



**A quantitative exploration of South African consumer's perception  
and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation.**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the entirety of this research study is my own work, and that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that this study has not previously been submitted to another University or the Independent Institute of Education during an undergraduate program. Vega School of Brand Leadership will not infringe on any third party rights by publishing this Research Report.

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- and most of all, to my supervisor Adrie Le Roux for all your time, patience, guidance and support. I could not have asked for a better supervisor.

## **ABSTRACT**

This research study explores South African consumer's perception and response to McDonald's product adaptation, in order to determine whether multinational brands should standardise or adapt their product offering. This paper investigates the perceptions and responses that South African consumers have of the McDonald's Boerie Burger, and may help global brands come to conclusions as to what business strategy they would prefer to implement within their organisation to ultimately create competitive advantage in the South African context.

Brand adaptation may take on various forms such as; reworking of the brand's name so that it is not offensive in foreign regions, and redesigning the brands packaging, jargon and most essential for this study, reshaping the products the brand offers to account for cultural norms, such as adding menu items that incorporate regional ingredients "McDonald's- Boerie Burger (Boerewors flavour)".

To assist the research paper's findings, 132 respondents were asked to answer a questionnaire which consisted of 15 questions. The respondents ranged in ages from 19 to 60 years old and were of diverse ethnicity and gender. The study followed a quantitative approach and data was analysed using descriptive analysis and thematic analysis for open ended questions. This study assumed that the McDonald's product adaptation of their Boerie Burger contributed to consumers' association and image of the global brand. This paper only addresses McDonald's and how they have implemented product adaptation. Other multinational brands that make use of an adaptive business strategy were not assessed in this study, although it is a possible area for future studies, the nature and scope of this study does not allow research into all multinational brands.

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## **1. Chapter 1: Introduction**

This paper reports on an exploratory study into South African consumer perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation, with the aim of determining if consumers feel that the adaptation represents their culture, and if consumers identify with the brand because of the adaptation.

This study has explored consumer's perceptions of Mc Donald's product offering and how the consumers respond to the product adaptations that are used to address a specific culture, and if enterprises are adequately recognising and adapting their product to achieve comprehensive business goals and objectives.

This study consolidates past and current research and expands the readers knowledge on the effects of adapting Mc Donald's product offering, based on cultural preferences related to a specific geographical area. A correlation has been drawn to exhibit the contrast between brands that standardise or adapt their product strategy to enter international markets.

This study is quantitative in nature and aims to explore an area in which little previous work has been done in a South African context. A short description of the research problem being investigated is introduced. A purpose statement has been created to highlight the focus of the study. A research question with sub questions has been created to guide the research. The question outlines what one attempts to answer by conducting the research.

An appropriate research paradigm, is explained and applied to the study. Justifications for the relevance of the study have been outlined. The theoretical foundation of the study is made up of brand image, brand association, brand adaption and ethnocentrism, and it has been applied to the study. An overview of previous research has contextualised consumers responses to product standardisation and adaptation, and considers the effectiveness of both strategies. The most suited data collection method is applied to the study to get the most beneficial results. Surveys were formulated and distributed to 132 respondents, which consisted of 15 questions each and which were used to gain more insight on the topic.

### **1.1. Background and orientation (contextualisation)**

Mc Donald's was founded by two brothers, Richard and Maurice Mc Donald in America in 1937. Canada was Mc Donald's first international venture in 1967 (Vignali, 2001). In November 1995 Mc Donald's opened their first restaurant in South Africa. Mc Donald's has created employment and trained over 10 000 South Africans. The franchise has implemented high quality standards by having 80% of all their products manufactured and produced by local South African suppliers (McDonald's, 2015).

Kolzow (2009) states that, "large companies must become more global if they hope to compete. They must change from companies that treat their foreign operations as secondary, to companies that view the entire world as a single borderless market." Globalisation of markets depends on the entire company's commitment to global marketing; it exemplifies the view that the world is a single market (Vignali, 2001).

Internationalisation comprises of customising marketing strategies for various regions of the world according to cultural, national and regional differences to aid specific target markets. In order to standardise a brand's product offering, the strategy needs to group countries by political, economic, social, technological, and cultural similarities (Vignali, 2001).

Mc Donald's is driven by the term, "think global, act local." The brand must ensure that it's structure fits in with it's international environment, while at the same time, have the internal flexibility required to implement it's strategic goal (Taylor, 1991).

McDonald's aims to create a standardised set of products that taste the same whether in Japan, Canada, America or South Africa, for example, The Big Mac. Although McDonald's has standardised some of their products, the brand has learned that they should be able to adapt to an environment that ultimately guarantees success. Therefore, the concept of "think global, act local" has been clearly adopted by McDonald's (Kolozow, 2009). For example, McDonald's customise their burgers for every major market, the 'Boerie Burger' is a product specifically offered to the – South African market, based on a traditional sausage –Boerewors. Various competing fast food chains such as Burger King and KFC have seen the success of Mc Donalds'

product adaptation and have implemented it into their business strategies (Bell & Shelman, 2011). International brands such as Starbucks and Krispy Kreme have a standardised business strategy as they have not seen a need to localise their product offering, and standardisation is cost effective (Macey, 2013).

Consumer perception includes the way stimuli are interacted and integrated by the consumer. Consumers perceptions of a brand are owned by it's customers. What customers are thinking and saying about your brand is what consumers depict your brand to be. Consumer perception can create an image of the brand and ultimately form brand associations which can be used to create brand equity (Smith, 2015). Brand equity occurs when brand identity and image is aligned. By making use of product adaptation as a business strategy, consumers are able to create emotional connections with the brand, with the aim of creating a reputable brand image. Brand associations occur when the brand makes use of exclusivity as a strategy, "no other brand is doing or saying it."

Little information exists into how consumers respond or perceive brands that adapt their product offering.

## **1.2. Rationale**

The purpose of this study is to examine South African consumers perception and response to product adaptation. Little literature exists on Google Scholar and Ebscohost about South African consumers reactions to product adaptation.

South Africa is noticing an escalation in international brands that are opting to open stores here, such as Radley-London, H&M, Cotton-on, Burberry, Jimmy Choo, Burger King, Pandora and Krispy Kreme (Morley, 2013).

According to Valez (2011) altering a brand's product offering may assist enterprises in infiltrating a competitive global market, ultimately increasing productivity and profitability. The anticipated results of adaptation will be useful in the future, and will guide other entities who are considering altering their product offering in respect to cultural change (Calantone, Kim, & Schmidt, 2002).

South Africa has 11 official languages – these do not include the vernacular languages. Each language is aligned with a specific cultural group, and each of these groups have sub groups. Most South Africans are educated in English and/or Afrikaans<sup>1</sup>, where individuals ascribe to these cultures they are taught in as well as their own cultures (SAinfo reporter, 2015).

It could be argued that it would be very costly for a brand to try and address all the different cultures in South Africa, which could lead to the brand losing it's overall identity. A lot of South Africans relate to boerewors, “a traditional sausage,” and to having a braai (Bernd, 2009). A braai is a social custom in South Africa where family and friends converge on a picnic spot or someone's home (Bernd, 2009).

Mc Donald's adapted the Boerie Burger into their South African menu to engage with consumers on a personal level. When consumers engage with a brand on a personal level they are likely to form a perception of the brand which wil aid brand loyalty. Boerewors is a flavour all South African's can identify with. So Mc Donald's strategically adapted the beef boerewors-flavoured patties on their Boerie Burger, to allow South African's to feel a sense of emotion and identify with Mc Donald's as a brand (Duff, 2013). Therefore an understanding of how South African consumers feel about product adaptation could assist other multinational brands, as to whether they should change their business strategy or not.

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<sup>1</sup> The scope of this paper does not allow for a full discussion on the politics of language in South Africa-especially in the education context.

### 1.3. Problem statement

When multinational corporations broaden their product offerings to international markets they need to scrutinise standardisation and adaptation. Doole and Lowe (2008), point out that due to globalisation, international cultures are integrating and brands tend to struggle to determine which product strategy to engage in particular markets. Doole and Lowe (2008), Horska', Ubreziova and Keillor (2007), and Hausknecht and Parker (2001) have identified three schools of thought with regards to this, namely; product standardisation, adaptability, and a combination of both.

Doole and Lowe (2008) observed that standardisation is a universal motion in which the entire global marketing mix is standardised in all states with the intention to improve efficiency. Adaptability looks at the marketing mix differently, whereby international markets are addressed by taking into account local differences and expectations of customers. Culture plays a substantial role in these.

The other authors express similar viewpoints in that product standardisation is when a brand's products are identical globally and product adaptation looks at products that are modified and introduced into global markets based on the local culture of the geographical area (Horska', Ubreziova and Keillor, 2007).

Culture consists of various elements such as values, beliefs, education, language and customs (Baldwin, 2006). Mesdag (1999) argues that due to the variation in cultural elements, adapting a Multinational Company's (MNC's) marketing to different global cultures becomes crucial in gaining a competitive advantage. For example, McDonald's customises its burgers for every major market. An example of this is the 'Boerie Burger,' a product specifically offered to the South African market, based on a traditional sausage, Boerewors. The name, Boerewors, comes from the Afrikaans words *boer* ("farmer") and *wors* ("sausage"). Boerewors is made from coarsely minced beef and various spices (Braai, 2010). This research study explores McDonald's and the significant advantages or disadvantages that are accompanied by the adaptation of their products to suit cultural trends, based on consumer perception and responses. Little information exists on consumer's perceptions and responses to product adaptation in the South African market. In a country with such diverse cultures,

it is important to know how adapting a product is perceived by consumers in order to determine if the strategy will make an impact on the brands return on investment. Consumer perception plays a large role in how the brand is seen by the customers who buy it. By knowing how your organisation is perceived, the brand can adjust their brand strategy and make it more feasible, if it is not seen that way.

