



The Impact of Brand Authenticity on Brand Trust and Cause-related Marketing: A Consumer Perspective

by

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Thank you, God. Great is Thy Faithfulness!

To my parents, Gloria and Donald Matiringe, and brother, Tanaka, thank you for always being there for me, believing in me, encouraging, and supporting me every step of the way. Thank you for every opportunity you have given me in life and for all your prayers throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of brand authenticity on brand trust, and cause-related marketing (CRM) and examines the relationship between these three constructs. Although the literature identified several properties of authenticity, the relative importance of each construct and attribute in terms of influencing the brand trust of consumers for a brand with CRM was yet to be determined. There was a gap in understanding how brand authenticity influences brand trust and CRM from consumers' perspective, a research problem that this study addressed. This study was conducted from a consumer's perspective, within the fast-food industry using Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) CRM as the experiment intervention.

The fast-food industry was chosen as the research context because it is very sensitive to CRM on the fact that fast-food is perceived to prioritise profit at the expense of society. A total of 151 South African consumers participated in the experiment. The research approach adopted for this study was Quantitative using a field experiment involving Pretest-Posttest Control Group Experimental Design. A Card scoring experiment procedure was carried out and this nonverbal method was intentionally chosen as it provided the most direct measure of rating, as though a respondent would put their vote or money, without developing a conceptual instrument to measure brand preferences or perceptions.

Once the results were obtained, one-way ANOVA was used to compare the groups because it is considered the prototypical experimental design in which one treatment group is compared with one control group. The researcher found that when a CRM campaign was introduced to the group that was aware of the campaign, the group was more positive than those who were not aware and did not receive an intervention. The results from the study confirmed that participants experienced statistically significantly greater brand trust before and after intervention on KFC brand scores. The researcher concluded that the aware experimental group showed significant improvement in scores in favour of the brand with the CRM initiative.

In consequence of all these analyses, it is deduced that cause related marketing initiative strategies based on brand trustfulness enhance positively the perception of consumers with regards to ratings and also their scores on brand authenticity, brand trust and CRM. This study contributes to the literature in developing markets by demonstrating that fast-food brands' use of CRM practices might be an effective strategy to positively influence brand authenticity and brand trust. The current study finds that brand authenticity and brand trust correlate with consumer perceptions of CRM.

This research sheds light on consumers' highest priorities related to perceived CRM, brand authenticity, and brand trust and proposes a consumer perception model consisting of brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM.

Keywords: Cause-related marketing, brand authenticity, brand trust, fast-food restaurant, card-scoring method, pretest – posttest control group experimental design.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the Master of Arts in Creative Brand Leadership degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another university or higher education institution for a degree.

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ACRONYMS

AC – Aware Control
AE – Aware Experiment
ANOVA – Analysis of variance
AVE – Average Variance Extracted
BA – Brand Authenticity
BC – Brand Continuity
BC – Brand Credibility
BI – Brand Integrity
BO – Brand Originality
BR – Brand Reliability
BT – Brand Trust
CR – Composite Reliability
CRM – Cause-Related Marketing
CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
HTMT – Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio
KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LVC – Latent Variable Correlations
PCA – Principal Component Analysis
QSR – Quick Service Restaurant
SAA – South African Airways
SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UC – Unaware Control
UE – Unaware Experiment
VIF – Variance Inflation Factor

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PURPOSE

1.5 INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, there has been a growing interest surrounding cause-related marketing (CRM), in which a company donates money to a social cause or charities based on consumers' purchases throughout the broader branding literature.

While the more general concepts of branding, brand trust, brand equity have been studied at length by a variety of authors (DiPietro & Jamie Levitt, 2019), little examination of the brand authenticity (BA) construct has been conducted (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019; Morhart et al., 2015) associating with CRM, presenting a significant research gap. As noted by Becker et al. (2019), research examining authenticity in advertising remains sparse. This sentiment is clearly shared by Schallehn et al. (2014:195) when they say "brand authenticity theory is in its infancy." To date, little attention in this research stream has been paid to consumer perspective. Thus, both academics and practitioners agree on the importance of authenticity for consumer behavior and branding (Liu et al., 2018; Morhart et al., 2015). A few emerging economies studies revealed a study on CRM from 1988-2016 (Thomas et al., 2020). Their research revealed that most of the studies were conducted in the U.S. (42%), U.K., and Europe. CRM literature shows a need to focus on understanding the role of CRM communications adjusted to the local context by global brands, which was seen as a research path that was of particular interest to consider (Vrontis et al., 2020b). The previous study has confirmed that the three antecedents of individuality, consistency, and continuity effectively capture and positively influence consumer perceptions of brand authenticity (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). A higher consumers' perception of brand authenticity results in higher perceived value and brand trust (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).

The term brand refers to a set of physical and mental attributes designed to hold certain beliefs about a product, service, person, or business (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015). Brand authenticity is defined as perceptions consumers have about a brand's or business involvement with cause-related marketing that is intrinsic to a brand's passion and the manner in which a brand is committed to providing its products and

services (Fernández, 2019). Brand authenticity is a concept originally derived from the Latin word '*authenticus*' meaning trustworthiness (Cappannelli & Cappannelli 2004:1).

Brand trust is defined as the secure feelings consumers have as they interact with brands influenced by the consumer's perception of the brand's responsibility and integrity, for their well-being and interests, and the brand's reliability (Fernández, 2019:8).

CRM is an organisation's brand promotional activity when a charitable or societal cause is supported together with the business' products or services as a bundled offering (Beise-Zee, 2013:321-326). CRM is a current initiative that is increasingly popular among organisations, which implies the achievement of marketing objectives through supporting a social cause (Melero & Montaner, 2016:1).

In the increasing debate of cause related marketing and social responsibility, the question is whether consumers are willing to reward brand for doing good or charity. One way commonly used to bring together socially responsible behaviour and consumption is CRM (Vanhamme et al., 2012: 259-274). In CRM the brands commit to donate certain amount to a charity cause on particular product or brand sold. Consequently, the body of scientific research has so far focused on the developed world, with only a few studies in Africa. The response of South African consumers to CRM campaigns has yet been examined. Because of lack of this empirical evidence, and because of the high prevalence of restaurants that the South African market has for African economy as whole, the researcher investigates consumer response to a CRM campaign in South Africa.

When consumers perceive a brand from a view that makes it mean something, this highlights the dynamics of a brand. When a brand's actions and values are aligned (proposition and positioning), the brand will have the power to attract consumers (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012: 567). Brands also need to be cognisant of the fact that the brand authenticity lies with the consumer, therefore resulting in the subjectivity of meaning (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012: 568). Consumers' perceptions are a combination of symbols and shared values that have different meanings to different people. According to Portal, Abratt and Bendixen (2019:714), "brand authenticity is considered to have a positive effect on brand trust".

This chapter briefly introduces relevant constructs and theoretical review in the following order: rationale of the study, problem statement, research purpose, definition of key terms, delimitations, and organisation of the study.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In today's highly competitive markets, a brand positioned on quality, great service, or superiority will not differentiate it; however, authenticity allows for a brand to be truthful (Fernández, 2019). Literature warns that "brands have come under the spotlight for unethical behaviour, resulting in decreased brand trust" (Portal, Abratt & Bendixen, 2019:714). When brand authenticity is assessed and measured, marketers can identify potential opportunities to create value and effectively position the brand to contribute to higher levels of consumer brand trust and perceived value (Fernández, 2019). Marketers should clearly show the attributes and characteristics that portray the brand's authenticity. Previous studies have shown that consumers seeking authentic brands spend more energy and time searching and consuming truly authentic products and will not consume imitation goods (Fernández, 2019:15).

Literature shows that there is a shift of brands focusing on short-term single transactions to now developing longer, more mutually beneficial relationships with consumers to create brand loyalty and longer consumer value and relationships, which has seen the rise and importance of gaining consumer trust (Fernández, 2019). Fernández's (2019) current findings have also revealed that brand trust can be created and increased by increasing consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity (Fernández, 2019).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is one of the significant corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies brands use to increase their competitiveness. However, little attention is paid to how cause-related marketing in fast-food restaurants is explicitly perceived by consumers' ratings of brands within an African context.

CRM has been measured using brand authenticity and brand trust (Portal et al., 2019) but there are limited empirical studies on the rating of CRM initiatives in fast-food. Of course, to win in the fierce competition, acting as a “corporate citizen” is not enough to make consumers choose one brand over the other, but it is necessary to get their trust, which in turn is a strict condition for having consumers of the future even consider choosing a brand (Holt, 2002). This view places enormous importance on consumers’ trust in brands.

Previous studies proposed that evidence-based (indexical), impression-based (iconic), and self-referential (experiential) cues are central to the formation of consumers’ brand authenticity perceptions (Morhart et al., 2015). The volume of extant works on the subject (e.g., Vrontis et al., 2020) also does not reflect its evident importance among businesses, particularly in the African context. CRM in emerging markets lacks empirical validation since even fewer studies have attempted so far to examine this topic (Vrontis et al., 2020). Scholars are not keeping up with CRM changes despite decades-long scientific attention (e.g., Morhart et al., 2015; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988).

Exploring contemporary insights in the African market in the cause-related context of fast-food, is imperative for both scholars and marketing practitioners alike.

1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE

When understanding brand authenticity, brand trust, and how brands involved in CRM are perceived, an analysis can be provided regarding the market’s present and future prospects for success.

The study asked the following:

1. What is the impact of brand trust on consumers’ ratings of brands?
2. What is the impact of a brand cause-related marketing initiative on consumers’ ratings of brand authenticity?

3. What are the perceptions of consumers on brand authenticity, brand trust, and cause-related marketing?

The following research objectives were developed in order to answer the research questions above:

- To measure brand authenticity ratings of a brand involved with cause-related marketing.
- To measure brand authenticity ratings of a brand trust involved with cause-related marketing brand's initiative.
- To measure brand trust of a brand following exposure to a cause-related marketing brand's initiative.
- To measure whether the brand is considered authentic or trustworthy, a clear competitive advantage results from the involvement with cause-related marketing.

1.5 DEFINING THE KEY TERMS

This section of the study unpacks the constructs that make up this study namely; brand authenticity, brand trust, cause related marketing (CRM), the treatment or experiment group, control or no intervention groups used for the experiment, the card scoring method, pretest post-test control group design experiment and consumer perspective.

Brand authenticity

The concept of authenticity comes from a combination of the Greek and Latin words; *aunthentikos* and *authenticus*, both meaning truthfulness, which translate to “worthy of acceptance, authoritative, trustworthy, not imaginary, false or imitation, conforming to an original” (Cappanelli & Cappanelli, 2004:1). Consumer researchers do not clearly maintain their standpoint on what brand authenticity means (Gustafsson, 2006). Terms such as trustworthiness, traditional, uniqueness, sincerity, realness, honest, genuineness, and original are most commonly used by scholars to describe authenticity (Eggers *et al.*, 2013; Lindum & Thomsen, 2019).

Brand trust

The credibility of a business is the degree to which consumers trust that a business will live up to its promises on delivery of a product or service that will satisfy the consumer (Aaker, 1997). The credibility of the brand is linked to the following: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness.

Cause related marketing (CRM)

CRM refers to an approach utilised in branding and advertising when a corporate takes on to have an association with a good cause that is involved with donations and charitable causes aligning with the consumer purchases (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988).

Treatment or Experiment Group

These are the respondents of the experiment that received the KFC CRM initiative intervention (Nhedzi, 2020). These two groups in the experiment consisted of an aware experimental group and an unaware experimental group.

Control or no intervention groups

The group of respondents in the experiment that did not see the CRM initiative was the control group, which consisted of subgroups – unaware control group and aware control group (Nhedzi, 2020).

Card scoring method

This data collection method entails the actual allocation of 99 cards into branded envelopes to be used before and after the intervention stages. The card scoring method is a non-verbal method used to assess and rate a respondent's favourableness of the different fast-food brands. This method is similar to the method of buying or voting (Nhedzi, 2020).

Pretest post-test control group design experiment

This study used both pretesting and post-testing. Pretesting is defined as the process of determining which respondents to allocate to either the control or experiment group depending on their trust and knowledge of CRM fast-food brand initiatives before the intervention stage (Nhedzi, 2020). In this study, it refers to the allocation of 99 cards into six well-known fast-food brands for the first time according to respondents' knowledge before the intervention stage. Post-testing is defined as the process of accessing participant ratings after the intervention stage (Nhedzi, 2020). For this dissertation, post-testing refers to allocating another 99 cards to well-known fast-food brands for the second time according to respondents' knowledge after the intervention stage. After that, respondents were given a self-completion questionnaire, which formed part of the post-testing.

Consumer Perspective

The term consumer perspective within this study refers to the participants that will be used for data collection purposes. Previous studies have confirmed that the three antecedents of individuality, consistency, and continuity effectively capture and positively influence consumer perceptions of brand authenticity (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). A higher consumers' perception of brand authenticity results in higher perceived value and brand trust (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).

1.6 DELIMITATIONS

For this dissertation, it was important to do a delimitation of the study in order to concretise the research findings. The study was carried out in Johannesburg, Gauteng province, South Africa, looking at the geographical delimitation. The findings of this study may not be applied in the same way to other regions or different countries.

The research study mainly focuses on a few aspects of CRM within fast-food companies. For the study, the top fast-food franchises in South Africa (Writer, 2020) considered were: Wimpy, Steers, KFC, Nando's, Debonairs, and McDonald's to analyse brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. Other constructs may form part of this study's framework and are mentioned, though not operationalised.

Data were obtained from consumers, as they were the key stakeholders of the study to address the problem statement and the strategic results for a company and its CRM strategies. This research was conducted on a business-to-consumer market and the CRM initiative, Add Hope by KFC. Part of the Add Hope benefits was included due to the complexity of the study. For the empirical research, it was precise and exclusively structured to analyse KFC's Add Hope CRM initiative in South Africa. KFC was chosen because it is well known among most South African consumers, and they have an opinion about the brand. This made the empirical analysis contextually applicable and trustworthy in reality and made it possible for this study to create a deeper understanding of the fast-food industry and CRM.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction and research purpose

The first chapter of this study gives an introduction and background to the research problem. It also includes the rationale of the research, problem statement, research purpose, key definitions of terms, and the delimitations of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The second chapter unpacks the conceptual framework for the study; dimensions of brand authenticity, brand authenticity perspectives which are the existentialist, constructivist and objectivist perspectives, moral and brand authenticity and development of trust, CRM, conceptualising the food industry, linking brand authenticity and brand trust, then lastly the theoretical frameworks within this study; the Contrast Effect and Attribution theory.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The third chapter of the study covers the research design, the philosophical orientation of the study, the research approach that was used, the sample data procedure, unpacking the experimental design, card scoring methodology, questionnaire administration, pilot testing, validity; both internal and external as well as the study's reliability. The final section of this chapter unpacks the quantitative statistical procedure that the study used to test the hypotheses; structural equation modelling.

Chapter 4: Findings and interpretation

The findings of the quantitative experimental methodology are discussed in chapter four of the study, which covers the demographic information, experiment – card scoring results, questionnaire results, descriptive results, principal components analysis of fast-food brand authenticity factors, reliability statistics, convergent validity, discriminant validity, Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), structural equation modelling testing and a test of hypotheses.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In summary, this dissertation looks at a consumers' perspective on the impact that brand authenticity has on CRM and brand trust to ultimately help marketing professionals understand the importance and impact of investing in and including CRM in their marketing and advertising strategies. It indicates complexities within consumers and other factors that will affect the outcome. The theoretical examples and concepts discussed in this chapter summarise different steps that brands can take to get the best from CRM initiatives and success.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The background to the study was covered in the first part of this chapter which reviewed different conceptual information. The rationale, purpose, local and global examples of CRM were all previewed in this chapter. CRM is viewed as a way brands can add value, become successful and stand out from other competitor brands. Using the pretest-post-test card scoring experiment and questionnaire and introducing the intervention, the CRM initiative resulted in an increased respondent preference for the chosen brand. This study was designed to determine the impact of brand trust on consumers' ratings of brands, the impact of CRM on consumers' ratings of brand authenticity, and lastly, the perceptions of consumers on brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature, theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The sections in this chapter cover the academic review of literature on brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM and how they are constructed. The theoretical frameworks; the Contrast Effect and Attribution Theory are unpacked in the next sections, as well as various conceptual frameworks on brand authenticity, the different perspectives of brand authenticity; objectivist, constructivist and existentialist and moral authenticity. Constructs that define brand authenticity; originality, continuity, reliability and credibility and stability and rarity are discussed. Thereafter, empirical studies on brand trust and CRM are discussed, and how the fast food industry relates to brand authenticity and brand trust. The chapter highlights the conceptual framework (Figure 2.1).

While the more general concepts of branding, brand trust, brand equity have been studied at length by a variety of authors (DiPietro & Jamie Levitt, 2019), little examination of the brand authenticity (BA) construct has been conducted (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019; Morhart et al., 2015), presenting a significant research gap. As noted by Becker et al. (2019), research examining authenticity in advertising remains sparse. This sentiment is clearly shared by Schallehn et al. (2014:195) when they say “brand authenticity theory is in its infancy.”

To date, little attention in this research stream has been paid to consumer perspective. Thus, both academics and practitioners agree on the importance of authenticity for consumer behavior and branding (Liu et al., 2018; Morhart et al., 2015). A few emerging economies studies revealed a study on CRM from 1988-2016 (Thomas et al., 2020). Their research revealed that most of the studies were conducted in the U.S. (42%), U.K., and Europe. CRM literature shows a need to focus on understanding the role of CRM communications adjusted to the local context by global brands, which was seen as a research path that was of particular interest to consider (Vrontis et al., 2020b). The previous study has confirmed that the three antecedents of individuality, consistency, and continuity effectively capture and positively influence consumer

perceptions of brand authenticity (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019). A higher consumers' perception of brand authenticity results in higher perceived value and brand trust (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019).

The dimensions of authenticity will give the context of the study, the history of the term, and how researchers have defined the term within the branding and marketing space. The researcher will highlight the three brand authenticity perspectives: firstly, the objectivist perspective suggests that real scenarios and information that can be verified concerning a brand, such as the brand's age, performance, origin, and labels, are factors that indicate its brand authenticity perceptions. The second perspective is constructivist, which defines authenticity as a personal or socially constructed phenomenon; therefore, results of it differ in interpretation based on how the world looks. The researcher will then unpack the existentialist perspective, which examines authenticity in relation to one's identity, implying that authenticity means being true to oneself.

Past studies to understand the impact of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) on consumer's buying intention have been conducted (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019: 2139 - 2151). Menon and Vardarajan's work credited how corporate social responsibility (CSR) could help companies and organisations to strengthen their brand values and generate goodwill (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019: 2139 – 2151). Since the 1990's, when CRM was characterized by donations offered by organisations to a charity cause, it has gained popularity among marketers, who believe that this approach helps to enhance purchase intention and brand attitude (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019). Earlier empirical studies, such as one by Bowen, defined CSR as the organisations' social commitment to corporate policies and decisions that provide value to communities. Davis and Blomstrom (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019), emphasised the need for an organisation to have a balance between its business objectives and the welfare of the community. It has also been found that a company's CSR strategy can improve its brand image in the mind of consumers, and improve patronage intention and consumer loyalty (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019). A company's CSR activities were found to have the ability to create emotional attachment with consumers, increasing consumer satisfaction and consumer-company relationships. CRM and CSR are closely linked to each other. CRM has been

defined amongst CSR initiatives, as being a mutual partnership between charities and businesses where they help each other to market a product, service and image (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019). Menon and Vardarajan believe that CRM not only enhances a company's revenue, but also contributes to societal welfare.

Brand authenticity within other contextual frameworks; heritage experience, continuity, brand promise, stability, and rarity will be unpacked in this chapter. The second construct that the researcher will unpack is brand trust within the marketing discipline, brand authenticity in relation to brand trust, a decrease in trust and trust as authenticity. The third construct within the study is CRM, defining this within the context of the research and how CRM works as a relationship-building activity. Once the three constructs have been discussed, the study chapter will conceptualise the food industry integrating brand authenticity and brand trust.

The last chapter will be on theoretical frameworks within this study. The Contrast Effect theory is unpacked, and this theory suggests that brands or companies making charitable donations will be viewed differently by consumers depending on the company's reputation regarding social responsibility. This aligns with the concept of brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 CONTRAST EFFECT AND ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Consumer-based factors such as the suitability of CRM and the suitability of the campaign are used to judge a company's CRM campaign (Amawate, Deb & Manchanda, 2019). The contrast effect theory suggests that brands or companies making charitable donations will be viewed differently by consumers depending on the company's reputation regarding social responsibility (Amawate *et al.*, 2019), also linking to its authenticity.

Contrast is defined as the negative relation between the context and the stimuli, and assimilation is the positive relationship between the new stimulus and the observer (Winter, 2014). Consumers perceive new information within the context of their past feelings, experiences, and beliefs, with one's initial attitude serving as the judging frame of reference (Winter, 2014), influencing a consumer's level of brand awareness.

