Honours in Strategic Brand Communication

RMET8419: Final Thesis

Exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude to the following individuals, because without their assistance this study would not have been possible:

- To my mother who supported and encouraged me throughout this entire stressful year.
- To all the respondents and participants, without your insightful contributions, I would not have obtained the necessary data to successfully conduct this research.
- My varsity colleagues who supported and assisted me in any manner they could. I am privileged to have amazing colleagues like you.
- Naretha Pretorius for all the guidance, patient and support in facilitating the completion and achievement of this study.

ABSTRACT

The main concept and purpose of this particular research study is exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols. There are two objectives of the study which are to understand which aspect of colour schemes, slogans and symbols attract or deter consumers and why; and to understand how these perceptions potentially influence buying behaviour or brand perceptions. These two objectives where the focal point of the research study, and everything that was achieved revolved about them.

A qualitative questionnaire was designed and two focus groups where conducted by the researcher in order to really get an in depth understanding of consumer perceptions. Some key themes that emerged through the research findings included that brand names are not as important as one would originally think. Men and women see colours differently as not all men see specific shades where as women are more likely to.

Overall the research that was conducted revealed a few very interesting insights and that brand building is an extremely important concept.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

- Brand/s: The set of physical characteristics of a product or service, together with the beliefs and expectations surrounding it. In other words, a unique combination which the name or logo of the product or service should evoke in the mind of stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2011. p.252).

- Brand equity: The assets, or liabilities, related to a brand's name and symbol that can either add to or subtract from a product or service (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009. p.17).

- Buying behaviour: This refers to the purchasing behaviour or patters of consumers when it comes to purchasing goods and or services.

- Competitors: Companies/individuals that sell products and or services in the same market place as one another.

- Consumer/s: Individuals who buy and use products and services.

- Consumer behaviour: The different buying habits and patters of consumers when it comes to the purchase and use of products (goods) and services.

- Consumer perceptions: This includes the awareness, impression and even observation for a brand or company's offerings (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015). Consumer perceptions are typically affected by advertising, personal experiences, public relations, reviews, social media and other channels (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015).

- Corporate branding: The different ways in which an organisation develops and builds a strong and successful reputation with its stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2011. p.65).

- Corporate identity: the profile and values communicated by an organisation. It is a type of character that an organisation seeks to establish and the way it portrays itself to its stakeholders. It consists of an organisation's defining attributes such as values and mission. It needs to be remembered in the minds of its stakeholders and so therefore this is achieved by the consistent use of its particular colours, logos, symbols, etc (Cornelissen, 2011. p.8).

- Corporate reputation: an individual's combined representation of past images of an organisation which is established over a period of time. These images are formed through the organisation's communication or past experiences with the organisation, can be positive or negative (Cornelissen, 2011. p.8).

- Distinctiveness: Enables an organisation to differentiate itself from its competitor and it helps achieve a preferred position in the minds and hearts of all stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2011. p.65).

- Stakeholders: Any group or individual who is able to affect or is affected by the organisation. This can include the achievements of the organisation's goals (Cornelissen, 2011. p.8).

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Title:

Exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols.

1.2 Introduction:

This particular research study focuses on and provided an overview of the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols. Brand building can basically be described as the activities that are associated or connected with establishing and promoting a brand (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Corporate identity, is an element of brand building, can be described as a brand's strategic choices and the way in which it chooses to express and communicate these choices to its many different stakeholders, both internally and externally (Cornelissen, 2011. p.254). In addition, it is also concerned with what the brand is and what it seeks to be (Abratt, 2012).

Organisations express core values, that they feel are specifically important to them, that make up the backbone of their organisations brand track record and of course these values need to be aligned with their promises (Urde, 2009). Corporate expression is a common term used in the corporate world which consists of the decisions concerning visual identity, brand promise, brand personality and brand communication. The process of corporate expression covers the organisations corporate identity and its corporate brand building activities (Abratt, 2012. p.8).

Corporate identity is important and so every brand needs to have a strategically strong one as this will improve and grow their organisation by projecting a precise positive image in order to build, maintain and protect their reputation with their many stakeholders, such as consumers.

A strong corporate identity will lead to the acceptance of the brand by its stakeholders and this will lead to a transparent and trusting relationship between them which in the long term will result in a strong and positive reputation of the brand

as well as loyal customers. Strong reputations give organisations a type of "first-choice" status among consumers, which means that they will choose a certain organisation's products and or services over another organisation's without any hesitation (Cornelissen, 2011, p.59). Corporate identity can either improve an organisation's reputation if it is strong and memorable, or it can hinder the organisation if it is weak and forgetful by consumers.

The researcher will be looking at the branding an organisation chooses in order to represent them self through the colours, slogans and symbols. The role it plays in consumer decision making when it comes to consumer buying behaviour will also be evaluated.

1.3 Field of specialisation:

This particular field of specialisation involves corporate identity, branding and marketing. In addition, it also focuses on how corporate identity, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols, has the ability to have some type of effect on consumer perceptions.

1.4 Research problem:

The concept of corporate identity is important to every organisation and so it needs to be strategically strong as their selected brand building techniques will be able to have some type of effect on consumers' perceptions and potentially buying behaviour. This study will evaluate the concept of brand building in terms of colour schemes, slogans and symbols and the role these aspects play in forming consumer perceptions as well as how it adds to the already existing consumer perceptions. This research proposal will be discussing which aspects of branding (such as colours schemes, slogans and symbols), plays the biggest role in attracting consumers which will have some type of effect, either positive or negative, on their individual perceptions of a certain brand. Every consumer has their own particular point of view and beliefs, so logically this will have a big part to play in contributing to their perceptions on certain brands which may influence their buying behaviour.

1.5 Objectives:

Understand which aspect of colour schemes, slogans and symbols attract or deter consumers and why.

Understand how these perceptions potentially influence buying behaviour or brand perceptions.

1.6 Research questions:

How influential are colour schemes, slogans and symbols, in consumer perceptions and behaviour?

What does this influence tell us about brand building and brand equity?

1.7 Rationale of the study:

Branding either has some type of negative or positive effect on consumer perceptions. One would say that this research proposal is relevant to the field of strategic brand communications as it makes individuals realise how important corporate identity and branding really is when they enter the brand building world, as it can have major effects on a brand associations and perceptions as well as having the ability to influence consumers perceptions which will influence their purchasing behaviour. So therefore, studying strategic brand communication will enable students to know exactly how to creatively form a strong and strategic corporate identity and branding systems.

This research will be significant to society as it will make consumers more aware of the different corporate and branding identities constructed by different organisations. So therefore, this will result in consumers being able to make more of a conscious effort in critically thinking and making more of a logical decision when it comes to their purchasing behaviour as they will then have a wider knowledge span of this particular topic. In other words, consumers will be able to compare the different brand building efforts by organisations that are available and then be able to make more of a reasonable decision. This will lead to the majority of consumers becoming more open minded and aware of the different organisations' selected branding system. So therefore, consumers will be able to form perceptions that are more considered.

This study is significant to any type of brands as it will provide insight into consumer perceptions having either positive or negative effects on their brand building efforts. Being aware of the influence of colour schemes, slogans and symbols in building corporate identities will ensure effective creative brand communication strategies. This will leads brands to realise the importance of how brand identity (Aaker, 2009) and corporate identity (visual and verbal identity) should relate to each other in order to communicate the same message of the brand.

In other words, their messages need to be aligned with one another in order to have a strong and successful brand. Consumer input is vital to the success of any brand and so brands need to easily identify what consumers like and want as opposed to what they don't like in certain branding systems. Brands need to use these types of findings correctly in order to improve their corporate brand and identity which in the long run will improve their brand image in the minds of all their stakeholders.

