target, as she said “*this enables us to know which media to use. It actually has to do with money, segment and the media that segments read, for example we don’t spent a lot of money in marketing for young people because they are not our client”(Appendix 2: 11).* It shows that targeting a particular segment would assist marketers to know which media of communication that could easily be used to advertise the activities and events taking place in the forest. The LBT added that “*we generally see all the segments, those with families like the 50 years and above, single people and people with dogs”(Appendix 2: 13).* In this direction Kotler (1997:257)theory on market segmentation (P:38),discussed demographic segmentation where the market is usually grouped into variables such as age, family size, family life cycle, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, race, generation, nationality or social class. In regards to the above arguments, it is accepted that all segments visit Lemvig for different experiences offered in the forest but more focus according to the LTB is on those German tourists that ranged from 50 years and above because they are their constant customers*”,(Appendix 2: 13*). As supported by Larsen and Therkelson (2009: 10) by looking at the primary segment within the main foreign markets, families with children are the most representative segment that ranged for almost 47.1%. Tourist 6, also attest that “*I came with my wife and child*” (Appendix 8: 26). These are the different German segments that constantly visit Klosterheden as argued Kotler, therefore marketers should dwell more on the communication strategies which will focus on this market segments.

More so, to market the activities of the forest, the LBT reveals that “*we always use the brochures, the local guides, the news papers and articles. Every year we find people from the forest that express their experiences and activities”* (Appendix 2: 11). Whereas, CEO confirms that “*we use our home page, internet, local news papers, and some public services like the regional radio, they market us for free”(Appendix 1:5).* As noted from the above revelation home page, brochures and local guides are some of the cheap and remote promotional Medias used to promote the activities of Klosterheden because no budget is located for the marketing of the forest, this is in connection to Kimmel (2009), argument on marketing communication (P: 33), which states that formally marketing communication rely on the tradition forms of communication strategies, such as television, radio, print, and outdoor advertising. However, the choice has increased where significant budget could be allocated to target direct marketing effort as public relation campaigns, sponsorships, events management, internet advertisement, product placement. As realised from the above interviews and the theory, the media of communication used are traditional and very limited thus it could not penetrate an extensive market and this could influence just a small number of tourists to visit Klosterheden. As noted from the interviews with the various German tourists, (Tourist 1) explains as follows “*A friend told me Lemvig is a nice place so I came to see it”(Appendix 3:14).* The other tourist (Tourist 2) also added that “*I have heard a lot and read a lot on the internet and have been advised by friends to visit the forest that it has a unique nature and animals but it was primarily nature related visit”( Appendix 4:17 ).* Whereas Tourist 5 equally reveals that *“I heard about Klosterheden from friends”(Appendix 7: 25).* It therefore implies that messages were transmitted through some other Medias like the internet, brochures, local papers but the common way most of the German tourists got to know about the activities of Klosterheden are through word of mouth. In accordance with Moilanen and Rainisto allegation, “*the customer can receive the brand messages from physical element of a product, from the employees of the service process, planned marketing communication, oral communication with friends, newspaper articles and even from internet forums”.* These are the various means of communication that tourists can have a message as also reveals by the manager of Klosterheden and Lemvig Tourist Board Director as seen above. But word of mouth has been one of the prominent ways that the German tourists have their information about Klosterheden.This is buttressed by Weaver and Lawton (2006:204) assertion on market communication (P: 34), that due to the intangible nature of the service sector, word of mouth is especially important as a source of product information since it involved assess to those who have already experienced a particular destination or know of someone who has experienced. Thus word of mouth above other Medias of communication influenced many German tourists to pay visitation to Klosterheden. But the problem is that this Media of communication is very limited, therefore both traditional and modern communication criterion and strategies should be implemented to attract more German tourists to flock into Klosterheden in other to discover the unique qualities of the forest. As supported by Kimme`s postulation on market communication (PP:33-34), recently non-traditional context of marketing messages include televised sporting events, underground parking garage billboards, coupon distribution, digital outdoor billboard, marketing messages imprinted on the sand by beach cleaner, pop-up and pop down adverts that appear when customers visit certain websites. This allegation of implementing the recent innovation of marketing communication is contrary to the decision of Klosterheden since they don’t intend to spend money in marketing as the manager of Klosterheden confirms above. Therefore traditional and non-traditional media of communication could be used to market the activities and events of Klosterheden but the problem is that it would involve a lot of sacrifices in the form of financial assistance.

