



AN EXPLORATION OF WOOLWORTHS' ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF MILLENNIALS IN JOHANNESBURG: A QUALITATIVE STUDY.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT
SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
**BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS IN STRATEGIC BRAND
MANAGEMENT**

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Research: RESE8419

WORD COUNT: 13 010

November 2021

DECLARATION

I, Kirsten Blane, student number [REDACTED], hereby declare that the research report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Strategic Brand Management to The Independent Institute of Education, is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

The consolidating power of modern-day consumers, particularly of millennials, is changing the way consumers interact with brands when deciding to purchase a product or service. Hence, it has become increasingly important for businesses to recognise and comprehend all of the factors that have an influence on the way these consumers decide on which brands to engage with and/or purchase from. One of the factors that could potentially influence purchasing behaviour is organisational culture. Organisational culture has largely been viewed as an internal phenomenon, whereby its impact on the attitudes and behaviours of employees influences organisational performance. Yet, the growing demand for business transparency from consumers made it necessary to explore this concept as an influential factor in consumer purchasing decisions. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to investigate millennial consumer's perception of organisational culture by examining the external perception of this phenomenon according to regular consumers of a South African brand, namely Woolworths, and thus determining whether it has an influence on their purchasing decisions. The study specifically aimed to establish whether South African millennials are aware of organisational culture, and if they choose to purchase from brands based on their perception of its organisational culture respectively. Data was collected by means of an online questionnaire, whereby 20 applicable responses were analysed and interpreted. The findings revealed that consumer's perception of organisational culture was significantly associated with their overall satisfaction with the brand, however; findings regarding organisational culture as an immediate influential factor, proved to be unconvincing organisational culture. Nonetheless, the overall assumption was that organisational culture; in light of the attitudes of employees; has a positive impact on the purchasing behaviour of South African millennial consumers.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXTUALISATION

Modern-day consumers make it clear that their preferences for, and relationships with brands and organisations are influenced by a number of factors. Some relate to consumers directly, while others are coordinated by marketers (Al, Rula & Gbadamosi, 2017). Consumers have become more in control of their relationships with brands, and their perceptions of these brands are becoming a major influence in their purchasing decisions (Ordun, 2015). This is especially true for millennial consumers.

Globally, millennial consumers are fast becoming the most powerful group of spenders, and are supposedly shifting the motives for purchase decisions (Netzer, 2020). Hence, millennial consumers are an especially important group of consumers as they are the upcoming generation of spenders, thus they hold a large portion of buying power. There are approximately 14 million millennials living in South Africa, which translates into 27% of the country's total population, and ultimately makes up 27% of South African consumer's buying power (Stats SA, 2021). For that reason, marketers have zoned in on this group of consumers in the hopes of embracing their influence and aligning their marketing efforts to maintain millennial loyalty (Alton, 2017).

Millennial consumers are more aware of company activity, and are subsequently reshaping what is important in organisational culture (Alton, 2017; Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2020). Traditionally, the influence of organisational culture has been interpreted in accordance to the internal boundaries of a business (Doherty & MacIntosh, 2007). However, it has been suggested that the internal activities of a business can in fact have a meaningful influence on the exterior perceptions of the business respectively; specifically, on its company image (Doherty & MacIntosh, 2007). It would seem that the external perception of an organisation's culture is key in shaping a company's image, and ultimately the attitudes and behaviours towards the company from the consumer.

This unfamiliarity, or potentially unknown consideration of organisational culture as an influential factor can be problematic considering the large portion of buying power that millennial consumers hold, as well as the growing importance of understanding the factors

that influence millennial purchase behaviour in their entirety. Moreover, there is a scarcity of academic research that confront the impacts of organisational culture on consumer purchasing behaviour among millennials in South Africa (Taylor, 2016). Such research is important to maximise the effectiveness of marketing efforts targeting this generation. Therefore, this research study intends to explore the degree in which organisational culture impacts the purchasing behaviour of South African millennial consumers.

1.2. RATIONALE

Globally, millennial consumers are fast becoming the most powerful group of spenders, and are supposedly shifting the motives for purchase decisions (Netzer, 2020). Evidence is offered through a study that discovered a general preference of millennials for brands that align with their values, and are thus more likely to buy from brands that have a strong purpose and identity (Kitterman, 2020). According to Yohn (2017), a company culture that is strong and differentiated contributes to the strength and differentiation of a brand, and that an exceptional brand can support and enhance an exceptional culture. However, despite the relationship that millennial consumers believe to exist between themselves and organisational culture, there is limited research that explores this relationship and its influence on millennial purchasing behaviour.

Research concerning organisational culture has focused almost exclusively on the internal perception of its influence, specifically in the context of it being a factor that influences employee satisfaction and performance (Doherty & MacIntosh, 2007). Evidently, organisational culture has been considered an internal phenomenon, impacting the behaviours and attitudes of employees, and ultimately influencing organisational performance (Doherty & MacIntosh, 2007). However, it appears that there are in fact findings that have conceptualised it as a contributing factor to a company's image in the marketplace (Doherty & MacIntosh, 2007).

This suggests the need for a research study that will dig deeper into the possible influences of organisational culture on consumer purchasing behaviour. The rationale for this study is therefore to contribute to the research community by generating new knowledge through addressing the topic from a South African organisational context and viewpoint of millennial consumers.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given that millennials are considered a powerful group of consumers; coupled with the growing importance for businesses to recognise and comprehend all the factors that have an influence on the way consumers decide on which brands to engage with and/or purchase from; the research recognised that one of the factors that could potentially influence purchasing behaviour is organisational culture. However, existing literature and prior research have tended to gravitate their focus towards the relationship between organisational culture and employee behaviour, and seemed to have overlooked the connection between the culture within an organisation and its external image, and to a large extent, between consumer purchasing behaviour (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2020). Consequently, this may be causing unknown, and unnecessary futility of marketing efforts.

1.4. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to investigate millennial consumer's perception of organisational culture by examining consumer's perspective of this phenomenon within a prominent South African brand, namely Woolworths, and determining whether it has an influence on their purchasing decisions. The study specifically aims to establish whether millennials are aware of organisational culture, and if they choose to purchase from Woolworths based on their perception of the brand's organisational culture.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a. Is Woolworths' organisational culture visible to consumers, particularly through the performance of employees?
- b. Do millennial consumers consider Woolworths' organisational culture as one component of the brand's identity that they resonate with?
- c. In what way does millennial consumers' perceptions of Woolworths' organisational culture impact their purchasing behaviour?

1.6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the factors that influence millennial consumers' purchasing behaviour.
2. To investigate whether millennial consumers are aware of and understand the concept of organisational culture.
3. To explore whether millennial consumers are aware of Woolworths' organisational culture.
4. To explore whether millennial consumers are influenced by the presence of Woolworths' organisational culture in their purchasing decisions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The subsequent sections provide the reader with a general understanding of organisational culture, brand identity and perceptions, as well as an in-depth investigation of millennials as consumers. These factors will be explained in relation to Schein's Model of Organisational Culture, as well as Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, as both theories lay an appropriate foundation from which to evaluate a consumer's understanding of organisational culture and how it influences their perceptions of an opinions of a brand or company.

2.2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following definitions are provided to give the reader a better understanding of the key constructs encountered within the study, of which the relevance is evident in the literature review section.

2.2.1. Organisational Culture

Organisational culture shapes the topic of the research, and due to the aim of the study, it is considered the main concept within the research. The impact of organisational culture on purchase behaviour will be measured, and the relationship between organisational culture and millennial consumers, consumer purchase behaviour and consumer brand perceptions will be considered. According to Schein (2004), organisational culture is a term that characterises a system of norms, values and shared basic assumptions that underlie the behaviours of an organisation's members. A more thorough analysis of this concept is provided in the literature review, as it is the underlying theme of the study.

2.2.2. Consumer Purchase Behaviour

A person who recognises a need or desire, follows through with a purchase and then uses the product or service for personal consumption, is referred to as a consumer (Mehta, Saxena & Purohit, 2020). Consumer purchase behaviour is the concept that characterises

the when, why, how and where people buy, or do not buy a product (Carter, Priest & Statt, 2013). Moreover, Carter et al. (2013) describes consumer purchasing behaviour as the psychological and physical activities that people employ when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing products with the intention of satisfying their needs and desires. The study is aimed at measuring the relationship between consumer purchase behaviour and millennial consumers, thus understanding this concept is of great importance.

2.2.3. Millennial Consumers

Attributable to the aim of the research, millennial consumers form the focal point of this study. Millennials, commonly referred to as Generation Y, are young consumers typically born between the early 1980s to the late 1990s (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2020). For the purpose of this study, millennial consumers will refer to those born between 1981 and 1996. Millennials represent an important group of consumers as they hold a significant amount of purchasing power, therefore knowing and understanding their behaviour has become an important issue (Carreón, Lafuente, Moreno & Moreno, 2017). A more detailed description of millennial consumers is provided in the literature review.

2.2.4. Consumer Brand Perceptions

Consumer perceptions of brands, products or services, and company values can have a significant impact on how they interact with a brand and their purchase behaviour (Simmons, 2019). Customer perceptions can be described as the awareness of customers, their impressions and their opinions about a brand (Simmons, 2019). In this study, millennials perception of a brand will be monitored by determining its relationship to an organisation's culture.

2.2.5. Brand Identity

In this study, brand identity is seen as an underlying alliance of organisational culture. The identity of a brand forms the fundamental aspect of consumer recognition and can be a symbol of differentiation from a brand's competitors (Kapferer, 2008). An effective brand identity should be focused on customers, differentiating from competitors and represent what an organisation is capable of (Aakar, 2000).

2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As this study is investigating the impact of organisational culture on the purchasing behaviour of millennials, an in-depth understanding of organisational culture is important. However, in order to recognise its impact on creating perceptions, the researcher needs to consider organisational culture within the identity of the brand as a whole. Accordingly, the study uses Schein's Model of Organisational Culture (1980) as well as Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (1996).

2.3.1. Schein's Model of Organisational Culture

Schein (2004) argues that there is more to an organisation's culture than what is visible. The theory details organisational culture according to three levels, namely; artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, as well as underlying assumptions, all of which are differing levels of importance in shaping the culture of an organisation (Schein, 2004).