### **1.3.1. Why is the problem worth investigating?**

South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation is worth investigating to determine if product adaptation influences the brands overall success and if other global brands should consider adapting their product offering to the local market they operate in. There is little previous research on this topic, and South Africa presents a unique context to investigate brand adaptation, as we have so many cultures.

### **1.3.2. Research questions**

The primary research question for this study is stated as follows:

What are consumer perceptions and responses to Mc Donald's product adaptation in the South African context?

The secondary research questions:

- What do consumers think of the Boerie Burger?
- Is Mc Donald's product adaptation in the South African context effective?
- Does Mc Donald's product adaptation effect how South African consumers feel about the brand?

### **1.3.3. Research objectives**

The aim of this study is to investigate South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation, with reference to Mc Donald's Boerie Burger.

The objectives of this study are:

- To place product adaptation in a South African context
- To determine how consumers feel about product adaptation
- To determine how consumers feel about Mc Donald's product adaptation
- To determine how consumers react to product adaptation
- To investigate if product adaptation in Mc Donald's is successful
- To investigate South African consumers point of view, with reference to product adaptation.

#### **1.4. Purpose statement**

The purpose of this study is to explore South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product offering. The literature review examines two approaches, standardisation and adaption, to show how companies manage cultural differences. To achieve this purpose the study will analyse the internal marketing mix of Mc Donald's, by exploring the research question and sub-questions. Primary research is conducted, whereby 132 participants who eat Mc Donald's will be asked to answer a survey on Google Forms.

#### **1.5. Conceptualisation (of key concepts)**

Key concepts are terms that appear regularly in the study that are defined for a better understanding of the study at hand. They are terms that guide the research (Davis, 2014).

- **Standardisation**

A framework of agreements to which all relevant parties in an organisation must adhere to ensure that all processes associated with the creation of good performance of a service are performed within set guidelines (Cambridge Dictionary, 2011). In relation to this study, Mc Donald's standardises the Big Mac across all branches on a global scale.

- **Adaptation**

A flexible process associated with the creation of products or the performance of a service according to various political, economic, social, technological and cultural elements (Dontigney, 2013). In relation to this study, Mc Donald's adapts it's product offering to create a competitive edge in the market.

- **Brand image**

Aaker (1988) defines brand image as, "what consumer's think you stand for and how the market place perceives the brand." If brand image and identity are aligned, brand equity is achieved, which results in increased brand loyalty. The value of a brand lies in what people think, feel and believe about it. In relation to this study, consumers create a perception of Mc Donald's based on how they interact with the broader community and make their brand stand out amongst their competitors.

- **Globalisation**  
A process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology (Ohmae, 1989). In relation to this study, Mc Donald's treats it's global operations as a single borderless market.
- **Internationalisation**  
Internationalisation comprises of customising marketing strategies for various regions of the world according to cultural, national and regional differences to aid specific target markets (Vignali, 2001). In relation to this study, Mc Donald's customises it's marketing strategy based on consumer and cultural preferences.
- **Consumer perception**  
Consumer perception is a process by which consumers select, organise and interpret stimuli from the brand and create a meaningful and coherent image of the brand. Perception can make customers respond directly to the stimuli they receive from the brand message (Kumar, 2009).

## **1.6. Overview of Research Methodology**

The research was quantitative in approach and used a survey design. Data was collected using questionnaires on Google Forms. A link was posted on Facebook and also sent to potential respondents via Whatsapp. The questionnaire contained a total of 15 questions. The sample consisted of South African individuals, between the ages of 19 and 60, of mixed gender and diverse ethnicity. Snowball sampling was used in the study, where participants suggest other people who meet the population parameters, such as other potential participants that eat Mc Donald's and who have access to the internet to participate in the study.

## **1.7. Structure of the paper**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction:**

This chapter introduced the reader to an exploration of the South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation by contextualising the study and defining the primary and secondary research questions and objectives of the study.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

This chapter dealt with the literature review, which looks at past research and existing literature on product adaptation and standardisation. It provides the reader with a background of the topic and guides the research process. The theoretical framework forms the foundation of the study. Seminal sources, journal articles, textbooks and Google scholar are used.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology:**

This chapter outlines the research process proposed for the study, including the cross-sectional survey design, questionnaire, accessible population, population parameters, sampling size, unit of analysis, as well as specifying all limitations and delimitations.

#### **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings:**

In this chapter, data gained from the questionnaires were analysed by making use of descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for open ended questions. Once the data is analysed the researcher can record the findings.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations:**

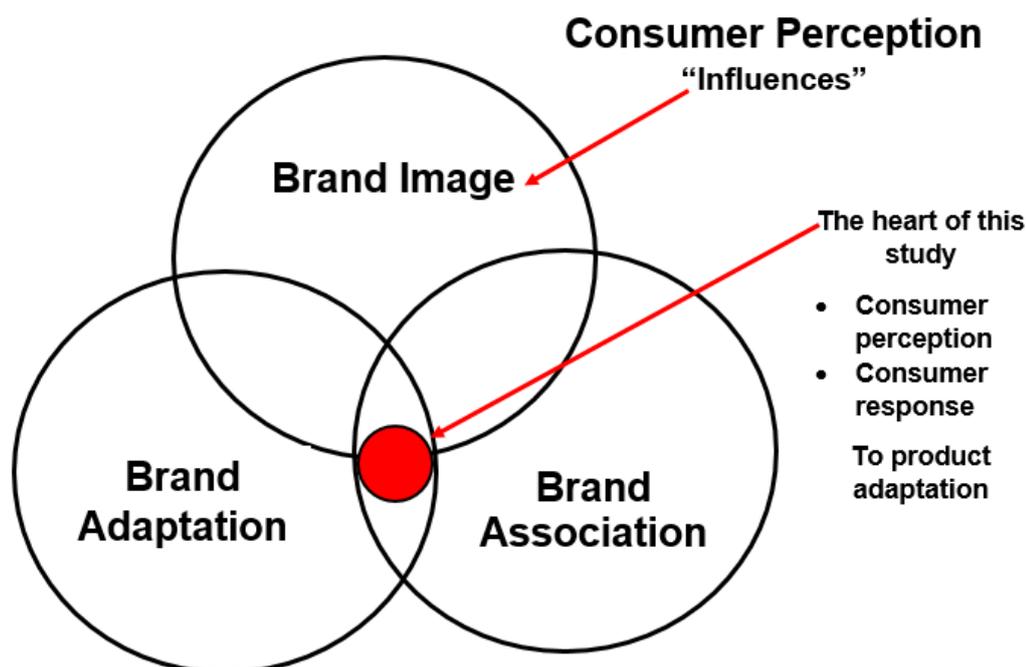
In this chapter, a conclusion was made based on the research findings and recommendations were made as to whether multinational brands should standardise or adapt their product offering.

## **2. Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review is to present information that illuminates the research problem. This study will explore South African consumers perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation, and if enterprises are adequately recognising and adapting their products to gain comprehensive business goals and objectives. The literature review will deal with Brand Image, Brand Adaptation and Brand association, as visually represented in Figure 2.1 in the conceptual framework of the study. An overview of previous research will contextualise consumer perception and response to product standardisation and adaptation, and consider the effectiveness of both strategies.

## 2.2. Theories



**Figure: 2.1: Conceptual framework of the study**

*Source: Researcher's own*

### **Consumer perception**

Consumer perception is a process by which consumers select, organise and interpret stimuli from the brand and create a meaningful and coherent image of the brand. Perception can make customers respond directly to the stimuli they receive from the brand message (Recklies, 2015). Negative changes such as an increase in price or reduction in quality isn't really seen, but positive changes such as a new product being launched by a brand, a new logo, a new brand name or a new slogan is easily noticed by consumers. A consumer's expectations are determined by their previous experiences with the brand. Consumers perceive the things they want, need and that create a strong emotional connection, where unrelated things are more inclined to be ignored (Kumar, 2009).

### **Brand image**

Brand image is the present perspective consumers have about a brand. There are distinct associations such as the brand's packaging, word of mouth, advertising and other promotional tools within the minds of the target audience (Aaker, 2009). Brand image represents what a brand currently stands for in the eyes of the consumer. Consumers are able to form an image about a brand through their observations and

experiences with the brand. This allows consumers to grasp the organisations mission and vision through emotional value. When consumers assess a brand's image they look at three attributes; what does your brand do better than others, why do I believe what your brand says over others and how does your brand make me feel over your competitors. By looking at these three attributes, a consumer is able to come up with their own image of the brand based on their experiences (Keller, 2008).

Brand association, adaption, consumer perception and image all influence how a brand is perceived by the consumer and how a consumer may respond to the brand they are in contact with (MSG Experts, 2016).

**Brand equity**

Aaker (1996:7) defined brand equity as, “a set of assets linked to a brand’s name and symbols that add to the value provided by a product or service to a firm/ and or that firms customers.” This paper acknowledges that Brand equity is an important theory (through consumer perception and association, consumers are able to form an image of the brand and if the image is aligned with the brands identity, brand equity is the result) but for the purpose of this study, the researcher will only focus on brand image and brand association.

**Brand association**

Brand associations can be linked to attributes that a consumer can touch or brand associations attached to a culture, skills and members of the organisation, or aspects associated with the brand’s personality. Brand associations formulate desired attitudes and feelings towards the brand, ultimately building brand equity (Klopper & North, 2011). McDonald’s is associated with the golden arch. Anyone who sees the golden arch affiliates it with McDonald’s. McDonald’s is associated with the global fast food chain and the slogan, ‘I’m loving it’. McDonald’s has been built with young, spirited professionals, who are genuine, kind and influential (Vignali, 2001).