A consumer's brand awareness may result from a contrast caused by their attitudes and values, resulting in an inappropriate attitude towards a brand (Winter, 2014). The consumer may account for how, why, and to what extent the biased data has affected their current attitude.

Linking the above to brand authenticity, there is an expected contrast effect when consumers view a brand as irresponsible and announce a corporate donation. Consumers will not trust these efforts, and the brand's actions are deemed out of character. However, if a brand that consumers perceive as trustworthy makes a charitable donation, it will be viewed well, and no contrast effect will occur (Winter, 2014).

Attribution theory has been widely explored in the field of marketing (Schmitt, 2015:1-3). A theory that helps to explain how people make judgements and attribute blame is Attribution Theory. The Kelley's model of the attribution theory focusses on how other people attribute causes of behaviour and the process of attribution itself (Schmitt, 2015). Behaviour can be either attributed to the person itself, the stimulus, or the circumstances of the moment. These three factors can be categorised into internal attributions (the person itself) and external attributions (the stimulus, the circumstances). People are actively interpreting events and try to make sense of them in a logical way. Personal, psychological and situational factors play an important role during this process because they can bias the observers view. Hence everyone has their own uniquely biased perspectives, which are used to view and interpret the same outcomes. The biases are linked to certain motivations that bring people to attribute causes to events. These motivations can either be the motivation to protect the ego (self-serving bias), to the need to believe in effective control, as well as to present the self positively to others (Schmitt, 2015). The Attribution theory further denotes that consumer attributes cause consequences of an event (Amawate *et al.*, 2019). The

casual process attribution is one of the dimensions in the perceived controllability of CRM campaigns. If consumers perceive a company's CRM campaign negatively, then the company will also be viewed in the same light (Amawate *et al.*, 2019). When a company's CRM campaign is viewed positively, consumers have positive perceptions towards the firm involved in the initiative. If the campaign is evaluated positively then it leads to positive perception about the capability of the brand involved in it. Hence positive motivation attribution process is central to determining the success or failure of CRM (Gao, 2009; La Ferle *et al.*, 2013; Tsai, 2009: 649-665).

Amawate *et al.* (2019) utilised both the Contrast Effect theory and the Attribution theory in a study to understand the impact of CRM on consumers' intentions in India. The study used quantitative methodology to collect data, and the results showed that the relationship between the evaluation of a campaign and the suitability of a campaign was insufficient and negative. This study also established a significant but negative relationship between campaign evaluation and the controllability of efforts (Amawate *et al.*, 2019). The third significant and positive finding was the relationship between the perceived motivational attribution and the evaluation of a campaign.

The researcher hopes that this study will be valuable to both brand practitioners and academics and that it will contribute to academic knowledge of understanding the impact that brand authenticity has on brand trust and CRM from a consumer's perception. This research addresses identified contextual, theoretical, and methodological gaps.

A study by Morhart *et al.* (2015:200) argues that "although brand authenticity is gaining increasing interest in consumer behaviour research and managerial practice, literature on its measurement and contribution to branding theory is still limited". Much research has also been carried out on BA and retro brands, luxury brands, and mass-marketed brands (Beverland, 2005); however, a gap still exists within the fast-food industry, which is a gap that this research will address.

Contextually there was no evidence of previous studies done that tested the correlation between brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM in the fast-food industry within a developing economy, particularly in South Africa. A clear need for this study

was identified, with authors calling out for more integrative research on these theories (Fiske *et al.*, 2012). The context in which a search on brand authenticity is conducted is of great importance due to the subjective nature of brand trust (Grayson, 2002; Grayson & Martinec, 2004), with consumers being a part of the creation of brand authenticity (Pace, 2015). Researching brand authenticity is of real academic value when conducted in alternate cultural and social contexts, as authenticity is pliable and a construct that is constantly evolving (Beverland, 2005; Eggers *et al.*, 2013).

Within this field of study, qualitative methodology is mostly adopted due to the subjectivity of the research constructs (Alexander, 2009). Using the quantitative methodology will add value in furthering more objective academic studies on brand authenticity (Schallehn, Burmann & Riley, 2014). Hence, this study adopted a quantitative methodology that will contribute to methodological significance.

This study addresses numerous gaps identified in previous studies, with important questions such as understanding the role brand authenticity plays in marketing still open and yet to be answered (Morhart *et al.*, 2015). Marketing personnel remains in need of information on how brand authenticity may impact their other marketing strategies, in this case, CRM or other external factors such as brand trust. There is also an important need to investigate brand trust in the context of brand authenticity (Dowell, Heffernan & Morrison, 2013; Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015).

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It was necessary to show the underlying build-up of the key constructs that were used in the second part of the study. To show the relationships between brand authenticity, brand trust and CRM.

2.3.1 DIMENSIONS – BRAND AUTHENTICITY

When a product is described as real and genuine and not an imitation within marketing and branding, this is known as brand authenticity.

Park (2017:74) argues that “consumers are increasingly searching for authenticity in brands and the quest for authenticity is well documented in a wide range of marketing settings”. Morhart *et al.* (2015:200) discuss that “although brand authenticity is gaining increasing interest in consumer behaviour research and managerial practice, literature on its measurement and contribution to branding theory is still limited”.

The message of BA has evolved over the years to become a powerful brand differentiator deeply rooted in brand values (Fernández, 2019:5). With a global rise in feelings of doubt due to numerous factors; increasing political instability, global financial crises, and climate change, people seek authenticity from brands and products they consume in their day-to-day lives. Authenticity has become essential and a vital part of today’s marketing (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Authenticity has also now been defined as a key-value of the image a brand has and an important contributor to its success as a characteristic of brand identity (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012).

There have been many definitions of brand authenticity and various dimensions of an authentic brand identified as naturalness, continuity, reliability, and originality. An authentic brand has also been defined as not being self-deceptive but rather true-to-self and self-reliant (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Authenticity has been implied to not apply to brands that want to conform as these have a likelihood of losing their identity and being deemed inauthentic (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Authentic brands are those that consumers believe give them authentic experiences by being genuine, sincere, original, credible, unaffected, and natural.

With the various contexts of brand authenticity, the following can be summarised and concluded:

- (1) Within branding, authenticity refers to the brand’s product or service offerings
- (2) Brand authenticity is not based only on the brand’s attributes but also on the evaluations of consumers
- (3) Brand authenticity is contextual as there are varying attributes and not one definition of the concept (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012).

Research has also suggested that a motivational intent is not involved with brand authenticity as a consumer may align a brand as authentic without wanting to link themselves to the brand or possess it (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Brand authenticity is often also perceived as a part of the image of a brand as it also involves consumer perceptions of a brand's offerings (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, authenticity can be viewed as a positive brand association of consumers thus, brands that consumers view as authentic will also be considered to have a positive brand image.

Previous research suggests that brand authenticity should not be viewed in context with consumption of a brand and that judgement of a consumer ought to be obtained prior to it (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). The perceived discrepancy is not a result of brand authenticity but rather a variable in the consumers' mindset. There has, however, been a correlation between brand satisfaction and consumers who ascribed a brand as highly authentic.

To further understand the dimensions of brand authenticity, the researcher will unpack the different brand authenticity perspectives by first highlighting the objectivist perspective, then the constructivist perspective, and lastly, the existentialist perspective. The upcoming chapter will discuss main different types of authenticity, such as moral authenticity and unpacking brand authenticity and heritage experience, continuity, and brand promise.

2.4 BRAND AUTHENTICITY PERSPECTIVES

In order to understand brand authenticity, there is importance in understanding the different perspectives, as it is understood in social psychology. The various descriptions are grouped into three perspectives: inherent (objective), inferred (constructive), and expression (existential).

2.4.1 THE OBJECTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

The origins of authenticity are believed to stem from museums that experts used to view whether art or what it appeared to be was authentic (Morhart *et al.*, 2015:6). This

authenticity was considered a quality is existing for objects and assessed by experts, which was defined as indexical by Grayson and Martinec (2004), distinguishing a real thing from a copy.

For many authors, the objectivist perspective refers to a person's experience or physical facts that either agree or disagree with what was claimed to be delivered to the person, whether it was a product, service, or experience. Consumers are very objective and often use various factors to judge a product or brand's authenticity (Beverland, Lindgreen & Vink, 2008).

2.4.2 THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

The constructivist perspective defines authenticity as a personal or socially constructed phenomenon, therefore results of it are differing interpretations of the world (Morhart *et al.*, 2015:7). This perspective further denotes that authenticity is an indication or reflection of a person's own perspective, expectations, and beliefs, not determined by the actual quality of the product or object. (Morhart *et al.*, 2015:7). An example of this is explained with how there are people who find authenticity in recreated settings, such as Disneyland (MacCannell, 1973) or reproductions of pre-existing products like the VW Beetle (Brown, Kozinets & Sherry, 2003) representing iconic authenticity (Grayson & Martinec, 2004) or commercially created authenticity (Stern, 1994).

Brands create a schematic fit of authenticity within a branding context to align with what consumers expect as authenticity (Beverland *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, it can be concluded that brand authenticity communication is done through marketing aligned to people's impressions and perceptions of a brand rather than a brand's objective properties (Brown *et al.*, 2003).

2.4.3 THE EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE

With roots in philosophical existentialism, this perspective examines authenticity in relation to one's identity, meaning that authenticity is linked to truthfulness to oneself

(Morhart *et al.*, 2015:7). Authentic experiences are further defined as experiences individuals feel for themselves in both their real selves and the real world. In the context of consumption, the existentialist perspective is attributed to a product that assists a consumer in uncovering their truth (Arnould & Price, 2000). Reality television is an example where consumers view it as a self-identity resource as the programmes provide relevant information to themselves (Rose & Wood, 2005).

Within branding context, this authenticity refers to the ability of a company to help consumers feel that they can be themselves by consuming a brand and revealing their true selves. Thus, with the ability to be a reflection of themselves, authenticity emerges from an existentialist perspective.

Overall, the literature suggests that the three perspectives, existentialist, constructivist, and objectivist perspectives are interlinked, and all provide an understanding of how people view authenticity with regards to products, objects, and brands (Leigh, Peters & Shelton, 2006). A conclusion can then be drawn that perceived BA is a combination of experiential motives (existential authenticity), subjective psychological relations (iconic authenticity) as well as objective facts (indexical authenticity) (Morhart *et al.*, 2015:8).

Brand authenticity then appears to be the degree towards people's understanding of a brand's truthfulness to its consumers and to itself and how it supports people to be truthful, bringing moral authenticity to the brand.

2.4.4 MORAL AUTHENTICITY

In socio-psychology, authenticity is shown through unwavering moral strength (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014), similar to authentic brands that inspire consumers to attain a higher goal (Portal, 2017:28). Morality and an ethical compass are important qualities for authentic brands (Beverland, 2006; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Pace, 2015). Moral beliefs and philosophies should be shown in the behaviour and practices of a brand (Molleda & Jain, 2013).

Transparency is synonymous with authentic brand behaviour, with growing expectations of brands to have truthful and open communication fuelled by technology that has enabled consumers to access information about brands more easily (Hicks, 2013). This consumer seeks transparency from brands, resulting in more authentic brands (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Molleda, 2010; Shen & Kim, 2012). An example is how Nike decided to reveal to the public how it had implemented new regulations and improved the working conditions of its factories after years of concealing its unethical production methods (Holt, 2002).

When brands share their information accurately, through dialogue with stakeholders and consumers, there is an opportunity for the various stakeholders to assess the brand's moral integrity (Molleda & Jain, 2013). Through transparent behaviour, a brand can be true and authentic without a need for perfection (Beverland, 2005; Beverland *et al.*, 2008).

There are ongoing discussions about commercially-oriented brands being considered authentic, as authenticity and commerce have opposite sides (Beverland, Farrelly & Quester, 2010). With the rise of the Internet and social media, technology became the physical embodiment of the postmodern reality slowly gave way to virtual reality. A number of scholars have stated that authentic brands should be distant from commercial orientation (Holt, 2002). To stand out from the competition, brands such as The Body Shop intentionally downplay any commercial intent or agenda, which is also known as stealth branding (Beverland, 2006).

When consumers know the positive contributions that a brand is making in society, this often results in less focus on the brand's commercial intentions, and a brand can still be viewed as authentic (Pace, 2015). In 2010, Beverland and Farrelly agreed with Pace's notion that consumers still found authenticity in commercial brands. An example of this is how McDonald's is often criticised for its global prevalence, making the brand appear more commercially orientated, however, consumers also view the brand's omnipresence as accessible and universally connecting people (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Brand social commitment and brand commercialisation are equally important dimensions of brand authenticity (Fritz, Schoenmueller & Bruhn, 2017).

Over and above consumers seeking moral authenticity, research reveals connections between brand authenticity and heritage experience. Heritage is deemed a contributor to authenticity, with a relationship highlighted between authentic brands and their heritage and origins (Newman, 2019). Continuity, consistency, and brand promise also play a role in contributing to perceptions of brand authenticity.

2.4.5 BRAND AUTHENTICITY AND ORIGINALITY

Research has revealed that in search of authentic experiences, consumers often seek brands with heritage or ones that have traditional or historical products (Fernández, 2019:4). Authenticity resonates with consumers, and this has led scholars to uncover authenticity as a fundamental attribute to contemporary marketing (Athwal & Harris, 2018). Legacy and brand heritage are both used as key differentiators and offer a sense of authenticity.

Being authentic means truthfulness to oneself, dependent on one's understanding of traditions, heritage, and history. Consumers increasingly seek relevant and original brands (Portal, 2017:25). Storytelling is used by brands to create connections between consumers and the brand's history (Portal, 2017:25). Using allusions to place and time, brand managers attempt to create unique brand stories that cause a sense of nostalgia for consumers (Portal, 2017:25). There has been a rise in nostalgia-driven marketing ideas, with people feeling a need to reflect and relive past times when the world was less commercialised (Brown *et al.*, 2003).

Authentic brands are often immersed in their history, heritage, origins, and traditions, with Newman and Dhar (2014) suggesting that it is common for brands wanting to be perceived as more authentic to communicate their exact place of origin. An example is Hershey's chocolates which are from Hershey, Pennsylvania. A brand's connection to a physical place often appeals to consumers because of the symbolism represented of its core aspect (constructive authenticity through an iconic cue) (Newman & Dhar, 2014).

There are a number of long-lasting brands with history and heritage within marketplaces. An example is Levi Strauss and Company, which was established in 1874, and is still present in the market today, more than 140 years later. From multiple brand successes and evolving with fashion trends to date, Levi Strauss still positions and markets itself as the original brand within the jean category (Athwal & Harris, 2018). Another example of brand authenticity and heritage experience is McDonald's and KFC, both originating from America but resonating with consumers globally. The question of how long-standing brands can remain current while maintaining their sense of authenticity has been asked, with literature reporting questions about legitimacy and sincerity being raised with a brand's repetitive use of authenticity (Beverland, 2006).

Much research has been done on brand authenticity within the context of retro brands, luxury brands, and mass-marketed brands (Beverland, 2005), however, a gap still exists within the fast-food industry, which is a gap that this research will try to fill. Long-standing brands with history may have a challenge in maintaining their brand essence as issues with their authenticity may arise with them updating their product offerings as consumers will have a mental perception of how the brand ought to be (Athwal & Harris, 2018).

Local icon value is another strategy pointed out by Bruhn *et al.* (2012), where brands give relevance in the culture and country, they are operating in. An example of a local icon value strategy is how KFC localises its brand offerings across different countries. In Nigeria, KFC offers jollof rice and fried chicken; while in South Africa, the brand provides maize porridge called pap; and in Kenya, deep-fried maize porridge balls with the original recipe of breading (African Professional, 2016). KFC advertises in vernacular within the South African market and uses South African models to give the brand relevance within the country's culture. The chicken meal offerings have also been localised to Streetwise One, Streetwise Two, Three, and Five. This enables the brand to be perceived as more authentic within the market, as Newman and Dhar (2014) suggested.

Contextual significance helps consumers identify with brands and connect with them on personal goals and values (Beverland *et al.*, 2008). Bruhn *et al.* 2012) also suggest that brands that incorporate a consumer's identity are often perceived as more

authentic as they create connections between the brand communities and people, serving as a place for the likeminded (Brown *et al.*, 2003). For example, the recollection of British heritage stories that MG car owners recall of the brand brings to mind a sense of solidarity (Leigh *et al.*, 2006). Expressions of innovation and creativity were also found to enhance perceived brand originality as consumers tended to perceive brands with a unique approach as more authentic and not copies of their competitors (Gilmore & Pine, 2007).

2.4.6 BRAND AUTHENTICITY AND CONTINUITY

Continuity and consistency are important when building authentic brands, with research showing that brands that offer consistency with their experience and communication remain stable and are in line with their values, vision, and identity (Eggers, O'Dwyer, Kraus, Vallaster & Guldenberg, 2013; Schallehn, Burmann & Riley, 2014). Brand 'continuity and consistency' are put together as stable brand behaviours. Consistency takes different forms and refers to the visual identity of a brand, including the fonts, slogan, name, logo, and brand colours (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, a brand needs to ensure that communication is consistent for stakeholders and ensure that consumers and retailers do not receive conflicting messages.

Authentic brands are "built from the inside out" (Faust and Householder, 2009). Brands like Colgate, Apple, and Porsche's stakeholders' promises are aligned with the brand's internal organisational values (Eggers *et al.*, 2013). Research has found greater significance between brand authenticity and continuity over the relationship between authenticity and consistency (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014).

The term continuity is defined as ancestry and the long-term commitment a brand makes to a set standard (Beverland, 2005; 2006). Morhart *et al.* (2015) discovered that when they asked people about what they believe makes brand authenticity, most respondents frequently mentioned continuity, along with examples of brands like Campbell, Heinz, and Coca-Cola. Continuity takes various forms; a promise of a brand to its origins, originality, the history of its founders and heritage, and cultural and traditional attributes in the brand's communication (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012).

A challenge identified for brand managers is keeping the link between a brand's history and origins while also staying relevant to evolving consumers and a changing market environment (Portal, 2017:27). Eventually, there will be some loss of continuity, so brands should consciously continue to remind people of their brand history (Portal, 2017:27). An example of this is how Nike re-launched one of its signature products, the Air Jordan sneaker. This created nostalgia among consumers and reminded them of the iconic history of the Nike brand (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014).

Consumers are searching for authentic brands in today's society, which influences their purchase decisions, above just the quality the brand offers (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Marketing personnel has also started to show more interest in understanding consumers' preference of authentic brands and what they offer to offer them a more fulfilling experience (Taheri, Farrington, Curran & O'Gorman, 2018). Providing consumers with authentic brand experiences has now become important for brands (Kim & Bonn, 2016).

2.4.7 BRAND AUTHENTICITY, RELIABILITY AND CREDIBILITY

A brand delivering on its promise comes down to its reliability and credibility (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014:194; Morhart *et al.*, 2015; Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Brands that are authentic whole-heartedly fulfil their promises and prioritise creating great value for their consumers (Eggers *et al.*, 2013). Brand authenticity continues to be an important discussion in marketing research and understanding how consumers perceive it (Hede, Grma, Josiassen & Thyne, 2014).

Credibility is crucial when a consumer lacks the motivation to make an informed decision on a brand or in low involvement scenarios (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Continuity and consistency enhance brand reliability, credibility, and perceived value (Beverland, 2005; Morhart *et al.*, 2015; Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). In Beverland (2005a), quality was recurring in luxury wine brands that consumers deemed as authentic. The wineries that were found to be authentic were dedicated to understanding superior consumer experience and were "fanatical about detail" (Beverland, 2005:1015).

Brand authenticity goes beyond a slogan or message but must be communicated and felt through consistent consumer experiences (Molleda, 2010). In a study, a consumer deemed Walmart authentic because of the constant fulfilment of its promise to deliver on unbeatable prices (Morhart *et al.*, 2015). There is an ongoing debate on brands 'being versus doing', with brands that honour their word being viewed as honest, sincere, and authentic (Portal, 2017:27). Most brands are perceived as highly inauthentic as the values communicated in their brand messages differ from their actions (Portal, 2017:27).

Consumers become dissatisfied when the actions of a brand and its promises are not aligned, resulting in consumers not having brand trust (Eggers *et al.*, 2013). With an increase in brand mistrust, brands find themselves needing to show their intentions through actions and commitments, as words alone are no longer enough for consumers (Eggers *et al.*, 2013; Gerzema, 2009; Molleda & Jain, 2013).

2.4.8 STABILITY AND RARITY IN BRAND AUTHENTICITY

Stability and rarity are two constructs that existed before brand authenticity (Moulard, Garrity & Rice 2015; Moulard, Raggio & Folse, 2016). Rarity refers to "the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand is unusual or atypical compared to the competition" (Moulard *et al.*, 2016:424). Stability refers to the consistent behaviour of a brand (Moulard *et al.*, 2016).

Grayson and Martinec (2004) pointed out that consumers have demanded authenticity from brands for a long time; however, Shen and Kim (2012) questioned whether authenticity was another marketing buzzword. Some 12 years prior, Peñaloza (2000) had answered this question, expressing that authenticity was not a trend but a consumer attempt to transform brand consumption.