1.8   Delimitations and limitations of the study:

In any research report, there will be both limitations and delimitations. Limitations can be described as the limits or constraints to the research that are completely out of the researcher's control, such as access to information, financial resources or time (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014. p.275). The limitations of any study need to be acknowledged, the researcher also needs to make sure that they are considered and ways of addressing them need to be made aware as this can contribute to the validity and reliability of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.276).

The limitations within this particular study could include a lack of control over the variables involved. So in other words, participants involved might not understand some of the questions in the questionnaire properly and therefore their answers might reflect this. Any type of misunderstanding of questions will be discovered during the pilot study and then altered for the main study. Participants have the ability to be dishonest or they might not answer the questions to the best of their abilities which will have some type of effect on the results. The researcher has decided to distribute more than the needed number of questionnaire in case something similar happens and so the questionnaire/s will be discarded and the

extra questionnaire/s will take its place so that the results of the study will be a true representation.

There are also limitations within the focus group that will take place. These limitations could include participants not attending the focus group, even though they said they would. This will affect the focus group as it will be small and may result in dull findings. Certain participants might not be actively involved in the discussion which will also have a negative effect on the findings.

Limitations such as these mentioned above cannot be fixed in any way therefore the researcher will have to work around these limitations in order to complete the study. There are not other many limitations within this study as the necessary information is easily accessed through the perceptions and opinions of the participants. Funding is not a big issue as not much funding is needed, except for the cost of paper for the questionnaires and some type of treat, such as tea or coffee and muffins, for the participants involved in the focus group. Time is not an issue as this study will be completed within this year.

Delimitations are results from the particular and distinct choices which are made by the researcher when deciding on the scope of the research study (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.276). All the decisions made by the researcher during the different steps of the research process determine, to some extent, the delimitations of the research study (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.276). These decisions need to be clearly thought out during every step of the research process so that researcher is able to fully understand what can and cannot be achieved through the chosen methods (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.277). They are the parameters set by the researcher which are crucial in order for the researcher to focus on specific concepts or methods so that the research will have a clear path and importance (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.276).

The delimitations for this particular study include all the critical decisions which will be made by the researcher throughout the study. These critical decisions would only be made if the researcher felt these specific choices are best for both the researcher and the study, which includes the findings. In this study, the researcher has set parameters in order to narrow the focus of the study. This study will be conducted in the Durban North area as this particular area is easily accessible to the researcher.

This study will not include any individuals under the age of eighteen years old as they would have to get parental supervision and also the majority of them do not purchase their own groceries and therefore they would not be of any addition to the study.

1.9 Assumptions:

The term assumption can be explained as something that an individual assumes to be the case, even without any type of proof (Vocabulary.com, 2015). For this particular research study, the researcher has made several assumptions for the research without any necessary proof. The researcher's first assumption is that participating consumers will agree that elements of brand building are important. The second assumption that the researcher has made is that participants may think that building a brand is easy. The last assumption is that consumers only purchase brand names.

1.10 Conclusion:

This first chapter has briefly introduced the research topic of exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols. The literature review will add much needed research in order to better understand this particular topic and to provide a ground work of the research findings to come.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:

According to Forbes (2012), the concept of brand building is more important today than it ever has been be over the years. This is because it is an essential aspect of business development (Powell, 2014). This particular chapter focuses on unpacking and exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, which could be either positive or negative. Colour schemes, slogans and symbols are the chosen elements that the researcher will be emphasis on through this literature review. The focal point of this chapter is to provide a literature review that will support and work together with the research findings which will be obtained through qualitative research methods.

2.2 Concept of brand building:

There is no one definition that encapsulates the essence of brand building in its entirety, but the best way in which it can be defined is a process of creating value to consumers (Powell, 2014). In addition, it incorporates everything that consumers feel, know and experience with a brand or organisation (Powell, 2014). Forbes (2012) states, brands are more important than ever before as they are psychology and science which are brought together as a promise mark rather than a trademark. Brand building does not only increase the voice and consumer awareness of a brand but it also has the ability to give it an identity as well as worth (Powell, 2014). Forbes (2012) reinforces the importance of branding with the quote: "Branding is fundamental, branding is basic, branding is essential, building brands builds incredible value for companies and corporations".

2.3 Corporate identity:

There has been a growth in the interest and development, over the past few decades, when it comes to corporate identity, branding and reputation. Several researchers have realised the links between these three aspects and so it is important for them to be aligned with one another in order to create and maintain an exceptional reputation and strong brand. According to Hatch and Schultz (1997, p.357), corporate brand has the power to influence customer-based images of the

organisation as well as the perceptions formed and held by all its stakeholders, such as consumers.

Currently it is common for organisations to want to be seen as a brand itself in the market place and so their corporate brand needs to be strong as it has the power to define the organisation that will be able to deliver their promises and stand behind their different offerings (Abratt, 2012. p.9). Abratt (2012, p.9) suggest that brand promises need to be linked with the corporate identity of an organisation. Every organisation has an individual corporate brand, even though some make more of a conscious effort to communicate it to all their stakeholders while others chose not to. Organisations are identified by their many different attributes such as their name, colours, slogans, symbols, employees and so on. Additionally, corporate branding can be described as the expressions and images of an organisation's identity which is unique and distinctive to a certain organisation (Abratt, 2012. p.9).

Cornelissen (2011, p.65) state that a key factor for the strength of an organisation's reputation is the extent to which values that it communicates are authentic as well as distinctive. This research links to the research conducted by Abratt (2012, p.9) as they both stress the importance of a distinctive branding system.

2.4 Colour schemes:

Aslam (2015, p.1) states that colour is considered an attribute of branding which has the ability to influence consumers in their buying behaviour, perceptions and preferences (Aslam, 2015. p.1). It is an essential element to every brand as it makes them unique and distinctive (Aslam, 2015. p.1). Corporate colours are strategically selected as it helps consumers easily differentiate organisations from their competitors (Aslam, 2015. p.1). According to Aslam (2005, p.1), colour is a form of nonverbal communication and so organisations may fail due to their unsuitable choice of corporate colours.

Cultural differences can mean that a certain colour that's happy and uplifting in one country can be depressing in another (Chapman, 2010). This is often the case, as research conducted on colour usually focuses brands may fail as some type of culture class could takes place (Aslam, 2005. p.1). When it comes to colour and human behaviour there are two different views, the first being that there is a strong

relationship between colour and psychological reactions, therefore colour signals are sent directly to the brain which sets off emotional responses. While the other suggests that colour preferences are learned over time by the meanings of different colours, past experiences or relations in language and myths (Aslam, 2005. p.1).

Colour plays a massive role in all aspects of an organisation such as their displays, packaging, products and even consumer perceptions which then leads to their buying behaviour. Culture has a major influence on colour because the same colours may have very different meanings when it comes to different cultures. For example, the colour red is said to be unlucky and negative in Chad and Nigeria but symbolises luck in China and Argentina (Aslam, 2005. p.3). It symbolises ambition and aspiration in India (Aslam, 2005. p.3). Red also represents love in America, China, and Japan (Aslam, 2005. p.3). Therefore brands need to think clearly and strategically before selecting their colours.

According to Moser (2003), there are three factors which influence consumer behaviour when it comes to colour choice. These are the levels of sophistication of colours, distinctiveness within the category and lastly the ability to extract emotional response (Moser, 2003). Moser (2003) states that simple colours are often used as they are strong and vibrant which is why they are used in road signs and by brands such as McDonald's and Spar (Appendix 1). Moser (2003) adds, sophisticated colours symbolise stylishness and intimate communication, and are often used by brands such as Jaguar (Appendix 2). The distinctiveness of colour or rather visual branding allows products to be different as they stand out because they are more eye catching and appealing (Moser, 2003). In addition Moser (2003) adds that some brands use their colours for brand and visual differentiation, such as Engen as they use blue, red and white while Shell uses yellow and red (Appendix 3). Both these companies are in the oil (petrol) industry, yet they are both distinctive and will not be confused by consumers.