### **2.3. Previous Research**

Over the past four decades there have been lengthy considerations regarding whether brands should standardise or adapt their global marketing strategy. Marketing has moved from product and production affiliated strategies to a more consumer based approach. From 1870-1930, international corporations focused on an escalation of market supply and a decrease in costs. As the economy declined due to global recession in 2008, brands shifted from being producers of low cost products to product innovators. Many corporates shifted their assets towards human resources, to convince consumers that the brands products will satisfy consumer wants and needs (Ryans Jnr, Griffith & White, 2003).

### **2.4. Standardisation and adaption of different components of the product**

Products are marketed to specific cultural desires throughout international markets. According to Hofstede (1984), culture is the unified composition of the mind, which differentiates the members of one culture from another. For the intention of this research study, culture is described as a shared arrangement of interactions and behaviours, and the intuitive comprehension that is learned through the process of socialisation (Hofstede, 1984).

According to Phatak, Bhagat, & Kashlak (2009), cultural aspects are basic elements that help us figure out how cultures may differ or be related. Cultural diversity is a consequence of the differentiation given to different values. Consumers in the food sector are driven by cultural factors, habits, consumer tastes and income. The significance of this research paper is in the product element of the marketing mix.

The marketing mix according to Doole & Lowe (2008) consists of the “4 Ps”, namely; Product, Price, Place and Promotion, as marketing strategies. According to McCarthy (1975), “The concept of the 4P's; product, price, promotion and place marketing mix. Goods and services that are offered by a company to it's consumers are referred to as the Product.” There are various components that attract a consumer's attention towards a specific product, such as it's packaging, what it tastes like in relation to other food, and the physical product itself.



**Figure 2.2** The four "P"s

Source: Doole and Lowe (2008).

According to Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong (1996), a product's function, support and appearance is what a consumer will actually purchase. The needs and expectations of the consumer should be taken into account when exploring whether a brand should adapt or standardise its product offering.

### 2.5. Product adaption

New products and services are modified and introduced into global markets based on existing products and services and the local culture of the geographical area. Brands often tend to modify their marketing strategy when infiltrating foreign markets, to ultimately gain a competitive advantage. Brands may adapt the colours of their packaging, the logo, or formulate new tastes better suited for the local palate (Valdez, 2011).

According to Meyer & Bernier, (2010) consumers' needs vary across cultures and people strive to be satisfied. Different geographical areas experience different political, cultural, economic and social issues. By adapting a brand's product offering, the company is able to acknowledge consumers preferences, ultimately aiding large market shares and increasing the brand's profit (Pirainen, & Seta, 2008).

According to Piirainen (2008), “Multinational Companies need to act globally but think locally” in order to gain a competitive advantage. Adapting a brand’s product offering is the main approach that impacts the export performance of an organisation.

In incorporation to enhance a company's export performance, McKee & Konell (1993), in their study *Product Adaptability: Assessment and Strategy*, established that by adapting a brand’s product offering, an organisation’s strategy can be complemented and enhanced. In established stable environments, companies must fit their strengths with accessible external resources in order to survive. McKee & Konell (1993), concluded that in a constantly changing environment, companies themselves must be prepared to continuously change.

In another study looking at product adaptation in processes of internationalisation, ‘The process of planning and implementing products and services so that they can easily be adapted to specific local languages and cultures, a process called localisation’ (Ishida, Miller, 2015). Horska et al. (2007) found that products must differ more from the original, so that consumers feel personally connected with the brand. This ultimately increases customer loyalty. The main pitfall of adapting a brand’s product offering is that it can become very costly if the organisation is altering their brand elements or product composition in order to be accepted by consumers (Kinard, 2013).

## **2.6. Product Standardisation**

Standardisation is when a brand’s product or service is identical globally. The cost and administration benefits of product standardisation has made the global marketing approach of the 21<sup>st</sup> century easier (Ghantous, 2008). Standardisation of a brand’s product offering creates a consistent image of the organisation’s products and services offered worldwide. For example, Red Bull and Krispy Kreme (Syed, 2013).

In comparison to the idea behind the product adaptation strategy, Valdez (2011) points out that organisations following a standardisation approach to infiltrate foreign markets using the same packages and advertisements that were used in the domestic market require less investment, ultimately decreasing the costs of the company’s marketing

approach and allowing the brand to have more competitive prices than its local competitors.

Standardisation assures a unique, secure and consistent brand image across global markets, ultimately assisting the organisation in adding consumer value. Van Raaij (1997) states that by implementing standardisation throughout an organisation, a brand's international communication strategy, mission, proposition, the concept and the execution is easier as it is generic throughout all markets.

The market is becoming one through globalisation and technology, thus making it easy for companies to standardise their product offering across cultures. People around the world are being exposed to various cultures through the media, traveling and creating one's own reality through experiencing different cultures. Ghantous (2008) further observes that consumers no longer belong to only one group nor do they present one distinctive cultural identity, but operate a 'bricolage' of diverse cultural forms by adjusting to different contexts and situations, mainly of consumption.

### **2.7. Risks of product standardisation**

According to Vrontis and Thrassou (2007), standardisation is not desirable or realistic due to the contrast in cultural and legal environments in local markets. Brands that standardise their product offering may find entering foreign markets challenging, as consumers may feel that their needs are not being satisfied (Hill & Still, 1984).

Standardisation as a marketing concept is not suitable for global market segments that are expressed by customers with unrelated customer wants, needs and traits. As consumers are less likely to engage with a brand they feel detached from (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Lamprianou, 2009).

### **2.8. A combination of standardisation and adapted products**

Standardisation and adaptation of a brand's product offering is not an all or nothing motion. MNCs should combine both approaches, by understanding the dynamics of the market(s) being served (Vrontis, *et al.* 2009). Global markets are becoming more homogenised, which allows international brands to market their products and services in the same way all over the world by using the same strategies. Brands may have a

generic strategy that they use on a global basis, but their strategy must be adjusted when it comes to entering markets with versatile cultures (Piiirainen, & Seta, 2008). For example, McDonald's makes use of a combination strategy, as they have a generic menu with products that consumers identify with the brand such as the BigMac. Yet McDonald's also have products that they have adapted for a specific market segment. An example of this is the 'Boerie Burger,' a product specifically offered to the South African market.

### **2.9. Strategies used by fast food chains**

Fast food companies persuade customers to consume more through the use of visual stimulation, convenience, audio stimulation and changing the perception of the portion size. Fast food chains make use of advertising as a way of attracting customers when they are not hungry. Billboards portray large images of the fast foods product offering to induce hunger. By providing an area for consumers to sit and have their meal, consumers automatically stay longer and may purchase more (Wansink, 2014).

Fast food brands urge consumers to buy more, through the use of meal deals, as a customer may have only intended on buying a burger where they leave with a meal and dessert (Wansink, 2014).

Various fast food chains such as KFC, Subway, Domino's Pizza and McDonald's came up with various menu items intended for local palates. Many fast food brands incorporated product localisation into their marketing strategy. By localising a brand's product offering the company is customising what they are selling to the people they are selling the product to. Fast food companies are coming up with new cuisine to please local tastes (Stern, 2010).

### **2.10. How do international brands in South Africa adapt or standardise their product offering**

South Africa is a very diverse country with eleven languages and various cultures. It would be very difficult to adapt a brand's product offering to every South African culture. So companies who have decided to implement product adaption into their marketing strategy need to address the many cultures that exist in South Africa. Adaptation of international brands in South Africa can be very costly and small to

medium brands would not consider adapting their product offering (Horska', Ubreziova, & Kekäle, 2007).

Large international brands such as KFC and McDonald's would invest in adapting their product offering as they have more capital and are willing to invest in the consumer in order to build customer loyalty, ultimately aiding a competitive advantage (Li, 2007).

### **2.11. How is Mc Donald's engaging with their consumers?**

Mc Donald's is a global fast food restaurant and according to Vieregge, Scanlon & Huss (2007) the brand's success is based on the standardisation of their generic menu which is offered around the world. The core name of the hamburgers and the way the meals are presented are standardised. According to DeBres (2005), the most expensive Mc Donald's products are alike in name and presentation on a global "standardised" scale.

Mc Donalds' menu has products that are standardised throughout global markets such as the Big Mac, yet they adapt certain products to various cultural differences such as the 'Boerie Burger' so that consumers feel more connected with their brand. In France, wine is offered on the menu, where beer is offered in Germany and tea in England which is an extension to the main beverages that are offered in the USA. In India the McVeggie, McAloo Tikki is offered on the menu, where McMini sandwiches are offered in Canada and Sweet chilli crispy chicken sandwich in England, which is an extension to the main cuisine, that is offered in the USA. Vieregge, Scanlon & Huss (2007) state that the use of locally sourced food products are perceived by consumers to be a positive characteristic, ultimately increasing customer loyalty.

### **2.12. Conclusion**

This literature review has highlighted that product adaption may be considered as the future for large brands globally, as increasing personal relationships with consumers through culture, values and beliefs will ultimately increase brand loyalty. It is advised that small to medium brands standardise their product offering as adaption is very costly (Horska' *et al*, 2007). Mc Donalds' menu has products that are standardised throughout global markets such as the Big Mac, yet they adapt certain products to

various cultural differences such as the 'Boerie Burger,' a product specifically offered to the South African market. By adapting a brand's product offering, consumers feel more connected with the brand.

The literature sources consolidated did not find much information about consumer response studies with regards to product adaptation in the South African context, and this is where the research study is located.