The three different levels of culture allow researchers to view organisational culture from three different perspectives (Cotter-Lockard, 2016). Schein (2004) suggests that the term "level" represents the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is observable. The levels span from very tangible, obvious displays of culture that can be seen and felt, to the deeply embedded, instinctive assumptions that form the essence of culture (Schein, 2004). (Refer to Appendix A for a visual depiction of the model). The focus of the study will be on the artifacts of an organisation's culture since it is the most observable to consumers. However, for a fuller understanding, all three levels will be covered briefly.

i. Artifacts

Artifacts lie at the surface of an organisation's culture, and includes all the visible signs of the culture, such as the architecture of its physical environment; its language; its products and technology; its values; its style, as expressed through clothing, manners, emotional displays, and myths and stories rooted in the organisation, as well as its visible rituals and ceremonies etc (Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) makes the point of this level being the easiest to observe, but the most difficult to interpret. Moreover, this implies that observers can describe what they see and feel, but cannot understand the logic that underlies these artifacts, and what they mean in the given group. In relation to the study, the assumption is

that millennial consumers' perception of an organisation's culture is influenced by its artifacts due to it being the most observable, thus requiring less effort. The theory goes on to explain that in order to analyse the reason for certain behaviours, the values that govern this behaviour need to be considered. This moves the understanding to the second level of cultural analysis (Schein, 2004).

ii. *Espoused Beliefs and Values*

Schein (2004) explains this level in terms of the group learning originating from group members adopting the initial beliefs and values that reflect some individual's own assumptions based on what is right or wrong. Consequently, this implies that only when joint action is taken by the group, and the outcome is observed, will the group have a shared social experience and be able to confirm these values (Cotter-Lockard, 2016). Ultimately, the espoused beliefs and values of an organisation signify the strategies, goals and philosophies that form its culture. In relation to the study, it is assumed that this level of organisational culture can be considered as an influence if consumers are willing to further their research into a brand.

iii. *Underlying Assumptions*

The underlying assumptions of a culture are typically unconscious, but essentially determine the way group members think, perceive and feel (Schein, 2004). According to Schein (2004), this level of culture is the ultimate source of values and action as it forms the foundation of the widely shared culture that group members are generally unaware of them. In relation to the study, this is the level of organisational culture will most likely not be understood, and therefore considered by a consumer.

2.3.2. Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism

Kapferer's Brand Identity theory identifies six unique elements that form the overall perception and image of a brand (Kapferer, 2008). These include; physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. (Refer to Appendix B for a visual depiction of the prism). The focus of this study will be on the organisational culture element, since it is important for the researcher to understand its position within a brand's identity as this will aid in determining the degree to which it influences consumers. Additionally, customer self-image and consumer reflection will be focused on as these elements are the components

of how customers form a perception of a brand, and essentially reflect the subjectivity that centres the research. However, in order for a fuller understanding, all six elements are briefly covered.

i. *Physique*

Physique is considered the basis of the brand (Kapferer, 2008). It refers to the physical features that people associate with a brand, and essentially use it to separate a brand from competitors. Connecting physical appearance to the Woolworths brand's black and white colour scheme is what can be called the physique.

ii. *Personality*

This element is concerned with the brand's personality, which essentially forms the traits of the brand in the consumer's eyes (Kapferer, 2008). The personality of the brand is considered a major influential element of the associated perceptions as it is the element that determines the degree to which consumers resonate with the brand, thus interact with it (Lombard, 2018). For instance, Woolworths has maintained a brand personality that is based on the association of competence, sophistication and sincerity (Taylor, 2016).

iii. *Culture*

The cultural element refers to the system of values and basic assumptions that guides the interactions and behaviour of a brand. Kapferer (2008) argues that culture is the direct link between an organisation and a brand. Additionally, this element is considered a powerful emotional connection because people who connect with a brand's culture will engage with the brand (Kapferer, 2008). In relation to the study, this is the brand identity element that will receive the most attention as it is the link to the aim of the study being to determine its impact on purchasing behaviour.

iv. *Relationship*

This element is concerned with the relationship between a brand and its consumers (Kapferer, 2008). A positive relationship between a brand and its customers has the potential to add value to a brand, essentially establishing a positive brand image in the minds of customers. The relationship will be somewhat considered in the study as it has a strong influence over customer loyalty, which evidently has an impact on a customer's purchase intent, thus is applicable to the study.

v. *Reflection*

The reflective element considers how a brand portrays its target audience (Lombard, 2018). Reflection can be understood as a set of stereotypical attributes associated with a brand's target market, and is often portrayed through the brand's communications. In relation to the study, the researcher will consider the degree to which this element influences the purchase intent of millennial consumers.

vi. *Self-Image*

Self-image relates to the way in which a customer considers them self in a brand (Lombard, 2018). Hence, this element can be understood as the internal view customers have of themselves that either connects or separates them from a brand, or even a social group. In relation to this study, the researcher intends to recognise and comprehend the internal views that accompany millennial consumers when considering the Woolworths brand.

By applying Schein's Model of Organisational Culture and Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, it will offer a fuller understanding of the possible motives that influence millennial purchasing behaviour, as well as a foundation for the interpretations to be based off of. Ultimately, these theories will guide, and potentially support, the researcher's assumptions and conceptions throughout the research study.

2.4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following section is provided to facilitate the provision to the reader a view of the existing literature regarding organisational culture and millennial consumers. The researcher has structured the review of literature according to two overarching themes, of which comprise of their respective sub-themes.

2.4.1. Organisational Culture within a Brand

Recent studies into organisational culture and branding have expanded the scope to allow researchers to explore these concepts further (Ghose & Rashid, 2015). Cotter-Lockard (2016) describes culture as contextual and living within us as individuals as well as within groups of people. Similarly, Schein (2004) argues that culture is to a group what personality

is to an individual because the results of behaviour can be seen, but the underlying forces of this behaviour cannot be seen. Moreover, Sparrow (2014) argues that people tend to create a culture around a sense of identity.

i. Organisational Culture and the Creation of Brand Identity

In a recent study by Ghose and Rashid (2015), evidence shows that the integration of organisational culture and brand identity represents a shift from reactive consumption by consumers to proactive consumption. To support this, Chandler and Owen (2002, cited in Ghose & Rashid, 2015) claim that the connection of values, ideas, feelings and emotions creates a clear identity. Creating a suitable identity for a brand provides consumers with a personality they can relate to (Ghose & Rashid, 2015). Yohn (2017) stresses the importance of linking the way an organisation operates internally to how it wishes to be perceived externally. Moreover, the alignment and integration of a brand and its culture increases operational effectiveness, accuracy and quality, which in turn increases an organisation's ability to compete for the loyalty of customers with intangibles that cannot be replicated (Yohn, 2017).

ii. Organisational Culture versus Brand Values

Various literature points out the uncertainty around the distinction between an organisation's culture and its values. Bard (2016) argues that the culture of an organisation is constantly evolving, while the values of an organisation make up the foundation. An organisation's culture is made up of its employees, and therefore is likely to change in accordance to these employees (Bard, 2016). Similarly, Blumberg (2015) states that decision-making is guided by values, as is the feeling what is right and what is important. On the other hand, culture is the collection of organisational practices, systems and interactions that structure the work environment (Blumberg, 2015). However, as evident in the aforementioned literature, for the majority, organisational culture and values are viewed interchangeably, or more specifically complimentary to one another.

iii. Organisational Culture and Customer Satisfaction

A number of academic researchers have studied various elements of organisational culture and customer satisfaction (Metz, Ilies & Nistor, 2020). Currently, customer service is

considered the critical tool for improving customer satisfaction (Metz et al., 2020). Moreover, researchers argue that this is in relation to the shift from emphasising brand creation to the creation of customer relations through effective management and positive experiences (Metz et al., 2020). However, research shows that the link between organisational culture and customer satisfaction ultimately stems from employee satisfaction and performance (Mohammed, 2017). Organisational employees are the main endorsers of an organisation's culture, and therefore are the most affected by it. An unsatisfied employee will perform poorly, which will result in poor customer service and ultimately unsatisfied customers (Metz et al., 2020). Generally, unsatisfactory performance is perceived as poor quality, which in turn impacts the overall performance of an organisation (Mohammed, 2017). Therefore, this means that organisational culture can influence a consumer's perception of an organisation to some extent.

In summary, previous literature indicates that by looking at organisational culture from the viewpoint of brand identity, there is in fact some form of relationship between organisational culture and consumers. The review also points out that organisational culture plays a role in forming perceptions of brands. Essentially, the literature highlights the link between the two theoretical theories that are applied in this study.

2.4.2. Characterising the Millennial Consumer

Demographics alone do not define millennials, but more accurately the combination of their demographic group, life experiences, values and buying behaviour (Ordun, 2015). Ironically, this generational group is categorised as "generation me" or "generation we" (Castellano, Khelladi, Partouche, Sakka & Vessal. 2019). Moreover, Castellano et al. (2019) distinguishes between these two categories as one that is self-centred, materialistic and inconsiderate, whereas the other is empathetic and concerned about the world. However, recent studies have shown that millennials are shifting from materialism and consumption, to building meaningful connections with people through prioritising self-orientated and relational goals (Lamont, 2019, cited in Castellano et al., 2019).

i. Millennial's Relationship with Brands

From a global perspective, Tanner (2010) identifies millennials as the most moral and ethically responsible of the generations, as they are concerned with following the rules and

expect others to do so too. Millennials choose to engage with companies that they regard as socially responsible, technologically skilled and that provide quick and instant services (Genoese, 2016). In alignment, Weyland (2011) discusses how rapidly millennials choose to support or reject a brand based on their understanding of a brand's connection with people and the way employees are treated. Accordingly, Carreón et al. (2017) study of millennial buying behaviour supports this as the researchers found that organisations and brands with strong values, social ethics and non-hierarchical environments tend to be viewed as more attractive by millennials. Moreover, millennial consumers are drawn to brands that offer engaging experiences, whereby brands attempt to build relationships and engage with them on a more personal level (Carreón et al., 2017). Grotts and Johnson (2013, cited in Hassanzadeh & Namdar, 2018) argue that millennial consumers choose certain brands to identify themselves, as well as to convey what they consider important and what they find most valuable in life.

ii. South African Millennial Consumers

Recent studies supported a strong relation between external factors and internal beliefs, attitudes and intentions. A study conducted by Duh and Struwig (2015) describes South African millennials as the “post-apartheid generation”. The study highlights the influence of historical events on this generation's mindset, attitudes, values and aspirations (Duh and Struwig, 2015). Moreover, the researchers argue that the post-apartheid millennials form a powerful group of South African consumers because they are more educated, have increased accessibility to job opportunities, earn a high income, and due to the size of their group, are growing in their buying power (Duh and Struwig, 2015). South African millennials are considered as the generation focused on leaving a lifelong legacy, and aspire to make a positive impact on the community through change (Close, 2015). They are therefore more likely to purchase with brands based on its personal value and its social awareness (Close, 2015). This literature is relevant to the study because the findings are based on the responses of South African millennials, therefore understanding their attributes is of great importance.