*4.1.4* **Problems encountered in marketing**

Klosterheden is said to be a state forest, and like any state possession there are usually difficulties that could be encountered in marketing as is highlighted from the above model in (Fig 5). Thus in respect to the question of marketing of the forest CEO constantly emphasis that they do not intend to market Klosterheden, as he explained “*We don’t compete or market Klosterheden, we don’t have specific brand” (Appendix 1:5).* This means that Klosterheden is not competing with any other forest since it is one of the forest amongst the other state forests, marketing Klosterheden implies marketing the other state-owned forests which would be very expensive for the government. As he further added; “*you have to be aware that we are working with Klosterheden which is 6000 hectares but the Ministry of the Environment handled 200,000 hectares, we don’t want to make a brand for Klosterheden, and another for other forest, we have one brand since all our branding is to brand the Ministry of the Environment not a single forest”(Appendix 1:3).* Therefore, the Ministry of the Environment handle a large area that share the same brand name which makes it a difficult and strenuous venture to market all these areas because it would involve a lot of logistics and financial involvement. This is in the same line of argument with Moilenon and Rainisto (2009:13) postulation on branding (P: 29), that brand “*also requires a commitment to offer sufficient resources for the brand, which enable it to achieve its desired position. Successful brands can satisfy the rational and emotional needs and expectations of the customers”*. The various allegations are on the same trend of argument since they agreed that successfully branding involve much commitment and determination. Thus, Klosterheden brand is entirely under the state brand, marketing it activities is against the roles and regulations of the state owned forests.

In addition, developing Klosterheden involves resources and organizational problems therefore as the CEO constantly argued “*We are not marketing the forest but marketing tours*. *When we have activities we make known our programs schedule and time to meet, especially when there is beaver tour we advertised on the papers and through the public radio.[...]* *Marketing all these will cost million because tax payer can`t pay for that”( Appendix 1: 5).* As realised, CEO is aware that Klosterheden is unique as compare to other forests in Denmark because it has beavers, this rare species of animal attracts people to visit Klosterheden, that is why they always arranged tours where the activities of Klosterheden is promoted to showcase the uniqueness and inform people to visit the forest. The Lemvig Tourism Board Director (LTB) also added that “*More activities should be included in the forest where there can be action or say fun. We have many lofty ideas but our hands are tied since it is a state owed forest there is nothing we can do.[...], maybe we could make activities like a field where you can jump from tree to tree. Like I said, it is a state forest”.* Thus, LTB has ideas on how to market the forest to attract more German tourists but is difficult to contribute or develop these ideas because it is a state forest. On the other hand, Morgan and Pritchard (2004:60) theory on branding (P:27), posited that, branding is considered as the most powerful marketing weapon which is available to contemporary destination marketers that are faced with tourists searching for lifestyle fulfilment and experiences. The arguments are antithesis to each other because the Lemvig Tourist Board Director is ready to contribute ideas for the marketing of the activities of Klosterheden, which is in relationship to Morgan and Pritchard`s argument on the point that branding a destination like Klosterheden is the most powerful instrument used by recent marketers to sell out experiences offered. While the manager of Klosterheden considers marketing of Klosterheden as a waste of resources, since the motives of the ministry of the Environment is not to market a single forest but the entire state-owned forests in Denmark.