### **3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research paradigm**

A paradigm is a way of looking, doing and thinking. The paradigm that is most suited to the exploration of Mc Donald's and the way they adapt their product offering, based on culture change, is Critical Realism.

#### **Critical Realism**

Critical realism grasps that evident structures remain independent of people awareness, an outlook related to positivists, who suppose that a single reality exists. Interpretivists regard people as different to objects. Critical realists suggest that peoples' knowledge of reality is a consequence of social conditioning (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

One's reality changes overtime. Knowledge should supply people with the tools needed to change their own world, true social conditions should be displayed and, freedom, liberation and equality are valued within Critical Realism (Maree, 2016).

Critical Realism is the ideal paradigm to explore product standardisation and adaption in international markets, as inevitably this research study is about consumer perception and response. Consumer's knowledge and reality of the brand may change through product adaptation. Nowadays MNC's are implementing various product offerings to different cultures, as it allows consumers to form a personal connection with the brand, ultimately increasing loyalty and aiding competitive advantage.

### **3.2. Research approach**

Maree (2016) defines quantitative research as a method that translates observations into distinct components that can be compared to other components by statistical analysis. The aim is to forecast and control; and the emphasis is on quantifiable evidence.

Quantitative research will be used to explore the perception and response of South African consumers to Mc Donald's product adaptation. This method provides the researcher with insights on South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product offering and if it's worthwhile for other multinational brands to incorporate product adaptation into their business strategy. It helps develop ideas or hypotheses for potential numerical analysis.

By making use of a quantitative research approach, the researcher is able to gather data on consumer perceptions. According to Muijs (2011),

"Many data that do not naturally appear in quantitative form can be collected in a quantitative way. We do this by designing research instruments aimed specifically at converting phenomena that don't naturally exist in quantitative form into quantitative data, which we can analyse statistically. Examples of this are beliefs and attitudes."

### **3.3. Research design**

The research design introduces the general strategy that one may select to combine the distinct elements of the study in a logical way, thereby, guaranteeing you will adequately address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Business dictionary, 2010).

In this study a survey design will be used. Surveys are made up of various open and closed ended questions that are constructed to collect information about a large population. The information that is collected represents the participants' attitudes, perceptions and opinions. A sample of participants are chosen to answer the questions, where the results are then generalised to the whole population (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Surveys and questionnaires are used interchangeably in qualitative and quantitative research, and can be used to measure subjective data. It's a

remarkable instrument for quantifying people's perceptions. Surveys are handy as they are a convenient means of collecting data and extrapolate to a larger population (DM&E Tip, 2012).

A cross sectional survey design will be used in this study to create an image of Mc Donald's consumer's perception and response to product adaptation in the South African context. Participants are only asked to answer the questionnaire once, there are no repeats (Maree, 2007). The questionnaire will consist of open and closed questions to simplify and measure responses, and validate opinions. Mail surveys will be used to distribute the questionnaires created on Google Forms via email and Facebook. Participants fill in the questionnaire in their own time and return it by a given date. It is a cost effective means of collecting data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

### **3.4. Population and sampling**

#### **Population**

A population consists of all the individuals or artefacts that reside to a group that shapes part of the research study (Pascoe, 2014). A population comprises of all units, individuals, and processing aspects that the researcher is interested in. Selected individuals or groups that are chosen are used to generalise the study's findings (Davis, 2014).

#### **Target population**

A target population is everyone that falls within the population parameters. The population has a chance to act on the information they are provided with and researchers gain insight from the specific population to conduct a research analysis (Pascoe, 2014). In this study the target population is all consumers in South Africa that buy Mc Donald's.

#### **Accessible population**

The accessible population refers only to the portion of the population that we can incorporate in the research analysis. The accessible population is a lot more refined than the target population (Pascoe, 2014). In the exploration of South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation, the target population would need to be narrowed down to the accessible population, which would be people in South Africa who buy Mc Donald's and have access to the internet.

## **Population parameters**

The common traits and the number of people or social artefacts in a population are cited as the population parameters of the research analysis, which consequently refer to the nature, size and distinctive aspect of the population (Pascoe, 2014). In this study the researcher will compare the perceptions and responses of consumers who eat Mc Donald's. The population parameters of the study would be:

- Human beings
- Who have access to the internet
- Who eat Mc Donald's
- Between the age group of 19-60 years
- The nature of the population: social artefacts in the form of consumers perception of Mc Donald's
- The size of the population: 100 consumers that buy Mc Donald's in South Africa
- How consumers perceive product adaptation by global brands in the South African context.

## **Sampling**

The sample should be a portrayal of the whole population (All South Africans that buy McDonald's). When taking a sample from a broad population, it is critical to examine how the sample is chosen. To get a representative sample, the sample must be picked at random and enclose the entire population (Pascoe, 2014).

Non-probability sampling is suitable for this study as it makes use of snowball sampling. This technique is used when one has limited access to the entire population. The focus of non-probability sampling is to include enough candidates in the sample so that the data saturation point is met (William, 2006).

## **Sampling method**

According to Pascoe (2014), Snowball sampling makes use of referrals to expand the sample size. Participants in the study suggest other people who meet the population parameters, such as other potential participants that eat Mc Donald's and who have access to the internet. Once new participants form part of the sample, they will be asked to recommend names of other potential participants that meet the population parameters that may be interested in participating in the research, until the sample size is reached.

**Sample size**

Sample size is a substantial concept in data, and is assigned to the population selected to conduct the survey. A sample size is valuable in determining the efficiency and reliability of a survey's findings. It represents the amount of participants in the study. A sample size is always depicted as the letter "n" (Zamboni, 2013). When exploring South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation, one will look at the accessible population which is consumers that eat Mc Donald's and have access to the internet. Consumer's that have access to the internet are the most accessible for the researcher and would ultimately be more cost effective and resources will be easily accessible reducing the time of gathering the information for this study. The sample size for this study is  $n= 132$ . 132 is the determined sample size as this amount is easily accessible through snowball sampling on the internet "social media."

**Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis is the main element that one would examine in the study. It is the 'what' or 'who' that is being considered. Units of analysis are basically the things one would explore, in order to formulate concise explanations of them and clarify distinctiveness among them (Crossman, 2016). The unit of analysis for this study is one consumer.

### **3.5. Data collection**

#### **Secondary research**

Textbooks, articles, google scholar and academic research will be used to familiarise the researcher with the problem in the study.

#### **Primary research**

The aim of this quantitative study is to explore, understand and describe consumers' perceptions. This research study will make use of a cross section survey design to determine South African consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation and to decipher if a product adaptation strategy will have an effect on the success of the brand. Surveys are used to collect data, they are comprised of various questions intended to gather information about the target audience (Pascoe, 2014).

A questionnaire was formulated with closed and open ended questions on Google Forms. The aim of this questionnaire is to gain insight into South African consumer perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation. A link to the questionnaire on Google forms was posted on Facebook, with a caption that explains what the research was about and encouraged people to participate and recommend others to participate in the study.

#### **Advantages of questionnaires**

1. They are feasible
2. They are cost effective
3. Information can be collected from a numerous amount of people in a short period of time
4. The data analysis and results of a questionnaire can be quickly and easily measured
5. Results are analysed objectively
6. The results can be used to measure change when compared to secondary research (Popper, 2004).

#### **Disadvantages of questionnaires**

1. It is insufficient in understanding changes of emotions, behaviour, feelings etc.
2. Questionnaires may lacks validity
3. The researcher has no way of knowing how honest a respondent is being in their answers.

4. There is no way of telling how much thought a respondent has put in
5. A researcher may miss something important when generating questions as the researcher creates questions that he/she thinks are valid to the study (Ackroyd, 1981).

**Questionnaire**

See attached (Appendix A)

### **3.6. Data analysis**

#### **Data analysis: Techniques and Procedures**

##### **Descriptive statistics**

Quantitative research may generate large amounts of data. To create understanding of this data it needs to be condensed in some way, so that the reader understands the values in the data and how they vary. All quantitative studies will have some descriptive statistics that depicts or summarises the data so that the reader can create a mental image of the data (William, 2006). This study distributed 132 questionnaires with 15 questions in each, which can ultimately generate a large amount of raw data. Descriptive statistics is the first step in quantitative data analysis, prior to more complex thematic analysis (William, 2006).

##### **Thematic analysis for open ended question**

Thematic analysis is a data analysing method used for identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns (themes) across a dataset. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. This form of data analysis is used for open ended questions that were included in the questionnaire to gain meaning from the justification participants gave to specific questions (O'leary, 2004).

When conducting thematic analysis, the researcher organises segments of data into broad categories with shared meanings, this is called coding. The data is organised into categories and then ultimately categories are organised into certain themes, which can be applied to all the text or data (Bezuidenhout, Cronje, 2014).

Line- by- line coding is used in this study to analyse thematic data. This enables the researcher to read through every line and mark the phrases, words and sentences that are essential to the study (Bezuidenhout, Cronje, 2014).

**Step 1: Preparing the data**

Data is prepared and carefully read through.

**Step 2: Coding the data**

A list of codes are made. Similar codes are put together to shorten the list. There should be a constant comparison between the coding and text. This step is only done when the researcher is fully familiar with the data. Coding refers to labels given by a researcher that represent a set of text or data that relate to the study at hand (Woodhall, 2016). Codes are then combined and the most important ones are kept.

**Step 3: Identify Sub themes or Categories**

Similar ideas and codes that refer to the same idea can be combined in to categories. It is not a linear process. There should be enough categories to cover all the data, thus it should be in-depth, mutually exclusive and specific. This means that the categories should be clear to anyone who has not read the data (Bezuidenhout, Cronje, 2014).