Overall, these findings indicate the importance of external factors that influence the purchase behaviour of millennials. The increasing power of millennials emphasises the importance of identifying all of these factors. Various connections to the insights found in the organisational culture literature are evident, illustrating that there is some form of

relationship between the two concepts. The relevance of examining previous literature concerning millennials is to ensure that the researcher has a thorough understanding of what can be expected in the future findings.

The review of previous literature allowed the researcher to discover various themes that have facilitated a better understanding of the key concepts and theories, which will ultimately allow for a comprehensive study into whether organisational culture is an element that South African millennial consumers consider in their purchase decisions. Through integrating prior research, various linkages were found between organisational culture and consumers, which supports the proposed gap in literature on the topic. However, it can be concluded that organisational culture should be viewed from the perspective of brand identity in order for this link to be clear. Furthermore, literature concerning millennials stressed their importance as consumers as they are growing in power and in size. This emphasises the importance of identifying whether this link between organisational culture and consumers can be translated into a factor that affects the purchase behaviour of South African millennial consumers. Thus, it is necessary for further investigation on the topic.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Research methodology relates to the ways in which the research problem is systematically solved or answered. In principle; it refers to the systematic and theoretical procedure that plans the specific techniques utilised to collect and analyse data during a research study (Wilkinson, 2015).

For the purposes of this research study, the researcher has selected to employ a qualitative research methodological orientation, of which refers to non-numerical research that seeks to develop an understanding of specific social phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Thus, a qualitative research orientation is appropriate as the researcher aims to gain an understanding of the phenomena regarding organisational culture and consumer purchasing behaviour.

This chapter contains and defines the components that make up the study's methodology, including the research study's research paradigm, research design and approach, as well as the study's population, sampling, data collection and data analysis methods.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Kuhn (2012) formally defines the term 'paradigm' as an epistemological outlook that determines the type of questions that are asked and then understood, and essentially is what indicates the research approach or design. For this research, an interpretivist paradigm underpins the nature of the study.

Interpretivism represents the view that social reality is ever-evolving and depends on how individuals view reality, which in turn allows the researcher to understand the primary social processes of the phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The main outlook of this paradigm is that people differ from objects, therefore should be studied and understood differently (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Individuals assign meaning and labels to different social phenomena through interacting with each other and with society (Alharthi

& Rehman, 2016). The interpretivist approach to research draws on a range of methods, tools and techniques to capture an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Denizin & Lincoln, 2011, cited in Dean, 2018). Thus, this paradigm is about the subjective experience of individuals, which is generally shaped through interviews, surveys and questionnaires, i.e. qualitative research methods.

This research study aims to measure the extent to which organisational culture influences the purchase intent of millennial consumers, taking into consideration the various factors that impact the consumers' understanding and interpretation of organisational culture as a whole. Thus, an interpretivist approach is adopted as the researcher is required to collect qualitative data, ensuring an in-depth understanding is gained involving the use of questionnaires for subjectivity (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Interpretivist research values the multifaceted understanding of unique realities, and acknowledges that the interpretation of participants, as well as those of the researcher, are what shape the research (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

Ontologically, interpretivists view reality as subjective, compound and socially structured (Dean, 2018). In this study, the socially constructed phenomenon is the relationship between organisational culture and the purchase intent of millennial consumers. An interpretivist approach assists the researcher in understanding whether millennial consumers consider organisational culture as an influence over their purchase intentions, and to generate meaning of this influence.

Epistemologically, for interpretivists, an essential source of gaining knowledge is through viewing what people regard as common sense, as this is ultimately what people are guided by (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Furthermore, facts are seen as indefinite, and are dependent on the context and how information is interpreted by people (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). An interpretivist approach therefore regards the act of buying as only a small part of a consumer's activities, and buying behaviour would need to be interpreted in the sense of a person's entire consumer experience and essentially their entire life experience (Carter et al., 2013). This study aims to understand the behaviour of millennial consumers, and how they interpret organisational culture in the context of their purchase intent. An interpretivist approach will assist the researcher in determining what guides millennials in their purchasing decisions.

Taken as a whole, an interpretivist research approach is appropriate for this study because it assists the researcher in understanding, as well as defining, the meaningful actions and experiences of millennial consumers that influence their perceptions of organisational culture, and ultimately their purchase behaviour thereof.

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The research approach illustrates the plans and procedures that link the phases of the research from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Grover, 2015). Furthermore, the research design aims to provide insight, understanding and guidance for the research problem (Creswell, 2009). Due to the interpretivist nature of this study, a qualitative research approach was employed, and thus a qualitative, exploratory research design. Qualitative research is concerned with gaining profound insights and understandings of human experiences through studying a phenomenon in its natural settings, essentially allowing researchers to examine the subjective meanings and experiences related to a specific phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). This confirms the interpretivist nature of the study, and thus its appropriateness. In principle; a qualitative approach was selected for this study due to the research being focused on examining individual perspectives, as this aided the researcher's investigation of identifying the subjective perceptions of millennial consumers towards organisational culture.

As the title suggests, the nature of the study was exploratory. Exploratory research refers to conducting research with the intention of obtaining new insights, discover new ideas, as well as to enhance the understanding of a particular phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The aim of this research study was to explore the purchasing behaviour of millennial consumers in relation to their perceptions of organisational culture, and thus the study was classified as exploratory research. Moreover, the exploratory design of the research emphasised the interpretivist approach, as it was used to answer questions like "what", "why" and "how" (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). For instance, the researcher intended to understand what were millennial consumer perceptions of organisational culture, why these were their perceptions, and how these perceptions have an impact on their purchase behaviour.

Therefore, a qualitative research approach, with an exploratory research design was appropriate for this study, as it assisted the researcher in answering the research questions through obtaining a more in-depth, and subjective understanding of millennial perceptions, and ultimately in solving the research problem.

3.4. POPULATION

The research population includes the elements sharing common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher and from whom information is required, which is then expressed as a unit of analysis (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The unit of analysis for this study was people, or more specifically, millennials residing in Johannesburg.

The population parameters represent the set of shared characteristics that illustrate the specified criteria of the research study, and ultimately define the study's population (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The population parameters for this study were as follows:

- **Nature:** People – millennial consumers.
- **Size:** All millennials, aged between 25 and 40, residing in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- **Unique characteristics:** Shopped at Woolworths.

3.4.1. Target Population

This study's target population, referring to everyone that fell within the population parameters (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014), was all South African millennial consumers between the ages of 25 and 40, who shop at Woolworths. Millennials were chosen as the target population because they represent significant purchasing power within the South African consumer group, and more importantly, are known as the group of consumers that focus on values associated with products or services (Alton, 2017). However, due to the magnitude of this population, an accessible population was identified.

3.4.2. Accessible Population

The accessible population refers to the section of the population by which the researcher has access (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Therefore, the accessible population of this study

included all regular Woolworths consumers aged between 25 and 40, residing in Johannesburg South Africa. This classified the final group of participants from which data was collected, and essentially represented the sampling frame (Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng-Abayie, 2017).

3.5. SAMPLING

Sampling refers to the method of selecting a portion of the population that coincides with a selected set of specifications to be studied (McCombes, 2019). This study utilised non-probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling is used when the researcher has difficulties in determining and/or accessing the entire population (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Non-probability sampling techniques are often applied in exploratory and qualitative research, where individuals are chosen based on non-random criteria (McCombes, 2019). Therefore, a non-probability sampling approach was appropriate to generate the study's sample, specifically using *convenience sampling* and *snowball sampling*.

3.5.1. Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method that targets individuals of whom the researcher has easy and convenient access to (McCombes, 2019). As a result of the contemporary means and circumstances for interaction; caused by both the pandemic and the digital evolutions that make such a technique simple and appropriate, this sampling method was selected for the study due to its ability to enable the researcher to negotiate access to participants through convenient, and user-friendly platforms, as well its ability to facilitate data collection over a short period of time (McCombes, 2019). The researcher reached out to a range of known individuals who were willing to participate in the study. Subsequently, those individuals who met the population parameters, formed part of the study's sample.

3.5.2. Snowball Sampling

Once the researcher had conveniently sourced an appropriate number of relevant individuals, the researcher made use of snowball sampling in order to gain access to participants of whom the researcher did not have direct contact with, and ultimately to

complete the selection of a suitable sample for the study. Snowball sampling occurs when the sampling process commences with a small population of known individuals which the researcher then expands by asking the initial participants to identify others that meet the sample criteria and are able to participate (Crossman, 2019). Thus, in this study, those participants that were conveniently sourced by the researcher, were asked to suggest other individuals that met the population parameters. Subsequently, the individuals that the researcher deemed suitable, and met the population parameters, formed the remainder of the study's sample.

3.5.3. Sample Size

The qualitative approach to the study limited the researcher to select a small sample size. Hence, the researcher initially decided on 10 – 15 participants. However, the addition of the snowball sampling method allowed the researcher to secure 20 suitable participants that all met the population parameters. Eight participants were selected via the convenience sampling method, whilst the snowball sampling method sourced the remaining twelve participants. This was deemed an appropriate sample size as the purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding of why certain factors, specifically organisational culture, can impact purchasing behaviour, and not necessarily to draw fixed conclusions.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection can be understood as a systematic process of gathering direct knowledge and original insights into the research problem (Bhandari, 2020). Although the primary aim of this research was to assess whether organisational culture has a significant impact on the perceptions of millennial consumers, the researcher also aimed to gather meaningful insights from these consumers to explore how these perceptions influence their purchasing behaviour. Thus, a mixed-methods approach was selected to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher decided on this method because the intention of the study was to explore the reason behind participants' responses, which qualitative methods alone fail to do (Trochim, 2021).