 Colour also plays a part in emotional branding and so organisations use this to their full advantage by selecting colours that evoke certain emotions which make consumers feel in a particular way (Aslam, 2005. p.4). This research on colour conducted by Aslam (2005) links to the research mentioned above by Cornelissen (2011, p65) as they both stress the importance of distinctiveness and uniqueness

which creates perceptions and even emotions in the minds of consumers. Therefore this leads to the purchasing behaviour of consumers who will support brands that have some type of positive effect on them which will result in some very successful brands. One such brand that is successful is Coca-Cola because their distinctive red is unique and easily recognised around the world (Appendix 4). They have even gone as far as registering their specific shade of red as their own. They also make use of emotional branding (Aslam, 2005. p.5) to their advantage as they play on the emotions of consumers and other stakeholder groups by their advertising which suggests that sharing a coke is about making memories with family and friends. They state that opening a bottle of Coca-Cola is opening happiness and fun which is why they are a part of many childhoods all over the world (The Coca-Cola Company, 2014).

Abratt (2012) suggests that corporate branding and reputation work together because a strong and successful brand that is communicated effectively will result in a reputation that is admired and supported by consumers and envied by competitors. Both Cornelissen (2011) and Aslam (2005) support the suggestions made by Abratt (2012) as they state how a strong corporate brand can have positive effects on and organisations but if the branding is weak then consumers will not be attracted to it and so they will eventually just fade into the background.

2.5 Slogans:

A well throughout slogan has the ability to capture the essence of a brand and become an important part of the brand equity (Aaker, 1996. p.58). Keller (2013, p.204) adds to this definition by Aaker (1996), by describing slogans as a short phrase that communicates descriptive or persuasive information about a brand. Slogans often appear in advertising as well as the physical packaging and other marketing materials (Keller, 2013. p.204).

Many brands believe that slogans work best when they reflect both the soul of a brand and the reason for being in business (Kiley, 2004). Therefore most brands try to associate themselves with a specific benefit, which over time acts like a stake in the ground, claiming territorial rights over its value proposition, an example of this is 'Volvo is Safety' (Dawar, 2004. p.31). In addition, a slogan is a catchy phrase that a

brand creates in order to tell the world what makes their product or service unique or different (Hamlin, 2015). When a slogan is constructed well, it can become the centre piece of a brand's identity but if it is done poorly, a slogan can send the wrong message and actually drive consumers away (Hamlin, 2015).

There are a variety of different components that make up marketing communications, one such component is known as a slogan. Over the years, slogans have appeared to play a crucial role in contributing to brand building, and are significant in generating and filling the financial performance of a brand (Haigh & Knowles, 2004. p.25). Well crafted and throughout slogans may have the capability to assist a brand in protecting its unique identity by preventing imitation by its competitors (Petty, Leong & Lwin, 2010. p.474)

2.6 Symbols:

In the world of today, there is a rise and even dominance of imagery as this is what the consumer wants (Hoye & Kaiser, 2007. p.51). The term symbol can be define as an action, object or picture that is used instead of words that express or represent a particular idea or quality (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Symbols are extremely important to the effective entrenchment of a brand (Kokemuller, 2015). Promotional symbols often include various characters, images, phrases, words and other visual depictions or even sounds that connect consumers to a particular brand (Kokemuller, 2015).

The potential a symbol has for creating the illusion of memory depends as much on the mental activity of the individual as it does on the quality of the symbol (Hoye & Kaiser, 2007. p.51). The symbol is often only a cue, which can only trigger a fuller image if the person has imagination, information, and an eagerness to revisit past events (Hoye & Kaiser, 2007. p.51).

2.7 Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model:

Keller is an international leader in the study of brands, branding as well as strategic brand management, with research focused on improving marketing strategies through an understanding of consumer behaviour (Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, date unknown). In addition, he has served as a consultant and advisor to marketers for some of the world's most successful brands (Tuck School of Business

at Dartmouth, date unknown). Keller's research appears throughout this particular study as it provides the necessary background research and supports the research study as a whole.

Keller (2002) presents a theoretical model of brand equity which is formed from the individual consumers' perceptions. This model is referred to as Customer-based Brand Equity which can be described as the many different effects of brand knowledge which play a significant role in consumer responses to the marketing of different brands (Keller, 1993). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009) add to this by stating that brand equity can be defined as the brand assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) a product or service.

This specific model illustrates the process that is required for building strong brands (European Institution for Brand Management, 2009). According to Keller (1993), customer-based brand equity takes place when consumers are familiar with a specific brand and therefore symbolises some type of favourable and unique brand association in their minds. Any type of brand will have some type of effect or influence on consumer perceptions; for example consumers may have a type of positive customer-based brand equity therefore they will react more favourably to a certain type of brand over another. Consumers could also have negative perceptions of a brand and so they will be less favourable to a brand (Keller, 1993).

Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model:

https://www.mindtools.com/media/Diagrams/Kellers-Brand-Equity-Model.jpg
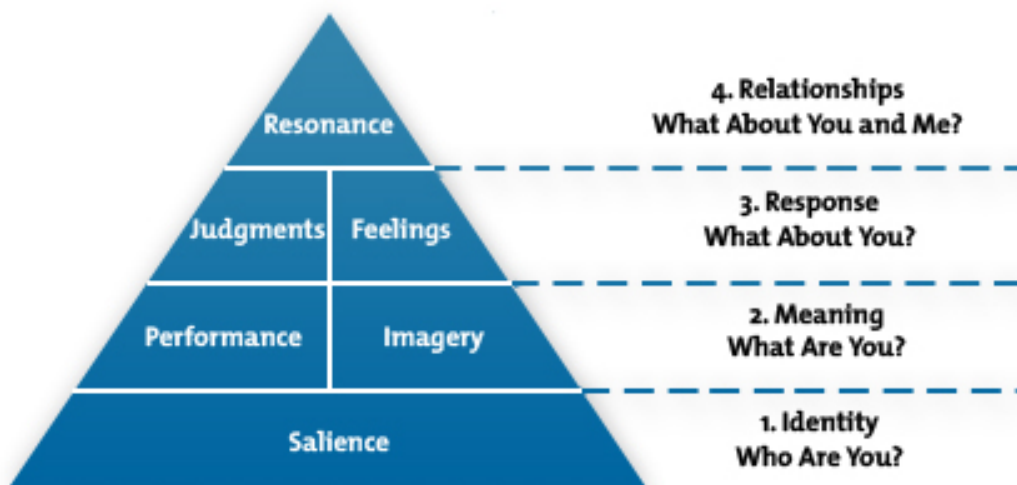
According to Keller (2002), "this model is set in the realm of brand-added value" which he defines as the differential effect that consumers' brand understanding have on their response to the marketing of that particular brand. The concept behind this model is simple because in order to build a strong brand, a brand needs to form how consumers will think and feel about their particular brand as well as its products and/or services (Keller, 2002). Consumers need to have positive perceptions and experience with a brand in order for them to support that particular brand. Consumers are able to show their support of a brand by being loyal customers to that particular brand.

There are four steps in Keller's model (2002) which are set up in a pyramid format that should be taken in a fixed order (European Institution for Brand Management, 2009). It describes the six different dimensions of brand equity, which are brand salience (bottom of pyramid), brand performance, brand imagery, customer judgements, consumer feelings and brand resonance (tip of pyramid).