Commodification and globalisation have contributed to the destruction of brand authenticity over the decades, with consumers bombarded with meaningless marketing messages, commercial intent, counterfeits, and fakes (Portal, 2017:15).

Baudrillard (1988) coined it an era of hyper-creation, where consumers are faced with products of sameness lacking in originality and depth.

Brand authenticity has become an important part of brand strategy and consumer consumption. Authenticity has overtaken quality, as quality overtook cost and cost overtaken availability (Gilmore & Pine, 2007:5). To connect with consumers, brands need to focus on what they stand for and not only on their performance (Burnett & Hutton, 2007). Brand authenticity enhances the relationship between a brand and consumers and is also being utilised by brands as a brand positioning tool (Fritz *et al.*, 2017). Brand authenticity is now used to indicate a brand's success and has a key role in branding and marketing (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014).

2.5 BRAND AUTHENTICITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRUST

Studies frequently show the notion of brand authenticity, as “the perceived consistency of a brand's behaviour that reflects its core values and norms, according to which it is perceived as being true to itself” (Fritz *et al.*, 2017:327). BA consists of symbolism, credibility, integrity, and continuity, and the perceptions consumers have of the brand (Dwivedi & McDonald, 2018).

Previous studies on brand authenticity and brand trust were on airline brands in South Africa. For example, the recent study by Portal, Abratt, and Bendixen (2019:714) investigated brand authenticity in developing brand trust. Consumers view brands that fulfil their promise distinctly and uniquely to competitors as authentic (Portal *et al.*, 2019:714). In the highly competitive fast-food market where competitors offer similar products, value propositions, brand promises; brand authenticity will play a vital role in influencing consumer choice and consumption. Consumers that perceive a brand as authentic have more brand trust and have higher expectations and reliance for the brand to fulfil its promises (Fernández, 2019:16) which is likely to lead consumers to view CRM initiatives of the brand positively.

In a study conducted on brand trust and brand authenticity of small and medium business growth carried out by Fernández (2019:5), brand authenticity was

operationalised as having three constructs: brand congruency, brand consistency, and consumer orientation. The data of 285 small and medium enterprises in Germany were analysed using the structural equation modelling, and results established that both brand congruency and brand consistency generate brand trust (Fernández, 2019:9). From the three dimensions revealing the notable impact on the dependent variable can be concluded that brand authenticity encourages the growth of brand trust (Fernández, 2019:9).

In another study conducted, a hypothesis was formed that “brand trust mediates the effects of authenticity on attitudinal measures” (Coary, 2013, cited in Fernández, 2019:9), respondents with higher perceptions of brand trust also had increased awareness of brand authenticity, with this being more significant with experiential products (Fernández, 2019:9). The findings from this research revealed a strong association between consumers who have high levels of brand authenticity and their trust in the brand. The question to be posed by this study is whether the awareness in CRM brand initiatives will have a significant impact on brand authenticity or brand trust.

In a study carried out by Portal (2017) in South Africa, to understand the development of brand trust based on brand authenticity, the study yielded results that confirmed that authenticity of a brand is subjective and contextual, based on how consumers understand authenticity and their personal experiences (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). The sampling frame used for the study consisted of frequent passengers of British Airways, Mango, South African Airways (SAA), Kulula, Blue Crane, Safair, and Cemair.

The study then measured brand authenticity, and the results did not prove that genuine, original, and ethical were factors of brand authenticity as literature had suggested these to be (Portal, 2017). Authenticity’s outward appearance has been linked with an honourable set of values, originality, and that which is true, real, and genuine (Portal, 2017). In a study, Akbar and Wymer (2017) had strong findings that proved genuineness and originality as factors of brand authenticity.

2.5.1 COMMUNICATING BRAND TRUST

Trust in its broad sense has received extensive attention over the years in varying disciplines, economics, sociology, psychology, and marketing and management. To a large degree, studies in the 21st century have focused on connections between brands and consumers, with security and confidence being deeply rooted in the evolution of trust (Fernández, 2019:8).

There is a general agreement in literature communicating that authenticity and behavioural involvement are highly intertwined when building trust. When a brand reduces its emotional and functional brand choice risk by increasing consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity, then brand trust can be positively and significantly influenced (Fernández, 2019:9). Holt (2002) points out the importance of trust as a future brand-building aspect of the relationship between consumers and brands (Gustafsson, 2006:522).

In recent years, brand reputation and trust within the marketing discipline, mostly in relation to brand image and culture, have been increasing. The researcher, however, identified a gap in how brand authenticity impacts brand trust and aims to answer this after conducting an experiment.

De Chernatony (1999) argued that a brand's image of trustworthiness, i.e., its reputation, is so important that brand managers ought to monitor a brand's reputation rather than its image (Gustafsson, 2006:522). Furthermore, Fombrun (1996) suggested that a brand can recover faster if it has high levels of stakeholder trust in a crisis. The importance of trust can be found in earlier research; in service management (Grönroos, 1990) and relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Gustafsson, 2006). A study by Holt (2002) contributes to the theories of consumers' trust relationships to brands suggesting that brands that have consumers' trust will adapt to what consumers demand of their authenticity.

2.5.2 BRAND AUTHENTICITY IN RELATION TO BRAND TRUST

There has been a link between authenticity and brand trust (Eggers *et al.*, 2013). Similar to authenticity, trust is also associated with fairness, consistency, honesty, competence, helpfulness, benevolence, and responsibility (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Napoli Dickinson, Beverland and Farrelly (2014) suggest that although brand authenticity and brand trust have conceptual similarities, they remain significantly different.

The two factors of brand trust are brand reliability and brand intentions, with authenticity being a contributor to functional and affective attributes (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). When consumers believe that brands have their best interest at heart and society, they deem them as authentic (Beverland, 2005; Napoli *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, brand authenticity is achieved through truthfulness, credibility, delivering on their promise, and reliability (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012).

Trust has, however, become increasingly rare with the deception and trickery in marketing (Holt, 2002), with BA becoming more important (Eggers *et al.*, 2013). Trust develops when consumers seeking trustworthy brands in times of insecurity and uncertainty find it within a brand (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). Authenticity reduces a consumers' uncertainty of a brand; therefore, it is important for brands wanting to gain trust with consumers (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Hence, brands like Nike position themselves as "authentic athletic performance", or Adidas with "once innovative, now classic, always authentic" (Schallehn *et al.*, 2014:192). With authentic brands' committing to deliver on promises they make to consumers, consumers in turn, trust these brands and their ability to perform (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012).

2.5.3 TRUST AS AUTHENTICITY

There has been a consumer culture shift within modern branding, where marketers are exploiting the paradigm, where authenticity is guised as disinterestedness in a brand (Gustafsson, 2006:524). Holt (2002) describes this contradiction as "peeling away the brand veneer," meaning that a corporation or brand perceived by consumers as authentic is now viewed as cowardly and not accountable nor responsible for its actions. Holt (2002) further argues that brands allow companies to avoid their

obligations, which is causing trouble within the market space and causing consumer resistance. The consumer resistance that Holt notes is because consumers are refusing to accept the brand's cover-up of an organisation's questionable practice, for example, in the form of suspicious bonus systems or sweatshops.

With this new conception of brands, brand managers have managed to separate the brand from the corporation to ensure that corporations can behave badly but not lose profits (Gustafsson, 2006:524). Acknowledging this conception and shift in consumer culture will influence the future of branding patterns. Holt (2002) further suggests that brands will help people construct their identities but only once consumer trust has been gained.

In the new postmodern Branding Paradigm that Holt (2002) highlights, he names brands "citizen-artists," elaborating that the brands have had to align their values to those of the corporations and appear as corporate citizens for them to gain and retain consumer trust and to survive within the market space (Gustafsson, 2006:524). A contextual example of corporate citizenship is a brand's decision to support local activities, while it is the company's duty as the citizen to take care of that environment by not exploiting the labour force or causing pollution. The demand for brands to act more ethically will increase, and corporations will be required to redefine what authenticity means to them. A brand can benefit from listening to what critics have to say about the brand as this will provide insights on how the corporation can improve and help consumers understand it better (Gustafsson, 2006:524).

Consumers can see through inauthentic brands, and when corporate actions are not aligned with what the brand stands for, the anti-branding movement on the internet spreads the misalignment between the corporation's brand values and its practices causing consumer resistance that then forces the corporation to change (Gustafsson, 2006:525). During the mid-1990s, Holt (2002) argued that media coverage on anti-branders and consumer resistance forced corporations to adapt their policies and offer more transparency and extensive information on their practices.

Transparency within a brand helps consumers better evaluate the corporation's practices and create trust. An example of this is how Nike found it necessary to

become more transparent about its subcontractors' production after speculation about its sweatshops started putting the brand at risk. However, the tension between stakeholders and corporations continues with both wanting to profit from authenticity but with differing opinions on what authenticity should be and what it is (Gustafsson, 2006:525).

Corporations are increasingly unable to escape their new realities that "brand veneer" is inadequate to persuade consumers if it is not combined with the corporation's genuine effort on good practices and values of the corporation, that is, being a brand (Gustafsson, 2006:525). Holt (2002) believes that consumers will depend more on brands in the future.

2.6 CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

2.6.1 CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING SUSTAINABLY

CRM has been an integral part of marketing for the last two decades. From when the term was first introduced in 1983, American Express first used CRM to raise money to restore the Statue of Liberty. Every time a consumer swiped their card, American Express would donate one cent, resulting in the number of cardholders growing by 45% (Berggren & Stark, 2010). Since then, CRM has been adopted globally by businesses marketers and has paved the way for researchers to unpack the different aspects of this philanthropic conduct (Natarajan, Balasubramaniam & Jublee, 2016). The principle of profit-motivated giving by companies has been implemented as a differentiation strategy to position the corporation as socially responsible in the consumer's mind (Natarajan *et al.*, 2016).

From earlier empirical studies, research shows that when a company gives more to a social cause, it will have a better reputation among consumers (Sumi, 2017:144). Fombun and Shanley (1990) agree that this favourable reputation will help brands to charge more for their products and services and attract more investors.

In 1999, Pringle and Thompson's conceptualisation of CRM was a marketing and strategic positioning tool that links a relevant social issue or cause and a brand or

company for mutual benefit. Both these marketing approaches benefit from the link between the brand/company to a social issue or cause (Sumi, 2017:144).

Consumers now expect brands or companies to conduct their business ethically and sustainably (Wigley, 2008). However, the relationship between consumers' loyalty and a brands' involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not largely explored, as it remains unclear how brand authenticity impacts brand trust and CRM and if people are want to support a company's CSR initiatives by switching from their favourite brand to another (Wigley, 2008). While CRM supports a company's ethical and social conduct; consumers' scepticism can come up towards the underlying motives of the CSR initiative (Mohr, Eroğlu & Ellen, 1998), but trust in a corporation's CRM and donations may result in lessening consumers' scepticism (Hartmann, Klink & Simons, 2015).

Kotler *et al.* (2012) stated that marketing must get consumers' attention, giving them solutions and helping better the world. Companies invest in CRM to grow the popularity and reputation of the brand. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) argue that growth in popularity and reputation will help businesses charge higher prices and bring in more investments (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990:223). The study suggests that an increase in reputation will follow with a great contribution from the business to social welfare. They also suggest that, within the same industry, a business with a good reputation will have an advantage over competitors to businesses with a lower reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990:235-239). Furthermore, consumers and stakeholders are always watching businesses evaluate the reasons behind donations and judge their behaviours: are businesses honestly interested in the social concern or merely donating to increase goodwill? (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001:210).

With the growing global trends, people are becoming more socially and environmentally conscious of the consequences their actions have, and in turn, more companies are affiliating their products with different causes (Farache, Perks, Wanderley & Filho, 2008:211). The attractiveness of linking one's business to a good cause has seen a rise in consumer perception and brand favourability (Farache *et al.*, 2008:211; Human, 2016:5). These perceptions play a role in how consumers perceive the brand's services and products (Farache *et al.*, 2008:211).

According to Stole (2006), CRM is classified in the following ways:

- Facilitated giving – this is when a company gives the consumer's donations to charitable organisations
- Advertising – where the business communicates a specific brand cause
- Sponsorship – when a business funds a specific event
- Purchase-triggering donation – when there's an amount set aside from a product price to be donated by the business to the charity
- Direct marketing – when both the charity and the business promote brand awareness and raise funds
- Licensing – when a company uses a charity's logo on its products and services and in turn pays the charity
- Public relations – when a partnership between a non-profit organisation and a business is publicly communicated.

In emerging markets, where social upliftment is of vital importance, CRM can provide more support to those in need (Bester & Jere, 2012). However, the role of the product in CRM was questioned concerning the gap in the literature that has results about the framework which differed across contexts (Human, 2016:6). Human (2016:7) confirms that “previous findings concerning donation magnitude and donation expression format are limited and inconclusive”.

Consumers are motivated by either intrinsic or extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation is propelled by interest, enjoyment, and curiosity, while extrinsic motivation is the pursuit of praise from others and seeks external rewards (McCoy & Renstrom, 2015:3). The impact of CRM on consumer perceptions will be determined by the degree to which one is motivated extrinsically or intrinsically. For the success of CRM initiatives, consumers ought to have perceptions of reliability towards the brand or the company's commitment to the cause (Barone, Miyazaki & Taylor, 2000). Studies confirm that there is a relationship between attitudes, intentions, and behaviour (Human, 2016:7; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2015). Therefore, attitudes and intentions are acceptable measures for understanding consumer desire (Human, 2016:7; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2015). CRM is more persuasive and influential on consumers' responses (Halim, Adiwijaya & Fauzan, 2013:474).

The researcher proposes that brands with CRM initiatives should be tested for brand authenticity and brand trust. Brand authenticity and brand trust have the common denominator which is 'brand trustfulness'.

2.6.2 DECREASE IN BRAND TRUST

Research carried out in the United States revealed that consumers' brand trust is at its lowest (Eggers *et al.*, 2013; Fiske & Malone, 2013), with a number of reasons such as corporate profit maximisation, the rapid growth of the internet, all contributing to consumer cynicism (Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009).

Brands focused on driving short-term profits and meaningless transactions receive mistrust and suspicion (Fiske & Malone, 2013; Eggers *et al.*, 2013), causing the decline in brand trust with brands' actions differing from its values and promises communicated to consumers. Others have attributed the decline to the 2008 global recession still present to date (Portal, 2017). There are greater opportunities within developing countries for brands and companies to build trust with consumers, and there is a high percentage of the population that remains under-served (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

In spite of South Africa's turbulent past, the country has made some changes; but citizens remain pessimistic and mistrustful due to poor policy and legislation choices, corrupt and inefficient governance, and malfunctioning systems (Marais, 2011). This makes South Africa an interesting context for researching brand authenticity and brand trust.

There are many incidents with brands and unethical behaviour within South Africa, resulting in decreased brand trust (Portal, 2017). In 2007, Tiger Brands and other manufacturers were investigated after being caught price-fixing maize, flour, and bread (Flanagan, Smillie & Tromp, 2007). When consumers feel betrayed, their brand trust decreases (Arnott, Wilson, Elliott & Yannopoulou, 2007). Arnott, Wilson, Elliott and Yannopoulou (2007) suggest that this incident negatively affected the Government and Tiger Brand's reputation for tolerating unethical behaviour (Arnott *et al.*, 2007).

Woolworths caught up in a dispute in 2013 with a local designer who accused it of stealing her designs (Portal, 2017). After presenting her designs to Woolworths, the Company did not want to pay her for the designs, however identical cushion designs in local Woolworths stores (Carin, 2013). Many loyal consumers were left with a sense of diminished trust and disturbed by this, as Woolworths positions itself as ethical and supportive of the well-being and sustainability of local businesses (Dos Santos, Svensson & Padin, 2013).

In 2015, KFC Braamfontein, Johannesburg, came under fire after employees were seen washing chickens on a dirty floor behind the restaurant (Portal, 2017). This video went viral, resulting in bad publicity and a decrease in the brand credibility of KFC. Doug Smart, KFC Africa's managing director, got the branch closed for investigations, and a public apology was released (Portal, 2017). One could then question how this impacted consumers' trust in the KFC brand.

Trust in others is known as generalised trust, while trust in regulatory systems is known as institutional trust (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015), with Steenkamp (2009) stating that both are key to positive growth in South Africa and are fundamental to any society. It is also interesting to note that consumers trust American or Western brands more than South African brands and view these brands as superior (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015).

Trust can be restored, according to Hobbs and Goddard (2015). Collaborations of trade associations, government, private sector businesses, and non-profit organisations will help rebuild trust within institutions (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Honesty, being transparent, and communication have been found to help restore trust (Lindgreen, 2003), which are important factors to brand authenticity (Beverland, 2005).

2.7 CONCEPTUALISING THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY IN RELATION TO BRAND AUTHENTICITY STUDY AND BRAND TRUST STUDY

Research conducted within the banking sector in Bangladesh found that apart from promotional expenditure, corporate social cause-related expenses were key

considerations within businesses that positively influence profit (Sumi, 2017:145). Business managers noted the benefits of improving corporate reputation to achieve competitive advantage and building a brand, while non-profit organisations stand to benefit from the publicity of their causes (Sumi, 2017:145). Daw (2006) similarly points out that CRM initiatives are mutually beneficial to both the cause and the company. Che'ron, Florian and Kaoru (2012), on the other hand, also showed that CRM was more efficient and cost-wise and had a positive effect on consumers' attitudes. Therefore, there is an increase in brands partnering with non-profit organisations and charitable causes to differentiate them from competitors, improve their corporate image, and increase their sales (Sumi, 2017:145).

In the Al-Dmour, *et al.* (2016) study, the primary finding was that brand and charity fit could have a tremendous impact on the success of a brand's CRM initiatives. With CRM on the rise, there is also immense criticism from consumers who often question the link between the cause and the brand (Sumi, 2017:149). Devinney (2006) noted that although consumers may express a favourable attitude towards brands that show social responsibility, they may not act on these attitudes. When the consumer's main focus is on specific brand cause marketing programmes rather than the overall CRM, their perceptions of the brand's motives for partnering with the cause may influence how they respond (Sumi, 2017:149).

Studies have shown many benefits of using CRM campaigns as part of CSR (Anghel, Grigore & Roşca, 2011). The benefits include getting new consumers, an increase in sales, having a positive brand image, and being able to get funds for charities and social causes. CRM campaigns have a role in enhancing a business's performance and communicating a business's mission to different stakeholders. Thus, the company's goals are profit, non-profit, or a combination of the two (Anghel *et al.*, 2011). The three supportive causes attract consumers through creative ideas, innovations, and communication of involvement with charities.

Different brands to date, such as Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and Dove, have taken on the marketing strategy to incorporate both shareholder and social value. Examples of these brand CRM initiatives are Procter and Gamble linking Pampers sales to donate to UNICEF's maternal and new-born tetanus programme (Vanhamme, Lindgreen,

Reast & Van Popering, 2012) and Tommy Hilfiger donating towards the Breast Health International from 50% of all his bag sales (Müller, Fries & Gedenk, 2014).

Therefore, the gap in the literature on CRM that this research aims to identify is also on how brand authenticity impacts consumers' perspectives on a brand's CRM initiatives.

The hypotheses are shown below.