The study made use of an online questionnaire to collect the necessary data. Online questionnaires are a popular instrument for both qualitative and quantitative data collection

as they present a series of different questions, all tailored to obtain the required information from participants via an online platform (Aryal, 2019). An online questionnaire was selected as the data collection instrument for this study due to its many benefits, specifically the convenience it offered both to the researcher and the participants (Sincero, 2020). Evidently, online questionnaires increase response rates, are low in cost and facilitate fast data collection (Sincero, 2020), thus were deemed, and subsequently proved to be an effective, and appropriate instrument for the collection of data in the study.

The questionnaire was formulated in a way that intended to gain insight into the overall perception of organisational culture amongst millennials, and whether or not millennials are influenced by this perception. The online questionnaire made for an easy to understand and timely means of doing so.

The questionnaire (Appendix D) for the study comprised of a series of predefined open-ended and closed-ended questions. Since the study followed an exploratory design, majority of the questionnaire was made up of open-ended and Likert scale questions. The open-ended questions allowed participants to expand on their thoughts and feelings, which provided the researcher with unique information and insights, and essentially offered richer qualitative data. The Likert scale questions offered participants clear and simple to respond questions that had the intention of determining their level agreement or disagreement towards certain statements, which essentially provided the researcher with a stronger understanding of the overall opinions and attitudes towards organisational culture, and towards the Woolworths brand. The closed-ended questions offered the researcher a basic overview of the trends and patterns, as well as facilitated the elimination of incompatible participants that did not meet the sample requirements; whereas the open-ended questions allowed the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of these trends and patterns. Therefore, both open-ended and closed-ended questions were necessary to produce objective and subjective findings, and ultimately aided in the understanding and exploration of the relationship between organisational culture and millennial consumer perceptions.

The online questionnaire was formulated using Google Forms, and comprised of 19 questions in total. The questionnaire was structured according to various themes within the research topic, including demographical questions to ensure that the data collected was derived from compatible responses, thus served as screening questions. The questionnaire was made up of four multiple choice questions, one multiple-choice tick-box question, seven

Likert scales, and seven long answer questions where spaces were provided to allow participants to elaborate on their selected choices in previous questions. Given that the study used a convenience sampling method for the most part, the questionnaire, and its corresponding consent form, was distributed via social media platforms, specifically Facebook and LinkedIn. Distributing the questionnaire via social media allowed for flexibility, as well as granted access to a large pool of potential participants. However, distributing the questionnaire via social media proved to only be successful during the initial stages of the data collection, and the response rate became stagnant. Moreover, many of the responses to the questionnaire emanated from those who did not meet all of the population parameters. Therefore, the inadequate response rate resulted in the researcher having to distribute the questionnaire directly to certain participants via email, in order to collect the necessary data, and to ensure the anticipated number of responses were received.

The questionnaire remained open to participants for a period of four weeks, over which a total of 35 responses were received. However, the demographical questions aided in eliminating the incompatible responses, which resulted in only 20 of the responses meeting with the population parameters, and was therefore the only data considered in the analysis and interpretation.

Overall, the collection of data by means of an online questionnaire aided the researcher in maximising the opportunity to satisfy this study's research problem, questions and objectives.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

This study used a *deductive qualitative thematic analysis* to analyse the data collected.

Data analysis is an important phase in the research process as it allows the researcher to extract insights that support and explain decision-making (Calzon, 2021). Analysing data tends to form the main construct or intention behind a research study as it is at this point in the study that the researcher is able to gain a richer understanding, and clarity on the topic of interest.

Owing to the flexible and exploratory nature of the study, the qualitative data collected was analysed by means of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is concerned with patterns of meaning within a data set, whereby sections of data are grouped together according to their similarities, essentially generating themes (Warren, 2020). This method of analysis is considered useful in studies seeking to understand thoughts, behaviours or experiences across a set of data, thus was deemed an appropriate method of analysis for this study (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Accordingly, by analysing the data thematically, it allowed the researcher to identify whether there were any similarities in the influences of millennial consumer perceptions; why these were influences; and ultimately determined whether organisational culture was one of those influences. Moreover, the use of this method correlated with the underlying interpretivist approach of the study because of its subjective nature.

In addition to the thematic method of analysis, a deductive approach somewhat guided the analysis. Deductive data analysis is concerned with testing an existing theory, in which the researcher moves from general assumptions to more specific conclusions (Streefkerk, 2019). In this study, the scope of the data did not permit a fully deductive approach to the analysis, however, the researcher analysed the data in alignment with the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2, and examined how these frameworks apply to the research findings. For that reason, the researcher followed a deductive qualitative thematic analysis method as it was the most appropriate data analysis method for this study since it allowed the researcher to comprehend and obtain an overview of the patterned meanings and themes within the collected data, and assessed these meanings and themes against applicable theoretical frameworks.

As the study utilised a mixed methods approach in the collection of data, both the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Google Forms offers the benefit of Google Analytics to analyse the quantitative data, thus this tool was exploited.

The approach the researcher took when applying the thematic analysis method to the data involved a six-phase process. Although these phases were sequential, thus built on to preceding phases; the researcher tended to move back and forth between the different phases, making for the analysis to be a recursive process overall (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The process of thematic analysis that guided the researcher has been adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006), and is discussed below:

i. Familiarisation

Throughout the duration of the data collection process, the researcher briefly skimmed through each response to ensure that the data was being collected from suitable participants. However, the researcher initiated the analysis process by becoming fully accustomed with the entirety of the data set. This involved the researcher actively reading through and understanding the collected data. Ensuring that the researcher was familiar proved to be beneficial as it allowed for valuable orientation to the raw data, as well as provided a foundation for the phases of analysis that were to follow.

ii. Generated Initial Codes

Once the researcher was familiar with the data set, initial notes were made on data items that were of potential interest, including connections between data items, as well as any stand-out questions that the researcher considered important. This initiated the coding process where the researcher defined and differentiated elements of raw data in order to it to be assessed in a meaningful way regarding organisational culture and millennial purchasing behaviour. These codes formed the coding framework for the analysis, which was applied to the entire data set through labelling extracts of data with appropriate codes, as well as noting the potential connections or patterns that the researcher supposed would inform the ensuing theme development. Once the researcher had coded the entire data set, the data was then organised according to the respective codes which offered the researcher a summarised overview of the main points and meanings that recurred throughout the data.

iii. Searched for Themes

The coded data extracts were then examined by the researcher in search for themes that were of a broader significance. In doing so, the researcher either combined several codes into single themes or discarded codes that were too vague or irrelevant. The deductive nature of the study was portrayed during this phase of the analysis, whereby the researcher was guided by the theoretical frameworks as well as the codes, to inform the theme development. Moreover, this implies that certain themes were focused more on a particular aspect of the data set. All of the identified themes were recorded, regardless of whether the themes were related to the research question or not.

iv. Reviewed Themes

Once the process of identifying themes had been exhausted, the researcher returned to the data set and compared the generated themes against it. The researcher reviewed these themes in order to ensure that coded data placed within each theme respectively, was an appropriate fit. This involved questioning the commonality and consistency of the data, as well as confirming the distinction of data between the themes. Moreover, the researcher modified several themes in order to better capture the coded data, as well as to maximise the usefulness and accuracy of the themes by either combining, separating or discarding them. Evidently, a final list of themes was produced of which the researcher deemed an accurate outline of the insights discovered from the data set.

v. Defined and Named Themes

Finally, the researcher progressed to defining and narrating each of the themes on the final list, as well as describing how each theme is important to the broader study question. The researcher defined the themes by articulating exactly what each theme represents and how it contributes to the understanding of the data. The naming of the themes involved the researcher producing clear, concise and plausible names for each theme. The researcher then honed in on why and how the coded data within each theme provides unique insights, interacts with other themes, as well as its contribution to the understanding of the greater questions of the study, being whether millennial consumers are influenced by an organisation's culture.

vi. Write Up

The final phase of the thematic analysis method involved writing up the final analysis in which the findings were described and interpreted. This phase of the analysis process is elaborated in the subsequent chapter.

3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS

As qualitative research has become increasingly recognised and valued, particularly in the field of marketing, it is crucial to conduct this research in a precise manner to generate results that have meaning and are worthy (Moules, Norris, Nowell & White, 2017). In qualitative studies, trustworthiness is a measure taken to foster reliability and validity. To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must consider credibility, transferability,

dependability and conformability when analysing data, as these are the identified criteria that ensure the accuracy of qualitative research findings (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). These criteria, along with the measures followed by the researcher to ensure the criteria was adhered to, are provided and discussed below:

i. Credibility:

Credibility establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from original participant data, and whether the findings are an accurate interpretation of the participants' original responses (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Moreover, credibility can be improved through prolonged engagement with participants to understand their perspectives, build trust and essentially test for misinformation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Although the virtual nature of the collection method restricted the researcher from prolonged engagement with participants, the study achieved credibility by asking the same questions to all participants, by confirming that all participants were true representatives of the selected population parameters, and by including only those findings that were plausible.

ii. Transferability

Transferability is concerned with the ability to which the findings of the research can be interpreted in various different settings and understood by multiple individuals (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

The researcher ensured transferability by providing a rich description of the research context and the main assumptions of the study. This will allow for other researchers to apply the research findings to similar situations, and thus, produce similar results. Moreover, this study's findings can be transferred and used to comprehend other contemporary perceptions that influence other behaviours of millennial consumers. Additionally, the findings can be transferred and applied by marketers in the primary stages of formulating more strategically effective marketing plans that target millennial consumers.

iii. Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability and accuracy of the findings. In principle; dependability is concerned with the quality of the integration that takes place between the data collection process, the analysis of data and the inferences generated from the findings (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

To ensure that the research findings were dependable, the researcher ensured that the research process was logical, traceable, and well documented. The researcher examined the analytical process and assessed whether all analytical techniques of the thematic analysis were used accordingly. Overall, dependability was achieved and is evident due to the fact that the selected themes from the analysis, have indeed stemmed from the data, and thus can be justified by the data.

iv. Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the degree in which the collected data supports the researcher's findings and interpretation. Essentially, confirmability establishes whether or not other researchers can confirm the findings of the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, to determine the confirmability of the findings generated from this study, the researcher compared them with the findings from similar previous studies. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved; thus, in this regard, this research study achieved confirmability.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data collected from the online questionnaires. The purpose of this section is to explore the underlying meaning of this research study, its possible importance, as well as the relevance of the results. Hence, this section details the findings that were gathered and analysed from the primary data collected. The findings are discussed within the broader context of the research problem, as well as the literature. Moreover, this section answers the research questions, and addresses the corresponding objectives of the study.