**Step 4: Main themes**

This refers to the grouping and labeling of the categories into broader themes.

**3.7. Limitations and delimitations**

Limitations are restrictions in one's research analysis that are out of one's control, such as the research budget, resources, information and time. Distinguishing the study's limitations, reinforces the accuracy and effectiveness of the research results. All researchers conducting an analysis of a specific scope of a study do not have complete control over every part of the study (Enslin, 2014).

The study presented a set of limitations that hindered the overall success of the research that was conducted. The most prominent limitation that presented itself was that only one geographical population dominated the study. 80% of the respondents were from Gauteng, this therefore reduced the validity of the overall study based on South Africa. Therefore the results attained by the study should not be generalised towards the whole of South Africa, but predominantly Gauteng. For future studies I would suggest a wider geographical area to be covered with a greater population and sample size in order to resemble South Africa as a whole more accurately.

Another limitation of the study that was identified was the number of data collection methods that were used for this study. This study only made use of questionnaires and included 132 respondents that answered the questionnaire. This collection method is effective but would be more effective if triangulation was displayed in the study by a variety of data collection methods such as in-depth interviews and focus groups. By implementing triangulation in the future, the quality and results gained from the data collected would increase the study's accuracy.

There were very few challenges that were presented in the research study due to the simplicity of the study. The only implication that was presented in the study was that a few of the respondents did not complete the entire questionnaire they were given and as a result left gaps in the findings that were needed for the study to increase the validity of the research. Due to this, additional time was spent on finding other respondents to complete other questionnaires which would ultimately replace the incomplete questionnaires. For future studies it would be recommended that the researcher makes sure that all respondents answer all the questions and participate in the research accordingly.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are formulated when the researcher makes particular choices about the scope of the research study. They formulate a framework in order for the researcher to focus on distinct concepts, literature and methods (Enslin, 2014).

- Not looking at Burger King as Mc Donald's adaptation strategy has been in place for a greater period of time.
- The population under the age of 19 will not be studied as they often don't make purchasing decisions. Their parents make purchasing decisions for them as they have no jobs.
- Consumers that do not have access to the internet will not be questioned as it would increase the time of conducting the research.

## 4. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

### Introduction

This chapter details the data analysis agenda and approaches used in this study, and provides a justification of their purpose. The findings and insights gained from the data collected is then reported. The aim of this study is to explore South African consumers' perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation.

#### The objectives of the study were to:

- Contextualize product adaptation in a South African context
- Determine how consumers feel about product adaptation
- Determine how consumers feel about Mc Donald's product adaptation
- Determine how consumers react to product adaptation
- Investigate if product adaptation in Mc Donald's is successful
- Investigate South African consumers' point of view, with reference to product adaptation.

This study makes use of descriptive statistics and thematic analysis when analysing the data collected. The findings from the total of 132 completed questionnaires reflected valuable feedback for the study and the findings were beneficial and relevant to answer the research question of the study. The importance of an aligned brand image and brand association as described by Aaker, (2009) as well as the role of consumer's perception and response to brand adaptation forms the theoretical framework of this study.

Participants in this study were selected by a non-probability sampling method that makes use of a snowball effect (William, 2006). Quantitative data was collected from 132 respondents using questionnaire on Google Forms. A link was posted on Facebook and sent to potential respondents via Whatsapp. The questionnaire contained a total of 15 questions. The sample consisted of South African individuals, between the ages of 19 and 60, of mixed gender and diverse ethnicity.

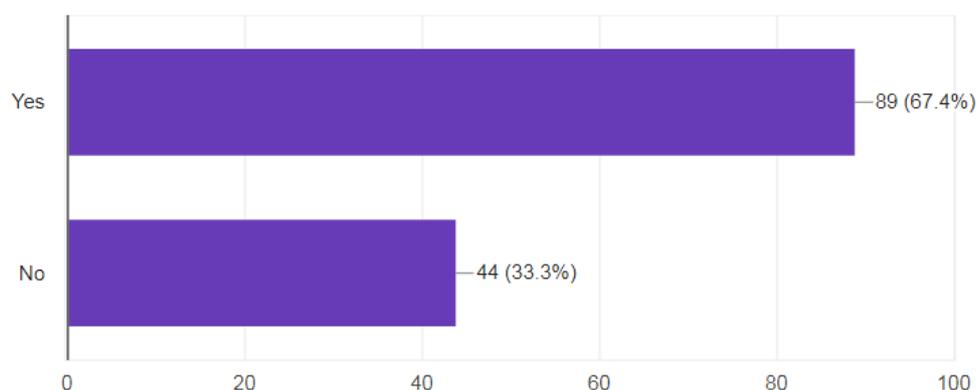
## 4.1. Findings

### General insights and findings from the questionnaire

From the 132 questionnaires that were completed, 78% of the respondents were female and 22% were male. The majority of the respondents were aged 19-25 with the least of the respondents being aged 46-60. 80% of the respondents reside in Gauteng and 70% of the respondents favour Steers (35%) and Mc Donald's (35%), fast food chains as opposed to 26% favouring KFC and 15% favouring Burger King. 36% of the respondents eat Mc Donald's once every few months where 32% of the respondents rarely eat McDonald's. The most popular McDonald's burgers according to the respondents are the Big Mac and the Quarter Pounder. When asked if the participants had heard of the Mc Donald's Boerie Burger, 67% of the respondents had heard of the Boerie Burger but 90% had never purchased or tasted a Boerie Burger.

Have you heard of or seen the Mc Donald's Boerie Burger?

132 responses

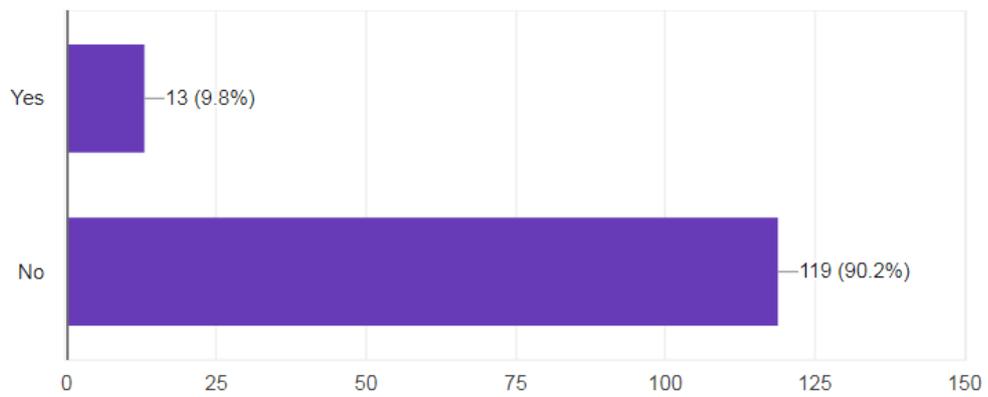


**Figure 4.1: Have you heard or seen the McDonalds Boerie Burger?**

*Source: Researcher's own*

## Have you bought a Boerie Burger?

132 responses



**Figure 4.2: have you bought a Boerie Burger?**

*Source: Researcher's own*

## **South African consumers' thoughts of the McDonald's Boerie Burger**

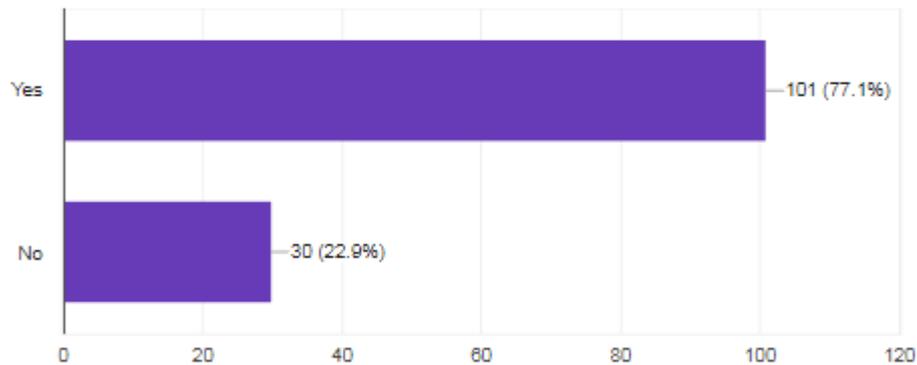
Based on an open ended question, the respondents were asked what their thoughts were of the McDonald's Boerie Burger. The main themes identified in the responses to the open ended question were that the Boerie Burger looks unappetizing and that Boerewors is a traditional South African cuisine and therefore it should not be mass-produced by a multinational brand that was founded in America.

90% of the respondents have not tried the McDonald's Boerie Burger and find that McDonald's is incorporating the product into their menu as a marketing gimmick and an attempt to capitalize on boerewors being a South African delicacy. One of the respondents pointed out that, "Consumers are more likely to braai boerewors and have it on a roll at home as it goes hand in hand with the social side of having a "traditional braai" then have it on a burger from a fast food outlet." Another respondent pointed out that, "When they go to McDonald's they are going for the fast, cheap American food associated with the brand, not products that are adapted based on local cultural trends." The Boerie Burger does not appeal to many of the respondents as they do not eat meat or do not like the taste of boerewors.

On the other hand some respondents were inquisitive to see how McDonald's has put the Boerie Burger together and how the brand has savored the flavor of boerewors that South Africans have come to know and love. Some respondents, "see the incorporation of the Boerie Burger in the McDonald's menu as, as one respondent wrote, "a good concept that represents the South African culture and allows consumers to relate to the product being served."

### Do you think the Mc Donald's Boerie Burger is an effective way of including South African culture in a multinational brand?