Hypotheses

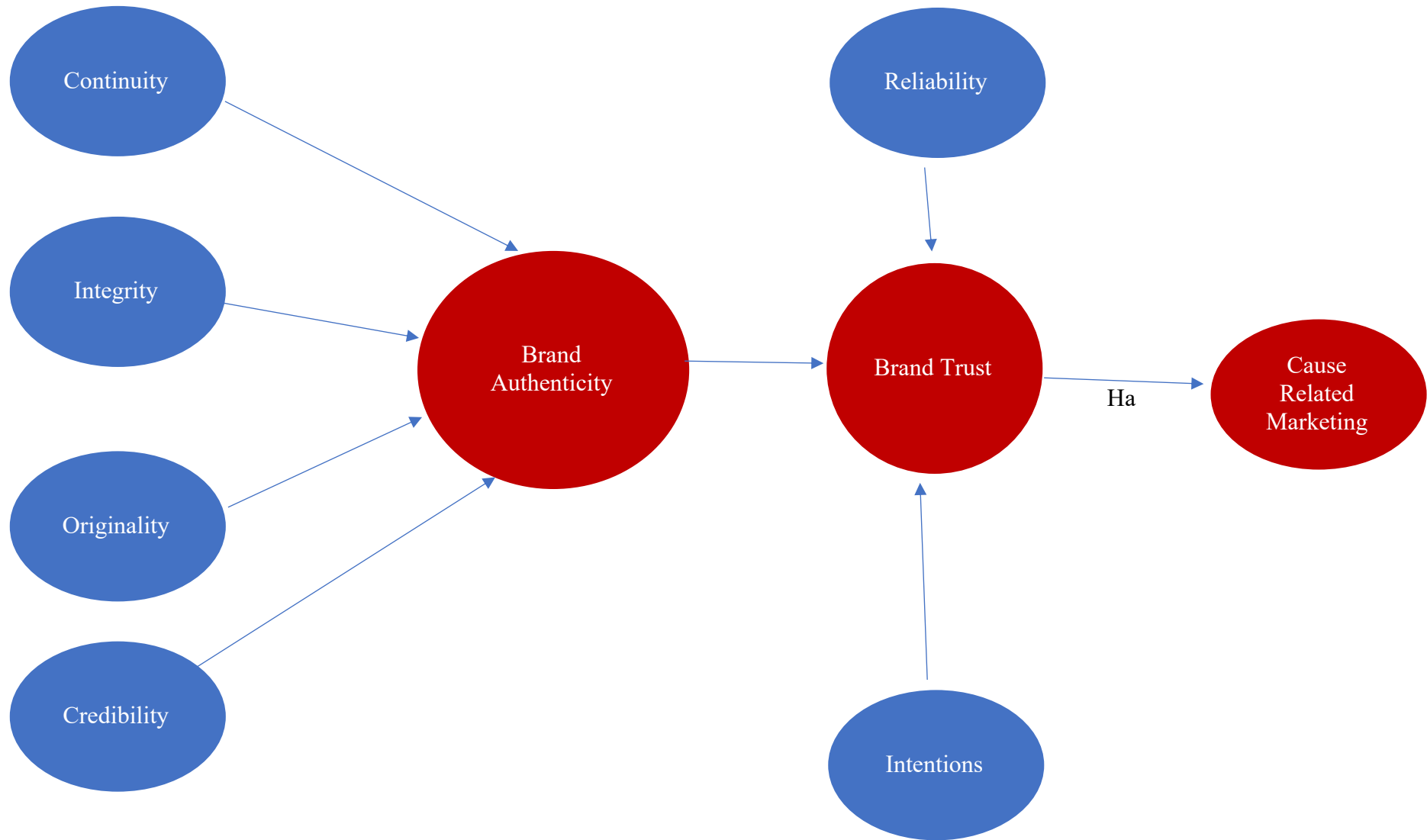
A summary of four hypotheses is listed below:

Hypotheses Explanations

- *H1a brand continuity impacts positively brand authenticity*
- *H1b brand credibility impacts positively brand authenticity*
- *H1c brand integrity impacts positively brand authenticity*
- *H1d brand originality impact positively brand authenticity*
- *H2 brand authenticity impacts positively brand trust*
- *H3a brand intentions impact positively brand trust*
- *H3b brand reliability impacts positively brand trust*
- *H4 brand trust impacts positively cause-related marketing*

The conceptual model of this research is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework



2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter covered academic literature on brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM and how they are constructed for this study, the dimensions of authenticity, the three brand authenticity perspectives, brand authenticity within other contextual frameworks; heritage experience, continuity, brand promise, stability, and rarity were analysed, as well as the theoretical frameworks within this study; the Contrast Effect and Attribution theory.

The next chapter will unpack the methodology used, the philosophical orientation, research approach, research design procedure, the instrumentation and method of data collection, and ethical considerations. Both internal and external validity were used in measuring the research instrument.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter discussed both important literature and theoretical makeup for this study. The methodological choice of this study is unpacked in this chapter, as well as the research design process, explaining why the pretest post-test control group design, a quantitative approach, was considered for this dissertation.

PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION

Ontology refers to the nature of reality that is observed by the researcher (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2019). The ontological question that the researcher asked to understand the nature of reality took an objectivism stance. Objectivism incorporates assumptions from natural sciences that argue that researched social realities are external to us and others (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Realism is also embraced ontologically by objectivism, which considers physical entities to be like social entities to the natural world, and that they exist independently despite what people may label them, think of them, or even their knowledge (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). With this stance, the researcher believes that the experiences and interpretations of social beings do not have an impact on the social world, but that there is one world that is the same and experienced by everyone (Saunders *et al.*, 2019); a social reality and world made up of things that remain the same, that include structures like family, religion, and the economies that people are born into (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Epistemology refers to the assumptions about knowledge made that are acceptable, legitimate, and deemed valid and how this knowledge is communicated to others (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The researcher will use epistemological post-positivism to understand the beliefs of what can be known from the study.

Post-positivism is known to challenge the traditional notion of knowledge truth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:6). According to Krauss (2005), the research methodology was determined by the researcher's chosen paradigm. Evolving from the positivist paradigm, the post-positivist paradigm does not adopt a purely objective stance as adopted by the logical positivists but is concerned with the subjectivity of reality (Panhwar, Ansari & Shah, 2017). Post-positivism holds a philosophy in which causes

determine outcomes. The problems show the need to find and analyse the cause that influences the outcome, such as those found in experiments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:6). A post-positivist gets knowledge from careful observation and measuring realities that exist, hence, creating numeric measures of observation and researching the behaviour of people becomes very important. Post-positivism balances both the interpretivist and the positivist approaches, as it puts focus on unpacking issues that involve experiences (Panhwar *et al.*, 2017), which is well-aligned to this study of exploring the role that brand authenticity plays on brand trust as well as CRM from a consumer's viewpoint. Using post-positivism within quantitative research includes perspectives of comparative, historical, phenomenological, and philosophical analysis (Panhwar *et al.*, 2017).

Scientifically, post-positivism strives to explore phenomena, however, unlike positivist research, this research approach believes that there is no absolute truth to be found (Panhwar *et al.*, 2017). The post-positivist researcher does not disapprove of the quantitative and scientific elements of positivism but rather puts emphasis on trying to understand the perspectives of a study from different dimensions and methods. The researcher aimed to explore the diversity of facts through an experiment while valuing and respecting all findings as essential components in the development process of knowledge.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Many authors have discussed deductive and inductive research paradigms. The researcher chose the deductive approach, which Hussey and Hussey (1997) defined theoretically and conceptually structured to be tested by empirical observations, resulting in cases being deducted to certain factors (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu and Abubakar, 2015). This states that deductive thought includes creating and designing a theory that will determine relationships and understanding assumptions about reality (Aliyu *et al.*, 2015). With this basis, when applying it to a quantitative study, will infer those assumptions will be made from theory in order to either disapprove or approve a theory.

The methodology that the researcher adopted was quantitative, using an experiment and questionnaire. Quantitative research is carried out to produce data that can be expressed numerically and examined statistically (Aliyu *et al.*, 2015).

The experiment selected for this research to examine the relationship between brand trust, CRM, and brand authenticity was best suited, combined with a self-administered questionnaire that collected structured data. In this study, the CRM initiative was represented by KFC's R2 Add Hope, which is recognised as South African fast-food CRM. The independent variable was the KFC Add Hope campaign and the two brands with a CRM aspect. The two dependent variables were brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM, which were used to measure the overall impact of the CRM initiative on a fast-food brand.

There have been decades of studies on CRM that continue to produce contradicting findings and diversified results (e.g., Morhart *et al.*, 2015; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). CRM is bound by cultural shifts and product changes given its evolving meaning within strategy marketing and based on individual behaviours. There remains a gap in understanding the importance of CRM within the African context, as there is a lack of adequate empirical research as few researchers have looked into this topic within developing markets (Vrontis, Christofi & Katsikeas, 2020). Questions around cross-cultural effectiveness, market behaviours in developing markets, consumers, competitive space, and also digital factors continue to be brought forth (Laroche, 2017; Vrontis *et al.*, 2020). Exploring contemporary insights in the African market in the CRM context of fast-food, therefore, is imperative for both scholars and marketing practitioners alike.

The study used a field experiment involving the pretest-posttest control group design. In this quantitative explanatory design, the researcher used four groups, two received treatment, and the outcomes were collected at the end of this experiment (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; 1966; Nhedzi, 2020). The control groups were not given the treatment but underwent the same test over the same time. Analysis to examine whether the intervention had a statistically significant effect was conducted (Nhedzi, 2020). Choi and Seo (2019) pointed out that the best practice for investigating brand authenticity and its relationships is utilising an experimental study. The experiment's

design allowed for reliance on real-life brand scenarios and exerted a high level of control through internal validity. The same study design was used by Nhedzi, Overton-de Klerk and Bester (2016) and Nhedzi (2020) to test the effect of brand linkage through card scoring, using the brand linkage, a single factor for the design subjects. The method that Nhedzi *et al.* (2016) and Nhedzi (2020) used tested the effect of brand linkage on brand relationships. Differences between control and experiment groups were assessed through a pretest post-test control group design to find if there were differences between the not aware group of respondents and the aware group.

RESEARCH DESIGN PROCEDURE

Self-administered questionnaires were the research instrument used by the researcher. The experiment was conducted one-on-one, with respondents completing questionnaires (see Appendix D – attached questionnaire form). The data for the experiment was collected at the respondents' preferred location.

The pre-test post-test control group experiment design randomly assigned the respondents to four groups in either control or experimental conditions.

The respondents were grouped as below:

Table 3.1: Experiment and control groups

Group 1	Aware	Experiment Group
Group 2	Not aware	
Group 3	Aware	Control Group
Group 4	Not Aware	

The research questions addressed in this dissertation concern CRM's effectiveness and understanding consumers' perception of brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. They were addressed using quantitative research techniques. A four-group experimental design was used, with the experiment groups being shown the KFC CRM initiative campaign (the treatment) while the control groups were not shown. The results for the experiment groups were recorded and measured after the group's

exposure to the CRM campaign. This study represented the CRM initiative by KFC's R2 Add Hope, a recognised South African fast-food CRM. The independent variable of the study was the KFC Add Hope campaign, and the brand with a CRM aspect – brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM – was the dependent variable used to measure the overall impact of the CRM initiative on a fast-food brand.

INSTRUMENTATION: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The main data collection of this study included the two integrated instruments; the first part being the self-administered questionnaire, then card scoring and the questionnaire survey. Both the card scoring and questionnaire were used to collect the primary data for this study. These two instruments measure different but complementary aspects of the influence of brand authenticity on brand trust as well as CRM. The form that was developed measured results of the respondents' card scores during the pretest and post-test experiment (See Appendix B). The structured questionnaire was also self-administered and consisted of self-developed items. Respondents from this study were from Johannesburg, South Africa.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The current study uses a true experimental methodology. The true experiment involves the dependence of carefully measured variables, manipulating one or more independent variables, and the use of two groups; experiment and control group (Rogers & Révész, 2020).

The experiment group receives the experimental treatment as well as completing the pretest and posttest, while the control group only partakes in the pre- and post-testing. For this experiment, participants are randomly assigned to either of the two groups (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018; Kirk, 2009; Nhedzi, 2020). Reliability and validity are the factors that determine experimental research quality (Rogers & Révész, 2020).

The card scoring method was the experimental design utilised. Card scoring is a nonverbal assessment of a chosen brand that was used to assess whether respondents' ratings would be influenced when another brand was introduced. The

simplicity and ability of this method allowing for respondents to autonomously rate brands are why it was deemed most suitable compared to other methods such as mixed methods and questionnaires. The card scoring method was used to assess whether other variables influenced respondents' brand ratings through a nonverbal assessment of the main brand that was being tested (Nhedzi, 2015)—using this method minimised researcher bias towards some brands while carrying out the research. The researcher conducted both pretest and post-test interventions and was aware that this method had been used in earlier years of academic studies, however, examined practical and effective in measuring brands' ratings (Nhedzi, 2015).

This method provided differentiation of brands with the respondents in the context of card allocation and also provided accurate and hard data (Nhedzi, 2015). This approach effectively examined brand authenticity's impact on brand trust and CRM and will help inform marketing professionals as they formulate brand strategies. Nhedzi *et al.* (2016) informed that when using the card scoring method, multiple variables interacting together need to be captured due to the psychosociological phenomena that will be present (Nhedzi, 2015). On Heath, Brandt, and Nairn's (2006:413) semantic scale, the card scoring method was deemed most suitable when measuring and quantifying meta-communication and communication, making it possible to see whether any correlations are present among brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. The favourability that the respondent will have towards a brand will be used to measure the relationship (Nhedzi, 2015). This favourability applied to both the aware and unaware respondents in a nonverbal way. Using this method, the researcher was able to obtain respondents' emotions and thoughts.

Bordens and Abbott (2014:110) put across that the control over extraneous variables is the second characteristic of experimental research. The respondents were not assigned based on characteristics or behaviour, random allocation of the four groups was very important in controlling the extraneous variables. An example is if the respondents that were aware of brand authenticity ended up in one group instead of the other, the degree to which they were aware of their brand authenticity before participating would have become an extraneous variable that would have been a problem for the research. Randomly assigning the groups ensured that respondents were equally distributed as this also ensured that these differences across the

treatments were not to be mistaken for the effects of the campaign exposure (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016). This approach eliminated many bias issues often inherent with non-experimental designs and ensured system variance maximisation (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016). Using revision and standardised testing also helped reduce error variances (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016).

The researcher used single-blinding to the treatment group assignment, in other words, the researcher did not know if a person was part of the experiment or control group. When participants of a study are not aware of how the experimental intervention will be given, this is known as 'blinding' or 'masking' (Schulz & Grimes, 2004). Blinding also ensures that respondents will not be biased. Single-blinding implies that the subjects receiving the intervention are blinded to the intervention assignments (Renjith, 2017:46). The researcher did not fully know the treatment that was supplied as this was only to be established after the pretest. This helped against the possibility of giving away the experiment knowledge to the assigned intervention groups and also helped to prevent researcher bias for respondents towards desirable results of the experiment's outcome (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016). This method also ensured that the researcher and respondents who measured the results were not influenced by how the cards were allocated to the non-favourable or favourable brands (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016).

The card scoring method aimed to utilise the least expenditure but ensured that the maximum data available was excerpted (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016). A baseline was applied to prevent the effects of functions and stimuli where respondents were examined in their "freely occurring state", ensuring that a standard measure was used to compare the shift or change from the experiment treatment (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016).

CARD SCORING METHODOLOGY

The card scoring method is a non-verbal method used to assess and rate a respondent's favourableness of the different fast-food brands. This method is similar to the method of buying or voting (Nhedzi, 2020).

This data collection method entails the actual allocation of 99 cards into branded envelopes to be used before and after the intervention stages. The first step was the pretest, where the researcher presented the respondents with named envelopes. There were six envelopes, each envelope with a name of a fast-food restaurant in South Africa. The six brand options were Wimpy, Steers, KFC, Nando's, Debonairs and McDonald's; the top fast-food franchises in South Africa (Writer, 2020). The researcher then gave each respondent 99 cards, however, the total number of cards was not disclosed to the respondents. The researcher then asked each respondent to allocate cards to each brand based on their trust and place them in the corresponding envelope. Each respondent's score represented their brand trust for each brand. The envelopes that contained the cards were then set aside and were analysed at a later stage.

The second step of the card scoring methodology involved questions on brand trust. Referring to the same six brands from step 1, the researcher asked the respondents whether they associated any of the brands as authentic, and the answer was either yes or no. These responses were captured (Appendix B) as part of the pretest. When a respondent answered yes, the researcher would ask a follow-up question to name the brand they deemed as most authentic. If KFC was mentioned as a most authentic brand, then the researcher further asked the respondent in what way they believed that KFC is authentic. This follow-up question was only asked if the respondent was aware of or had mentioned KFC.

The following steps were then involved, showing a respondent the KFC Add Hope CRM campaign advertisements (see Appendix C), however, this step was not done for the control group. For post-test, the first group of respondents was asked to allocate the cards according to how they felt after viewing the KFC Add Hope adverts, while the others were asked but not shown the KFC adverts.

The third step of the methodology was the post-test step of the methodology. Here the researcher provided the respondents with a new set of cards, without informing them how many they are, as well as six envelopes with the selected fast-food restaurant brand logos on each envelope: Wimpy, Steers, KFC, Nando's, Debonairs, and

McDonald's. In this step, only the experiment group was shown the KFC Add Hope campaign, then asked how they felt about KFC. The respondents in the control group did not see any artwork from the KFC CRM campaign. The respondents in the control group were also then asked: How do you now feel? For the final step, both groups of respondents were then asked to allocate the cards to these six brands again.

3.5.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

As a follow-up measurement, a short questionnaire was used to enhance and highlight the independent variables; brand trust and CRM (Nhedzi, 2015). The pretest-posttest control group design was combined with the card scoring method. This method enabled the researcher to compare the respondents' responses from the questionnaire by evaluating cards votes of the control group from the treatment group. Results from an experimental study such as this are highly regarded as providing superior evidence than nonexperimental methods for claims relating to causes (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016).

The items for measuring the constructs used the conceptual framework as shown below. The researcher approached the brand authenticity and the brand trust scales as second-order constructs. First, measuring brand authenticity (i.e., continuity, credibility, integrity, and originality) was done using a four-point scale instrument, consist of 16 indicators, which range from 1 = very strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree (based on Bruhn *et al.*, 2012; Huberts, 2018; Portal *et al.*, 2019).

Second, brand trust was developed from Delgado-Ballester's (2004) eight component scale. Specifically, four items of brand reliability and brand intentions were placed on a four-point Likert scales instrument, which ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Third, CRM (five items were captured using a four-point Likert scales instrument which ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. In this dissertation, this CRM scale was adapted from Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa (2004).

Fourth, the demographic characteristics of respondents were measured, namely gender, age, highest qualification, employment status, race, and monthly household income.

The questionnaire was useful for exploring the confirmation of the experimental results (Nhedzi, 2015). Based on statistical analysis, the results confirmed that all the measures used were reliable. Several controlling factors of the questionnaire were used to describe the respondents' age, education, employment status, ethnicity, gender, and income.

3.6 VALIDITY

Two important measuring instruments for this study were reliability and validity. Internal validity is defined as being concerned with the conclusion that independent variables are responsible for the variation in the dependant variable (Nhedzi, 2015). Internal reliability relates to the study's design and shows how much the researcher manipulated one or more independent variable(s) (as treatment), effecting changes in the independent variable (Rogers & Révész, 2020). For this study, the independent variable: viewing versus not viewing the CRM campaign. Dependent variable: form recognition and perceived trust. The internal variables for this study refer to the experimental procedures, experiences, or treatments of the respondents that could threaten the ability to obtain the correct inferences from the data about the population in the experiment (Cresswell, 2014:162 -164).

Below are the internal validity threats for the study and how they were dealt with:

Table 3.2: Internal validity threats

Threat	How it was dealt with
History	No external events occurred during the experiment.
Maturation	The respondents' change or mature during the experiment was equally shared through random allocation.
Experimental mortality	No respondents abandoned the experiment as it was short, and the same number made it through to the end.

Treatment's diffusion	The difference between the groups was not due to testing, as both groups of the study had pretest exposure.
Instrumentation	Same instruments were used in pretests and post-tests, or the same researcher administrated a measurement tool.
Statistical regression	This was not deemed problematic as no equal results were noted between the groups due to randomisation.
Selection	The random allocation of respondents to groups ensured that selection bias was avoided.
Demand characteristics	A single-blinded interventional trial was used consistently for all respondents.
Participant-predisposition effect	a single-blinded interventional trial was utilised consistently to all respondents.
Experimenter-expectancy effect	The researcher, while communicating, was aware of her bias and used similar instructions, and was attentive to accurate recording, analysis, and interpretation of data.

Source: Kaya (2015), Campbell and Stanley (1963)

Maturation refers to the processes within respondents that result as time passes, and this internal validity threat was dealt with as both the experimental and control group were treated equally (Kaya, 2015). The four groups underwent the same activities, except for the intervention, which ensured that the threat of history was well dealt with.

Purposive sampling was used for this study, meaning that the results cannot be imputed for larger populations (Creswell, 2018:172). This study's aim was to unpack the impact of the true experiment intervention and remove other influencing factors within the comparison groups; hence, the pretest -posttest control group design was adopted, as this was the most suitable due to the high internal validity had. Randomisation of participants ensured control of extraneous variables as the respondents were equally distributed among the groups (Nhedzi 2015). The unaware and aware groups were randomly assigned to either the control or experiment group. Standardising and uniformity of the delivery of the intervention to all respondents is

one of the requirements for strong validity (Gorard, Roberts & Taylor, 2004:584). The threat of instrumentation, which refers to changes of the instrument or observers when measuring, was dealt with by ensuring that a fixed measuring instrument was used, in this case, the card sorting method and questionnaire.

How a study sets up as a trustworthy cause and effect relationship between an outcome and a treatment is known as internal validity. The internal validity of research studies could potentially be harmed because experiments can be influenced by extraneous variables (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Human, 2016:20).

The researcher ensured a strict coherence of the method, analysis, and conclusions to enhance the scientific validity. As established by the proposed paradigm, this is regarded as a reality within the theory of science, with specific conclusions drawn from questions in the introduction. The pilot study that the researcher did ensure that there confounding threats to the validity were avoided, hence why pretesting was done before the experiment was carried out. The researcher was attentive to the various threats during the pilot study, and this ensured that the study was built on logical progression, with conclusions being drawn from logical reasoning.

Lastly, all the respondents were part of the experiment until the end, which ensured no threat to experimental mortality.

INTERNAL VALIDITY

The pretest-posttest control group design has merits, for it is regarded as an experimental design with the highest internal validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Bordens & Abbott, 2014; Babbie & Mouton, 2015; Nhedzi, 2015; Gravetter & Forzano, 2018), however, its external validity is not regarded the same. Making generalisations of a population from a sample drawn from a study is not always feasible due to how controlled the variables are, which have the potential to jeopardise a study's internal validity, which can then compromise external validity (Nhedzi, 2015).