Through the use of an online questionnaire, participants were asked about their knowledge and perceptions of organisational culture in relation to the Woolworths brand. The researcher employed a deductive thematic analysis process, whereby the factors that influence the purchasing decisions of these millennial respondents, and the reasons thereof, were revealed. Moreover, the deductive thematic analysis approach allowed the researcher to apply predetermined or anticipated codes to the collected data, of which were created from concepts and themes drawn from the literature (Bingham, 2021). The analysis revealed four predominant themes, namely, *understanding the consumer in relation to their purchasing behaviour; Woolworths' perceptions; organisational culture*, as well as the *perception of Woolworths' organisational culture*. A table summary of the emerged themes is presented in *Table 1*. The themes are presented with the affiliated questionnaire questions, as well as the corresponding objective(s).

Table 1: Summary of themes, relating questions and objectives.

THEME	QUESTION	RESEARCH OBJECTIVE
Theme 1: Understanding the Johannesburg Millennial Consumer	Q14. & Q15 Factors that are important when deciding on which brand to purchase.	Research Objective 1: <i>To explore factors that influence millennial consumer's purchasing behaviour.</i>
	Q16. & Q17. Likelihood of researching a brand before purchasing from it.	
Theme 2: Woolworths' Perceptions	Q6. & Q7. Would you personally consider Woolworths a favoured brand?	Research Objective 3: <i>To explore whether millennial consumers are aware of Woolworths' organisational culture.</i>
	Q8. When you think of Woolworths, what first comes to mind?	
Theme 3: Organisational Culture	Q9. How familiar are you with the concept of organisational culture?	Research Objective 2: <i>To investigate whether millennial consumers are aware of and understand the concept of organisational culture.</i>
	Q10. What is your definition of organisational culture?	
	Q18. Likelihood of purchasing from a brand that is known to have an unfavourable organisational culture.	
Theme 4: Perception of Woolworths' Organisational Culture	Q11. Would you say that Woolworths' organisational culture is visible to you as a consumer?	Research Objective 3: <i>To explore whether millennial consumers are aware of Woolworths' organisational culture.</i> Research Objective 4: <i>To explore whether millennial consumers are influenced by the presence of Woolworths' organisational culture in their purchasing decisions.</i>
	Q12. How would you describe Woolworths' organisational culture as reflected in its brand?	
	Q13. Statements agreeing or disagreeing with key organisational culture indicators.	

4.2. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The findings for this study were gathered from a total of 20 suitable respondents, all of which resided in Johannesburg and were aged between 26 and 40 years old, majority being female. Almost all of the respondents were frequent shoppers at Woolworths, and therefore provided adequate support for the remainder of the study. Figure 1 illustrates the demographical findings of the millennial consumers identified in the analysis.

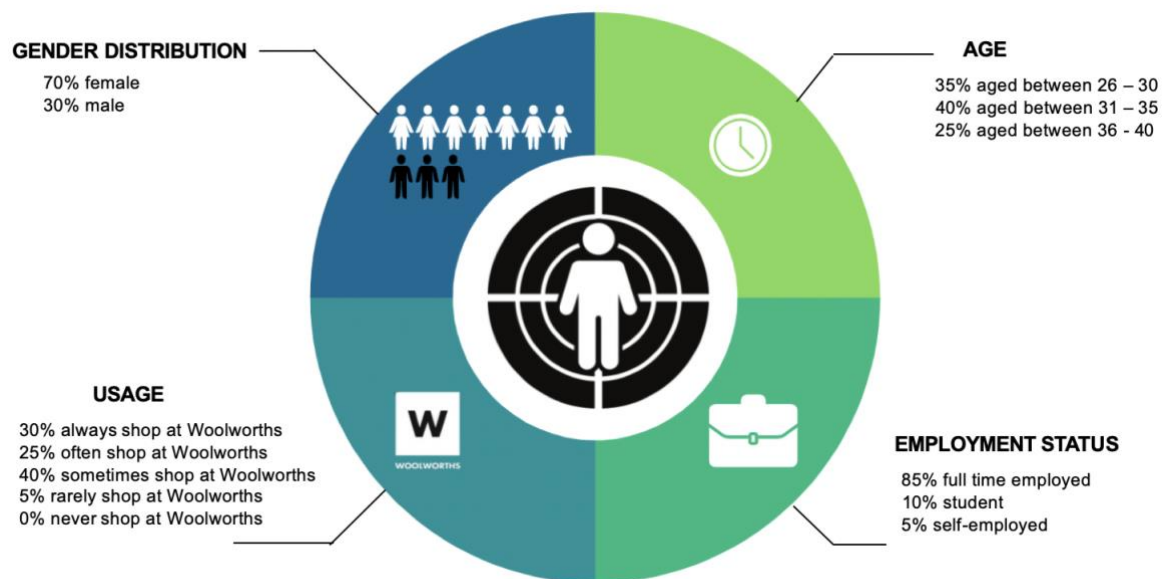


FIGURE 1: *Profile of Respondents*

4.3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In line with the aforementioned profile of the respondents, tables and figures have been used to illustrate the information captured from these respondents that was both relevant and applicable to the study.

RO1: To explore factors that influence millennial consumer's purchasing behaviour.

Q: Which of the following factors are important to you when making the decision on which brand to purchase and why?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	QUOTED EXPLANATION FOR RESPONSE
Familiarity with the brand	30%	"makes decisions easier because I know what to expect" "I prefer purchasing from a brand that I know is of good quality" "I know what I am getting"
Price	65%	"...it indicates quality" "it's all about quality and value for money"
Convenience	70%	"...makes the purchasing process easier" "I would like to go to one shop and buy everything" "I want my shopping to be quick and easy"
Brand values	25%	"experience is more important than price in my view" "it reflects me as a person"
Loyalty	10%	"I tend to be loyal to brands that I have a good experience with" "it reflects me as a person"
Brand reputation	30%	"a trusted brand is always going to be a winner"

Table 2: Responses to questions 14 and 15.

In terms of purchasing behaviour, the findings show that the factor considered the most important when deciding what brand to purchase from is "convenience", closely followed by "price". Many of the respondents claimed that time was an issue for them, thus prefer brands that are convenient in that they offer a quick and easy shopping experience. Although "quality" was excluded from the list of factors presented to respondents, the findings indicate that respondents believe that "price" and "quality" are equally influential of one another. This suggests that the price factor is considered in a broader sense than merely affordability, and therefore is a factor that influences the purchasing behaviour of millennial consumers. Additionally, the findings show that brand reputation and familiarity are also top factors, with 30% of respondents indicating that both these factors are considered when purchasing from

a brand. A mutual response from respondents was that these factors insinuate a sense of trust and reliability, where the level of quality and/or satisfaction is anticipated.

Q: How likely are you to do research on a brand before purchasing from it?

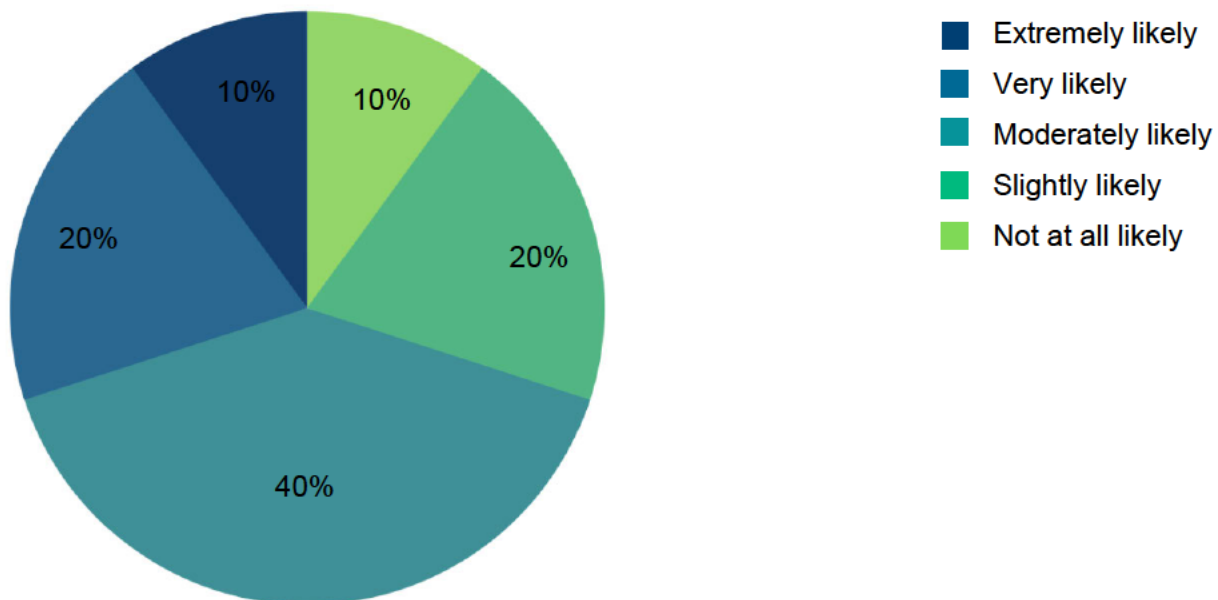


FIGURE 2: *Likelihood of researching a brand before purchasing from it.*

Q: Which aspects of the brand would you research?

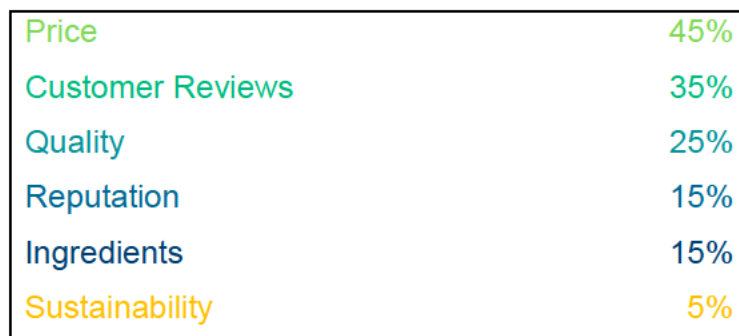


FIGURE 3: *Overview of brand aspects that would be researched.*

In keeping with the factors that influence purchasing decisions, majority of respondents indicated that they are somewhat likely to research a brand before purchasing from it. Figure 2 illustrates the aspects of a brand that respondents would research. Notably, there is no indication of respondents researching aspects of a brand's organisational culture (i.e. employee satisfaction, brand values, hierarchical structure, strategy etc.) This suggests that brand knowledge and associations from an external perspective, to some extent,

subconsciously influence the purchasing decisions of millennial consumers, and thus have a noticeable and more dominant effect on their purchasing behaviour.