More so, to strengthen the financial hindrance involve in the marketing of Klosterheden, most German Tourists seems not to have a good knowledge about the activities and events taking place in Klosterheden. Because the media of communication used to promote the activities of Klosterheden is not extensive to reach the required segments. When the question on which media is used to promote Klosterheden is posed, CEO explained that, “It *is the cheapest way to reach people. The local papers, the internet, cheap media and other marketing techniques is free. Here we don’t say come to Klosterheden because we don’t want to spend public money to attract them to any forest”* (Appenix1:5).The LTB also added that “*We always use the brochures, the local guides, the news papers, articles. Every year we find people from the forest that expressed their experiences and activities like different promotion we always include Klosterheden as well”, (Appendix 2: 11)*. This signifies that lack of adequate and effective promotion is another problem that hinders many German tourists from visiting Klosterheden because the media of communication used by Klosterheden is not substantial or extensive thus most of the German tourists don`t get information about the programs of Klosterheden since the promotional strategies and medias used to advertise the services and activities of Klosterheden is very limited and remote because of lack of funds. The LTB continues to express financial difficulties when she said “*We get money from our members of the union. We explained to them and asked if they want to join and also if they have some activities they wish to pay for”(Appendix 2:11).* This source of finance is very limited, and would be difficult to target the desire German segments. This therefore highlight the communication attributes in the form of marketing programs as observed in Weaver and Lawton (2006:221) theory on communication strategies (P:34), such as product strategy, price strategy, channel strategy and communications strategy that could be implemented to attract more German tourists. Though Klosterheden is a state forest, if the management is interested in marketing the tours as the manager claims to portray the uniqueness of the forest, they have to assist marketing organisation financially to go beyond the traditional forms of marketing communication. Because the management of Klosterheden don`t intend to put more funds in the marketing of Klosterheden activities but they want the programs of Klosterheden to be known to the public. As portrayed by many of the Germans interviewees, Tourist 3 confirms that “*I have heard a lot and read a lot on the internet and have been advice by friends to visit the forest*” (Appendix 5: 19). Tourist 6 also added that *“I heard about Klosterheden from friends” (*Appendix 6:22).While another tourist also supported that *“We got the information through leaflet and from friends who told us about the events*” (Appendix 7: 24). It could be realised that “*word of mouth*” or *“talk factor*” has been the most popular means that most tourists got their information about Klosterheden activities, this corresponds with Weaver and Lawton (2006) theory on communication strategies (P: 34), that word of mouth has a high degree of influence among potential customers as an image formation agent. Though this media of communication is influential as realised in the above arguments, it is however a limited source of information that most German tourists got information about the programs and activities of klosterheden. That is why most German Tourists that visit Lemvig pay visitation to Klosterheden as a secondary option since Klosterheden is not their main motivation for visiting Lemvig.

Another minor discrepancy is language. The two countries (Denmark and Germany) speak different languages and as such could handicap German tourists, as attested by the CEO *“for the German tourists, if we do that and have a market for it, we have to be sure that it would pay us. We tried to make some special arrangement for German tourists but it was not profitable, [...], it is difficult because it involve a lot of planning and effort. We don’t speak the language; we need salaries for interpretation and equipment but no profit for that. The local people think that is good we should do much to attract people”(Appendix 1:6).* This implies that, though Klosterheden is a state forest if marketing of Klosterheden to attract German tourist could have been a profitable venture they could have done so, because as the manager confirms they once tried to target the German tourists but their attempt failed. Secondly because of language difficulties it would involve much money to break this language differences and the state is not ready to invest money for that. Thus, there must be a need for private participation in order to put in funds to ameliorate this language barrier.

However on the part of LTB, language is not really a major problem, as she said “*There are classes for Germans that the locals are encouraged to attend. We also have some classes for Germans to speak Danish. However, we have not received any complain from the tourists concerning language” (Appendix 2:14).* This shows that she does everything to keep a good connection with the German tourists. This gesture is in relationship to “Blain et al (2005:329) assertion on branding (P: 30) that, branding provide many other functions for both buyer and sellers, because brands virtually serve as “*symbols around which relationship are built”.* The meaning is that the Lemvig tourist Board is a private organisation whose function is to attract tourists to Lemvig, thus they have to do everything possible to curb the language problem by using various types of marketing tools to capture German tourists to visit Lemvig. Thus encouraging the locals to study the German language in order to attract more German tourists is another way to build a strong relationship or bond with the German tourists as stipulated in Blain et al`s theory.