These six dimensions can be seen as building blocks or even a building ladder that need to be positioned and obtained in order for a brand to reach the top of the pyramid (Keller, 2002). The highest level of brand equity is reached when the top of the pyramid (brand resonance) is attained (European Institution for Brand Management, 2009). According to Keller (2002), brand resonance is achieved when consumers have a high level of awareness and familiarity with a brand and therefore the brand holds strong, favourable, and unique brand associations in their mind. In the long term, this will ensure strong relationships between brands and their customers as well as a successful brand and organisation (Keller, 2002). This particular model reinforces the fact that there are no shortcuts in building a brand (Keller, 2002). In addition this model created by Keller (2002), states that brand knowledge is the key to creating brand equity.

This customer-based brand equity model created by Keller (2002) can easily be applied to every brand in order to develop a strong corporate brand which consumers can identify and favour over other similar brands. If a brand does not align with consumers' expectations, it will not be successful unless they redefine and redevelop their brand identity and corporate identity. So when this model is correctly

applied to an organisation, their brand will align with the expectations of their stakeholders which will eventually result in these stakeholders having positive perceptions of their brand. This will then lead to a successful brand and customers will remain supportive and loyal. This model is particularly useful to new brands as well as brands that are struggling because the model is simple to follow and involves detailed market research which brands may have not considered before. Keller's model (2002) can help brand identify their specific issues or problem area/s as well as addressing these issues and problems so that they do not turn into some type of crisis which may end up being too big to handle.

2.8 Conclusion:

All the research mentioned above relates to this research study as they all link and work together in order to achieve the ultimate goal of how important branding is when it comes to consumers and their buying behaviour. This research has assisted the researcher in understanding the research objectives of which aspect of colour schemes, slogans and symbols attract or deter consumers and why; and how these perceptions potentially influence their buying behaviour or brand perceptions. The research also states that these three elements need to work together and be aligned in order for a brand to be strong and successful.

The literature illustrates how important it is for a brand's corporate branding to be distinctive and unique which will result in it being easily recognised by consumers as it stand out from similar brands and so consumers may then be more likely to purchase that particular organisation's products and or services, which relates to the research proposal as it focuses on consumer buying behaviour. This research proposal stresses the importance of corporate branding as it creates perceptions in the minds of stakeholders and so research should be conducted on the different attributes such as colour because colours have different meanings to different cultures. So when entering a foreign market environment, a brand does not want to suddenly be shunned by certain cultures due to their chosen corporate colours as this could lead to negative publicity for the organisation and ultimately resulting in negative effects with regards to their reputation.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter states the research methodology that has been chosen by the researcher for this particular study. This chapter will describe the research paradigm, the selected population, the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the study, research design, data collection process and analysis method, the ethical considerations and lastly the pilot study.

3.2 Research paradigm:

Interpretivism developed as a result to the shortcomings and limitations of positivism, particularly in its application to the social sciences (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.27). The main idea on which this research paradigm rests is that people are essentially different from any other objectives (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.27). Therefore, we are not able to study human beings in the same way in which we study objects in the natural sciences, because, unlike objects, human beings have the ability to change all the time and their surrounding environment is continuously influencing them in many different ways (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.27). This results in researchers studying and describing meaningful social actions (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.28). Thus, the research paradigm for this particular study conforms to an interpretivism paradigm (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.27). An example here would be that interpretivists would argue that it does not make sense to study individuals in the settings of a laboratory because they do not live in laboratories, and as individuals are constantly influenced by what's happening in their surrounding environment (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.27).

It is common for researchers to spend many hours in direct contact with those individuals being studied as they are then able to experience their daily lives as well as gaining an understanding of what is important and significant to them (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.28). This research proposal is an interpretivistic study because the researcher's aim is to gain understanding from the different perspectives of individuals which have the ability to change over time and are being influenced by

their dynamic environment. The respondents' perceptions need to be explained and their opinions, values and views are important in this research proposal which make research objective.

3.3 Population:

- **Units of analysis:**

The units of analysis for this research proposal would be consumers. In more detail, it would be conducted on 50 South African consumers who are between the ages of 21 and 60 that responded to this study's specific questionnaire (refer to Appendix 5). Two focus groups will also be conducted in which the researcher will gain an in depth understanding of the participants' views and opinions. A wide range of consumers will be considered to evaluate a range of different options and views ensuring an objective study. The data received from these consumers will be exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols.

- **Target population:**

The target population for this research proposal is all South African consumers between the ages of 21 and 60. Gender does not play a role in this particular research study. All the consumers involved should have their own spending power and thus being able to make their own purchasing decisions.

- **Accessible population:**

The accessible population of this research proposal is South African consumers between the ages of 21 and 60 who shop at major super markets in the Durban North area.

3.3.1 Sampling:

- **Non-probability sampling:**

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* (2014, p.136) states that probability sampling refers to every unit in the population having an equal opportunity of being chosen as a sample. Whereas in non-probability sampling every unit does not have an equal opportunity of being selected as part of the sample, this is because it is practically impossible to determine who the whole population is or otherwise when it is difficult to gain access to the whole population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.137).

The researcher of this study does not have the necessary access to a sampling frame which includes the whole population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.137), as well as the necessary resources, such as money and time, available which will result in not every sample having an equal chance at being selected. So that is why non-probability sampling methods are being used in this research proposal. Non-probability sampling will still meet the population characteristics for this study, however the sampling will be selected by the researcher's judgement. The focus of non-probability sampling is more on how many individuals need to be interviewed or how many elements need to be analysed to allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem that is being studied (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.137).

3.3.2 Sampling methods:

There are many different non-probability sampling methods that can be used but for this study. The most suitable methods would be the accidental sampling, purposive sampling and lastly, volunteer sampling.

- **Accidental sampling:**

This type of sampling method would be used as the sample consists of elements that where included only because they happened to be in the right place at the right time, as stated by du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* (2014, p.142). This would include the researcher stopping individuals at major super markets in the Durban North area in order for

them to complete a questionnaire. The individuals need to be willing to complete the questionnaire. The disadvantage of this method is that it is seen as risky because the results obtained from participants cannot be generalised to the rest of the population and so this could result in some important elements being let out (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.142).

This method is suitable because major super markets are always full of individuals and so this makes them easily accessible for this study. There, of course, will be many individuals who will not be willing to complete the questionnaire. But with the researcher's selected shopping day there will be so many other individuals shopping and therefore the researcher will eventually have enough willing participants to complete all the necessary questionnaires.

- **Purposive sampling:**

This method would be used because the researcher has selected elements that need to be included in the sample which are based on a specific set of characteristics (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.142). The researcher of this study has considers the population as well as the research questions and then determines what characteristics from the population are important for the research. The researcher would then have to cautiously select a sample from the population that have these specific characteristics and these elements that do not fit would be disregarded (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.143).

This method of purposeful sampling is suitable for this study as a list of population characteristics have been developed which need to be upheld in order to receive the necessary findings and outcomes that are required. According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* (2014, p.143), the advantage of using this particular sampling method is that the researcher can ensure each element of the sample will assist with the study because each element will fit with the population parameters of the study. If any elements do not fit, the researcher will simply disregard it (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.143).

- **Volunteer sampling method:**

According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et* al (2014, p144), this method of sampling, as the name suggests, is a sample that is put together from individuals who volunteer to

participate in this study. This sampling method would be used as the researcher would be standing in shops asking individuals to volunteer in this study and so individuals are given the option to accept or decline. The disadvantage of this sampling method is that it is not truly reliable as it tends to provide a lot of erroneous results (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.143).

3.3.3 Sample size:

The sample size of this study is 50 consumers because it is a manageable number of participants according to the money, time and resources available to the researcher. Anymore more participants would be costly and more information which may confuse the researcher as there would be too much qualitative information to analysis.

3.4 Validity, reliability and trustworthiness:

- **Validity:**

According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* 2014, p.256), this refers to determining whether the research actually measured what it was meant to measure. In other words, validity can be described as to the degree to which the method or instrument that was chosen actually reflected the reality of the constructs that were being evaluated (du Plooy-Cillers *et al,* 2014. p.256).