RO2: To investigate whether millennial consumers are aware of and understand the concept of organisational culture.

Q: How familiar are you with the concept of organisational culture? How would you define it?

	FREQUENCY	QUOTED DEFINITION FOR RESPONSE
EXTREMELY FAMILIAR	5%	"the shared norms and beliefs within an organisation amongst employees"
VERY FAMILIAR	45%	"social beliefs and norms shared by employees" "culture within an organisation that is often defined by the organisation's missions and values" "it's a collection of values, expectations and practices that guide and inform the actions of all team members" "the belief system of an organisation" "defines the correct way of behaviour within an organisation... and reinforced in various ways thereby shaping employee behaviour and perceptions" "...a great culture usually leads to improved performance and the success of the company"
MODERATELY FAMILIAR	30%	"creating a good culture amongst staff" "how an organisation treats its employees, responds to certain situations" "the culture between employees within an organisation"
SLIGHTLY FAMILIAR	20%	"work attitudes and beliefs" "collection of values, expectations and practices that guide and inform the actions of all team members" "what an organisation's values, missions and ethos are"
NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR	0%	

Table 3: Responses to questions 9 and 10.

Q: How likely are you to purchase from a brand that is known to have an unfavourable organisational culture?

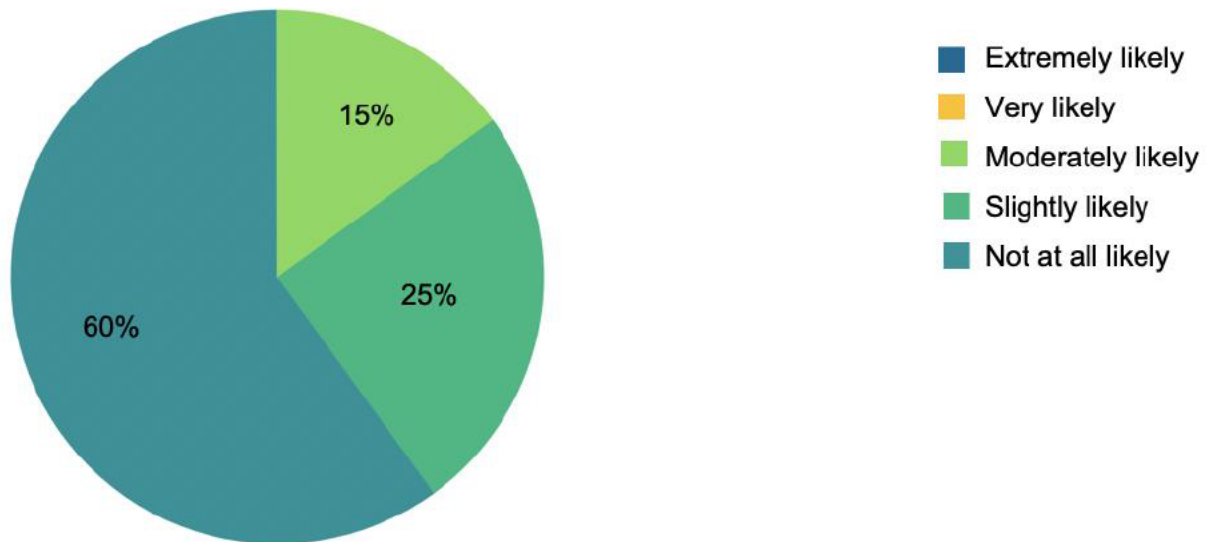


FIGURE 4: *Likeliness of purchasing from a brand known to have an unfavourable culture.*

The questions that aimed to uncover the level and extent of familiarity and knowledge that millennial consumers hold about organisational culture, revealed an equally balanced response indicating higher levels of familiarity (50%) to moderate levels of familiarity (50%). It can be assumed that this aligns to the fact that many of the respondents were employed full time, whereby they have personal experience of their company's organisational culture respectively. Furthermore, the majority of respondents' subjective definitions of organisational culture show an accurate general understanding of the concept. Selected definitions are presented in Table 3. Additionally, the findings for the relationship between the understanding of organisational culture and its external influence correlate, whereby 60% of respondents claimed that they are not at all likely to purchase from a brand that is known to have an unfavourable organisational culture, with 25% indicating they are slightly likely and 15% claiming to be somewhat likely. This indicates that millennial consumers understand organisational culture, and view it, to some degree, in the broader context of their purchasing decisions.

RO3: To explore whether millennial consumers are aware of Woolworths' organisational culture.

Q: Would you personally consider Woolworths as a favoured brand? Why?

	FREQUENCY	QUOTED EXPLANATION FOR RESPONSE
STRONGLY AGREE	45%	"...high quality food, fresh & a lot of variety" "stock is always of excellent quality and they offer a huge variety of items" "they have the best quality food" "products are what they say they are, great quality and makes my life easier" "it's a high-quality brand that focuses on sustainability" "it has a good reputation, sells quality products with mostly appropriate prices"
AGREE	25%	"A lot of people in my social group shop at Woolworths..." "...tend not to focus too much on quantity but rather quality" "their beliefs manifest in everything they are" "a lot of people in my social group prefer the brand"
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	25%	"the pricing is too high, however the convenience factor is there" "quality of food is great but can be pricey" "...wouldn't necessarily consider it superior to other stores" "I go to Woolworths only for specific products" "... should I see something I like at another store I won't think twice to go and shop there as well" "products sometimes very expensive"
DISAGREE	5%	"I cannot always find everything that I'm looking for at Woolworths"
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0%	

Table 4: Responses to questions 6 and 7.

Q: When you think of the Woolworths brand, what first comes to mind?

Quality	60%
Expensive	30%
Convenient	10%
Sustainability	5%

FIGURE 5: *Words associated with the Woolworths brand*

Overall, respondents revealed a positive perception of Woolworths, with 70% agreeing that Woolworths is a favoured brand, and from that, almost 50% strongly agreeing. A general reasoning for this agreement is due to the quality, variety and availability of Woolworths products. This finding indicates that, for the majority, millennial consumers tend to base their perceptions of the brand as a whole, on the products it offers, thus the tangible aspects. Yet, one respondent expressed that they strongly consider Woolworths a favoured brand because “the brand’s beliefs manifest in everything that it is”, therefore implying that their perception is more orientated around the brand internal aspects. However, roughly one quarter of respondents neither agreed or disagreed with Woolworths being a favoured brand, and one respondent claimed to disagree. Reasonings relate to respondents claiming to not being loyal Woolworths customers, and tend to only engage with the brand when it is a convenient option. This finding follows on from the purchasing behaviours explored previously. Figure 5 exhibits what first comes to mind when respondents think of the Woolworths brand. Evidently, the most common response was “quality”, followed by “expensive”, both being external factors of the brand.

As per Table 1, the following questions met both the third and fourth research objectives.

RO3: To explore whether millennial consumers are aware of Woolworths' organisational culture.

RO4: To explore whether millennial consumers are influenced by the presence of Woolworths' organisational culture in their purchasing decisions.

Q: Would you say that Woolworths' organisational culture is visible to you as a customer? Why? How would you describe Woolworths' organisational culture as reflected in its brand?

	FREQUENCY	QUOTED EXPLANATION FOR RESPONSE
STRONGLY AGREE	20%	"they care about people and the environment" "they only sell the best quality and will do the most to provide great service" "the brand is exactly as they say they are"
AGREE	55%	"employees seem to be helpful and happy" "Woolworths is very unified and the level of service and friendliness is the same wherever you go" "I believe they are the kind of company that sees people as people and not as consumers" "they are organised, efficient and helpful. I often find myself being helped by managers for no other reason than, they care" "we as customers get to see their emphasis on how well they treat their customers in various situations" "when I think Woolworths, all I see is good quality in everything they do"
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	25%	"not too friendly, very professional" "pride themselves on delivering the best service, but unsure on behind the scenes culture" "don't believe you really see [its organisational culture]"
DISAGREE	0%	

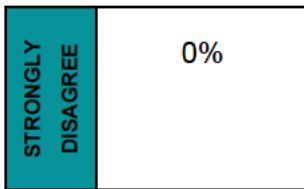


Table 5: Responses to questions 11 and 12.

Majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that Woolworths' organisational culture is visible to them as consumers. Interestingly, a number of respondents are of the opinion that the brand's organisational culture is reflected through the quality of its products. However, the general reasoning for believing that Woolworths' organisational culture is visible is based on their positive experiences with Woolworths' employees. Respondents claim to observe the brand's organisational culture from an external perspective, through its sense of non-hierarchical environment, employee attitudes and friendliness, and how this is then filtered into their experience of the brand's quality of service. This indicates that perceived employee satisfaction indeed has a noticeable effect on how millennial consumers view certain purchasing factors; such as their desire to purchase as well as their experience with the brand, which ultimately has informed their perception of the brand's organisational culture. Additionally, the findings indicate that millennials consider Woolworths as a brand that has a genuine interest in them as consumers, of which they believe reflects the brand's organisational culture.