**4.2The expectation of the German tourists**

This area would concern with the German anticipation of a product or services in other to satisfy the desire needs of German tourists. What would be discussed here involved the motivation and the expectation of the German tourists on the one hand, and the perception of the German tourists on the other hand as illustrated on the model in (fig 5). With reference to these, the following questions would be discussed; what is the motive for the visit to the forest? What are the expectations of the tourism destination like Klosterheden? How has the expectation been met? What observation do you get from your visit to the forest? Are you satisfied with the means to the forest? What experiences do you have for your visit to the forest? What interest you most from your visit? What perception do tourists have about the forest? These questions would be discussed in relation to the responses given by the different interviewees.

**4.2.2 Motives and expectation of the German tourist**

The interview data revealed that all the German tourists have their different motives for visiting Klosterheden. When a question was asked in relation to their motives for visiting Klosterheden, Tourist 2 responded that; “*first of all it was to see the forest and nature here because I heard it was good for hiking. That is why I came*” (Appendix 4:15). Tourist 4, also responded as follows; “*Oh I came for the beach, I like natural environment. Lemvig is attractive, with beach, museum and other attractions*” (Appendix 6:21). While Tourist 5 responded that “*I like to stay at the sea side is interesting. Is one of my top attractions in Lemvig” (Appendix 7: 24).* As seen from the above interviews not all tourists visit Lemvig because they were attracted to Klosterheden, many of the tourists were motivated by other attractions such as the sea and beaches, but later they had to visit Klosterheden as a subsidiary attraction. The Manager of Klosterheden also supported that “*Germans come here for the sea, coastline [...].They come here only for sport, mushroom and to spend time in the forest. They come here when the weather is poor. If the sun is shining, they are at the beach*” (Appendix 1:6-7).Therefore most German tourists motive for visiting Lemvig is not the forest but for beaching and coastline. They go to Klosterheden only when they don’t have other options.

In addition to Larsen and Therkelson (2009:9) arguments, nature, safe and secure destination, friendly population with child friendly environment are dominating factor for German tourists choosing Denmark as holiday destination. This assertion is in connection with the LTB explanations as she added that “*I think that some go to Sweden and Norway. These countries are good at marketing their country and have a fantastic nature. But I think the German come here because of the close distance, feeling familiar, safe, and is also due to the uniqueness of the forest. They like nature so much. They can find similar forest in and around Germany but when they come, the distance is very width. You have a long distance between the houses. But when we ask the Germans, they say nature”* (Appendix 2: 12). It is obvious from the above statements that German Tourists are attracted to Lemvig than Sweden and Norway due to the hospitable nature of the inhabitants, a safe and spacious environment that encourages them to move freely to all nooks and cranny, and also the sea and huge forest attributes that makes them to be completely closed and lost to nature`s experiences. These experiences that attract the German Tourists to Lemvig are in relation to Hankinson (2004: 110) assertion on destination branding (P: 23) which indicates that, a brand is regarded as *“two-dimensional models typically categorized attributes as either functional or symbolic or functional and representational appealing to reason and emotion”*. In the nut shell the above attributes are appealing to the reasons and emotions of the German Tourists, thus they have to select Lemvig and subsequently Klosterheden as their destination choice amongst other destinations.

Furthermore, in respect to the question of the German Tourists expectation of a destination like Klosterheden, As Tourist 1 responded “*Is a large forest my expectation was to see so many people in the forest”(Appendix 3: 15)* His expectation was to see many other tourists visiting the forest since he knows it is a huge forest with many attributes. Another tourist Tourist 2 confirms that “My *expectations are good hiking roads and to see nature at it best”(Appendix 4:17).* It means that he expected to see a sustainable environment where the natural features in Klosterheden are highly protected without destruction and also to have accessible paths for hiking and other sporting activities. Tourist 3 also supported that *“Well, it is difficult to say but every time you go to a place you know your expectation is to see something new and get new experiences* (Appendix 5:19*).* This means that he expected to go out of old memories and to acquire new experiences from the forest. This is in accordance with Moilanen and Rainisto (2009:12), theory on communication strategy (P: 34) that a good place image need good communication and communication gives promises that are unique, reliable, and desirable. This implies that because the above tourists have a positive experience from klosterheden, they would consequently communicate a positive, reliable or desirable portrayal or image about the forest to other German tourists.