131 responses



**Figure 4.3: Is the Boerie Burger an effective way of including the South African culture into the brands product offering**

*Source: Researcher's own*

As shown in figure 4.3, of the sample, 77% found that the McDonald's Boerie Burger is an effective way of including South African culture in a multinational brand and 23% did not.

Based on the open ended question where the respondents were asked to elaborate on their response to whether the Boerie Burger is an effective way of including the South African culture into the brand's product offering.

The main themes that stood out from the open ended question were that:

- The Boerie Burger does not adequately represent all South African cultures
- Consumers link the Boerie Burger, "boer," to the Afrikaans communities
- McDonald's ought to do more research of the actual taste of boerewors
- Boerewors is associated with a traditional braai
- Product adaptation is seen as a good marketing mechanism.

Negative responses to the open ended question were that respondents felt that McDonald's does not market the Boerie Burger effectively so it is not as successful as it could be and that McDonald's does not represent every culture and race in South

Africa and certain cultures may feel excluded. Due to the fact that South Africa is made up of 11 different languages and consists of very versatile cultures, some respondents did not think that McDonald's represents the South African culture properly through adapting their product offering. This links back to what Meyer & Bernier, (2010) noted in the literature review, that consumers' needs will vary across cultures, and because we have so many cultures, it might be unrealistic for McDonald's to think that they will be able to address every South African's culture with one burger. Some Respondents noted that product adaptation could be an effective tool if it is research correctly or if McDonald's implements product adaptation in countries that are largely homogenous and traditional for example, how they have adapted their product offering in Thailand. Many respondents link Boerie Burger to a "boer," which is a name used for Afrikaans speaking citizens. Respondents feel that McDonald's needs to look at bringing in a more African style meals or products that more South African citizens can relate to, such as pap and wors, atchar and bunny chow, and not just an Afrikaans type of food that represents a small segment of the population. For example, one respondent said, "If McDonald's implemented pap and wors into their menu, they would be more reluctant to purchase from the fast food chain." Respondents feel that McDonald's could have done more research into what boerewors tastes like as their flavor for their Boerie Burger is not the same taste one experiences when eating a piece of boerewors. Earlier on in the literature review Vieregge, Scanlon & Huss (2007) state that the use of locally sourced food products are perceived as positive characteristics, ultimately increasing customer loyalty. According to the study, if McDonald's does not do research into the actual taste of boerewors, consumer loyalty may decrease, and the Boerie Burger, according to some of the respondents, has failed to capture the local boerewors flavour. A few of the respondents say that McDonald's could have reached them better by making use of traditional South African languages in their messages instead of creating a whole new burger. One of the respondents in particular said, "If McDonald's altered their messages and linked their external communications to South African jargon it would create a more personal connection amongst South African's and the brand."

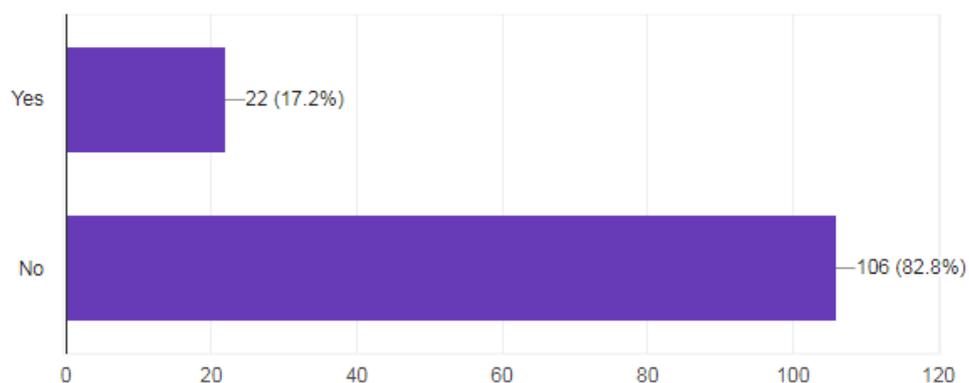
On the other hand most South African citizens have tasted boerewors when having a traditional braai. Respondents feel that a braai forms part of our national heritage which is why some citizens call heritage day, Braai day. Respondents see Braai day

as a social gathering where citizens of all different religions and races come together to celebrate South Africa while cooking local food on a fire. Some respondents feel that by incorporating product adaptation within the McDonald's menu, the multinational brand is able to tap into a previously untapped market and create an emotional connection with their customers. Respondents feel that McDonald's has brought in an exclusive product that customers can only purchase from their fast food outlet and which represents part of South Africa's traditional food system. Some respondents find McDonald's strategy as a smart way of considering their target audience and what South African meat consumers enjoy eating and making that meat easily accessible to the public at a low cost, which ultimately allows South African's to connect with a global brand through personal association.

One of the respondents said that, "Boerewors is unique to South Africa and I find it awesome that McDonald's has included a South African favorite into their brand that represents South Africa's cuisine and celebrates it." It is seen as a good marketing mechanism as people who may not normally eat McDonald's, usually due to their processed meat, will now give it a try. By having a South African sausage available to order, it could increase sales and change the perspective of the fast food outlet.

Does the Boerie Burger, which incorporates a local boerewors flavoured taste change how you feel about the Mc Donald's brand?

128 responses



**Figure 4.5: Does the Boerie Burger change how one feels about McDonald's**

*Source: Researcher's own*

As shown in figure 4.5, 83% of the respondents feel that the Boerie Burger does not influence how they feel about McDonald's, where the Boerie Burger influences 17% of the respondent's feelings towards McDonald's.

Based on the open ended question where the respondents were asked to elaborate if the Boerie Burger changed how they felt about McDonald's, themes that stood out were as follows:

- Consumers expect similarity to the menu of global brands
- Consumers go to McDonald's for specific products
- Consumers feel they can connect with the brand.

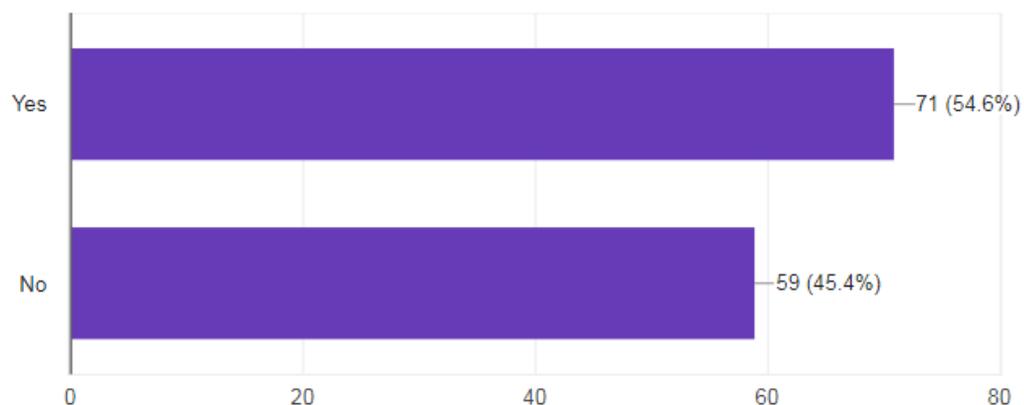
Some of the negative responses to the open ended question were that respondents felt that McDonald's is an American Fast food outlet and what they sell works. Customers expect a certain similarity to the menu, no matter what branch they purchase from globally. One of the respondents said, "Consumers are more focused on their favorite meal than a cultural meal. McDonald's is a fast food joint for people on the run and thus the customers don't want to fuss about trying something new but rather selecting their favorite meal that they know and trust." This links back to what DeBres (2005) noted in the literature review, that the most profitable McDonald's products are alike in name and presentation, and that product adaptation may not affect the brands overall return on investment. Many respondents go to McDonald's for specific products such as their Mc Flurry's, French Fries and nuggets. Some respondents felt that by McDonald's introducing a local boerewors flavour into the market, does not change the fact that the food sold is still extremely unhealthy. Some respondents would be more inclined to purchase products from McDonald's based on whether they provided a healthy food option instead of introducing a local flavoured burger onto their menu. Most respondents' preconceived opinions about the quality and taste of McDonald's is well established and by adding a product to their menu does not easily change the original opinion the respondents had of the brand.

On the other hand some respondents feel that by introducing the Boerie Burger into the market, their opinion about McDonald's and how they feel about the brand has definitely changed based on the brand specifically targeting the South African market. Some respondents feel that it shows that the brand is not boring with the same generic

products, and that the company is willing to take risks and experiment in the different global markets they operate in. Some respondents feel that McDonald's is respecting the South African culture by taking it into account by producing the Boerie Burger. Respondents feel that they can connect with the brand on a personal level through identifying with a local flavor and being included in the company's business strategies. One of the respondents stated, "By incorporating the Boerie Burger in the McDonald's menu, customers are more likely to change or retain their opinions about the brand as a whole and see the brand as more caring as McDonald's takes local consumers into account." This links back to what Horska et al. (2007) noted in the literature review, that consumers feel personally connected with the brand as they find McDonald's caring as the brand takes local consumers into account.

### Do you think the Boerie Burger is relevant to all South African's culture?

130 responses



**Figure 4.6: Is the Boerie Burger relevant to all South African's**

*Source: Researcher's own*

As shown in figure 4.6, of the sample, 55% of the respondents found the Boerie Burger relevant to all South Africans and 45% did not find it relevant.

In relation to the open ended question that asked respondents to elaborate as to if they thought the Boerie Burger is relevant to all South African's, various themes were identified:

- You cannot address all South Africans' taste preferences with one "flavour"
- Not everyone eats boerewors.