There are different types of validity, but first it is important to know the difference between internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to whether the research method or design will answer the research question, so therefore there must be no errors in the design of the research and the research method must be able to help the researcher in answering the research question (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.257). The focus of external validity is on the ability to generalise findings from a particular sample to a broader population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.257). The different types of validity that a researcher may encounter during the research includes content, sampling, face, construct, criterion-related, and instrumental validity.

The researcher will ensure validity by making sure that the research reflects what is actually meant to be measured. So the researcher must make sure that the questions are not off topic and that they are straight to the point so that the participants do not get confused. The types of validity that could apply to this research could be construct and criterion-related validity. Construct validity applies as it asks the question: Does it measure what it is meant too? Criterion-relation validity applies as it asks the question: Does the test accurately predict future behaviour? (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.256).

- **Reliability:**

Reliability is associated with the findings of the research. When it comes to assessing if the research method or instrument is reliable, one will need to ask whether the same results would be produced if the research were to be repeated or retested (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.254).. It would have to be repeated or retested by a different researcher at a different time but using the exact same method or instrument. Therefore, the reliability is about the credibility of the research and so it demands regularity (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.254). However, there could be some sources of error which could affect the data collection and therefore the reliability of the data (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.254). Similar to validity, reliability is most generally used in quantitative research in order to produce measurable, numerical and statistical results (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.253).

The researcher will ensure that the research is reliable by making sure that the research is conducted without any type interference or of influences to the participants while they are completing the questionnaire. Therefore, the results will be purely from the perspectives and opinions of the participants. The researcher has set out to show that the findings are credible. Certain controls such as large sample sizes, reliable research tools and random sampling will be used by the researcher in order to encourage reliability as well as validity (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p. 295).

- **Trustworthiness:**

Qualitative research does not use numbers as evidence, instead they use a different standard to establish the trustworthiness or rather credibility of the research findings.

The main purpose of qualitative research is to encourage in-depth understandings of a certain phenomenon within a certain context, this is not to generalise results but to rather broader population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.258).

The concept of trustworthiness is favoured as it measures validity and reliability within the qualitative study. These two terms are used in a different manner in qualitative research than they are used in quantitative research (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.253). Unlike quantitative research, when it comes to repeating or retesting a qualitative study to get the same results is not possible because the answers from the participants' are not objectively measurable as they are unique answers to each individual's experiences, views and opinions (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.258).

The researcher will ensure that the research is trustworthy by not influencing or changing any of the answers of the questionnaires and the focus group. If this research was conducted again within the same parameters then the results would be similar.

3.5 Research design:

There are three different types of research in which a researcher is able to choose from. There is qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both which is known as mixed methods. The chosen research design for this study is qualitative research. According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* (2014, p.14), the difference between quantitative and qualitative approach refers to how the researcher decides to choose, collect, analyse and understand the information that will serve as evidence in the research proposal. So it will also determine the data collection as well as the analysis methods that are used (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.28).

This study requires qualitative methods, such as questionnaires and focus groups, to understand, explain and describe the behaviour of individuals, themes in their behaviours, attitudes and trends, and relations between their actions (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.14).

Quantitative methods will not be used in this study as it involve numerical or statistical data, which allows the researcher to expect or even have some sort of

control on future outcomes and to generalise from a sample of individuals in a large population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.14).

- **Time dimension:**

The time dimension of this research proposal can be regarded as cross-sectional because it will take less than two years to complete (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.149). This is a manageable time dimension due to the researcher's constraints according to the available money and resources.

- **Deductive line of reasoning:**

This research proposal follows a deductive line of reasoning as it involves reasoning from general assumptions to more specific assumptions (du Plooy *et al*, 2014. p.48). As stated above, the research proposal is an interpretivistic study and so it does not involve generalising results. In addition, the research methodologies used are aware of the specific context and so they are never generalised beyond the context in which the research is conducted (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.29).

3.6 Data collection process:

The best method for the researcher to collect the data would be to develop and create a questionnaire as this will easily assist in answering the main objectives of this study. A questionnaire of about ten questions will be handed out to consumers for them to complete. The use of a questionnaire has been selected by the researcher as the most suitable method of data collection because a questionnaire is able to easily collect large amounts of information from a large amount of individuals in a short amount of time in a cost efficient manner. The results of the questionnaire can easily and quickly be captured and then assessed by the researcher. The results can be analysed in more of an objective manner than others methods of data collection. There will be qualitative questions asked in order to ensure a varsity of answers from the consumers. This will result in a well-rounded study incorporating the views and opinions of the many consumers.

The questionnaire will state the instructions and the questions with space for the participants to fill in their answers. The questionnaire will also have an allocated space for the participants' ages as well as the time frame that it should take to complete it. The researcher's name will also be mentioned so that the participants will know who created the questionnaire and it might make them feel more comfortable as it will come across as more credible and reliable.

The researcher would select a specific day in which to hand out these questionnaires in a major shop in the Durban North area. It will be best for the researcher to select the last Saturday of the month as it is month end and consumers will have money to spend and so the shop will be busy. The researcher has chosen Pick 'n Pay Hypermarket by the sea as this is a major shop in the Durban North area which attracts numerous consumers of different ages, backgrounds and so on. This is a big shop which is always busy with consumers and so there will be many consumers willing to complete the questionnaires.

Permission will be needed in order for the researcher to hand out the questionnaires in Pick 'n Pay and so the researcher will have to discuss this issue with the main manager in order to get the go ahead. The researcher should stay at Pick 'n Pay for about three hours and if the necessary amount of questionnaires are not completed then the researcher will have to come back the next day. It is in the researcher's best interest to hand out more than 50 questionnaires in order for the results not to be skewed as some participants could be dishonest or not complete the questions properly.

The researcher will have to approach the consumers entering and exiting the shop. A brief introduction, will be given by the researcher to the consumers, about this particular research in order for them to get an understanding about the objectives of the research study as well as the benefits. The researcher needs to come across as approachable and trustworthy as this will encourage more individuals to take part in the research. Once the consumers have agreed to complete the questionnaire, the researcher will hand them the questionnaire on a clip board with a pen to fill in their answers. The research will also encourage the consumers to ask any questions if they are concerned or do not understand something. Once they have completed the questionnaire, the researcher will thank them for their time and cooperation.

The researcher has also decided to conduct a focus group for this study. The focus group will allow the participants involved to express their views and opinions in a more relaxed and informal environment. This focus group will include consumers of all different ages in order to get different views and opinions. This type of focus group might reveal better findings than the questionnaires as many individuals find it easier to express themselves with spoken words than written words. The researcher will show the participants certain images that involve colour schemes, slogans and symbols of different brands in order to get their individuals associations, feelings, interpretations, meanings and opinions.

The researcher is asking qualitative questions in order to gain an in depth understanding of the consumers' views and opinions. Certain themes from the focus group will start to emerge which is what the researcher is looking for as they are essential to this study. If the first focus group does not go according to plan, the researcher may decide to conduct another one which will involve a different group of participants. The researcher will also be handing out treats to those who participants involved in order to thank them for their precious time. These treats would include tea or coffee and muffins.

3.7 Data analysis method:

The researcher has chosen to use qualitative research methods as this will result in the best outcome for this particular study. Qualitative questions will dominate the questionnaire as this will ensure a variety of in-depth answers for the study. The data that will be gathered for this study will be conducted in the form of a questionnaire and a focus group. The analysing of the data will include finding the basic characteristics of the data, revealing patterns within the data and identifying relationships between the gathered data and the external parameters (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.206). Interpreting the data includes attributing patterns that emerge within the data to the external parameters (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.206).