When the question of how far these expectations been met is asked, Tourist 2 responds as follows; “*Yes, I wanted to find good hiking roads which I found here and also the people are very good and friendly*”.(Appendix 4:17)*.* It indicates that he is satisfied with his expectations and therefore has a good experience from his visit. The next tourist (Tourist 3) responded that “*Well, before going there I wanted to see beautiful nature and hear birds singing and see no people and have no net work connection, no mobile phone. Basically, all my expectation has been met*”,(Appendix 5:19)*.* If the tourist is satisfied with his experiences, it means that he has a positive image about Klosterheden. However, Tourist 5 added that, “*Of course! My expectations are met but I expected more people. My first visit was with a family friend. We came for biking race. I took part in the activity with my friend. We got the information through leaflet and from friends who told us about the events” (Appendix 7:24).* It signifies that he enjoys his sporting experiences in the forest and expected more tourists to participant and also observes the sporting activities but the means of communication limited the turnover because less people got the information. Thus it is also in relation with Morgan and Pritchard (2004:66) argument on branding (P: 27) which states *that “on any positioning map, however, brand winners are those places that are rich in emotional meaning, have great conversation value and hold high anticipation for potential tourists”.* This is because the experiences acquired by the tourists would encourage them for more future visitation and positive recommendation that would encouraged more tourists to come and discover the experiences in the forest. This would consequently create more employment and small businesses in the Lemvig locality due to the increase in tourist expenditure as a result of increase in tourists.

More so, in relation to the question of what observation the German tourists get from their visit, Tourist 3 attested that “*I notice that too little attention is paid to the green related nature of the forest. Cars are allowed, I think it is a bad thing and should be banned and only bicycles should be allowed to get to the forest [..] because it is environmentally friendly and does not harm the environment. It does not pollute the atmosphere so the trees and the animals can be free from CO2.”(Appendix 5:19-20).* The tourist thinks that in order to preserve the environment cars should not be allowed to the forest because it has a negative consequence to the plants and animals.Another Tourist observed that “*Few people visit the forest*” (Appendix 6: 22). While Tourist 6 added as follows; “*More need to be done in the advertisement department”(Appendix 8: 26).* Therefore it shows that very few tourists visit the forest and this could be because the forest is not adequately marketed that could properly informed more tourists about the activities and various events taking place in the forest. Some tourists would prefer to visit an environment where they can meet with many other tourists from different angles and works of life. Contrary to Weaver and Lawton (2006:2003) postulation on destination branding and communication strategies (P: 33) which states that, *“marketing involves the interaction and interrelationships among consumers and producers of goods and services, through which ideas, products, services and values are created and exchanged for the mutual benefit of both groups”*. The implication here is that as attested by some Tourists very few people visit the forest because of inadequate advertisement that make the forest not to be efficiently marketed to the German Tourists. Whereas, according to Weaver and Lawton, marketing Klosterheden does not only involve the interaction of consumers and producers but it also concern exchange of ideas, knowledge, values and other important element that is profitable for consumers and producers.

When the interviewee were asked about the services of the tourist guides Tourist 1 responded that “*They should employ more guides to look after tourists (Appendix 3: 16).* Tourist 2 said *“I have no idea, we did not use them”(Appendix 4:17).* The various responses indicate that the German tourists did not constantly use the services of the tourist guides; they prefer to freely enjoy the forest environment. While the LTB attested as follows, “*but the problem is state-owned and they are cutting down the budget on forestry, there is also shortage of guides in the forest*”. (Appendix 2: 10). And the CEO also added that “*some of our participants for guiding tours are from Germany but very few, because when we take people on guided tours we speak Danish and very little of German Tourists speak Danish”(Appendix 1:1),*This signifies that since very little Germans preferred guided tours to the forest it means they are not really satisfied with the services of the tour guides because, first the tour guides are not enough which makes their services to be limited, and another issue is the language differences that would pose communication difficulties between the German tourists and the tourist guides. But besides this their services are good as Tourist 3 recommended that “*I did not really use any guide at the forest so it is difficult to say but I heard from people that they were satisfied and saw many groups with guides and they were happy. So I think the guides are doing a great job. I rate them positive*”(Appendix 5:20*).* This highlights the fact that the interaction between the tourists and the guides is good in spite of the language discrepancies. This is congruent with the assumption of Weaver and Lawton (2006:203) on communication strategy (P: 33), that marketing emphases the two-way interaction between these producers and the actual as well as potential tourists market, successful marketing depends on feed back such as customer satisfaction, which flow from the market to the producer, and ever financial and other benefits to both parties concern. Although Klosterheden is not marketed to the German Tourists but they must be a flow of relationship between the guides and the German tourists to give satisfaction that would encourage future visitation.