The researcher took several measures to prevent the possible negative effect of extraneous variables. Each respondent only participated once, making the threat of mortality and maturation irrelevant to the study. For threats of maturation, none was anticipated as respondents were equally allocated to the control and experiment groups. The study used card scoring; a fixed measuring instrument, so this validity threat was not a problem (Nhedzi *et al.*, 2016). The card scoring being non-verbal meant that it could not influence the respondents or what was being tested by the experimental variable. Randomly assigning female and male subjects to the experiment groups addressed the potential selection effects and insufficient realism (Cresswell & Creswell 2018:170). The threat of mortality effects and maturation was irrelevant as each respondent participated once.

3.7 RELIABILITY

Within a quantitative study, reliability refers to the consistency of the measure, replicability, and dependability of a study over time, over experimental groups of respondents with similar characteristics and instruments (Nhedzi, 2015). The measure needs to be consistent and stable in order to produce the same answers or measurements over time from varying researchers (Nhedzi, 2020).

There are various methods to deal with reliability, including verifying findings of research workers through training and replication, using established measures, test-retest method, and statistical split-half methods.

The instrument was assessed by a Meritas professor with more than 30 years of academic research experience in marketing communication. The instrument and questionnaire constructs were developed through consultation with a senior statistician from a university and an experienced researcher who holds a Ph.D. in marketing communications.

The researcher consistently followed the same procedure when conducting the research by using the card scoring method and questionnaire, from when the pilot study was carried out all the way through to conducting the main study. This ensured

that intrarater reliability was observed, as this is defined as the consistency in which measurements are taken by an individual (Nhedzi, 2015).

Test-retest reliability refers to achieving similar test scores when respondents are given the same test more than once. The pilot study tested the experimental design's main measuring instrument (card scoring method), which had already been established as effective in previous studies (Nhedzi, 2015). However, the card scoring method has not been used within the context of testing the influence of brand trust as well as CRM from a consumer's viewpoint. Therefore, to test the reliability of this measuring instrument, another researcher will have to repeat this research design to test brand authenticity's effect.

The reliability of the questionnaire and its seven dimensions has been similar with the use of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient α statistic as evidence of instruments from a previous study with the marketing mix, "The Image of Institutions of Higher Education and Student Satisfaction" (Brkanlić, Sánchez-García, Esteve & Brkić, 2020). Cronbach's alpha coefficient refers to static generally utilised by researchers to determine that the assessments and scales that have been created or adapted for the study are suitable for research determination. A coefficient is utilised to estimate the extent of internal consistency of the instrument, that is, the reliability of the scale or test.

Table 3.3: The questionnaire reliability dimensions

Dimension	Number of items	α
BRAND AUTHENTICITY		
Continuity	4	.843
Integrity	2	.639
Credibility	4	.929
Originality	4	.819
BRAND TRUST		
Intentions	4	.812
Reliability	4	.893

CRM	5	.723
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3.8 DATA GATHERING

The next section covers a discussion on the sample, the treatment of variables, the questionnaire measure scale, ethical considerations, the pilot study that the researcher carried out before conducting the main study, the operationalisation of measures, as well as how the pretest and posttest experiment was conducted and the questionnaire and the data analysis.

3.8.1 SAMPLE

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique form of a nonprobability strategy in selecting of respondents. This sample of respondents was selected for this study based on accessibility to the researcher and the respondents willingness to participate (Rutterford, 2012). Babbie and Mouton (2015) argue that intervention research with a group that is geographically bound and small provides the researcher, the possibility to obtain more reliable results regarding the effectiveness of an intervention. The sample consisted of adults above 18, and these respondents were obtained using voluntary willingness to participate. This method of sampling is common among many academic studies (Nhedzi, 2016). Previous researchers claim that the robustness of any sample depends more on the careful selection of respondents rather than its size (Mooi, Sarstedt & Mooi-Reci, 2018:47; Boreham et al, 2020). This target sample will most likely have some buying power, and their lifestyle is typical with consumption from fast-food restaurants. Most studies in social sciences and behavioural research rarely use probability sampling and thus random samples (Memon et al., 2017). Among the reasons is the unavailability of the sampling frame. This study had practical problem as details about the customers was not necessary for this study. The representation of the general population was not necessary for this study, as the purpose was to analyse the difference between comparison groups following exposure to the experiment intervention (Kirk, 2009).

The experiment was carried out in Johannesburg in South Africa, and the selection criteria included several shopping malls and worksites in Johannesburg. The capital

city was chosen, as it was deemed most suitable to have a greater reflection of the population at large, however, one cannot input for the larger population as purposive sampling was used.

The sample chosen was to establish causal relationships between the three variables; brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. According to Babbie and Mouton (2009: 212-213), this type of research increases internal validity as it makes use of random allocation to compare the different groups, excluding the exposure of the experiment variable or intervention. The study considered the randomisation into four groups and the adequacy of the sample size for statistical analyses.

To test the propositions of this study, card scoring was used. The primary research method for the study was the experiment used to establish causation.

Data for the main study was collected from 2 December 2020 to 18 March 2021 from 151 people after a pilot study of 30 participants. The researcher obtained a sufficient sample size to enable data analysis of the results. A response rate of 100% was achieved, with all 151 questionnaires, as respondents of the study left their completed questionnaire with the researcher, which they completed anonymously.

3.8.2 TREATMENT OF VARIABLES

The treatment that was used for this study was a CRM campaign. The researcher chose KFC as the brand of choice because a literature gap exists where brand authenticity has not been explored in the context of a fast-food brand within a developing country. KFC is a significant brand within the food industry in both the USA and across the globe. Yum! Brands are the mother brand for KFC and other food chains such as Taco Bell and Pizza Hut (KFC, 2012).

KFC's advantage over competitors lies in its alignment to market recognition of specialisation, service, and product differentiation (KFC, 2020). KFC is expanding its international markets by utilising its differentiation, cost leadership strategy, and corporate social responsibility, which enables it to run sustainably. The founder of KFC Colonel Harland Sanders' mantra for the brand, was to deliver food quickly in a good

environment, appealing to health-minded and proud consumers (KFC, 2020). KFC's branding is sculpted around Colonel Sanders' white suit, black tie, and goatee that has become a symbol of delicious fried chicken, making KFC one of the most recognised brands across the globe (KFC, 2020).

KFC capitalises on the diversity and dedication of its stakeholders, demonstrated by the brand's commitment to consumer satisfaction and strategic skill. This stakeholder collaboration gives KFC its competitive advantage within the quick service restaurant (QSR) industry (KFC, 2020). KFC's core makes it unique and is engraved in the brand's identity resulting in successful franchises. KFC's global market share continues to increase due to the effective and well-planned implementation of its strategy pillars: service, quality, cleanliness, and value (KFC, 2020).

CSR can drive a company's local and international perceptions, a key pillar that KFC fully utilises to stay ahead of its competitors (KFC, 2020). KFC is known to be generous, with the KFC foundation assisting more than 4 500 students and KFC employees' children in attending college. The KFC Foundation has provided over US\$17 million, with these contributions coming from the KFC corporation and franchises (KFC, 2020). KFC's CSR programs focus on all markets, including emerging economies such as Brazil, India, and China, with food, people, communities, and the environment (KFC, 2020).

Without the community, CSR will have few positive perceptions and impact within societies (KFC, 2020). KFC's giving back is part of their DNA that started with Colonel Sanders giving a full scholarship to a student. KFC's primary focus is on volunteerism, world hunger relief, harvest food donation, and local community engagement (KFC, 2020). The CSR initiatives that KFC enrolls in are why the researcher has chosen to use this case study within CRM. 44 million meals were given to children and women Through the KFC Add Hope initiative in 2015 and US\$11 million cash and food donations were provided to hunger alleviating organisations (KFC, 2020).

In a report, KFC employees are recorded to have done over 40 000 hours of voluntary work with charities and within communities (KFC, 2020). Globally, KFC ensures that it is deeply rooted in the communities. KFC is a proud sponsor of the mini-cricket

programme in South Africa, promoting active balanced living for children and also the Add Hope initiative feeding millions of children within the country (KFC, 2020).

3.8.3 QUESTIONNAIRE MEASURE SCALE

The first section of the self-administered questionnaires used for this study contained 28 items relating to brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. Of these 16 items related to brand authenticity, with four subconstructs items each on continuity, integrity, originality, and credibility from Bruhn *et al.* (2012;26), Huberts (2018:45) and Portal *et al.* (2019) ($\alpha = .81$), four indicators or items were adapted from Bruhn *et al.* (2012) ($\alpha = .86$). Eight items for brand trust with four subconstructs items, each taken and improved from Robinson and Clifford (2012) ($\alpha = .93$). Five items related to CRM ($\alpha = .93$) were based on Vanhonacker *et al.* (2010). A 4-point Likert type scale was utilised in this study (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree).

The researcher requested participants fill in the following demographic profile on the questionnaire: gender, age, ethnicity, family income, and marital status.

3.8.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As defined by the Code of Academic and Research Ethics of the Vega School, ethical considerations are defined as guiding values and principles that address what is described as good or bad with regard to varying circumstances.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher informed the respondents of who she was what institution she was associated with and informed the respondents on what was required of them for the study. Informed participation consent for this study was obtained. Ethical principles in the form of voluntary participation, respect for the respondent rights to withdraw from the experiment at any stage or choose not to disclose any information they would not prefer to, as well as confidentiality (Wassenaar, 2008; Nhedzi, 2016). The questionnaire was anonymous, and the researcher ensured that respondents were respected and no personal information was obtained. This ensured that no power imbalance or exploitation occurred. Respondents provided the researcher their consent and permission for data obtained

from this study to be documented as anonymous. Permission for participation in the study was requested and obtained as voluntary. No data about an individual or consideration as a respondent was utilised for this study without prior agreement to participate (Wassenaar, 2008; Nhedzi, 2016). No incentives were offered to the respondents at any stage during this experiment.

The researcher randomly allocated participants using a spontaneous single-blinding trial to avoid any brand factors that could offer brand knowledge and affect positioning. The researcher included distractor items in the tests to control the possibility of the pretest potentially sensitising respondents to the experiment. For example, five other fast-food restaurants alongside KFC. This is unpacked in detail in the research design procedure section of this study.

After the respondents were done with the experiment and completed the questionnaire, the researcher debriefed them to explain further what the full study was about and allowed them to ask questions. Respondents' anonymity and privacy were respected, and aliases were created during the experiments.

Once the experiments were completed, the researcher reported honestly and did not falsify data, findings, evidence, authorship, and conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:167). The researcher also ensured that all work adapted from others was correctly referenced and not plagiarised. The data results will be shared with other researchers, and the researcher will consider website distribution.

3.8.5 PILOT TESTING

The researcher carried out a pilot study (N = 30) to check how the descriptive statistics and distributions of the measurement items and scales would be conducted for the main study (Mertler, 2021). Few revisions were made after the pilot test, and results showed reasonable validity and reliability of the three constructs. The pilot revealed few concerns on low Cronbach's Alpha on brand integrity and CRM items. After that, the main study was carried out (N = 151). At this stage, the experiment design was identical to the pilot study except for the two constructs that did not load high on

Cronbach's Alpha because of the required sample size needed for structural equation models and estimate measurements and cost constraints (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2019).

3.8.6 OPERATIONALISATION OF MEASURES

Brand trust as a single factor between subjects' design of this study. Nhedzi *et al.* (2016), in an experiment, used a similar pretest post-test control group design to evaluate whether there were significant differences in brand ratings between the four experiment groups.

Respondents of the experiment were randomly allocated into groups, and each participant received 99 cards. At both pretest and posttest, six envelopes with different fast-food logos were given, as well as a set of plain 99 cards. Respondents were then asked to allocate cards to each brand accordingly per envelope by assessing each brand.

3.8.7 ADMINISTERING PRETEST POST-TEST

Masking, also known as blinding, was used in the first phase of this study, and this process is defined as restricting knowledge about the research intervention from the respondents before they have been allocated to groups (Kirk, 2009). Blinding keeps the respondents unaware of the assigned interventions to not influence their responses (Kirk, 2009). It was important to ensure that the respondents were not aware of the intervention procedures as to avoid experiment bias (Kirk, 2009).

When the respondent remains unaware of the interventions throughout the trial, this is referred to as single-blinding (Kirk, 2009). The researcher used a single-blind procedure for this study and ensured that the respondents' intervention was not disclosed. The researcher also did not fully know of the respondents' intervention allocation. This was done to ensure that the researcher did not have any bias towards the respondents for desirable experimental outcomes (Rutterford, 2012). The single-blinding also ensured that neither the researcher nor the respondents knew the

groups, as this could have influenced the card allocations towards the different brands (Nhedzi, 2015).

3.8.8 ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

To meet the requirements of this study and experimental research, a self-administered questionnaire (a structured form that consisted of a series of closed-ended questions) was adapted for this study. It is called self-administers as the respondents filled it in themselves, without the researcher (Nhedzi, 2015). Data was required on consumers' perceptions about KFC to answer the research questions. The researcher using a self-administered questionnaire format ensured that the respondents were not disturbed nor interrupted while completing the questionnaire (Nhedzi, 2015). The respondents responses were entirely their own perceptions. The questionnaire evaluated brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. The questionnaire format was short of ensuring maximum data was collected timeously. The respondents had a code allocated to them at the top of the questionnaire, however, their identities remained anonymous. The questionnaires were all completed after the experiment.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical data analysis for the current research was IBM statistical package for social sciences (SPSS v.27) and SmartPLS 3.

3.9.1 ONE-WAY ANOVA

An ANOVA reports whether one or more significant differences among group levels exist, but it does not provide any information about specific group means to each other (Midway et al., 2020). The research ran the statistical test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Lipsey & Hurley, 2009:51). For the experiment outcomes whose value were continuous measures and considered to be statistically normal, it makes sense to compare groups means. One-way ANOVA followed by a multiple comparison test was used to compare the groups because it is considered the prototypical experimental design in which one trial or treatment group was compared with one

control group. To assess the effect of the intervention or treatment on consumers' scores on the KFC CRM, the researcher conducted a posthoc.

3.9.2 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

Previous studies suggest that the aim to estimate relationships among measures of theoretical concepts (Hair et al., 2022) use structural equation modelling (SEM). The social sciences inquiry routinely deal with theoretical concepts such as perceptions, attitudes and intentions, overcome limitations of first-generation techniques (Hair et al., 2022). Hence, to overcome the limitations of measurement errors, increasingly researchers have been turning to second- generation techniques referred to as SEM. SEM enables researchers to simultaneously model and estimate complex relationships among multiple dependent and independent variables. The concepts under consideration are typically unobservable and measured indirectly by multiple indicators. In estimating the relationships, SEM accounts for measurement error in observed variables. As a result, the method is credited for obtaining a more precise measurement of the theoretical concepts of interest (Cole & Preacher, 2014). PLS has been introduced as a “causal-predictable” approach to SEM, which focuses on explaining the variance in the model's dependent variables (Chin et al., 2020). PLS-SEM that is evolving rapidly as a statistical modelling technique, the current study utilised partial least squares (PLS-SEM also called PLS path modeling), with normal data distribution not being required due to PLS-SEM having merits that are not usually distributed in data analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Bootstrapping was used because, with the non-normal data, it produced peaked and skewed distributions. PLS-SEM's statistical properties provide very robust model estimations with data that have normal as well as extremely non-normal (i.e., skewness and/or kurtosis) distributional properties (Hair et al., 2022). Due to its less stringent data requirements, PLS-SEM offers the flexibility needed for the interplay between theory and data (Nitzl, 2016). Using bias corrected and accelerated (BCA) bootstrapping routine, to a level, handled these issues, as it adjusted the confidence intervals for skewness (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). Bootstrapping was used to determine statistical significance as PLS-SEM refers to a non-parametric technique (Hair et al., 2019).

In order to evaluate the PLS-SEM models, the researcher utilised the SmartPLS 3 software with a graphical interface. PLS-SEM assumes the concepts of interest can be measured as composites, which is the reason PLS is considered a composite-cased SEM method (Hwang et al., 2020). Hair *et al.* (2017) postulated that Bca bootstrap confidence intervals for testing significance in situations where the bootstrap distribution of the indicator weights is skewed. Validity refers to evaluating both theory and practical meanings of the concepts to be evaluated (Ramayah *et al.*, 2018). The three-validity analysis is construct validity that consists of convergent validity, content validity, discriminant validity, and criterion validity, including reliability analysis.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The research design of the study was covered in this chapter, with the first part of the chapter dealing with the philosophical orientation of the research and the approach that was used. The sample data procedure, unpacking the experimental design, card scoring methodology, questionnaire administration, pilot testing, internal and external validity, and the study's reliability were also discussed.

The next chapter discusses the findings and interpretation of the experiment and questionnaire results.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous discussion detailed the research methodology, the measuring instruments, and the procedures. The research was conducted in two consecutive parts. Firstly, a pretest control group design experiment was conducted to test the impact of the treatment variables (i.e., exposure to the KFC CRM initiatives) on the ratings of respondents. This was carried out through a card scoring instrument where the number of cards allocated to a particular brand pre-exposure and post-exposure was an indication of respondents' rating of the brand following exposure. The nonverbal card scoring method was intentionally chosen as it provides the most direct measure of rating, as though a respondent would put their vote or money, without developing a conceptual instrument to measure brand preferences or perceptions.

Secondly, the data was collected using the questionnaire, which respondents completed immediately after the experiment, were dealt with in the second part of the research. The purpose of the questionnaire was to indicate respondents' perceptions of the brand being tested as well as to shed more light on the findings of the experiment. In this case, the brand that was under consideration was KFC and its Add Hope CRM initiative.

4.2 FINDINGS

The next session is on the demographic data of respondents.

4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Prior to the discussion on a statistical analysis of all key construct measurements, a discussion on demographic statistics of the sampled respondents follows first. The completed questionnaires were 151. There were 75 males (49,7%) and 76 females (50,3%) respondents. The majority of those respondents were in the 25-38 age bracket (60,9%). The largest proportion (59%) of the participants in the study indicated their race as black African. The largest proportion (33,8%) of respondents had tertiary

degree education in terms of educational status. Slightly more than half (51.7%) of respondents had been employed (receiving a monthly salary or wages). Based on self-reported gross monthly income status, less than half (25.8%) of respondents had a monthly household income above R30 000. Below Table 4.1 presents the attempts to gauge the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 4.1: Respondent Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	75	49.7%
Female	76	50.3%
Age		
18-24 years	34	22,5%
25-38 years	92	60,9%
39-54 years	24	15,9%
55-73 years	1	0,7%
Ethnicity		
Black African	89	58,9%
White	30	19,9%
Coloured	23	15,2%
Indian or Asian	9	6,0%
Highest academic qualification		
High School	28	18,5%
Certificate/Diploma	48	31,8%
Degree	51	33,8%
Postgraduate	22	14,6%
Other	2	1,3%
Employment status		
Employed	78	51,7%
Self-employed	21	13,9%
Unemployed	24	15,9%
Student	28	18,5%

Retired	0	0
Monthly Household Income		
>R5 000	3	2,0%
R 5001 – R10 000	21	13,9%
R10 0001 – R20 000	44	29,1%
R20 001 – R30 000	44	29,1%
>R30 000	39	25,8%

The following section concentrates on the descriptive statistics concerning card scored on experiment design.

4.2.2 EXPERIMENT – CARD SCORING RESULTS

During the pretest-posttest, participants were allocated 99 cards in terms of trust on CRM initiatives of the brands. The approach automatically uses participants' awareness or lack of awareness of the CRM initiatives and gathers how their perceptions are projected to change a specified treatment. The respondents were randomly assigned to four groups:

- Group 1: 29.15 (n=44) aware experiment (AE) group, in which respondents who mentioned CRM R2 initiatives being linked to KFC and was shown the advertisement;
- Group 2: 29.8% (n=45) aware control group (AC) group, in which the respondents were aware of the KFC CRM initiatives and then were not shown any advertisement;
- Group 3: 20.5% (n=31) unaware experiments (UE) group, in which the respondents had not mentioned CRM R2 being linked to KFC and were shown the advertisement;
- Group 4: 20.5% (n=31) unaware control (UC) group, in which respondents were not shown any advertisement.

As a rule of thumb, the study had sufficient statistical power ranging between 30 to 40 participants, which seemed sufficient for the experimental conditions for the total number reached 151 (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). The number of participants

required is 105 to 220 related to the pairwise post hoc tests (Brysbaert, 2019:16). For reasons to improve statistical power, the researcher was able to obtain “big enough” participants per group to examine the true effect based on statistically significant of the scientific scored so that the researcher observed a treatment or intervention effect when it occurred. The age, education levels, and professional and other relevant characteristics of the population were heterogeneous due to random allocation into subgroups. Control trials for the experiment need control of bias through randomised allocations. To randomly allocate respondents across the four groups because their prognostic factors (such as., sociodemographic variables) are comparable, in an attempt to maintain respondents’ results similar at baseline (Nhedzi, 2020).