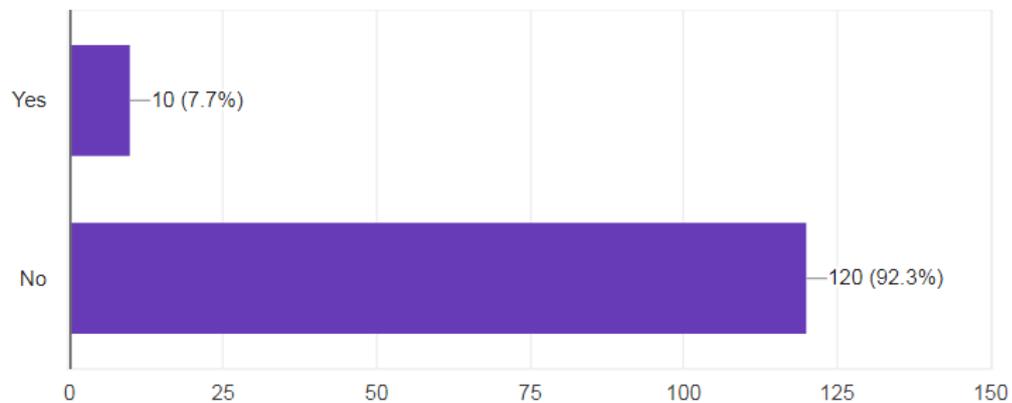
30% of the respondents felt that you cannot address all South African taste preferences with one “flavour” and not everyone eats boerewors. South Africa is a rainbow nation which is made up of various diverse groups of people who all have different taste preferences and respondents feel that one flavour does not represent all the citizens of South Africa. Respondents felt that McDonald’s should not generalise that all consumers eat meat, therefore one of the respondents suggested that McDonald’s should rather alter their messaging, packaging or even create a source that South Africans can identify with. One of the respondents said, “They don’t associate themselves with South African food, they tend to be more inclined to purchase from westernized cuisines that have a variety of international flavors.” Respondents found that the name Boerie Burger can be seen as aligned with only a specific fragment of the South African society and does not represent all citizens, and as a matter of fact, some citizens may find the word contentious.

35% of the respondents felt that boerewors is uniquely South African. One of the respondents said, “Every South African knows about boerewors and that it is seen as a South African specialty to the degree that they have South African shops abroad selling boerewors.” 64% of the respondents find boerewors as a proudly South African product and one of the respondents said, “McDonald’s implementation of the flavor in their menu is very clever as many locals are able to relate to the flavor and reminisce on memories made at Braai days while they eat their Boerie Burger.” Most races and cultures consume boerewors as it does not contain pork, so it does not go against certain South African consumers’ religious beliefs. 27% of the respondents say that their favorite South African food is boerewors and one of the respondents said that, “it is a delicacy as it is one of the only African meals that most of the population enjoy, including tourists.”

## Consumer purchasing behavior at McDonald's

Does the way Mc Donald's has adapted their menu offering (by including a South African burger) change what you buy at Mc Donald's?

130 responses



**Figure 4.7: Does the way McDonalds has adapted their menu offering change what you buy at McDonalds**

*Source: Researcher's own*

92% of the respondents stick to the products they know and like when purchasing from McDonald's. 8% will try different products at McDonald's.

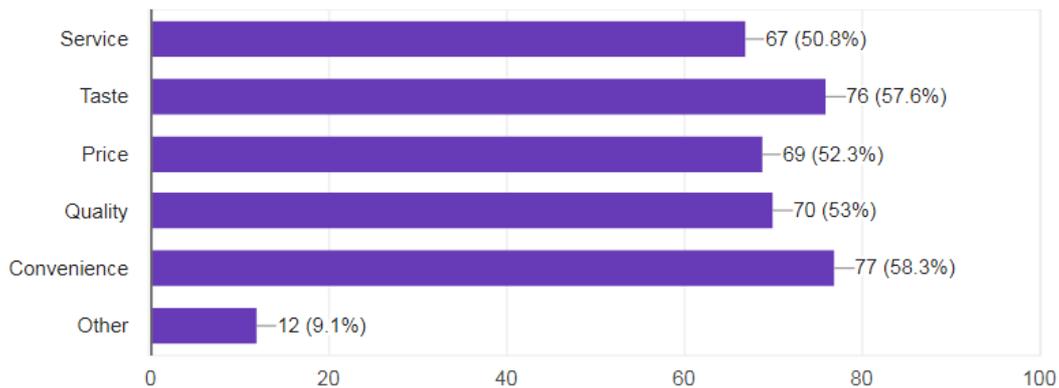
Based on the open ended question that asked the respondents, "what influences what you buy at McDonald's?" The majority of the respondents would base their purchasing decisions at McDonald's on the price (15.5%), taste (16.5%), convenience (13.5%), how hungry they are at the time (13.5%), health factors (6%) and how intoxicated or hungover they are (5%) where the rest of the respondents based their purchasing decisions on other factors.

Based on the results gained from the study customers are more likely to stick to what they know and favour. Respondents feel that the product that is purchased must appeal to them personally and that if customers order their favorite meal they are certain that they will not be disappointed. 92% of the respondents are more likely to buy generic McDonald's products that are standardised globally as most people don't like change. If they find a product they like, they are loyal to it wherever they are. 5% of the respondents only eat McDonald's after consuming alcohol or recovering from

doing so, where they are not concerned with trying new tastes. They tend to purchase what they know. 8% of the respondents were willing to try different tastes and experiment with food, but they are of the minority.

### What influences your customer experience of Mc Donald's? Please tick all that apply

132 responses



**Figure 4.8: What influences customer experience**

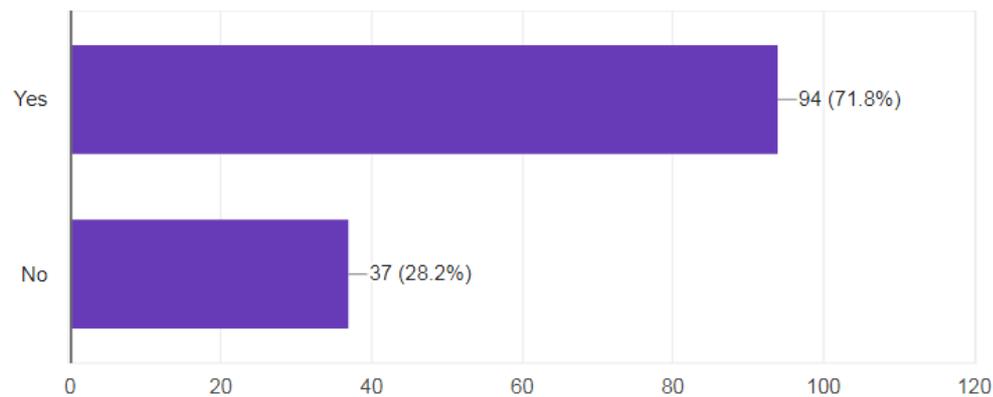
*Source: Researcher's own*

The respondents were given the option of ticking more than one box when asked what influences their customer experience at McDonald's.

As shown in figure 4.8 of the sample, 91% of the respondents' customer experience is based on convenience, taste, quality, price, and service and the other 9% of the respondents' customer experience of McDonald's is based on other factors.

## Would you try a product that has been adapted to suit the South African context?

131 responses



**Figure 4.9: Consumer perception of product adaptation in a South African context**

*Source: Researcher's own*

As shown in figure 4.9, 28% of the respondents would not try a product that has been adapted to the South African context, where 72% would.

Based on the open ended question, "The respondents were asked to elaborate if they would try a product that has been adapted to suit the South African context." The most dominant themes that arose were:

- Consumers tend to stick to what they know
- Consumers go to McDonald's to purchase food that was found in America
- Adaptation of other aspects to suit the South African context
- Consumers purchase products based on how they responded to their senses.

10% of the respondents feel that fast food outlets do not get the taste of South African flavours correct. Some respondents feel that they are not adventurous and would rather stick to what they know. 4% of the respondents do not enjoy South African cuisine so they would rather stick to what they like and avoid trying new products. 42% of the respondents feel that when they purchase from McDonald's they are purchasing American food and that is why they go to that fast food outlet to purchase the kind of food that is produced there, they are not interested in trying new products that are not found on the original American menu. One of the respondents said, "But if McDonald's

were to consider product adaptation in a South African context in relation to how they present the meal “packaging” the message they communicate to the public, and the additional sources they have available to customers to put on an original McDonald’s burger, then respondents would be more inclined in supporting those products.” This links back to what Piirainen (2008), noted in the literature review that companies need to act globally but think locally in order to gain a competitive advantage through the way they present their product (packaging and messages).

22% of the respondents are likely to purchase a product based on it’s smell, look and taste, so if the product that was brought into the market consisted of those specific characteristics, then respondents would be more inclined to purchase South African adapted products. The majority of the respondents feel that if they see a product on a menu that they are used to eating they would be more likely to purchase the product as they would be accustomed to it. 10% of the respondents are open to new tastes and trying different adventurous foods, so the Boerie Burger would appeal to those type of people. Consumers are attracted to innovation and are curious about new products that are launched by a well-developed brand. One of the respondents said, “I am more likely to try something new if it is made by a well-known global brand than a small company that I don’t really trust.” 5% of the respondents feel that change is good as it opens up doors for people to find something better that they like and enjoy.

#### **4.2. Validity and reliability / trustworthiness**

The validity of data is the magnitude to which data collection methods can measure what they were intended to measure correctly. The reliability of data is the degree to which data collection techniques will provide regular findings, homogeneous observations or conclusions formulated by other researchers. The raw data must be transparent while it is comprehended (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Yin (2003) four assessments have been established in order to test the quality of the study. These tests are as follows:

- **Construct Validity:** creating viable measures for the data being studied. Construct validity lies in that the measurement tool yielded answers that were used to answer the research question and sub-questions.