**4.2.3The perception of the German Tourist**

On the bases of the different perception, many of the German Tourists highlighted the unique nature of Klosterheden. As Tourist 6 responded “*The perception is that the forest has many natural attractions as compared to the forest tour I made to Norway. It has beavers and red dears as compared to the other forest. I also like mushrooms and I got many mushroom from the forest free of charge”(Appendix 8:25).* From this tourist`s assertion he has a positive image about Klosterheden because it is a unique forest as compared to other forests which he has visited. In addition Tourist 4 replied that “*I came knowing that there will be a lot of tourists and some local people. [..]because the weather was good. I was a bit surprise that I could not see too many people as I thought, so I freely walk round the large forest p*ath”(Appendix 6:21).He thinks the forest would be overcrowded with many other tourists however he was happy because he enjoyed a calm environment couple with the spacious nature of the forest that make him to feel lost in the forest experiences. More so, the LTB explained that “*Some are satisfied, some are not satisfied, but I really do not know since we have never asked such a question before, I am only trying to guess here. Some people will like Klosterheden because it is big and quiet. Others will like a busy place with noise and activities so, some will not be happy while others will be very happy. Actually is difficult to know their satisfaction since the forest is state owned and therefore going out and coming in is free. This is a guess I do not know”(Appendix 2:13).* Is difficult to know the different satisfaction of the German tourists but as she suggested it is obvious that some would like a cool and ideal environment while some would prefer a busy environment. It all depends on the views of the beholder. While the CEO on his part responded that “I *think they have a positive perception because it is free and they go anywhere without restriction”(Appendix 1: 7).* Both arguments suggest that German Tourists have a positive image about the forest because there are no restrict on visitation couple with the huge nature of the forest which make them to move freely from different parts of the forest.

In relation to the question of future visitation all the interviewees agreed that they would recommend Klosterheden to other tourists. For instants Tourist 3 testified that “*I will definitely advice someone to visit this forest because of the unique atmosphere. You run away from your daily routine. You have time for yourself. That was a good experience. I will advice others to come” (Appendix 5: 21).* The experiences he acquired from the forest are so unique and therefore he intends to recommend the forest to many other tourists and subsequently pay future visitation to the forest. Tourist 5 equally responded that “*I have been advising people to visit Klosterheden, is a nice place for adventure, holidays and camping” (Appendix7: 25).* He considers Klosterheden as an attractive place for holiday camping and more discovering that is why he has to encourage people to visit the forest. This means that many German Tourists have a positive image about the forest. This practice is in harmony with Morgan and Pritchard 2004:65) assertion on branding (P: 26), that image is all important and how a place is represented can inspire people to visit and revisit it. From the above postulations the tourists intend to recommend Klosterheden to friends and relative and also to make future visitation because Klosterheden have presented a positive and acceptable image. This would make Lemvig to become one of the popular destination choices for many tourists.

**4.3. Summary**

As illustrated on the above model in (fig 5), the analysis section has been divided into two parts namely brand used by Klosterheden and the expectation of the German tourists. The brand used by Klosterheden is composed of organisation and ownership, state brand, German Tourists and marketing problems, whereas, expectation of the German Tourists is also made of motivation and experiences of the tourists, and perception of the German tourists. All these have revealed that Klosterheden is owned by the state and as a state owned forest it is placed under the Ministry of the Environment. The purpose of Klosterheden State Forest is to promote nature’s experiences, and also to maintain and restore natures protected areas. Therefore tourists can visit the forest at any time of the day without restrictions and also free of charge unlike the private forest whose sole aim is to make profit. Klosterheden used a state brand which is similar to all other state forests in Denmark such as the Silkeborgskovene located in Central Jutland which is the biggest forest with 85.00 km square, followed by Rold Skov found in Himmerland, Gribskov which is located West Jutland and Slagelseskovene forest situated in Central Zealand among others ([www.visitdenmark.dk](http://www.visitdenmark.dk)). However, Klosterheden is third largest forest in Denmark in terms of ranging but is said to be unique as compared to the other forests since it has a lot of natural features within the forest especially the beaver. All these forest zones used one brand name and logo called “forest and nature`s Agency” it becomes a difficult process to brand Klosterheden, since marketing Klosterheden would involve all other forest areas and this would need too much finance and political decision which is difficult to arrive at. However, involvement of the private enterprises would have ameliorated the much talk about the financial constraint involved.