4.2.3 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The next section is a description of findings from the questionnaire.

4.2.3.1 DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

When analysing the responses, the majority of the respondents (92.1%) believed that KFC remains true to itself and has a known concept that it focuses on (92.7%), while 88.4% agreed that the brand was consistent over time. The largest proportion (75.1%) of the respondents agreed that KFC is fair; however, only 51% believed KFC to be honest, and 50.4% believed the brand to be true to a set of moral values. When testing for brand originality, KFC scored highly among the respondents, with 96% agreeing that KFC uniquely distinguishes itself from other restaurant brands, and by far, most respondents (93.4%) agreed that KFC stands out from other brands.

A total of 78.8% of the respondents’ experience with KFC showed them that the brand keeps its promises, with 77.5% also agreeing that the brand delivers what it promises. The majority of the respondents (82.2%) indicated that KFC meets their expectations and that they feel confident in the brand (80.2%). Although more than two-thirds (78.8%) of the respondents believed that KFC was honest and sincere in addressing consumers’ concerns, only 39.7% indicated that KFC would compensate the consumers in some way if a product had a problem.

When unpacking CRM, the majority (83.4%) of respondents’ trust KFC to keep their best interests in mind when making a corporate donation to a cause or charity, and

72.2% believe the information KFC provides with its corporate donations. The overall results for CRM show that respondents viewed KFC and its involvement in charity causes and donations positively. More than half (68.9%) of the respondents believe that KFC will keep the promises it makes to them on making donations to charity and causes, as well as 56.3% indicating that KFC is a brand that wants to be known for keeping its promises and commitments of its corporate donations to a charity or a cause.

Table 4.2: Perception of brand continuity

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I think the brand is consistent over time	Count	6	12	60	73	151
	Row N %	4.0%	7.9%	39.7%	48.3%	100.0%
I think the brand is true to itself	Count	5	7	59	80	151
	Row N %	3.3%	4.6%	39.1%	53.0%	100.0%
Brand offers continuity	Count	5	3	87	56	151
	Row N %	3.3%	2.0%	57.6%	37.1%	100.0%
The brand has a clear concept that it pursues.	Count	1	10	45	95	151
	Row N %	0.7%	6.6%	29.8%	62.9%	100.0%

Table 4.3: Perception of brand integrity

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
The brand is true to a set of moral values	Count	22	53	62	14	151
	Row N %	14.6%	35.1%	41.1%	9.3%	100.0%
The brand is honest	Count	5	69	63	14	151
	Row N %	3.3%	45.7%	41.7%	9.3%	100.0%
The brand is fair	Count	1	35	108	7	151
	Row N %	0.7%	23.2%	71.5%	4.6%	100.0%
The brand is responsible	Count	11	44	76	20	151
	Row N %	7.3%	29.1%	50.3%	13.2%	100.0%

Table 4.4: Perception of brand originality

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands	Count	1	5	48	97	151
	Row N %	0.7%	3.3%	31.8%	64.2%	100.0%
The brand stands out from other brands	Count	7	3	40	101	151
	Row N %	4.6%	2.0%	26.5%	66.9%	100.0%
I think the brand is unique	Count	4	17	37	93	151
	Row N %	2.6%	11.3%	24.5%	61.6%	100.0%
The brand makes a genuine impression	Count	1	19	64	67	151
	Row N %	0.7%	12.6%	42.4%	44.4%	100.0%

Table 4.5: Perception of brand credibility

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
My experience with the brand has shown me that it keeps its promise	Count	5	27	95	24	151
	Row N %	3.3%	17.9%	62.9%	15.9%	100.0%
The brand delivers what it promises	Count	2	32	96	21	151
	Row N %	1.3%	21.2%	63.6%	13.9%	100.0%
The brand promises are credible	Count	6	36	95	14	151
	Row N %	4.0%	23.8%	62.9%	9.3%	100.0%
The brand makes reliable promises	Count	7	35	93	16	151
	Row N %	4.6%	23.2%	61.6%	10.6%	100.0%

Table 4.6: Perception of brand reliability

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	
I think this brand meets my expectations	Count	9	18	62	62	151
	Row N %	6.0%	11.9%	41.1%	41.1%	100.0%
I feel confident in the brand	Count	10	20	67	54	151
	Row N %	6.6%	13.2%	44.4%	35.8%	100.0%
The brand always satisfies me	Count	9	48	61	33	151
	Row N %	6.0%	31.8%	40.4%	21.9%	100.0%
The brand name guarantees satisfaction	Count	5	34	45	67	151
	Row N %	3.3%	22.5%	29.8%	44.4%	100.0%

Table 4.7: Perception of brand intention

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	
The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns	Count	7	25	107	12	151
	Row N %	4.6%	16.6%	70.9%	7.9%	100.0%
I could rely on the brand name to solve the problem	Count	6	54	80	11	151
	Row N %	4.0%	35.8%	53.0%	7.3%	100.0%
The brand would make an effort to satisfy me	Count	9	38	93	11	151
	Row N %	6.0%	25.2%	61.6%	7.3%	100.0%
The brand compensates me in some way for the problem with the product	Count	36	55	47	13	151

Row N %	23.8%	36.4%	31.1%	8.6%	100.0%
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Table 4.8: Perception of cause-related marketing

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I trust this brand keeps my best interests in mind with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	Count	6	19	65	61	151
	Row N %	4.0%	12.6%	43.0%	40.4%	100.0%
This brand will keep the promises it makes to me with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	Count	13	34	86	18	151
	Row N %	8.6%	22.5%	57.0%	11.9%	100.0%
I believe in the information that this brand provides me with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	Count	5	37	79	30	151
	Row N %	3.3%	24.5%	52.3%	19.9%	100.0%
This brand wants to be known as the one that keeps promises and commitment of its corporate donation to a charity or cause	Count	24	42	59	26	151
	Row N %	15.9%	27.8%	39.1%	17.2%	100.0%

The following discussion is on the descriptive statistics about principal component analysis of fast-food brand authenticity factors.

4.2.3.2 PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS OF FAST-FOOD BRAND AUTHENTICITY FACTORS

The researcher performed a principal component analysis (PCA) on items applied to brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM variables.

The researcher considered a principal component with promax for oblique factor rotation on the independent variables determining brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM items. PCA is used to statistically obtain a quite small number of items to apply to deliver as much of the data in the observed or measured variables and determine similarities among items (Tabachnik & Fidel, 2013).

The first PCA test had three items with double loading. As a result, the items were removed before the final PCA test was conducted. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KOM) is .917, and so all items were greater than .7 is satisfactory (Kaiser, 1974). The Bartlett test is significant ($p < .001$), which is good and indicates that the correlations are not near zero. The Bartlett's sphericity test is statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlations are not factorable and not near zero, a good sign for sufficient correlation (Bartlett, 1950). For this study, Bartlett's Test results were statistically significant ($p < .005$) (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Results on rotated structure matrix principal component analysis rotation with promax rotation

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
BRAND AUTHENTICITY				
Continuity				
I think the brand is consistent over time		- 0,769		
I think the brand stays true to itself		- 0,754		

Brand offers continuity		- 0,822		
The brand has a clear concept that it pursues		- 0,747		
Integrity				
The brand is true to a set of moral values			0,792	
The brand is honest			0,874	
The brand is fair				
The brand is responsible	0,753			
Originality				
The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands				0,763
The brand stands out from other brands.				0,566
I think the brand is unique				0,763
The brand makes a genuine impression				0,678
Credibility				
My experience with the brand has shown me that it keeps its promises	0,872			
The brand delivers what it promises	0,828			
The brand's promises are credible	0,797			
The brand makes reliable promises	0,803			
BRAND TRUST				
Reliability				
I think this brand meets my expectations	0,962			
I feel confident in the brand	0,902			
The brand always satisfies me	0,641			
The name guarantees satisfaction	0,858			
Intentions				
The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns		0,798		
I could rely on the brand name to solve the problem		0,674		
The brand would make efforts to satisfy me		0,828		
The brand would compensate me in some way for the problem with the product		0,838		
CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING				
The brand is trustworthy with its corporate donations to cause or charity	0,446			
I trust this brand keeps my best interests in mind with its corporate donations to a cause or charity	0,797			

This brand will keep the promises it makes to me with its corporate donation to a cause or charity	0,799			
I believe in the information that this brand provides me with its corporate donation to a cause or charity	0,785			
This brand wants to be known as one which keeps promises and commitments with its corporate donation to a cause or charity	0,591			

Table 4.10: KMO and Bartlett's Test for brand authenticity

Kayser Meyer Olkin of Sampling Adequacy		0.841
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	140.253
	df	120
	Sig.	0.000

Table 4.11: KMO and Bartlett's Test for brand trust

Kayser Meyer Olkin of Sampling Adequacy		0.856
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	638.874
	df	28
	Sig.	0.000

Table 4.12: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kayser Meyer Olkin of Sampling Adequacy		0.754
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	162.621
	df	10
	Sig.	0.000

The researcher used one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparisons between four data set groups. The statistical test compared the variance in the group means within a sample whilst considerations were made only for one independent variable or factor (Seltman, 2018; Palant, 2020). The participants were exposed to only one treatment, in which case the treatment variable was being applied "between-subjects" in a random assignment of treatment to experiment groups. Random assignments assured that all of the potential confounding variables are equal on average among the treatment groups. Blinding (masking) was another main component of internal validity. Blinding signifies that the respondents were prohibited from realising which level of intervention they had received during the experiment (Nhedzi, 2020).

4.2.3.4 RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Internal consistency is described as the level to which all of the items of a test measure the identical construct, that is, general factor satisfaction (Hair *et al.*, 2019). To examine the interitem consistency of the measurement items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with composite reliability values was used for this present study. The researcher applied the PLS-SEM's rule of thumb in interpreting the results, as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2019). "Reliability is [about] the degree of consistency exhibited when a measurement is [represented] under identical conditions" (Porta, 2014:300). Cronbach's Alpha [assess] "the internal consistency of the scale items that is the degree to which the set of items in the scale covary, relative to their sum score" (DeVellis, 2012:27). An alpha coefficient of .6 has been frequently deemed a standard reliability threshold, while others advocate for .7, .8, and .95 as preferred for quality scales (DeVellis, 2012). In this study, the mixture of reliability should be for exploratory studies have a minimum of .6 while for established scales .7 and higher. According to Hair *et al.* (2017), Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability value that is acceptable have to be higher than 7. As depicted in Table 4.13, the reliability of the measurement scale was measured in relation to composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the values were greater than the recommended cut-off of .7 with one item scoring .6 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). Hence, construct reliability was confirmed.

Tables 4.13: Convergent validity and measurement model

Latent Variable	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand_Authenticity			.805	.853	.391
Brand_Continuity	BAC1 BAC2 BAC3 BAC4	.925 . .757	.843	.832	.715
Brand_Credibility	BACR1 BACR2 BACR3 BACR4	.897 .934 . .920	.929	.941	.841
Brand_Integrity	BAI1 BAI2 BAI3	.427 .188 .964	.639	.574	.382
Brand_Intentions	BTI1 BTI2 BTI3 BTI4	.829 .787 .814 .766	.812	.876	.639

Brand_Originality	BAO1	.741	.819	.866	.684
	BAO2				
	BAO3	.888			
	BAO4	.846			
Brand_Reliability	BTR1	.907	.893	.933	.823
	BTR2	.930			
	BTR3				
	BTR4	.883			
Brand_Trust			.850	.886	.528
Cause Related _Marketing	CRM1	.438	.723	.819	.500
	CRM2	.790			
	CRM3	.778			
	CRM4	.816			
	CRM5	.588			

4.2.3.5 CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Consistent with Hair *et al.* (2014:37) “convergent validity refers to the extent to which a construct measured in different ways yields similar results.” As a result, it is the extent to which scores on the considered scores on the instrument are related to measures of other constructs that can be anticipated on theoretical forms to be close to one selected into by this instrument (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The authors also suggest that two measures of the same construct are correlated (Hair *et al.*, 2014) hence the researcher used the factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). “All the items’ loadings [are supposed to] be over the recommended value of .7” (Hair *et al.*, 2011:139). Furthermore, the composite reliability values that reflect the level to which the construct indicators reveal the latent variables and they should also be higher than .7 is recommended (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Except for the integrity value (.57), all other composite reliability values ranged from 8.19 to .941, as emphasised in Table 4.13, demonstrating good internal consistency reliability values for this study.

Evidence of the AVE measures showing loading of higher than .50 to capture the indicators relative to measurement error was suggested to explain the application of the construct (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Table 4.13 shows that the AVE ranged from .500 to .841, which were all within the range. For this reason, the entire latent variables satisfied the threshold value and were considered to meet the suggested convergent validity standard except for integrity (.382).

4.2.3.6 DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminant validity is “the extent to which a measure is novel and not simply a reflection of some other construct,” implying the distinctiveness of the construct or minimally correlate with one another (Hair *et al.*, 2014:). Precisely it’s a degree to which scores on the studied instrument are d separated from behavioural indicators of other constructs, which theoretically grounds can be expected not to be related to the construct underlying the instrument under examination (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The Fornell and Larcker’s criterion and the cross-loadings are the two proposed measures to investigate discriminant validity. Accordingly, a traditional metric was proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981:14), who “suggested that each construct’s AVE should be compared to a squared inter-construct, and all other reflectively measured constructs in the structural model.” The inter-construct is applied as a measure of shared variance. A low to moderate correlation is often considered evidence of discriminant validity (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019; Henseler, 2021). Discriminant validity is determined by comparing the square root of AVE against the correlations coefficients of other constructs. This comparison should show that each latent variable is bigger than the latent variable correlations (LVC) for it to be assessed as significant, which is depicted in Table 4.14. Table 4.14 shows that the square root of the AVE for the AVE of the value of brand continuity, brand credibility, brand integrity, brand intentions, brand reliability, and CRM is much larger than the corresponding LVC. Therefore, the Fornell and Larcker’s (1981) criterion is achieved as highlighted in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	AVE	Brand Authenticity	Brand Continuity	Brand Credibility	Brand Integrity	Brand Intentions	Brand Originality	Brand Reliability	Brand Trust	Cause Related Marketing
Brand Authenticity	0.391	0.625								
Brand Continuity	0.715	0.611	0.845							
Brand Credibility	0.841	0.894	0.365	0.917						
Brand Integrity	0.382	0.650	0.255	0.576	0.618					
Brand Intentions	0.639	0.518	0.146	0.533	0.542	0.799				
Brand Originality	0.684	0.798	0.496	0.527	0.307	0.294	0.827			
Brand Reliability	0.823	0.766	0.613	0.576	0.515	0.474	0.676	0.907		
Brand Trust	0.528	0.733	0.414	0.643	0.619	0.887	0.543	0.827	0.726	
Cause Related Marketing	0.487	0.381	0.035	0.384	0.390	0.591	0.263	0.400	0.592	0.698

4.2.3.7 HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATIO (HTMT)

To supplement the Fornell and Larcker's criterion, (Henseler *et al.*, 2015) proposed a more rigorous valuation of the discriminant validity variables through observation of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion (Roemer, Schuberth & Henseler, 2021). The HTMT ratio of correlations is defined as an estimate for the correlation between two latent variables (Henseler, 2021). To establish discriminant validity, we examine the mean value of the items correlations across constructs (i.e., variables that are not directly measurable) relative to the geometric mean of the average correlations for items measuring the same constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2019). For the judgment, the HTMT is an estimator for inter-construct correlation; if the correlations between two constructs exist, the predefined threshold value (Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Franke & Sarstedt, 2019) range from .85, which is considered a conservative benchmark, to a more liberal cut-off value of .9 or higher (Roemer *et al.*, 2021). Table 4.15 shows the values of HTMT for the model depicted in Figure 4.1; its elements are in the range from .368 to .816, and these indicate that all these values for all these variables are distinctively different at values below HTMT .90 except for brand continuity (.913) and brand trust (.954). Most of the outcome results of HTMT statistical inferences imply that the variables are distinctively different compared from one another, which confirms the discriminant validity.

Table 4.15: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Brand Authenticity	Brand Continuity	Brand Credibility	Brand Integrity	Brand Intentions	Brand Originality	Brand Reliability	Brand Trust	Cause Related Marketing
Brand Authenticity									
Brand Continuity	0.913								
Brand Credibility	0.940	0.435							
Brand Integrity	0.976	0.462	0.547						
Brand Intentions	0.629	0.254	0.619	0.693					
Brand Originality	0.996	0.701	0.634	0.386	0.368				
Brand Reliability	0.875	0.815	0.639	0.495	0.551	0.816			
Brand Trust	0.867	0.604	0.732	0.698	1.061	0.674	0.954		
Cause Related Marketing	0.590	0.341	0.467	0.730	0,63	0.361	0.479	0.732	

4.2.3.8 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING TESTING

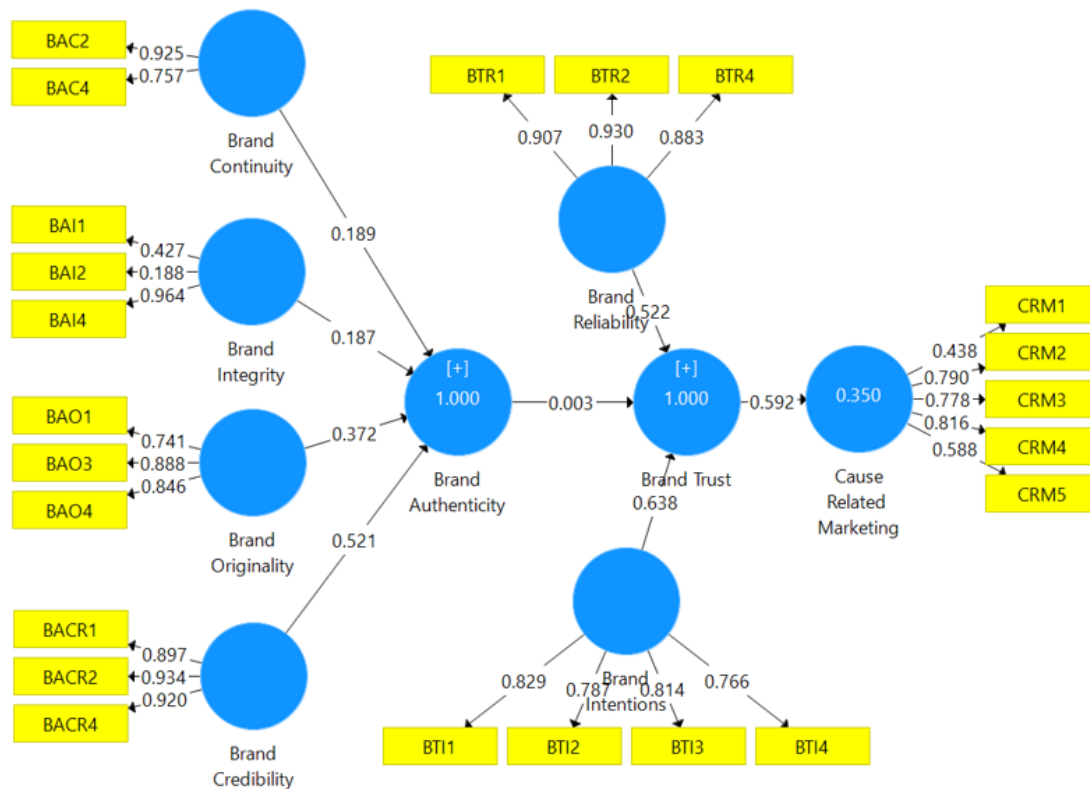
Hair *et al.* (2017) R^2 (coefficient of determination) and path coefficient and significance are the most frequently reported indicators to display the global fitness of a proposed model. Though much less reported are predictive relevance (Q^2), The blindfolding based on cross-validated redundancy measure, and the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients (Hair *et al.*, 2017). R^2 is a statistical measure of how close the data is to the fitted regression line, denoting the degree to which to manifest variables can explain latent variables. The R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher levels are indicated as predictive accuracy (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The path coefficient between latent variables indicates the degree of variation of other variables caused by the variation of the variable. The results of collinearity statistics (VIF) for BACR2 had the highest VIF value of 3.924. Hence, the VIF values are uniformly below the threshold value of .5. The researcher concludes that collinearity does not reach critical levels in any formative constructs and is not an issue for the estimation of the PLS path model. Table 4:16 and Figure 4.1 (significance of the path coefficients) demonstrate R^2 , path coefficients, indicated that the model has a generally good fit. Q^2 , which is critical to assessing a complex model's predictive validity, is also estimated and presented in Table 4.16. Table 4.16 illustrations Q^2 values of latent variables are greater than zero, which indicates the PLS path model had predictive relevance for this construct.

The PLS Algorithm Procedure used the bias correlated and accelerated bootstrapping steps to assess the an interaction effects and the control variables significance. This assessment of the significant control variables should rely on f^2 effect size to reflect their relevance for this research as Cohen (1988) suggests that the exogenous latent variable the f^2 is that values of .02, .15, and .35, respectively, represent small, medium, and large effects. Brand authenticity (.012) showed a small effect, while brand trust (.539) has a large effect size for f^2 values on CRM.