Qualitative data often involves a huge amount of data which needs to be analysed, interpreted, presented, and recorded (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.228). This type of data is often very time consuming and in order to perform a deep and close

reading of the data collected and to provide a detailed description of the findings (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014 p.229). Through qualitative analysis and interpretation, the data is altered into findings so that the researcher is completely immersed in the data and identifying and describing the evidence and hidden patters of meaning which surfaces from the data (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.229). This process can be difficult and labour intensive for the researcher because of the nature and goals of the qualitative research process (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.229). De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011, p.397) have explained qualitative data analysis as the method of bring order, organisation and meaning to the accumulation of data.

The researcher has decided that the best qualitative data analysis to use for this research proposal would be content analysis, which is also sometimes referred to as textual analysis. This method is used in order to explore and discover overt and covert themes and patters which are rooted in a particular text (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.234). According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009, p.319), qualitative content analysis concentrates on the unique themes which illustrate the range of meaning of the phenomenon rather than statistics. When conducting qualitative content analysis, the idea here is to group the data together in order to allocate them to broader categories of related meanings, this process of grouping data categories is referred to as coding which makes this process analysis manageable (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.235).

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009, p.309) have developed eight steps in order to assist researchers in the process. These eight steps are 1) prepare the data, 2) define the coding unite to be analysed, 3) develop categories and a coding scheme or theoretical framework, 4) test your coding scheme on a pre-test, 5) code all text, 6) asses your coding consistency, 7) draw conclusions from the coded data and 8) record your methods and findings.

So in the first step, the researcher would have to take the all raw qualitative data, which was collected by the means of a questionnaire, in order to get familiar with the data by reading it and coding it (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p. 236). The second step refers to the necessary coding unit or unit of text that the researcher intends to analyse, so here the researcher would organise the raw data found in the

questionnaires and organise it into manageable amounts of information (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.236). In the third step, the researcher will have to group related coding units together to form categories of codes. Similar answers that would be found in the questionnaires would be grouped together (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.239).

A conceptual frame or framework is often created at this point in order for the researcher to easily identify the different categories and to keep them organised. The forth step entails testing the clarity and consistency of the category definitions on a sample of the data (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.240). Step five involves focusing on the relevant sections (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.240), so the researcher would have to highlight the important sections within the data. It is best for the researcher to write a descriptive paragraph about each category in order to refer to these categories later on. The sixth step involves rechecking the consistency with which the coding was performed (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.242). So the researcher will here will have to thoroughly recheck the data for consistency.

Step seven involves the interpretation of the themes or categories that where identified (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.242), so the different themes that could come up in the questionnaires need to be interpreted. The final step entails the researcher to report on the process that has been used in the coding, analysis and interpretation (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.245). This process requires the researcher to be as truthful as possible in order to not distort the results in anyway. So the researcher will have to create a report about everything that was analysed in the questionnaires in order to complete the research.

3.8 Ethical considerations:

Ethics supply individuals with guidelines in terms of what can be considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.291). It refers to the method, procedures or perspectives that tell individuals how to act and how to analyse difficult problems and issues (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.291). The researcher will need to uphold all ethical principles and professional standards as this is crucial in a responsible manner (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.262). Within research, ethics are important as they could potentially affect the individuals involved

or even distort the results in some way (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.263). It is also important for the participants involved to uphold ethics in order for the results to be reflection of the research. There are various ethical considerations with regards to the research participants as well as to the researcher and these include:

- The participants involved in the research need to be able to trust the researcher and feel safe as they do not want to be misinformed and exploited (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.263). The researcher will ensure this by thoroughly explaining what the purpose of the research is and encouraging the participants to ask questions or state any concerns they might have. The researcher will also have to explain how the participants' details will be kept confidential. There are several important ethical issues that affect the participants, these include avoiding dishonesty and harm, dealing with sensitive information and providing incentives (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.264).

- The broader public want to believe in the importance and credibility of the results and their implications for society (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.263). The researcher will ensure the credibility of the results but not purposely distorting them in any way as the results need to be a true representation of the study. The researcher will also need to explain the outcomes of the findings and the implications on society. The participants will need to make sure that they thoroughly understand what the researcher is saying and if they are unsure then they must ask for assistance.

- Any funding body that decides to invest their money, time, or experiences in supporting the research will expect results that are worth of their investment (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.263). The researcher will need to behave in an ethical manner at all time in order for the results to not be skewed otherwise the funding body would possibly assume that their money has been misspent, and that their reputation will be damaged. The participants here will need to ensure that they answer the questions honestly and to the best of their ability.

- The community who directly benefits from the research will be interested in the research (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.263). The researcher will need to conduct the research in a responsible manner in order for the members of the community to benefit from the research.

- Policy makers may feel they want to use the research results in order to create and improve existing policies. The large number of individuals affected by the policies increases the ethical burden on the researcher as well as the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014. p.263)

- The mass media many want to express newsworthy aspects of the research to their target markets but if these results are distorted due to unethical approaches then a large number of individuals will be misinformed and the consequences of the researcher's unethical behaviour will increase (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.263). The researcher will need to ensure that ethical standards are held at every stage of the research process because if they are not then it could harm the credibility and reputation of the researcher.

- The researcher is also recognised as a stakeholder in the research. The researcher's personal and professional reputation, as well as their current and future employability is linked to their reputation as a researcher (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.263). This proves how important it is for a researcher to be ethical as it can affect their credibility. The researcher will have to be completely honest and passionate about the research. Ways in which the researcher could be unethical include allowing bias to influence results, distorting results, falsifying information, misusing information and using inappropriate research methods (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.269). Researchers who fail to protect the rights of their participants are being unethical as exploiting people in any form is always seen as unethical (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.268).

3.9 Pilot study:

According to Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, Dos Santos, Du Toit, Masenge, Van Aardt and Wagner (2014, p.209), it is advisable to conduct some type of a pilot study or pre-test before administering a self-completed questionnaire to the selected sample. This type of pre-testing is often referred to as a feasible study in order to decide whether or not it is possible and practical and (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al,* 2014. p.257). Pilot studies are often particularly crucial in relation to research (Bryman *et al,* 2011. p.209).

The researcher has conducted a pilot study on the questionnaire attached (appendix 5) and the outcome was feasible. The nine respondents understood the all questions and gave very helpful feedback. The researcher did not have to modify the questionnaire in any way.

3.10 Conclusion:

A detailed discussion and explanation on the research design is clearly indicated and justified the type of study which will be conducted. The presentation of data and findings collection techniques will guarantee a well-planned research study. This particular planning and research processes are to ensure that the research findings represent both reliability and validity.

Chapter 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction:

This particular chapter presents the data findings of this study which have emerged from the research methodology described in the previous chapter. The data that was gathered from the targeted sample will be presented and analysed in order to discover and discuss the key themes that have appeared from the collected data. These key findings have been based on the objectives of the study which have been mentioned earlier. The discussion presented will focus on exploring the role corporate identity plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols in order to help understand the trend and answer the research questions. The first section of this chapter details the data findings while the second half conducts an analysis on these findings.

4.2 Findings:

The term findings can be defined as a conclusion or result which is reached after examination or investigation (Farlex, 2015). In this case, the findings have been collected through the means of a questionnaire and focus groups.

- **Questionnaire:**

A total of 55 questionnaires (as stated earlier, refer to Appendix 5) were completed by willing participants, with a response rate of 100%. A sample size of 50 South African consumers was chosen in order to represent the population, with five extra questionnaires completed in case some were incomplete or misunderstood by the participants.

The researcher decided that the best time to hand out the questionnaires was on the 25th of June 2015, as this was the last Saturday of that particular month which symbolises month end for the majority of consumers. The researcher chose Pick 'n Pay Hypermarket by the sea as this is a major shop in the Durban North area which attracts numerous consumers of different ages, backgrounds and so on. These consumers will also have their own spending power and thus make their own purchase decisions.