Q: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

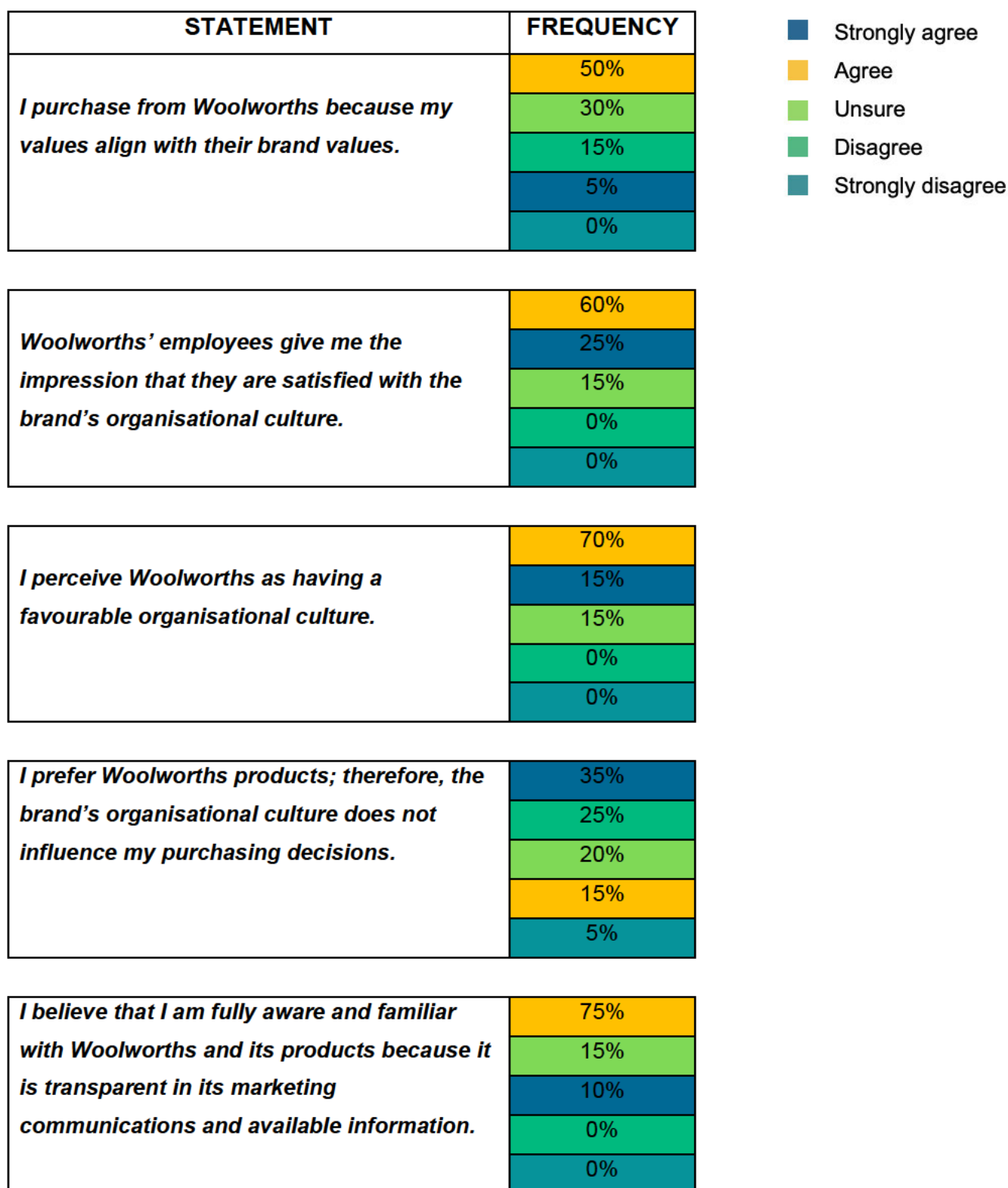


FIGURE 6: Statements agreeing or disagreeing with key organisational culture indicators.

Evidently, the findings from this question show that almost every respondent perceives Woolworths as having a favourable organisational culture. However, the subjective responses reveal a level of bias towards those who highly regard the Woolworths brand and their overall positive perceptions of the brand's organisational culture.

Yet, and perhaps the most significant finding was that, half the respondents revealed that their preference for Woolworths' products overrides the influence of their perception of the brand's organisational culture in their purchasing decisions, whereby the largest response was from those that felt strongly towards this. Although this implies that millennial consumers do not deliberately consider a brand's internal culture, majority said that they purchase from Woolworths because they believe their values align with the brand's values. This suggests that millennial consumers do not fully comprehend organisational culture as a concept, but rather as a distant internal aspect of the brand, that they are not influenced by in their purchasing behaviour.

4.4. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This study attempted to shed light on the ways in which South African millennial consumers' perceptions of a brand's organisational culture impacts their purchasing behaviour, and the extent to which analysis of their understanding of organisational culture might indicate conceptual linkages between the theoretical perspective of organisational culture and brand identity theory.

The growing purchasing power of millennial consumers and their pressure on brands to connect and engage with them on a deeper level served as the basis for exploring the concept of organisational culture as an influential factor in purchasing decisions, comparable to what Doherty and MacIntosh (2007) found in their study of whether the internal activities of an organisation influence its exterior perceptions. They argued that a brand's image is in fact influenced by its internal activities. Similar to Grotts and Johnson's (2013) argument about how millennial consumers tend to identify themselves through the brand's they choose, it was found that majority of millennials claim that they would not purchase from a brand that is known to have unfavourable organisational culture, presumably as one would not want to identify themselves with anything unfavourable, and thus would be regarded as an influential factor in their purchasing decisions. Given this, the finding also affirms the

connection between culture and self-image in the context of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (2008).

Moreover, it was found that majority of millennial consumers believe that organisational culture is reflected and influenced by the employees of an organisation, thus affirming previous literature (Mohammed, 2017) suggesting that organisational employees are the main endorsers of an organisation's culture. Similar to what Mohammed (2017) and Metz et al (2020) suggest, it would seem that millennial's level of customer satisfaction is strongly coaxed by the quality of service they receive, of which they believe stems from Woolworths' employees' satisfaction, and thus serves as the basis in their perception of the brand's organisational culture. This also indicates that millennials indeed consider organisational culture at Schein's (2004) artifact level, whereby their perceptions are based on their brand experiences at a surface level rather than looking at a deeper level, which would have been implied through prior research of the brand.

In addition, it was found that millennial consumers are more influenced by the preference for a brand's products, over their perceptions of its organisational culture. Given this, Castelleno et al. (2019) categorisation of millennials as being materialistic and inconsiderate holds somewhat true. Yet, this also counters Weyland's (2011) claim that millennial's decision of whether to support or reject a brand is strongly influenced by the way employees are treated.

It was found that by exploring the factors that influence millennial consumers' purchasing behaviour, and investigating their awareness and understanding of organisational culture, it set the basis upon which insight was gathered when exploring whether millennial consumers are aware and are influenced by Woolworths' organisational culture in their purchasing decisions. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the findings answer the primary research question of this study, in that they reveal the ways in which millennial consumers' perceptions of Woolworths' organisational culture impact their purchasing behaviour.

Although millennial consumers claim to be influenced by organisational culture to some degree, overall the study revealed that organisational culture has a weak impact on millennials' purchase intention. This potentially suggests that antecedents of organisational culture in its entirety, need to be more prominent, and need to demonstrate a clear relation

to the brand's identity, in order for it to have more of an impact on the consumer's purchasing behaviour.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. CONCLUDING ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Is Woolworths' organisational culture visible to consumers, particularly through the performance of employees?

In general, the responses indicate that millennials are of the impression that Woolworths' organisational culture is indeed visible to them as consumers; many of whom referred specifically to the performance of Woolworths' employees as their reasoning. This group of consumers consider the friendliness and helpfulness of these employees as a reflection of Woolworths' internal organisational culture, and this has further translated into their positive perceptions and satisfaction for the brand overall. Therefore, the fundamental assumption that was made, was that the favourable, if not satisfactory, interactions that consumers have had with Woolworths employees, has given them the impression that Woolworths employees are satisfied with their working environment, and essentially disclosing the brand's favourable organisational culture.

Do millennial consumers consider Woolworths' organisational culture as one component of the brand's identity that they resonate with?

In principle, the findings revealed no clear indication that millennial consumers consider Woolworths' organisational culture as one component of the brand's identity that they resonate with. Although organisational culture plays a role in Woolworths' brand identity in its entirety, millennial consumers seemingly resonate more with the consumer reflection and physique components from Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (2008). Thus, the researcher deduced that millennial consumers find quality and status as their most resonating components from Woolworths' brand identity, and are largely what their overall perceptions of the brand stem from.

In what way does millennial consumers' perceptions of Woolworths' organisational culture impact their purchasing behaviour?

Predominantly; millennial consumers' perceptions of the Woolworths brand in general, are positive; however, as mentioned previously, these positive perceptions of the brand are very much linked to the quality of Woolworths products and not necessarily to its organisational culture. The researcher has thus deduced that quality is likely the main contributor in which positively influences millennials purchasing behaviour towards the Woolworths brand per se. Although there is no direct link between the concept of organisational culture and millennial purchasing behaviour, the findings indicate that millennials consider Woolworths' organisational culture in relation to the brand's employees, of which satisfies their overall image of the brand, and subsequently has a positive impact on their purchasing behaviour. The researcher can thus assume that, by virtue of the findings for this research study, South African millennial consumers' perceptions of Woolworths' organisational culture are positive, which subsequently has a positive impact on their purchasing behaviour.

5.2. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings generated by this research study will broaden the existing body of knowledge by offering primary evidence regarding the influence that organisational culture has on the purchasing behaviour of South African millennial consumers. This evidence will afford companies, and even brand managers, with a better understanding of the importance of organisational culture from an external perspective and how it can impact the purchasing decisions of millennial consumers.

5.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The nature of qualitative research studies makes it crucial to formulate and adhere to certain ethical considerations in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings produced, particularly the interaction between the researcher and participants, (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

This research study only commenced once the researcher had obtained ethical clearance (Appendix E). The following ethical considerations were considered throughout the duration of study, both from the participants perspective, as well as the researcher's perspective:

5.3.1. Participants

i. Informed Consent

The researcher attained informed consent (Appendix C) from participants via a consent form and an information document. The information document was drafted to fully notify the participant of the study's contents to ensure that there was an understanding of what was required during their participation.

ii. Anonymity and Confidentiality

All participant information and data were regarded as anonymous and confidential. Only the researcher had access to participant responses, of which this assurance was stipulated in the information section of the questionnaire that was presented prior to the questions.

iii. Deception

The researcher ensured that all communication and measures of the study were truthfully revealed to participants via the information section, and can assure that the participants informed immediately of any necessary alterations.

5.3.2. Researcher

i. Falsifying Information

The researcher avoided falsify information in order to suit personal preferences, or obtain desired outcomes. Data was collected and analysed as objectively and accurately as possible.

ii. Distortion of Results

All data was analysed and interpreted as it was presented. The researcher ensured that all findings were considered and examined as equal in significance, thus ensuring the prohibition of distorted results in the study.

iii. Misuse of Information

All data collected from participants will be used for this research study only. If the researcher wishes to use the information for other purposes, permission will be obtained beforehand.