In addition, Klosterheden has many interesting attributes and features like beavers, bird watching, lakes, streams, shelters, good path for biking and hiking, mushroom, hunting ground, red deers and host of others. These make it to be seen as one attractive destination in Lemvig, thus marketing Organisation like Lemvig Tourism Board would virtually used Klosterheden as one of the top destination amongst other attraction to promote Lemvig to the German tourists and other markets but the main difficulties is lack of adequate promotion since many of the media of communication used to promote the activities of Klosterheden are not extensive to target the required market because of financial limitation. Therefore lack of adequate advertising and general information about Klosterheden in the German media is seen as a major reason for low visitation to Klosterheden. It could be observed that the German market is one of the known markets that are easy to target because of geographical proximity, they are attracted to nature and also the main market that constantly visit Lemvig. However, limited information about the activities of Klosterheden has adverse effect on the German tourist’s visitation. These may be due to financial constraint, inadequate marketing strategies of the activities of Klosterheden and also language discrepancy.

**5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

**5.1 Conclusion**

The research set out to investigate how Klosterheden could be branded to attract more German tourists. Therefore from the various interviews gathered, the study assumes that though Klosterheden is a state-own property with a brand name and logo called “Nature agency” under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment, it is unique as compared to the other state forests in Denmark. The unique features are due to the fact that Klosterheden has many features and natural attributes that need to be promoted. These natural attributes such as beavers, birds watching, lakes, streams, shelters, good path for biking and hiking, mushrooms, hunting ground, roe deer’s and many species of plants. These are features that Klosterheden could take advantage of them, in order to attract tourists from all nooks and cranny. This assertion is in accordance with Morgan and Pritchard postulation that Countries often show case their history, their culture and their beautiful scenery in their marketing. This attributes therefore gives Klosterheden a comparative advantage over other state forests.

More so, Klosterheden aimed at maintaining, restoring and preserving nature’s experiences in connection with the other forest zones in Denmark in other to maintain and promote the policy of sustainability. It values also aimed at transforming knowledge into action which is seen in the promotion of nature’s interpretation school which focus more on young children to instil the important of nature’s preservation in them at a tender age. Therefore to implement all these functions the forest regulation warrants the forest to be free in order to promote the values of the forest.

The absence of general information about Klosterheden activities and events, negatively affects the German Tourist demand for travel to Klosterheden. Thus most German tourists pay visitation to Klosterheden as a secondary option especially when the weather is bad, and would rather prefer to visit the coastline when the weather is favourable. There should be an urgent need for mass media promotion in order to create awareness and also to improve on the image of the forest to encourage the German tourists to frequently visit the forest. There is also need to revamp the quality of their marketing initiatives, which includes the local news papers, brochures, internet, especially word of mouth however, is considered as non-strategic and non-attractive, which is a cheap promotional means; therefore promotion of Klosterheden has very limited financial support and fails to attract the German tourists. More budget and different marketing strategies should be implemented to support marketing organisations who wish to promote Klosterheden activities since these activities could attract investors and business initiatives to invest in the community.