Table 4.16: Predictive relevance (Q^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	SSO	SSE	$Q^2(=1 - SSE/SSO)$
Brand Authenticity	1,000	1,000	0,016	0,013	1,000
Brand Trust	1,000	1,000	0,018	0,015	1,000
Cause Related Marketing	0,350	0,346	0,830	0,660	0,322

Figure 4.1: Significance of path coefficients



The path coefficients of the prediction model were in brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM. In path coefficients analysis, the factor of brand authenticity was greater than .7, the total effect p-value was smaller than .05., and $t > 3.29$ (Table 4:10) except for brand authenticity and brand trust. This shows that the exogenous formative construct in brand authenticity and brand trust can explain at least 50% of the variance of the endogenous construct CRM.

Table 4.17: Path coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T/Statistics (IO/STDEV)	P Values	2.5%	97.5%
Brand Authenticity - > Brand Trust	0,003	0,003	0,003	0,919	0,358	-0,002	0,010
Brand Continuity -> Brand Authenticity	0,189	0,186	0,025	7,664	*0,000	0,138	0,234
Brand Credibility -> Brand Authenticity	0,521	0,519	0,023	22,976	*0,000	0,477	0,567
Brand Integrity -> Brand Authenticity	0,187	0,195	0,035	5,352	*0,000	0,146	0,280
Brand Intentions -> Brand Trust	0,638	0,638	0,027	23,529	*0,000	0,588	0,696

Brand Originality -> Brand Authenticity	0,372	0,367	0,021	17,530	*0,000	0,323	0,410
Brand Reliability -> Brand Trust	0,522	0,521	0,028	18,780	*0,000	0,472	0,582
Brand Trust -> Cause Related Marketing	0,592	0,602	0,051	11,657	*0,000	0,494	0,695

**P* value is significantly smaller than 0.05.

This study shows that 100% of the latent variable brand authenticity can be explained by the exogenous variables, brand continuity (BC), brand integrity (BI), brand originality (BO), brand credibility (BC) ($R^2 = 1.000$), 100% of the latent variable brand trust (BT) can be explained by brand reliability (BR) and brand intentions (BI) ($R^2 = 1.000$), and 35% of cause-related marketing (CRM) can be explained by brand trust (BT) ($R^2 = .350$). From the variable coefficients, brand continuity (BC), brand integrity (BI), brand originality (BO), brand credibility (BC) have a significant impact on brand authenticity (BA), while brand reliability (BR) and brand intentions (BI) have a significant impact on brand trust (BT), among which brand trust (BT) has a significant impact on cause-related marketing (CRM). However, brand authenticity (BA) has a non-significant effect on brand trust (BT).

Table 4.16 demonstrates Q^2 values of latent variables are greater than zero, which illustrates the PLS PATH MODEL has predictive relevance for this construct.

4.3 DISCUSSION

In this part, the hypotheses are tested, which are outlined in section 1.5 of this dissertation. This section discusses the results found from the experiment and how these answer the research questions. In an inferential statistics analysis, conclusions and inferences are drawn from the population, and two hypotheses proposed in this study are either supported or rejected by the data collected.

1. What is the impact of brand trust on consumers' ratings of brand?

During the experiment, participants were asked whether they were aware of any of the six fast-food brands (Wimpy, KFC, Steers, Nando's, Chicken Licken, and McDonald's) were associated with charity initiatives in any way. Data was collected by recording it in a short questionnaire. There were 89 participants who were spontaneously aware of the KFC Add Hope CRM initiative. These aware participants allocated 6 590 scores to KFC, which on average rated KFC 30.8 votes, compared to a random allocation score of 16.6 votes and the KFC average of 26.9 votes. The spontaneously aware findings showed that the participants of this charity association were more likely to rate KFC's salience much higher than average. Therefore, the clinical results gave a clear indication that brand trust (after exposure to the KFC CRM brand campaign) resulted in noticeably higher ratings of KFC as a trusted brand on Add Hope CRM initiative by those who were aware of it.

The results from a previous study suggest that brands perceived as highly credible have merit over those perceived as less credible when carrying out the same cause effect related marketing actions (Kim, Kim & Han, 2005:102). This implies that the higher the brand authenticity or corporate credibility is, the more favourable is the perception toward the brand trust.

2. What is the impact of a brand cause related marketing campaign on consumers' ratings of brand's authenticity?

This dissertation found that the significant difference between groups was mainly between the exposed participants and those who did not receive any intervention. The differences between the four groups after intervention showed no statical significance between the UC group and the AC group as well as the UE group. The finding reveals a need for future research to measure donation amounts and their value within the fast-food industry and understanding of CRM in other low-ranking fast-food restaurant brands. This will encourage comparison with the larger fast-food restaurant brands.

Literature demonstrated that brand authenticity tends to increase consumers purchase intentions and brand attitudes, and commitment towards the brand (Ilicic & Webster, 2014;

Portal *et al.*, 2019; Moulard *et al.*, 2016). Once a brand is able to deliver on its promises, it is endowed with credibility, which seems to correlate to brand trustworthiness (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Past research showed that CSR activities, such as to cause marketing campaigns, prompted positive associations that influence consumers' favourable responses to organisations and their products (Sen, Bhattacharya & Korschun, 2001; Södergren, 2021).

3. What are the perceptions of consumers on brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM?

To contribute to social responsibility, many brands engage in cause related marketing such that brands donate to a chosen cause out of every consumer purchase (Vanhamme *et al.*, 2012). In particular, principal component analysis on factors such as restaurant and personal attributes positively affect perceptions of a restaurant's brand authenticity (DiPietro & Levitt, 2019).

In addition, our results share similarities with Vanhamme *et al.* (2012) findings that enhanced positive recognition with the cause, which in turn leads to a more positive perception of the marketing campaigns for a brand cause scope and brand cause type. Thus, consistent with the findings of this study and prior research findings, it is recommended that brand trust increased significantly with the endorsement should provide a useful guide for marketers.

4.3.1 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Table 4.18 illustrates the relationship between the latent variables. The hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables have been well tested; t-values denote the statistical significance of the correlation between variables, the larger the t-value, the higher the significance. The p-value only measures the statistical significance, thus whether an effect exists, but not the substantive significance, that measures the size of an effect. Based on the results of the t-test, the Cohen's (1977) *d* value of every hypothesis is therefore calculated. The Cohen's (1977) *d* value reports the effect sizes of statistical t-tests of significance, which further support or even contradicts the proposed hypotheses testing and measures if there is a statistical difference between items. Thus, the effect size defines the

final size of the experimental effect, which is important to determine the magnitude of an experimental treatment from one experiment to another. The values of d for small, medium, and large effects, are interpreted as .20, .50, and .80 (Cohen, 1977). Cohen (1977) suggests that if the mean difference is lower than .2 and does not differ by .2 standard deviations or more than the difference can be considered as insignificant, even if it is statistically significant.

The findings for hypotheses (H_a) 1 and 2 show that the path coefficients of brand authenticity formulated by brand continuity, brand integrity, brand originality, and brand credibility are .189, .187, .372, and .521, respectively. Brand authenticity has a path coefficient on the brand trust of .003. Brand trust is positively but non-significantly affected by brand authenticity (brand continuity, brand integrity, brand originality, brand credibility). Among them, brand credibility has the greatest impact on brand authenticity, followed by brand originality, brand continuity, and finally, brand integrity. That means brand credibility is the strongest indicator to measure brand authenticity, preceded by brand originality, brand continuity, and brand integrity.

The results for hypothesis 2 of direct impact predict that brand trust as the path coefficient of CRM is .592, indicating a positive and significant effect. In other words, CRM is positively and significantly affected by brand trust. Results indicate that brand intention (.638) is the strongest predictor of brand trust, followed by brand reliability (.522). The more brand trust they have with the brand, the more likely they are to trust CRM initiatives. It thus implies that the more brand trust with the brand, the more consumers view positively the brand's CRM.

Table 4.18: Summary of hypothesis testing results for direct effect

Hypothesis	Path coefficients	Beta	Sample Mean (M)	T-values	P values
1	BA-> BT	0,003	0,003	0,919	0,358
	BC -> BA	0,189	0,186	7,664	0,000
	BC -> BA	0,521	0,519	22,976	0,000
	Bintegrity -> BA	0,187	0,195	5,352	0,000
	Bintentions -> BT	0,638	0,638	23,529	0,000
	BO -> BA	0,372	0,367	17,530	0,000
	BR -> BT	0,522	0,521	18,780	0,000
2	BT -> CRM	0,592	0,602	11,657	0,000

BA = Brand Authenticity; BT = Brand Trust; BC = Brand Continuity; BC = Brand Credibility; BI = Brand Integrity, BR = Brand Intentions; BO = Brand Originality; BR = Brand Reliability; CRM = Cause-Related Marketing

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discusses in detail the findings of the quantitative experimental methodology. It draws the overall results of the research which indicate that the aware experiment group received a higher mean score than the other three groups. Post hoc tests also reveal that the aware experiment group was significantly different from the aware group than the unaware experiment and the unaware control group. Also, the aware control group was significantly different from the unaware control group. However, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between the two groups; that is, the unaware experiment and the unaware control groups. Similarly, the findings highlighted no statistically significant difference in mean scores between the aware control group and the unaware experiment group.

Paired sample t-tests were used to compare the means between a pretest-posttest control group on KFC for comparison of the means between the correlated samples. First, the statistic regarding scores for KFC aware intervention pretest and aware intervention post-test conditions had significant differences. Second, there was a significant difference in the scores for KFC aware no intervention pretest and aware no intervention post test conditions. Third, there was a statistically significant difference in the scores for KFC unaware intervention pretest and unaware intervention post test conditions.

Conclusively, the results showed a statistically significant difference between pretest unaware no intervention and post-test unaware no intervention conditions. Overall, the results confirmed evidence suggesting that participants experienced statistically significantly greater brand trust before and after intervention on KFC scores. The null hypothesis was rejected.

The next chapter will deal with the conclusion and implications of these findings.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the final part of this dissertation with the objective to achieve a synthesis of the empirical findings and the theoretical section. The managerial implications and the suggestions for future study are discussed in this chapter. The first section in this chapter is an outline of this research. The next sections subsequently offer the conclusions about overview study questions covering each objective in turn. Thus, this chapter suggests significant theoretical and managerial implications that emerged from the main conclusions of this study. Next is a discussion of some limitations of the research. Description of future research possibilities offered is thereafter proposed. Ultimately, the final section provides the final conclusions of the dissertation.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

A brief overview of the previous chapters will be provided first before the discussions, implications, and recommendations of this research.

From chapter 2, it can be resolved that consumers' perception about brand authenticity, brand trust, and cause related marketing on fast-food restaurants has not been conducted in the African context. Consumer-based factors such as the suitability of CRM and the suitability of the campaign are used to judge a company's CRM campaign (Amawate et al., 2019). The contrast effect theory suggests that brands or companies making charitable donations will be viewed differently by consumers depending on the company's reputation regarding social responsibility (Amawate *et al.*, 2019), also linking to its authenticity. A study by Morhart *et al.* (2015:200) argues that "although brand authenticity is gaining increasing interest in consumer behaviour research and managerial practice, literature on its measurement and contribution to branding theory is still limited". Many studies also examine brand authenticity from the retro brands context, luxury brands, and mass-marketed brands (Beverland, 2005); however, a gap still exists within the fast-food industry, which is a gap

that this research will address. A brand's CRM imitative campaign within a restaurant industry possibly will influence the consumers' perspective of the brand, which would result in an impact on brand trust.

Additionally, contrast effect and attribution theory were described, and how a brand that the consumers view as irresponsible announces a corporate donation there has an expected contrast effect. Consumers will not trust these efforts, and the brand's actions are deemed out of character. However, if a brand that consumers perceive as trustworthy makes a charitable donation, it will be viewed well, and no contrast effect will occur (Winter, 2014). Furthermore, the attribution theory further denotes that consumer attributes cause consequences of an event (Amawate *et al.*, 2019). The casual process attribution is one of the dimensions in the perceived controllability of CRM campaigns. If consumers perceive a company's CRM campaign negatively, then the company will also be viewed in the same light (Amawate *et al.*, 2019). When a company's CRM campaign is viewed positively, this leads to consumers having positive perceptions towards the firm involved in the initiative. The final section of chapter 2 was a discussion on brand authenticity perspectives, brand trust, and cause related marketing to allow operationalisation of these key constructs.

Following the focus on conceptualising the food industry in relation to the organisation, brand authenticity study, and brand trust study, the later part of chapter 2 explains why South African restaurant industry is particularly relevant for measuring the impact of brand trust on consumers ratings of brands.

Chapter 3 offered the methodology for this research. The research followed a pretest posttest control group strategy. Further, the study aimed to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between these consumers perceptions towards a fast-food restaurant CRM brand before and after an intervention. Therefore, causal research will be applied to this study. A true experiment with a short questionnaire is the most appropriate method to apply to this research since the understanding of the impact of CRM from KFC's initiative is the cause of the research problem and thus will be manipulated by creating a real-life campaign. The decision on which South African restaurant brand to use in the treatment was based on a pilot trial. Six South African fast-food restaurant brands were presented in the experiment,

and respondents were asked to allocate using a single blinding technique if they perceive each brand as trustworthy in donating to a cause. KFC was the treatment brand campaign of the pretest posttest experiment design.

Chapter 4 discussed the findings of the experiment and their interpretations, where the results of the conducted statistical analysis were detailed. The experiment with a self-administered questionnaire was completed by 155 consumers. The final sample from a convenient sample of Johannesburg residents was found to be positively impacted by KFC's Add Hope CRM initiative. Especially the aware groups are mostly influenced by the treatment since the degree of brand awareness in spontaneously random allocation showed significant difference from the unaware and control groups.

Based on the findings described in the previous chapter, conclusions are made in this chapter. With these conclusions in mind, theoretical, practical, and managerial, as well as societal implications and limitations of this study, are outlined, and future research is suggested. First, conclusions to the findings are made based on the proposed research questions and research objectives in section 1.4 and measured by the two hypotheses explained in that section of this dissertation.

5.3: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The next section will discuss the conclusion based on experiment results. The research questions that this dissertation addressed are:

1. What is the impact of brand trust on consumers' ratings of brands?
2. What is the impact of a brand cause-related marketing initiative on consumers' ratings of brand authenticity?
3. What are the perceptions of consumers on brand authenticity, brand trust, and cause-related marketing?

Recap of the research objectives are:

- To measure brand authenticity ratings of a brand involved with cause-related marketing.
- To measure brand authenticity ratings of a brand trust involved with cause-related marketing brand's initiative.
- To measure brand trust of a brand following exposure to a cause-related marketing brand's initiative.
- To measure whether the brand is considered authentic or trustworthy, a clear competitive advantage results from the involvement with cause-related marketing.

5.3.1 CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARDS TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research questions of this study were the research questions from this research examined by use of four objectives. Objective one was focused on measuring brand authenticity ratings of a brand involved with cause-related marketing was measured with hypotheses 1a to 1d. Objective two, concerned with measure brand authenticity ratings of a brand trust involved with cause-related marketing was measured with hypothesis 2. Objective three, which measures a brand's brand trust following exposure to a cause-related marketing brand's campaign, was tested with hypotheses 3a and 3b. The three objectives compared the effect of brand authenticity as well as brand trust. Objective four assessed whether the brand is considered authentic or trustworthy, a clear competitive advantage results from the involvement with cause-related marketing was also hypothesis 4. The next paragraphs give the general conclusions emerging from these three research objectives.

5.3.1.1 CONCLUSIONS ON STUDY OBJECTIVES - RESEARCH FINDINGS OF EXPERIMENT

This study's ANOVA analysis between four groups on all constructs (brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM) indicated a statistically significant difference with small effect size, e.g., aware experiment vs. unaware control vs. unaware control groups, except for brand authenticity on continuity and integrity. This small effect size and the lack of significant

difference between the two constructs could be further examined in the future. The researcher speculates that the more the sample increases, the statistically significant effect size could be boosted. Effect size (magnitude effect) and other two factors impact on the P value, including variability and sample size (Travers *et al.*, 2017).

5.3.1.2 CONCLUSION ON RESEARCH OBJECTIVES - RESEARCH RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The results of hypothesis one is necessary to offer answers to this study's objectives, which are recognized with the use of previous scales adapted from earlier studies. The findings confirm much of the research undertaken in respect of the importance of brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012; Botha *et al.*, 2020; Eggers *et al.*, 2013) within the restaurant context (DiPietro & Levitt, 2019). After the results regarding the hypotheses, it is proven that the use of CRM initiative positively influences ~~for the~~ brand authenticity and brand trust of a South African fast-food restaurant brand.

The aware groups that received treatment perceived the trust of a fast-food restaurant after receiving the intervention. Overall, this research shed light on consumers' highest priority related to perceived CRM and brand authenticity. Despite only inquiring about consumers in Johannesburg on the KFC restaurant brand in South Africa, the present research gives knowledge that can assist in future research. The conclusions of H1 to H4 were depicted in figure 4.18, which will be expanded more in section 4.1.

The present study provides unique understandings concerning brand authenticity's CRM and shows its value for brand authenticity, brand trust practice, and theory. The study provides an avenue of previous considerations to assess brand authenticity (BA) (see Napoli, Dickinson-Delaporte & Beverland, 2016; Egger *et al.*, 2013).

One of the remarkable results in the present research is the addition of a CRM variable that has not been present in earlier literature on brand authenticity and brand trust. The presence of this variable provided the research to offer one step further towards insights on the distinct causal impacts of the variables that affect perception from CRM within an emerging market

context. The items that comprise brand trust – intentions variables are related to connections to the brand authenticity – integrity and brand authenticity – originality that highlights the CRM. These findings also suggest that this variable relates to the construct of a brand's corporate image, which is how a cause is linked to brand equity (Choi & Seo, 2019).

Along with these conclusions in focus, the research implications are outlined in the following part of this study.

5.5 RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

To continue a unique brand of the fast-food industry, brands are highly using cause related marketing initiatives to consumers. However, consumers could still feel attracted or otherwise based on their perception of brand authenticity and brand trust. The ability to increase positive perception will require a complex assessment of the brands. This section provides research implications for scholars which are based on conclusions explained from the section above, brand managers and marketing managers to take note of once their brand is considering cause related marketing initiatives. Based on research implications, brands can take advantage of the cause initiatives with the right intentions to advance in consumer ratings and perceptions of the brand.

5.4.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Since it can be concluded in this study that CRM initiative impacts on brand ratings, this dissertation offers several contributions. Firstly, the study adds valuable insight to CRM studies by proving that fast-food brands' use of CRM initiatives might positively influence brand authenticity and brand trust. Past research has highlighted that brand authenticity relates directly to brand trust (Chaabouni, Jridi & Bakini, 2021). This study finds that brand authenticity and brand trust correlate with consumers' perceptions of CRM trustfulness. Moreover, as research on CRM has been conducted in developed economies, the results investigated in a developing economy add more to understanding the CRM and brand authenticity constructs from a different context.

Second, this study extends Bergkvist and Zhou's (2019) work that proves the influence of brand assessments on CRM to a control treatment using a marketing communications initiative. Similar to previous studies, the evaluations have initiated that CRM, in nearly the entire case, had a significant positive impact on brand associated results compared to a control condition, the CRM contribution.

Third, most past research (DiPietro & Levitt, 2019; Becker *et al.*, 2019) has considered brand authenticity and brand trust in the developed market as affecting CRM in general. By means of realistic circumstances, this dissertation is to the researcher's familiarity one of the unique attempt to put forward a complete quantitative analysis of consumers' pro-social behaviour, explanatory of the impact of brand authenticity between cause related marketing and brand trust in the fast-food restaurant brand reliant context on the scoring level of the brand within the fast-food market.

The results of this study established that the CRM manipulation was effective: respondents in the experiment (i.e., received the intervention of exposure to the CRM campaign) brand condition(group) rated with the brand significantly higher on each of the card scores compared to the respondents in the control groups condition (i.e., did not receive any intervention). CRM can affect a brand positively in a way for the reason that the cause can encourage consumers' attitudes that the brand is supportive to a worthy cause; this implies that consumers should give support the brand and its accompanying prosocial causes. Past research found that CRM proposals improved consumer attitudes towards a brand irrespective of product cause relationship (Heo & Gendall 2008). Another study revealed that CRM effectively increases general attitude towards a product because the passion associated with a cause is partnered with the proficiency linked with a brand to positively influence general attitudes for both the product and the cause (Aaker, 2011).

Given that the context of the application of the study is framed in a field experiment, which by its nature is dynamic, situations may arise that threaten its internal validity, which affects the results in experimentation. The researcher conducted an experiment with a strong degree of internal validity. According to the classifications made by Kirk (2009), and Campbell and Stanley (1966), specifically for the study, some of these situations are history,

maturation, experimental mortality, treatment diffusion, instrumentation, experimenter behaviour, and environment, etc.