5.4. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Research limitations refer to the factors and/or challenges that occurred and were beyond the control of the researcher (Enslin, 2014). Alternatively, research delimitations refer to the factors and/or challenges that were sequential to the researcher's specific and definite choices made throughout the research process (Enslin, 2014). Both the research limitations and delimitations are important, as they aid in contextualising the research findings. The researcher has identified the limitations and delimitations for this research study as the following:

- **Time Constraint:** The completion of this research study was limited to a period of eight months, of which only one month was allocated to the collection of primary data. The researcher was thus limited in the amount of information to collect within this given period of time.
- **Unrepresentative Sample:** Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the sample size was limited to a relatively small amount, and thus impacted the study's capacity to obtain generalisable findings.
- **Single Geographic Location:** A singular geographic location – Johannesburg – was evaluated in this research study. Thus, results cannot be generalised as applicable to and representative of all millennial consumers in South Africa.
- **Data Collection Instrument:** The use of a questionnaire delimited the range of responses collected due to participants' opinions being confined by the listed questions. Moreover, the questionnaire put the study at risk of incomplete and/or implausible information from participants, essentially limited the accuracy of the findings.
- **The primary focus of this study was delimited to one organisation only.** Therefore, the research findings cannot be generalised to be representative of all brand's organisational culture perceptions.

- The study's population was delimited to Johannesburg millennials aged between 25 and 40, whereby specific characteristics of these individuals restricted the scope of the research study.

5.5. FINAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to explore the perceptions of millennial consumers' regarding the concept of organisational culture, and to determine whether or not this perception influences their decision to purchase or not to purchase from a brand. Evidently, the contents of the preceding sections have fulfilled this purpose, and the researcher can justifiably conclude that the perceptions of organisational culture held by millennials does not have a noticeable influence on their purchasing decisions as a factor by itself; but can be an influential factor in the broader sense of a brand's overall image. Hence, it is recommended that future quantitative research is conducted, comprising of a larger sample size and examining other organisations, to further measure the influence that the perceptions of organisational culture has on the purchasing behaviour of millennial consumers in South Africa.

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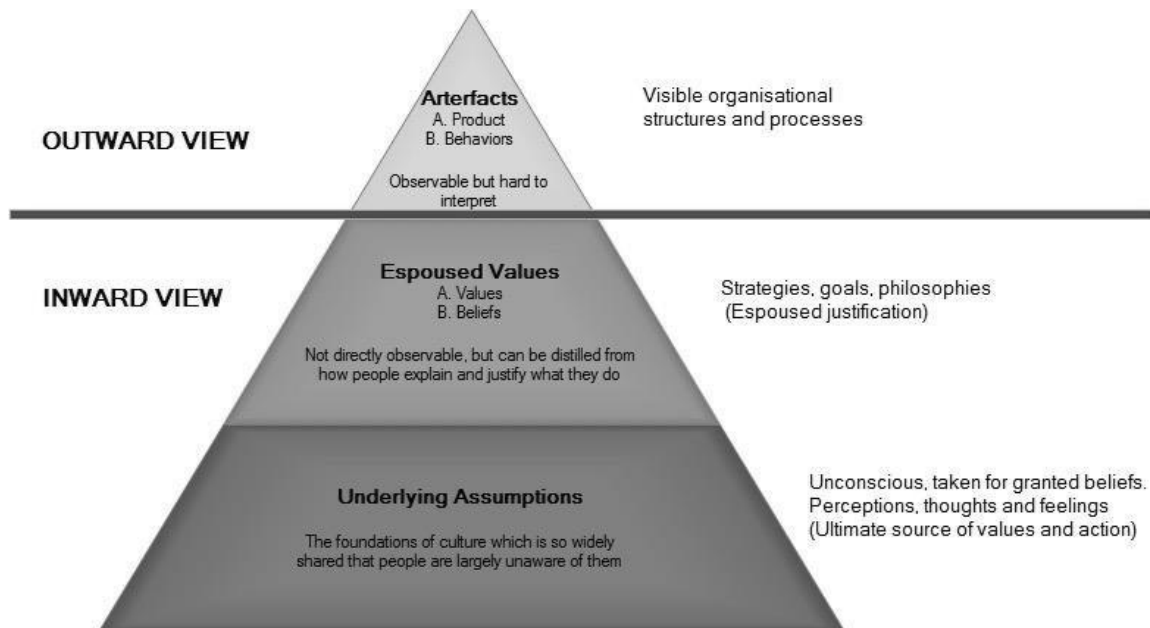
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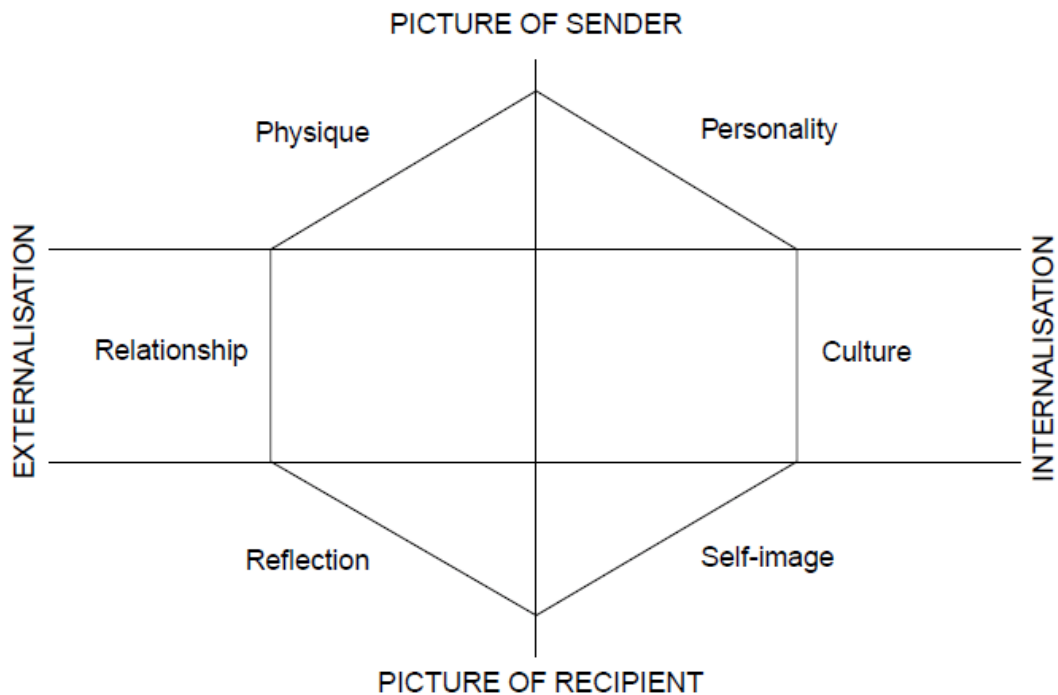
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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Schein's Model of Organisational Culture



APPENDIX B: Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism



APPENDIX C: Study Information and Participant Consent

This is a research study intended to investigate consumers' understanding of organisational culture and whether or not it has an influence on purchasing behaviour. Essentially, the study aims to establish if there is a relationship between consumer behaviour and organisational culture, and the subsequent practices thereof.

This is an anonymous questionnaire and your responses will not be shared. The questions are intended to get an understanding of your purchasing decisions when it comes to a brand's values and organisational culture. There are no mandatory questions, and you may stop at any time – your participation is completely voluntary – however, full and honest answers will be beneficial to the accuracy of the study. All information will be presented anonymously, therefore your identity need not be disclosed. The results of this study will be presented in an aggregated format.

Please note that this research study forms part of the requirements for the completion of the BCom Honours in Strategic Brand Management degree.

By proceeding with this questionnaire, you agree that:

- You have read the information above and understand it.
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the research study.
- You understand that your data cannot be withdrawn once submitted.

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire Template

- 1. What is your age group? *(multiple choice)***
 - ☐ Younger than 20
 - ☐ 21 - 25
 - ☐ 26 - 30
 - ☐ 31 - 35
 - ☐ 36 – 40
 - ☐ Older than 40

- 2. Please Indicate your gender. *(multiple choice)***
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Other

- 3. Where do you reside? *(multiple choice)***
 - ☐ Johannesburg
 - ☐ Cape Town
 - ☐ Durban
 - ☐ Pretoria
 - ☐ Other

- 4. What is your employment status? *(multiple choice)***
 - ☐ Employed part time (less than 30 hours a week)
 - ☐ Employed full time
 - ☐ Self employed
 - ☐ Not employed
 - ☐ Student

- 5. How often do you shop at Woolworths? *(Likert scale)***
 - ☐ Always
 - ☐ Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Never

6. Would you personally consider Woolworths a favoured brand? (Likert scale)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

7. Can you please expand on your above response? (long answer)

8. When you think of the Woolworths brand, what first comes to mind? (long answer)

9. How familiar are you with the concept of organisational culture? (Likert scale)

- ☐ Extremely familiar
- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Moderately familiar
- ☐ Slightly familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

10. What is your definition of organisational culture? (long answer)

11. Would you say that Woolworths' organisational culture is visible to you as a consumer? (Likert scale)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

12. Please expand on your above response. How would you describe Woolworths' organisational culture as reflected in its brand? (long answer)

13. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I purchase from Woolworths because my values align with their brand values.					
Woolworths' employees give me the impression that they are satisfied with the brand's organisational culture.					
I perceive Woolworths as having a favourable organisational culture.					
I believe that I am fully aware and familiar with Woolworths and its products because it is transparent in its marketing communications and available information.					
I have a preference of Woolworths products; therefore, the brand's organisational culture does not influence my purchasing decisions.					

14. Which of the following factors are important to you when making the decision on which brand to purchase? (pick top two that apply) (multiple choice)

- ☐ Familiarity with the brand
- ☐ Price
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Brand values
- ☐ Loyalty
- ☐ Brand reputation
- ☐ Other

15. Why are these factors important to you? (long answer)

16. How likely are you to research a brand before purchasing from it? (Likert scale)

- ☐ Extremely likely
- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

17. Which aspects of the brand would you research? *(long answer)*

18. How likely are you to purchase from a brand that is known to have an unfavourable organisational culture? *(Likert scale)*

- ☐ Extremely likely
- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

19. Is there anything else you would like to add on the topic of organisational culture and Woolworths as a brand?

APPENDIX E: Ethical Clearance Form



05 July 2021

Student name: Kirsten Blane

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega School, Cape Town

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.

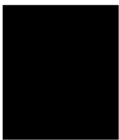
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Monika Edwards



Signature:

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Carol Affleck



Signature:

Title: An exploration of Woolworths' organisational culture and its impact on the purchase behaviour of millennials in Johannesburg: a qualitative study.

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