Furthermore, the Ministry of the Environment should adopt a more open policy vis a vis the private stakeholders. These would encourage cooperation with private stakeholders to work in partnership with the ministry, in order to developed ideas and knowledge to attract tourists to enjoy the natural environment while maintaining the sustainable nature of the forest. Currently the ministry has trimmed down on the budget of forestry, which has subsequently leads to shortage of guides, and the smooth running of the forest activities. There is also language problem that make communication between the German Tourists and the tours guides’ very difficult since the Germans don’t understand Danish and tour guides too do not speak Germans. This could be one of the reasons that make some of the German Tourists not to use the services of the tourist guides. Tour guides have an important role to play in respect to guiding tours around the forest, thus lack of guides means it would be difficult to handle a large number of tourists and this would give a negative image of the forest. This could be ameliorate if the state invests more on the forest and also work in partnership with the private sector. Lastly, tourism is one of the highest employed sectors in the Lemvig community. As argued by the Lemvig Tourism Board Director*, “it is millions which the community gain from it. If you look at the numbers, tourism business is one of the highest numbers of people employed per person in the community. Tourism has a strong impact on the community”[Appendix 2:9]*. Therefore a proper marketing of Klosterheden could definitely create more revenue that would subsequently create many jobs opportunities in the Lemvig Community.

**5.2 Recommendation for the study**

From the different interviews gathered, together with articles from internet and documentation from Klosterheden and Lemvig tourism Board, the research had made investigation on how Klosterheden could be branded to attract more German tourists. However, in reference to what I gathered from the findings the below recommendation is revealed.

The Lemvig tourist Board director has many brilliant ideas that could be implemented in order to develop the activities and attractions of Klosterheden and consequently attract more German tourists but as a state entity is difficult to openly cooperate with the private stakeholders, (Appendix 2: 4). Based on the above arguments, the government should relax its policy and regulation of the forests zones and adopt an open policy in order to attract foreign investors and stakeholders to exploit the opportunities and advantages of the forest to the benefits of the locality.

More so, according to the arguments of the Manager of Klosterheden, (Appendix 1: 2) the mission and vision of the forest is to provide nature`s experiences and values in conformity with other forest zones in Denmark. Therefore, they work in collaboration with the nature school to instil the principles of sustainability to younger children especially. However, this shows that, the forest solely operate to provide natures experiences whereas it has many exciting touristic attributes. Thus, the ministry of the Environment should ensure that Klosterheden operates not only as nature’s preservation environment but also as tourist destination. In this light more diversification of other product could be introduced in the forest, so as to attract wider tourist markets. In addition, the government and the private stakeholders should periodical be organizing meetings especially concerning the sporting activities and events in the forest. These would enable the two parties to exchange and contribute ideas and experiences on the importance of nature’s protection on the one hand and also marketing on the other hand. This would help the development of the forest.

Also Klosterheden among the other forests zone controlled by the minister of the Environment is said to be distinguished since it has the beavers and huge forest with many natural features in one area, (Appendices 1&2) These are unique attributes that give Klosterheden a comparative advantage over public and private forest alike. Therefore it could have been wise to add a logo that carries the beaver on Klosterheden forest; this would differentiate Klosterheden from the other forest and consequently create an awareness that would attract more tourists.

Lastly, the manager of Klosterheden further attest that they don’t have records of tourists visitation and don`t know whether the tourist are satisfied or not with their experiences offered, whereas he also revealed that they once tried to target the German tourists but it failed which make them to loss much finances,( Appendix 1: 5). It failed because they did not have any marketing research or records that guide them on what segments and how to target the German markets. Klosterheden should be keeping records on the various tourists visiting the forest. In this way they would be able to have a record of the number of tourists from different countries or region that visits the forest; this would help them in order to know where and how to target these segments in the near future.

The above discussion presented in the study has provided an insight into different aspects in relation to how Klosterheden could be branded in order to attract more German Tourists, since Klosterheden has many natural attributes that could attract many tourists from different nooks and cranny. Nonetheless, the study is still open for future investigation. The research could be expanded to cover all the forest zones in Denmark to be able to have a broader insight to the problem to facilitate a solid solution on how the advantages of these forests could be utilised for the development of tourism.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

CEO- Chief Executive Officer

DMO- Destination marketing Organisations

LTB- Lemvig Tourism Board

T- Tourist

UNWTO- United Nation World Tourism Organisation.

**Appendices**

* Interview transcriptions
* Interview Guides
* Tourism Economic Impact in Lemvig Community,( VisitDenmark.com-2009:7)
* Audio CD`s of the interviews