The questionnaire really made the participants think and many of them stated that they had actually never thought so intensively about these three elements of brand building. Most of the participants stated that branding was essential for every organisation as it has the power to either make or break an organisation. Some felt that branding is most influential if it is accepted by consumers and different to similar products or services. One consumer stated that branding is all the different elements in which a brand chooses to communicate to the consumer and portrays itself in the market.

One of the first questions in the questionnaire asked the participants which aspect of brand building, with regards to colour schemes, slogans and symbols, do they feel is most important and plays the biggest role in attracting their attention. There was a complete mix in answers and some participants stated that these three aspects need to all work together in order for the brand to be successful.

Some consumers even stated that they would only purchase a product (or service) if it looks "pretty" or "appealing". One particular female participant, age 24, said "I am more attracted to a product that is appealing and has the ability to stand out from the competition". This reinforces how important branding is, as a brand needs to have eye catching elements that have the ability to draw in the consumer and influence them into purchasing that particular brand's product or service.

In regards to how influential colour schemes, slogans, and symbols are, the majority of participants stated that they are influenced by colour and often remember certain brands or products based on their specific chosen colours rather than the actual brand name. "I am more attracted to the colours of a brand than the actual name as I often forget the name", was said by a female participant aged 38. The researcher thought this was very interesting as logically one would think the name is the most important but clearly not anymore.

Some participants said they prefer slogans which are attached to a jingle, as this often gets stuck in one's head and remembered over a period of time. The one example that came up the most was "I'm Loving it" which is the slogan of McDonalds. McDonalds is an example that appeared a lot throughout the questionnaire results, which is not surprising as the researcher feels that they have mastered their branding and built an iconic world famous brand.

Many participants thought that Coca Cola and McDonalds have the best branding system as they have used distinctive colour schemes, slogans and symbols. Many participants who said Coca Cola associated it with the colours of red and white and their outlined bottle symbol. While many participants who said McDonalds associated it with the colours of yellow and red and the golden arches which is their golden 'M' that it particularly unique to the McDonalds brand.

Many participants felt that these two particular brands have the best branding system as they have simple and have distinctive elements which are easily remembered. Consumers do not like brands that are too cluttered as this can often be quite distracting and overwhelming. The researcher thinks this is why consumers prefer these two brands, as these two power houses have strategically chosen simple primary colours which stand out and are easily remembered. Their slogans are easily remembered by the consumer and are often put with a little jingle which, earlier stated, are remembered and get stuck in one's mind. Their chosen symbols are also simple and straight forward which makes them effortlessly remembered by consumers.

There was not a stand out answer in regards to which brand or organisation has the least appealing branding system. The researcher feels this might be due to the participants not remembering the brand as it did not stand out and so the participants most likely forgot those particular unsuccessful brands.

- **Focus groups:**

The researcher then conducted two focus groups in order to gain an in-depth understanding of consumer perceptions. The researcher felt it was best to have two focus groups which were conducted in the exact same manner but with different participants. The first focus group consisted of younger participants while the other consisted of older participants. The researcher thought conducting two focus groups was necessary as it enables participants with a platform to better express themselves than they would be able to with a questionnaire.

The first focus group consisted of seven participants and of course the researcher. All the participants involved in the first group where of the age 39 or younger, most of

them being in their 20s. While the second focus group also consisted of seven willing participants, these individuals fulfilled the older target market as they were the age of 40 or above. The researcher conducted the exact same process for both focus groups and similar key findings arose.

The researcher asked similar questions that appeared in the questionnaire as well as showing visual representations on a tablet in order for the participants to be involved in a more in-depth manner. The researcher showed the participants a variety of visual elements of different brands in order for them to identify which brand they belong to. This allowed the researcher to access their knowledge of visual elements used in brandings. Both focus groups where filled with interesting discussions as the participants were able to easily discuss their personal views and opinions.

The participants involved in the first focus group stated that they felt colour schemes, slogans and symbols are extremely important for every organisation as one or all of these elements are remembered over the brand name. On female participant, age 21, stated that "I often forget brand names, especially if they are complicated, but remember their colours and slogans." This individual is a very young consumer who does not like complicated brand names as they are often forgotten in her busy life but if the other branding elements are simple and sophisticated they will be remembered. She also stated that she is drawn to visual aspects and elements as they easily attract her attention.

A female participant, age 51, stated "I feel that brand names are not important to me as I buy what I like and what attracts my attention". This particular individual was of course part of the second focus group as she is older. The researcher felt this was very interesting as one would assume that older individuals would stick to brand names because they have most likely tried and tested many different brands in their life-time. But clearly no one is attracted to a weak brand identity as they are attracted to something that stands out and is different.

There were a handful of participants who do not care about branding at all. As one 22 year old male participant stated "I do not care about any of these elements and I just buy what I like". There will also be that type of individual who does not seem to care but then again it might just be because that individual has never really thought about it.

This first focus group was able to recognise the majority of the visual elements, of different brands, which were presented by the researcher. From this particular finding, the researcher feels the participants involved in the first focus group are brand aware. The researcher feels this might be because they are constantly using a mixture of different media in their daily lives which exposes them to heaps of different brands that they might not normal come across. The second focus group were able to identify about half of all the brands that where shown in the slide show. The researcher thinks this might be because these participants are older and so they might not have come across many of these brands as well as not being exposed to as many different mediums, as the younger group, which often bombards individuals with numerous brands.

Another key finding that emerged within this first focus group was that men and woman see colour differently. It was found that men just saw a simple colour where as women say a distinct shade of that particular colour. A common example that emerged was that men would just see red whereas the women were able to see a specific shade of red or even a certain shade of orange.

4.3 Analysis:

The term analysis can be described as a detailed systematic examination and evaluation of data, elements or information, by breaking it down into its component parts to uncover their interrelationships (Business Dictionary, 2015). In addition, it can be seen as a careful study of something in order to learn about its parts, what they do and lastly how they are related to each other (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

4.3.1 Objective 1:
Understand which aspect of colour schemes, slogans and symbols attract or deter consumers and why.

There are several overarching themes that have appeared throughout the research findings. One of the most prominent themes that emerged is that brand names are not always as important as we may think because brands are often easier recognised and remembered by their visual elements such as colour, shape, symbols etc. A product's branding is often the first thing that a consumer is exposed too and so it needs to create a long lasting positive impression on them in order to

create positive perceptions and influence their buying behaviour. This links to the statement made by Aslam (2015), where he states that colour is a form of nonverbal communication and so organisations may fail due to their unsuitable choice of corporate colours.

The researcher feels that these three brand building elements are important to the participants involved, as well as other consumers, are often visual creatures that are drawn in and even influenced by something that is appealing and eye catching. Visual elements have the ability to create lasting mental notes within one's mind as well as being able to strengthen a brand's reputation which creates a consistent experience for the consumer. In addition, visual elements are often easier for the consumer to understand and remember which is essential for any brand or organisation.

This specific overarching theme answers the question: How influential are colour schemes, slogans and symbols, in consumer perceptions and behaviour? The researcher feels this is the most interesting theme that has appeared from the research findings as one would normally think that that a brand name is essential but clearly not. Some participants stated that if a brand name is too long or complicated then they don't even remember it, but they are more likely to take notice and remember its visual elements as they might be appealing.

Many of the participants stated that brands with attractive branding will have some type of positive effect on their perceptions of that particular brand. On the other hand, if the branding is weak and confusing this will lead consumers to having negative perceptions on a brand. This key finding links to Keller (1993) customer-based brand equity model where equity takes place when consumers are familiar with a specific brand and therefore symbolises some type of favourable and unique brand association in their minds. In addition, this could lead to the consumer purchasing that particular brand's product or service.