Finally, the present study found that the significant difference between groups was mainly between the exposed participants and those who did not receive any intervention. The differences between the four groups after intervention showed no statistical significance between the unaware control group and the aware control group as well as the unaware experiment group. Research on the donation's influence on CRM within the fast-food industry has not been studied has not been conducted previously and would then be suitable future research in connection with this dissertation. Future studies could focus on how CRM in other low-ranking fast-food restaurant brands. This will encourage comparison with the larger fast-food restaurant brands.

5.4.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Since this study used a fast-food restaurant brand within the African context, there are several empirical implications for practitioners that assist in unveiling the impact of CRM practices. This outlines the efforts of how marketing practitioners could effectively improve their understanding of successful CRM initiatives as consumers' responses concerning the level of perceived brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM are different based on the intervention and simultaneous awareness of the association between the KFC brand and the CRM campaign. As cause related marketing campaigns have flourished over the past years, brands should find appropriate ways to partner with charities or causes if they wish to stand out in the competitive marketplace. Exposure to the CRM initiatives increases consumers' perceived brand authenticity, brand trust, and trustfulness.

5.4.3 MANAGERIAL AND SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS

The debate on CRM has been at the centre of continuing inquiry (Anghel *et al.*, 2011; Coleman *et al.*, 2019) because many brands practice their CRM for social responsibility in which brands give a donation to a chosen cause with every purchase from consumers (Vanhamme *et al.*, 2012). In particular, principal component analysis on factors such as

personal and restaurant attributes positively influenced perceptions of restaurant authenticity (DiPietro & Levitt, 2019). The researcher finds that no empirical study has dismissed the belief that brand trust through the card scoring method, a nonverbal rating of CRM effectiveness, impacts the brand. Also, from the findings of this study, it is concluded that ratings of CRM can impact consumers, and therefore managers can at least use the study as useful reference points on these issues and serves to notify marketers on ideas to debate questions such as whether there is a difference in rating scores following a CRM campaign intervention. In effect, the dissertation demonstrates that marketers operating in the fast-food restaurant industry looking to raise the strength of a marketing plan should consider Add Hope for CRM hunger initiatives. Therefore, the suggestion from this research confirms the assertion of DiPietro and Levitt (2019) that brand equity increases the likelihood that consumers will choose that particular brand and pay a price premium over the competing brands. This means that from a managerial point of view that, CRM hunger initiatives of fast-food restaurant brands can possibly be a rewarding initiative that brands within this industry could employ.

From the findings, there are comparisons with Vanhamme *et al.*'s (2012) findings that enhanced association with the cause pave the way to a more positive perception of marketing campaigns for a cause scope and cause type. Therefore, in line with the results of this dissertation and previous research results, it is it should be suggested that brand trust, which increased significantly with the endorsement, should provide a useful guide for marketers. Bergkvist and Zhou (2019) suggest that CRM affects brand evaluations along two paths: the direct transfer path in attitudes towards the cause is transferred to the brand, and the indirect transfer path, mediated by the attribution of motives. Similarly, this finding is aligned with the result of prior studies that a CRM can have positive feedback influences on the cause (Lafferty & Edmondson, 2009; Samu & Wymer, 2014).

However, the conclusions of this study should be replicated in another context to make them more generalizable. This is one of the limitations of the research, further discussed in the following section.

5.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE AVENUES

Although this study reached the new ground in terms of conducting research on brand authenticity, brand trust, and CRM, it is confined by some limitations. First, insight has been provided by scratching the surface on CRM effectiveness shifting to fast-food restaurant brands. Here the researcher tested only CRM initiatives designed to improve brand authenticity and brand trust on one brand that had many negative events in its history and was widely seen as increasing health issues. For example, Choi and Seo (2019) mentioned that Health risks such as being obese or overweight increase chances of cancer, and at the same time, KFC was responsible for a 50 cents donation for every pink bucket of chicken purchased by the Susan G. Komen Cancer Research Foundation. Thus, the brand tested here has a probably extraordinary level of harmful public opinion framed that was linked with it. A brand with healthier statuses in less controversial circumstances may provide a more positive transfer influence of CRM. Further, there was no manipulation of how the prior participants' backgrounds had an important impact on the scoring of the brand. Future research could validate the study's findings in a more complex and detailed natural setting where other classifications could be used to test CRM.

It might be fruitful to measure the variable (i.e., CRM, brand trust) after providing respondents with different types of real stimulus campaigns of other brands in future research. To improve the generalisability of the study to employ a more rigorous experimental framework to examine whether the current findings reported here differ across large populations and settings. Thus, the present study reveals more subtle and causal levels of insights.

This study is a cross-sectional study conducted at a specific point in time hence it is limited to the context of the time frames of the study. The consumers' perceptions are dynamic; therefore, future studies should use longitudinal methods to examine the change in the consumers' perceptions over time and capture consumer tendencies in real-time. The study was conducted using quantitative techniques, which limit the in-depth capturing of qualitative information required for the topic as wide as this. Future research must consider the in-depth insight of consumer reviews on the tested constructs.

While the current research investigates consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity and brand trust of partaking in CRM as a proxy to evaluate consumer responses, future studies should investigate the influence of CRM on brand image and intention to recommend, etc. by examining a pretest before evaluating brand image and a posttest after CRM is implemented in the fast-food brand.

In order to better understand the possible implementations to increase the impact of brand on the effectiveness of CRM, a longitudinal study is needed. Most of the research has been conducted in a single exposure setting, as was this study. However, it is unknown how an initial exposure changes consumers' perceptions about a brand's trustfulness over time. Therefore, managers should systematically compare CRM to other CRM trust formats, e.g., celebrity endorsement or sponsorship types.

Even though a convenient sample is generally used to conduct studies, using nonrandomization in selecting a sample of consumers might weaken the generalisability of these findings to the whole population. For this reason, future research should augment external validity by replicating the experiment procedures in different contexts or settings.

It should also be noted that prior experience towards a specific brand (i.e., fast-food restaurant) can impact on dependent variables (i.e., brand trust, CRM). Still, this research utilised field experiments in a real-world situation to maximise internal validity. as a result, there might be possible extraneous variables influencing that could not be controlled given the limited time and sample size in this dissertation. For future research to increase the generalisability of the finding is recommended. Also, it is suggested for future studies to examine the impact of pre-existing attitudes by utilizing less controlled research settings of a larger representative sample.

Another important issue is that this study is quantitative, which implies that in-depth individual insight is limited, unlike in qualitative studies. The future researcher could consider in-depth qualitative methods to establish the perceptions of consumers on CRM in fast-food restaurant brands.

Despite its limitations, this research is believed to meet the urgent need to understand how a brand's CRM campaign impacts consumers' brand ratings. Based on this resolve, the dissertation offers practical conclusions regarding to the consumers' ratings of a CRM campaign in the fast-food restaurant industry via the pretest post-test control group design using an actual CRM initiative and actual brand. Hence, the researcher proposed the hypothesised inquiry as an initial exploration, hoping that the study hypotheses would stimulate discussion and further tests to confirm my findings.

The use of one brand and a single CRM campaign limited the interpretation within this campaign. Alternatively, research on brand trust and CRM initiatives could have used survey research to capture consumers' responses to multiple real-world campaigns of CRM initiatives. The comparative impact of independent variables could have been projected by means of statistical analysis techniques such as structural modelling analysis.

This dissertation will fill the gap described by Bergkvist and Zhou (2019) as missing in approximately all cause related marketing persuasion studies constructed on experiments that compared different levels of the independent variables to establish the impact of independent variables. Utmost studies did not involve a CRM control condition or at least one condition with other forms of marketing activities that this study employed. This study extends the card scoring method and brand authenticity on fast-food by connecting consumer perceptions and brand trust within African contexts.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Experimental research, often considered to be the "gold standard" in research designs, is one of the most rigorous of all research designs. In this design, one or more independent variables are manipulated by the researcher (as treatments), subjects are randomly assigned to different treatment levels (random assignment), and the results of the treatments on outcomes (dependent variables) was observed. The unique strength of experimental

research is its internal validity (causality) due to its ability to link cause and effect through treatment manipulation, while controlling for the spurious effect of extraneous variable.

This experimental research was best suited for its explanatory research (rather than for descriptive or exploratory research), where the goal of the study was to examine cause-effect relationships. It also worked well for this research that involved a relatively well-defined set of independent variables that were manipulated or controlled. Experimental research can be conducted in laboratory or field settings. The experiment was conducted in real world settings, and tend to be high in internal validity, but this comes at the cost of low external validity (generalizability), because the setting in which the study was conducted may not control external factors.

Brand authenticity has become an essential subject as CRM represents an important contribution to fast food branding. However, not much was done to date to understand the impact of CRM initiatives from the context of a developing market. This study had two aspects; it firstly measured the impact of CRM, then secondly it unpacked the relationship between the constructs. The impact was responded through the experiment while the questionnaire was used to emphasise the details on which the consumer perceived the key constructs.

The research correlates with Bautista *et al.* (2020) claims that greater exposure to CRM can better impact the perception of intention to participate in the CRM initiative. The results on assessing the impact of brand trust on consumers' ratings of brands provided a clear indication that brand trust after exposure to the KFC Add Hope CRM campaign resulted in higher ratings of KFC as a trusted brand by the respondents who were aware of this CRM initiative. The overall results also revealed that brand trust – intentions, brand authenticity – integrity, and originality were found to influence overall CRM truthfulness perceptions positively. The variable that had the strongest influence on perceived CRM was brand authenticity – integrity.

These insights support marketing practices to effectively contribute to the persuasion of consumers and CRM success to be meaningful as most respondents could rate KFC high based on its CRM initiative compared to other brands. The results of this dissertation have

also opened a research gap that may be extended to understanding CRM in other low-ranking fast-food restaurant brands.

Finally, since CRM research was examined primarily in first-world economies, developing economies' results further increase the understanding of CRM, brand authenticity, and brand trust constructs in a different context. The advantage is that this study will fill many gaps in the literature. Therefore, the connection between these three key constructs in branding research, having not yet been widely considered previously, is an important contribution of this study, as well as the use of an experiment and questionnaire as methodology.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Experiment Questions



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Introduction

I am a Masters Research Fellow at Vega School, Johannesburg, and would appreciate your assistance by affording me your time. I would like to ask you to do an exercise regarding fast-food restaurants in South Africa in how they give to charity causes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. There is no right or wrong answer, and I seek your opinion. It will take about 5-10 minutes.

I would like you to think about brands within the fast-food restaurant market. In front of you are six envelopes, each with a brand name on them. In terms of how you trust these brands to give to a charity, I want you to 'vote' for them by allocating cards into each envelope. With these cards, allocate or vote for each brand by placing the cards in the envelopes. Or let's say this was the money you have, how much would you be willing to spend on these six brands. Allocate more cards to your most trusted brands based on giving to charities initiatives and less on those you deem less trustworthy.

Step 1: Pre

Present a respondent with named envelopes of 6 fast-food restaurants; Wimpy, KFC, Steers, Nando's, Chicken Licken, and McDonald's. 99 (undisclosed to respondent) cards that they should allocate according to their degree of trusted or untrusted brands.

Step 2: Ask the respondent about their knowledge of the brands in giving to charities initiatives (Cause Related Marketing).

What kind of charity initiatives do these brands support? (To ask respondents one brand after the other and take note if any of them mention the KFC Add Hope Initiative).

Show the respondent the cause-related marketing campaigns for KFC (Add Hope) except for the control group.

Step 3: Post

Provide another set of the undisclosed number of cards and six named envelopes of 6 brands within the fast-food restaurant market; Wimpy, KFC, Steers, Nando's, Chicken Licken, and McDonald's.

Only the experiment group will be shown the KFC Add Hope communication. Having seen this communication, how do you now feel about these brands? Allocate the cards to these brands again based on how you trust them to donate to charities (Cause Related Marketing).

The control group will not be shown the campaign or have any mention of KFC. Re-allocate the cards to the brands.

Thank the respondent for the time afforded...

APPENDIX B: Experiment Results Form

			A	N	E	C
--	--	--	---	---	---	---

Step 1: Pre-awareness

	Number of Allocated Cards
Wimpy	
KFC	
Steers	
Nando's	
Chicken Licken	
McDonald's	

Step 2: The awareness question (Knowledge on the brands within the context of giving to charities initiatives (Cause Related Marketing)).

What kind of charity initiatives do these brands support?

	Charity Initiatives Mentioned
Wimpy	
KFC	
Steers	
Nando's	
Chicken Licken	
McDonald's	

Take note if any of the respondents mention the KFC Add Hope Initiative.

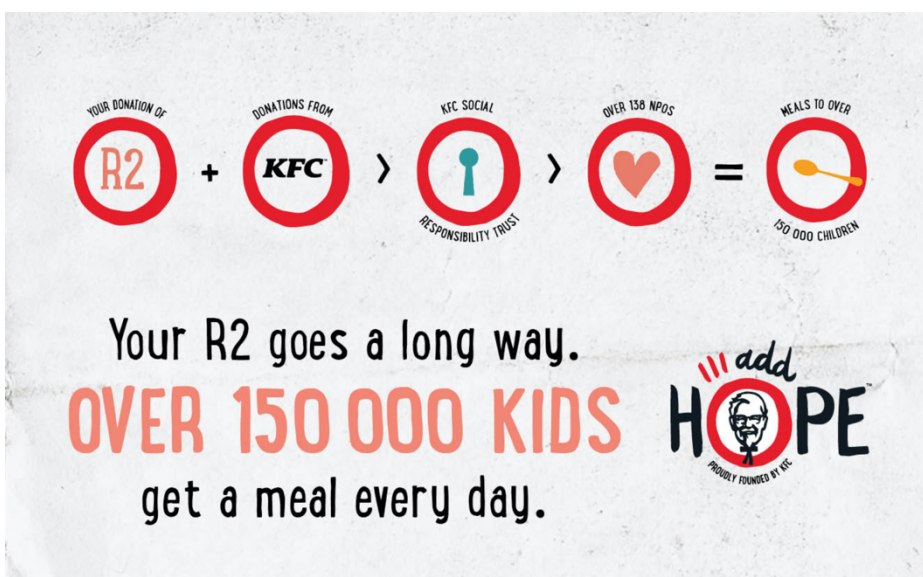
Mentioned	Did Not Mention

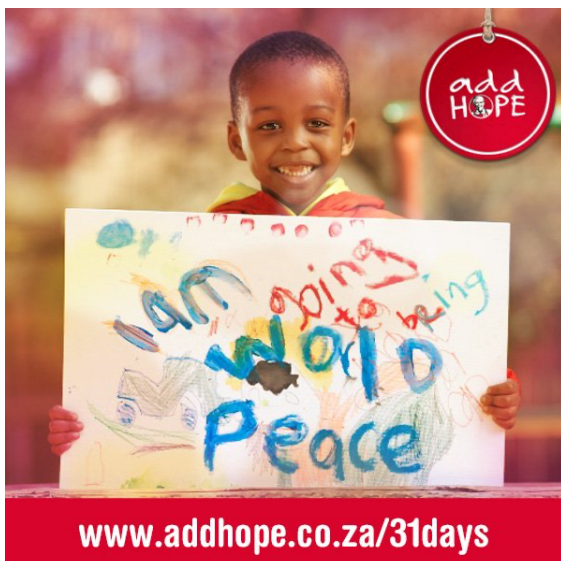
Show the respondents the cause-related marketing campaigns for KFC (Add Hope) except for the control group.

Step 3: Post-awareness

	Number of Allocated Cards
Wimpy	
KFC	
Steers	
Nando's	
Chicken Licken	
McDonald's	

APPENDIX C: KFC Add Hope Communication





add HOPE

Help Spread
Hope Today

KFC Add Hope feeds children
so they can learn, grow and thrive

WFP
World Food
Programme
wfp.org

All funds donated by customers during Add Hope will directly support the greatest needs of WFP's food assistance programs in vulnerable communities around the world. WFP does not endorse any product or service. For more information about WFP visit www.wfp.org. The YUM! Foundation will make an additional contribution to cover a minimum of US\$1M and maximum US\$2M in WFP's global administrative fees. ©2015 Yum! Brands, Inc.

add HOPE

WFP
World Food
Programme
wfp.org

Hands
for
Hunger

Partnering together to end world hunger

All funds donated by KFC, Yum! Brands and its subsidiaries during Add Hope will directly support WFP's food assistance programs in vulnerable communities around the world. WFP does not endorse any product or service. For more information about WFP visit www.wfp.org. The YUM! Foundation will make an additional contribution to cover a minimum of US\$1M and maximum US\$2M in WFP's global administrative fees. ©2015 Yum! Brands, Inc.

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire



			A	N	E	C
--	--	--	---	---	---	---

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING WITHIN FAST-FOOD RESTAURANTS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to examine how you view KFC as a fast-food restaurant in South Africa in relation to charity initiatives. KFC is feeding South Africans with the R2 donated to the Add Hope initiative. KFC's 'Add Hope' campaign collects donations in-store to fund meals for undernourished children. The results from this experiment will be used to determine the perceptions and impact of brand authenticity on brand trust and cause-related marketing among consumers in Gauteng.

Taking part in this survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire consists of four sections. The questionnaire should take no more than 15 minutes of your time. Your co-operation is appreciated.

When evaluating a question, please answer from your own perspective.

Place an X in the appropriate box where applicable or complete where required.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Tanitta Matiringe: nittamat@gmail.com

Your responses will be treated confidentially and with anonymity.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Please answer the following demographical questions by marking with an 'X'.

1. What is your gender?

Male	1
------	---

Female	2
--------	---

2. What is your age?

18-24 years	1
25-38 years	2
39-54 years	3
55-73 years	4

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Primary School	1
High School	2
Certificate/Diploma	3
Degree	4
Post Graduate	5
Other, specify.....	6

4. What is your employment status?

Employed	1
Self-employed	2
Unemployed	3
Student	4
Retired	5
Other, specify.....	6

5. What is your ethnicity?

Black African	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian or Asian	4

6. What is your household income (in Rand monthly)?

Less than R5 000	1
R5 001 to R10 000	2
R10 001 to R20 000	3
R20 001 to R30 000	4
More than R30 000	5

SECTION B: BRAND AUTHENTICITY

6. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree, indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

Please indicate your answer by marking it with an X.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
BAC1	I think brand is consistent over time	1	2	3	4
BAC2	I think the brand stays true to itself	1	2	3	4
BAC3	Brand offers continuity	1	2	3	4
BAC4	The brand has a clear concept that it pursues	1	2	3	4
BAI1	The brand is true to a set of moral values	1	2	3	4
BAI2	The brand is honest	1	2	3	4
BAI3	The brand is fair	1	2	3	4
BAI4	The brand is responsible	1	2	3	4
BAO1	The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands	1	2	3	4
BAO2	Brand stands out from other brands	1	2	3	4
BAO3	I think the brand is unique	1	2	3	4
BAO4	The brand makes a genuine impression	1	2	3	4
BACR1	My experience with the brand has shown me that it keeps its promises	1	2	3	4
BACR2	The brand delivers what it promises	1	2	3	4
BACR3	Brand's promises are credible	1	2	3	4
BACR4	The brand makes reliable promises	1	2	3	4

SECTION C: BRAND TRUST

7. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree, indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

Please indicate your answer by marking it with an X.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
BTR1	I think this brand meets my expectations	1	2	3	4
BTR2	I feel confidence in the brand	1	2	3	4
BTR3	Brand always satisfy me	1	2	3	4
BTR4	The brand name guarantees satisfaction	1	2	3	4

BTI1	The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns	1	2	3	4
BTI2	I could rely on the brand name to solve the problem	1	2	3	4
BTI3	The brand would make an effort to satisfy me	1	2	3	4
BTI4	The brand would compensate me in some way for the problem with the product	1	2	3	4

SECTION D: CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

8. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree, indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

Please indicate your answer by marking it with an X.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CRM1	This brand is trustworthy with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	1	2	3	4
CRM2	I trust this brand keeps my best interests in mind with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	1	2	3	4
CRM3	This brand will keep promises it makes to me with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	1	2	3	4
CRM4	I believe in the information that this brand provides me with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	1	2	3	4
CRM5	This brand wants to be known as one that keeps promises and commitments with its corporate donation to a charity or cause	1	2	3	4

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!!!

APPENDIX E: Vega Ethical Clearance



Our ref: c.13546

Enquiries: registrar@iie.ac.za

24 February 2020



Student name: Tanitta Laura Matiringe

Student number: 12023750

Campus: Vega Cape Town



Re: Approval of Master of Arts in Creative Brand Leadership (MACB511) Proposal



Thank you for submitting your proposal titled:

The impact of brand authenticity on brand trust and cause-related marketing: A consumer perspective



We are pleased to inform you that the Research and Postgraduate Committee considered and has approved your research proposal. Ethics clearance has also been granted.

The Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee made some further suggestions that can assist you with your study. These should be attended to under the guidance of your supervisor.

The committee confirms that Dr A. Nhedzi has been appointed as your supervisor. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the campus staff or your supervisor directly.

All the best with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Brenda van Wyk
Dean: Postgraduate Studies

ADvTECH HOUSE

Inanda Greens
54 Wierda Rd West
Wierda Valley 2196
P.O. Box 2369
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