- **Internal Validity:** Creating a relationship between the data, which means; specific situations lead to other situations. Through data analysis the researcher was able to create themes by creating a relationship between the data and linking them.
- **Face Validity:** An intuitive analysis of whether or not the study quantifies what it is supposed to measure. A pilot test of the questionnaire was done at Vega amongst the honours group on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2017.
- **Reliability:** Quantitative research consists of numerical, measurable and statistical results. The researcher is looking for causes of specific effects, one can test the cause of the effect by retesting if the same motive, under the same situation, causes the same effects. For example, if a research study is conducted and every time it is retested the same results occur, the researcher can be sure that the findings are reliable (William, 2006).

Even though the study was a success, the reliability and validity of the study is adequate; the reason for this being that the study consisted of respondents who mostly reside in Gauteng. Therefore the study is not 100% reliable and valid if used to represent the whole of the South African population.

## **5. Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1. Concluding answers to the research questions**

When considering the primary research question which was stated as: what are consumer perceptions and responses to McDonalds product adaptation in the South African context, the research found that adaptation can be seen as an asset when doing business abroad as it creates an emotional connection with the brand, which tends to increase customer loyalty.

When taking into account the first secondary research question that was stated as, "What do consumer think of the Boerie Burger," the research found based on primary research that the Boerie Burger does not appeal to many of the respondents as they do not eat meat or do not like the taste of boerewors. One of the respondents stated that, "McDonalds is incorporating the product into their menu as a marketing gimmick and an attempt to capitalise on boerewors being a South African delicacy. One of respondents suggested that McDonalds should do more research into the flavour of boerewors.

In light of the second secondary research question that was stated as, "Is McDonalds product adaptation in the South African context effective?" the research found that McDonalds does not address all South African cultures by implementing the Boerie Burger into their menu and that the brand could have reached local consumers more effectively by altering their packaging or implementing South African jargon into their marketing message. Yet by implementing product adaptation into their menu, McDonald's is able to tap into a previously untapped market and create an emotional connection with their consumers. Product adaptation is seen as effective when it comes to the exclusivity of the brand.

When considering the last secondary research question that stated, "Does McDonalds product adaptation effect how South African consumers feel about the brand?" the research found that most of the respondents' preconceived opinion about the quality and taste of McDonald's is well established and by adding a product to their menu does not easily change the original opinion the respondents have of the brand. Yet some respondents felt that they can connect with the brand on a personal level through identifying with a local flavour and being included in the brand's business strategy.

## 5.2. Implications of findings for future practices

The anticipated contribution makes one aware of the benefits of the study and how it may influence the body of knowledge related to the topic being studied (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

By understanding South African consumers' perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation, the researcher is able to determine if implementing an adaption business strategy is beneficial for the overall success of the brand. By conducting this research study, the analyst is able to explore consumer's perception and response to product adaptation.

According to Meyer & Bernier, (2010) consumers' needs vary across cultures and people strive to be satisfied. Different geographical areas experience different political, cultural, economic and social issues. By adapting a brand's product offering the company is able to acknowledge consumers' preferences, ultimately aiding large market shares and increasing the brand's profit (Piiirainen, & Seta, 2008).

In incorporation to enhance a company's export performance, McKee & Konell (1993), in their study *Product Adaptability: Assessment and Strategy* established that by adapting a brand's product offering, a company's strategy can be complemented and enhanced. In established stable environments, companies must fit their strengths with accessible external resources in order to survive. McKee & Konell (1993), concluded that in a constantly changing environment, companies themselves must be prepared to continuously change. This study might help brands have a more informed choice on how standardising or adapting products to suit a local context changes people's perception.

Based on primary research it is suggested that there are more ways to adapt a brand's product offering and it is recommended that McDonald's looks more into adapting their jargon and packaging to the likes of South Africa. 77% of the respondents feel that the Boerie Burger is an effective way of including South African culture into a multinational brand but McDonald's should do more research into South Africa and incorporate a

product that represents South African culture as a whole. For example: McDonald's could introduce pap and wors, atchar and bunny chow into their menu.

### **5.3. Conclusions (critically evaluate your study and findings)**

The study highlights some interesting insights that were gathered from the findings and which aid the complexity of the study. The first and most important insight that was obtained, was that the majority of the respondents had heard of the Boerie Burger but 90% had never purchased or tasted a Boerie Burger. Which shows that the Boerie Burger was well marketed but lacked the ability of getting consumers to engage with the product. Consumers are unable to provide a reliable perception of the Boerie Burger if they have not tasted it, and may not associate the Boerie Burger as an effective business strategy, which may have an effect on the organisation's brand image. Secondly it was found that respondents are able to link the Boerie Burger to McDonald's through the brand's strong brand awareness, but consumers are more likely to purchase products based on what they know and love. Respondents pointed out that when they go to McDonald's they are going for the fast, cheap, American food associated with the brand, not products that are adapted based on local cultural trends. Consumers feel that the Boerie Burger does not represent South Africa's culture as a whole as South Africa is a very versatile country with 11 different languages. McDonald's needs to do more research into what boerewors actually tastes like as the flavour for the Boerie Burger does not taste like actual boerewors. Based on primary and secondary research it is suggested that McDonald's looks more into adapting their jargon and packaging to the likes of South Africa instead of a whole new burger that not all South African's are able to identify with.

Majority of the respondents from the study feel that they go to McDonald's to purchase cheap, fast American food and purchase products that are available globally from any McDonald's outlet, and are unlikely to purchase a product that has been adapted to the country's culture unless they are feeling curious and adventurous on the day.

77% of the respondents feel that the Boerie Burger is an effective way of including South African culture into a multinational brand but McDonald's should do more research into South Africa and incorporate a product that represents South African

culture as a whole. For example: McDonald's could introduce pap and wors, atchar and bunny chow onto their menu.

By incorporating product adaptation within the McDonald's menu, respondents felt that the multinational brand was able to tap into previously untapped markets and create an emotional connection with their consumers. Respondents find McDonalds' strategy as a smart way of considering their target market and creating more trust between consumers and the brand.

Based on primary and secondary research one can conclude that product adaptation is an effective way of creating brand association and building emotional connections with consumers. But multinational organisations should do thorough research into their target market in order to exploit this strategy. Based on the study one can say that most consumers prefer to purchase products that they are familiar with and have learnt to love, but the door should not be closed into exploring new products as millennials are a very curious generation. 83% of the respondents feel that product adaptation doesn't affect how they feel about the brand. Based on the research conducted, standardisation is essential in global organisations, but that being said, product adaptation can aid brand association and build consumer relationships if presented correctly.

#### **5.4. Ethical considerations**

Ethics are put in place to ensure we do not harm others, to build confidence with participants and expand the value of the study (Louw, 2014). High levels of ethics and morals are maintained in this study. To promise such high levels of ethics, the basis as depicted by the bullet points beneath are taken into account throughout the research task and are analysed by the ethical board of the North-West University. Research ethics are essential in maintaining admissible research conduct, it is supported in the following ways:

- Participants are obligated to supply written consent and are free to leave at any time during the research process
- All participants rights are honoured at all times, comprising of one's privacy and confidentiality

- Voluntary participation of respondents in the research is important. Participants are not forced to participate in the research study
- Information regarding the access of this study will be made available for your perusal when it has been finalised.

The ethical considerations and the overall well-being of the participants that were used for the study were strictly adhered to. All respondents stayed anonymous throughout the study, the questions that were asked were not biased and were not offensive to any of the respondents and there were no concerns that were brought up by the individuals involved in the study. The researcher remained neutral when analysing and interpreting the data and therefore the findings that were presented were precise and reliable reflections of the data recorded by the respondents.

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## **APPENDICES:**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Questionnaire**

The following survey will be used to determine consumer's perception and response to Mc Donald's product adaptation in the South African context. The results will assist in measuring if product adaptation contributes to the overall success of Mc Donald's.

It is not necessary to include personal information, as the details of the respondent will remain confidential.

According to Linton, (2007) product adaptation can be defined "as the process of modifying an existing product so it is suitable for different customers or markets. An adaptation strategy is particularly important for companies that export their products because it ensures that the product meets local cultural and regulatory requirements."

**1. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

**2. How old are you?**

- 19-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-60

**3. What province do you reside in?**

- Gauteng
- Northern Cape
- Western Cape
- Eastern Cape
- Free State
- KwaZulu-Natal
- Limpopo

- Mpumalanga
- North West

**4. What is your favourite fast food brand?**

- Mc Donald's
- KFC
- Burger King
- Steers

**5. How often do you eat at Mc Donald's?**

- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once every few months

**6. What is your favourite Mc Donald's burger?**

- Big Mac
- Boerie Burger
- McFeast
- McRoyale
- Cheeseburger
- Quarter Pounder

**7. Have you bought a Boerie Burger?**

- Yes
- No

**8. What do you think of the Boerie Burger?**

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**9. Do you think the Mc Donald's Boerie Burger is effective in the South African context "Justify"**

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**10. Does the Boerie Burger effect how you feel about the Mc Donald's brand?  
"Justify"**

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**11. Do you think the Boerie Burger is relevant to all South African's?**

- Yes
- No

**12. Does the way that Mc Donald's has adapted their burger change what you buy at Mc Donald's?**

- Yes
- No

**13. What influences your customer experience?**

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**14. What influences what you buy at Mc Donald's?**

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**15. Would you rather support a brand that tries to represents the South African culture over one that doesn't? "Justify"**

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