From both focus groups, another key finding that surfaced was that all the participants are very brand wise as they knew most of the brands which were shown in presentation on the tablet. Although the majority of participants knew most of the brands, there were a handful of individuals that where challenged as they did not

know the brands. But this is mainly due to them not coming into contact with those brands and therefore they were unaware of those particular brands.

The next overarching theme that occurred from the findings is that men and women see colour very differently. This is often due to men being less adept at distinguishing among the different shades of colours. While on the other hand, women are extremely skilful when distinguishing among shades of colour. This key finding is essential for brands when considering their specific colour schemes and target audience. So for example, when considering colours for a brand or product which is predominately for a female audience then the colours can specific shades or contrasts of colours. Whereas the colours for a predominately male audience should be more simple and straight forward, such as making use of primary colours. This specific theme is extremely interesting to the researcher as the researcher did not consider this aspect when creating the research objectives and questions.

4.3.2 Objective 2:
Understand how these perceptions potentially influence buying behaviour or brand perceptions.

All these key findings mentioned above answer the last research question: What does this influence tell us about brand building and brand equity? Basically every single key finding stresses the importance of branding for every brand or organisation as this communicates to the consumers and hopefully remembered by creating or contributing in a positive manner to the perceptions of consumers. But on the other hand, weak branding can deter consumers as they can create negative perceptions and therefore will affect the brand's reputation.

The researcher also noticed that Coca Cola and McDonalds have the best branding systems according to the questionnaire. These two examples came up a number of times as participants felt their branding is simple and also effective. This proves that consumers like brands that incorporate simple branding elements as opposed to a brand that is clutter and difficult to understand as this deters the consumer. The participants stated that they like something that is essay to understand and does not require too much thinking as consumers are often very busy in the fast paced environment that we inhabit.

The researcher feels that these examples of Coca Cola and McDonalds where chosen by participants because they have mastered the concept of successful brand building elements but also because they are two of the biggest and most successful brands in the entire world. Both of these brands have brand building elements that are on point and are exactly what attracts consumers. These brands are also constantly evolving with the dynamic business environment and adapting to the specific needs of consumers. Coca Cola's branding elements have slightly changed over time but not dramatically and therefore is one of the most recognised brands on the planet with surveys consistently find that around 94% of the world's population recognises the iconic red-and-white logo (Signs.com, 2015). Logo longevity clearly gives Coca Cola a huge advantage of its competition as they do not have this (Signs.com, 2015).

The majority of people do not like change as they like a type of routine and so in certain cases sticking to a particular logo does not necessarily mean that a brand will feel stale and old (Signs.com, 2015). But instead, it has the ability to help maintain that brand throughout the years and multiple advertising campaigns (Signs.com, 2015).

4.4 Conclusion:

In conclusion, this chapter has presented the findings, which have been obtained from the participants involved in this study, as well as an analysis of these findings. The analysis of the findings revealed that both research objectives that had been set out for this study have been met. The most significant finding from the research revealed that brand names, in the context of corporate identity, are not always as important as we may think. This is because brands are often easier recognised and remembered by their visual elements such as colour, shape, symbols etc.

Chapter 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction:

In this concluding chapter, the key findings are linked to each objective of the study, together with highlighting areas of limitations are summarised. This chapter will also include recommendations that may be undertaken in future studies on this particular research topic, taking into account the findings and limitations of the research study. This particular study was designed around the literature review which was discussed in Chapter 2, with the purpose of exploring the role corporate identity, as a component of brand building, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols.

5.2 Summary of theoretical study:

The theoretical research that was discussed in the literature review chapter served as the basics for the entire research study. It provided the researcher with a well-rounded understanding of the importance of branding building. The literature review also assisted the researcher in explaining the topic to the participants as well as answering any questions or concerns that the participants had while completing the questionnaire or during the focus groups.

5.3 Summary of imperial study:

The researcher handed out 55 questionnaires to willing participants and conducted two focus groups which consisted of seven individuals each. All the questionnaires where completed by the participants. The total number of participants was 69 individuals which resulted in the perfect amount of information for the researcher to handle within the given time frame and budget.

5.4 Attainment of research objective:

The research study was able to achieve and accomplish both its desired research objectives. The researcher was able to reach these objectives as the research was conducted in the best manner possible and everything that the researcher did was inspired and revolved around the specific research objectives and questions.

5.5 Limitations:

There were several limitations that both the researcher and the research where effected by. The two most prominent limitations were, of course, time and budget constraints. These two particular limitations will almost always occur in any research study. The time constraints limited the researcher to only two focus groups and 55 questionnaires completed. Budget constraints restricted the researcher to one particular area or rather demographic, as the researcher did not have the budget to fly all over the country to get to different consumers. If the researcher had more time and a bigger budget then more participants could have been involved which would have given the study a more rounded outcome.

5.6 Recommendations:

If the researcher had to conduct this specific research study again, the researcher would focus on time management as this is what the researcher is not that good with. Time management is an essential element of any research study because without good time management, the study is most likely to fail. The researcher would have also liked to involve more participants as this would have added to the findings and outcomes by providing interesting insights.

5.7 Suggestions for further research:

If future research should be conducted and then the researcher should target a wider range of consumers and conduct more focus groups as valuable information will emerge which will lead to interesting insights. Time is essential in a research study and so the researcher should manage their time wisely. It might even be a good idea if the researcher divided the participants into their LSM (Living Standards Measure) groups in order to see the different outcomes that will occur. It is also advised that the researcher decide on a qualitative reach approach, such as the use of questionnaires and focus groups discussions is also recommended. These types of interactions will provide the researcher with a deeper understanding and therefore greater insights of the respondent's behaviour which might just be missed in a purely quantitative research analysis.

5.8 Conclusion:

This particular research study has revealed several very interesting insights. The most interesting being, that brand names, in the context of corporate identity, are not always as important as we may think. This is due to the fact that brands are often easier recognised and remembered by their visual elements such as colour, shape, symbols etc. Several recommendations as well as suggestions to improve future studies were made which include involving a wider range of consumers, more focus groups and dividing the participants into LSM groups which will add a deeper element to the findings. Lastly, conclusions have been reached and suitable recommendations have been made that should result in positive outcomes.

Appendix 1

McDonalds and Spar Logo

https://twitter.com/McDonaldsCorp

https://twitter.com/SPARInt

Appendix 2

Jaguar logo

https://twitter.com/Jaguar?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

Appendix 3

Engen and Shell logo

http://www.mynewsroom.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/engen.jpg

https://twitter.com/Shell?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5
Eauthor

Appendix 4

Coca-Cola logo

http://core0.staticworld.net/images/article/2015/02/022615blog-coke-logo-
100570201-primary.idge.jpg

Appendix 5

Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explain and evaluate role branding, as a component of corporate identity, plays in creating consumer perceptions, with emphasis on colour schemes, slogans and symbols. Participants will have 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The researcher of the research proposal would like to thank you for your precious time and willingness to complete this questionnaire.

Questions:

1. How important do you think brand building is for an organisation ad why?

2. How influential are colours schemes, slogans and symbols, in attracting or deterring you from a brand and why?

3. Which aspects of branding in terms of colours schemes, slogans and symbols, play the biggest role in attracting your attention and then positively influencing your individual perceptions?

   Colour schemes ☐ Slogans ☐ Symbols ☐

4. In relation to the question above, why do you feel this particular way?

5. In your opinion, which brand or organisation has the best branding system with regards to their chosen colour schemes, slogans and symbols?

6. Why do you feel that particular organisation has the best branding system?

7   In your opinion, which brand or organisation has the least appealing branding system with regards to their chosen colour schemes, slogans and symbols?

8   Why do you feel this?

Thank you again for your precious time and willingness to complete this questionnaire.

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