

**Investigate Consumer Perceptions to Explore the Reasons Behind the Decline in
Foot Traffic Through the Inside Out Windermere Store**

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Investigate Consumer Perceptions to Explore the Reasons Behind the Decline in Foot Traffic Through the Inside Out Windermere Store

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communications degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University for Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Signed: Chelsea La Reservee

25 October 2019

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ABSTRACT

This was a small-scale research study investigating consumer perceptions to determine the reasons behind the decline in foot traffic through the Inside Out Windermere store.

The retail space within the economy has shifted from physical to online stores. This is caused by the rapid growth of trusted online shopping platforms and the lack of free time available for consumers. Previous studies have determined factors which cause a decrease in foot traffic, however in this study only three factors have been explored. These are location, competition and advertising and promotion.

The methodology of this study was a qualitative approach. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews to gain an in-depth insight and understanding on how location, competition and advertising and promotion can affect consumers perceptions and overall foot traffic for a business.

The research findings showed that location, competition and advertising and promotion are key to the success of a business, but they are not the only factors which may affect a business's foot traffic.

The recommendations stated that if businesses wish to maintain or grow brand equity and positively influence brand perception, they will need to focus on building sustainable relationships and improving their online presence with their customers.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Due to the technological advancements and the increasing number of trusted online shopping platforms, the retail space in the economy has shifted from walking into a physical store to rather shopping online. Numerous studies have been done to determine which factors influence customer perceptions and how this affects foot traffic for retailers. This study aims to contribute to an existing knowledge base, however it will only look at three factors; location, competition and advertising and promotion, to gain a deeper understanding of the affects these have on customer perceptions and foot traffic in retail outlets.

The Inside Out stores are slightly different in that the majority of their business still comes from customers coming into the actual store and even though there is an online store, there has not been a noticeable shift from walk-in traffic to online purchases.

Inside Out is a small home décor boutique store that specialises in providing unique, superior quality and one of a kind home décor items. The brand has been operating from Windermere Road in Morningside, Durban for the last five years but the store has been in the same location for close to three decades.

The building from which the store operates is well-known in the decorating industry as there has been an interior decorating shop in that building for the past 20 years. Morningside is known as decorators central, as most fabric houses and other well-known decorating stores are still located in this area. Inside Out has built up a client base consisting of regular purchasers as well as decorators.

The purpose of this study is to determine why the rate of walk-in customers has declined in order to protect the brand and remain a going concern. This topic is continually being researched around the world as researchers try to determine if there is a correlation between customer perceptions and foot traffic levels.

Chapter one introduces the research study by providing the background as well as the rationale for the research.

1.2 TITLE

Investigate Consumer Perceptions to Explore the Reasons Behind the Decline in Foot Traffic Through the Inside Out Windermere Store.

1.3 RATIONALE

This study has noteworthy potential to provide beneficial strategic business insights to the Inside Out Brand which could lead to positive brand perception and potentially increase revenue as well as foot traffic through the store.

By understanding the brand image from a customers' point of view, the Inside Out Brand can reference this against what it is trying to portray through brand identity. It can then better align the brand image and identity in order for the customer to correctly feel what the organisation is trying to portray. This could lead to more effective communication between the brand and its customers.

This study may represent the positive effect which correct alignment of brand image and brand identity could have on an organisations profit margin as well as foot traffic levels through the stores.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the interpretivist tradition, a researcher's main aim is to gain a deep, empathetic understanding of the aspects of human behaviour and social life. They want to understand phenomenon's in-depth and understand how people give meaning to and, at the same time make sense of, their daily lives. They do not aim to predict or control outcomes.

Inside Out Home Boutique in Windermere Road solely relied on in-store sales and has noticed a decrease in foot traffic resulting in lost revenue for the business.

The problem that this study aims to explore is the reasoning behind declining foot traffic which has resulted in fewer sales for the Inside Out Brand. Inside Out needs to conduct research to identify if the location, competition or advertising and promotion has an influence on customer perceptions which has resulted in decreased foot traffic and lost revenue.

1.5 RESEARCH GOAL AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this study is to determine why the rate of walk-in customers has declined in order to protect the brand and remain a going concern.

Has the foot traffic decreased at the Windermere store because of the location of the store?
Has the foot traffic decreased at the Windermere store because of the opening of the new Ballito store in March 2019?

Has the foot traffic decreased at the Windermere store because of the lack of advertising and promotion?

This research question is an empirical question, because it forms part of a qualitative research study and is embedded in the interpretivist tradition. This research question is an open-ended question as the question does not want to speculate any outcome of the research study. This research question is a causal question as it attempts to answer the question "why" and aims to determine the causes of phenomenon to an existing body of knowledge.

Most studies based on this topic have looked at multiple factors that affect foot-traffic in an organization, however this study aims to provide in-depth understanding as to whether location, competition or advertising and promotion has a direct effect on brand image and the overall foot-fall in an organization.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.6.1 Objective 1

Determining if Inside Out Windermere is located in the correct area.

1.6.2 Objective 2

Assess whether Inside Out Ballito has drawn customers away from the Windermere store since opening on 1 March 2019.

1.6.3 Objective 3

Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing methods in creating the correct brand image and targeting the correct audience.

1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

1.7.1 Limitation

The research was limited to the Windermere store and to the customers and decorators who walked through the door.

1.7.2 Delimitation

The researcher has a full-time job and did not have the capacity to interview a bigger sample of people over a longer period of time.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview of Research

Chapter one introduces the research study by providing the background as well as the rationale for the research. It provides the research goal alongside with the research questions and objectives for the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter two provided a review of the secondary research that is related to this study whereby relevant studies and research papers are discussed. It also provides a theoretical framework that links to the research study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter three explains the approach that will be taken in order to conduct the research of this study. It introduces the research approach and design, the population and sampling, data collection methods as well as the ethical considerations of the research study.

Chapter Four: Results and Findings

Chapter four is the presentation and interpretation of the findings from the conducted research.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter five discusses the conclusions and recommendations from each objective through looking at the findings from both the literature as well as the research. Further suggestions for the research study are discussed.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the justification for the research, the research problem, the aim and objectives of the study amongst other aspects of the research. Chapter two introduces the literature review as well as appropriate theoretical models that support the research study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is the process of examining existing, relevant research which can be used to enhance and back up a study (Creswell, et al., 2016). It improves theory development, reveals existing research and identifies areas where further research is required (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

The literature discussed below relates to the research objectives and will be used to inform the research findings.

This literature review exposed numerous factors but for the purpose of this study, only three factors which may affect or decrease foot traffic for an organisation were identified and examined. These factors are location, competition as well as advertising and promotion. These were identified as being key elements relating to the Inside Out Brand.

Reference will be made to three branding models; Keller's Brand Equity Prism, Aaker's Brand Equity Model and Stakeholder Theory to show the importance for an organisation to build meaningful relationship with customers through its brand identity and image in order to positively affect the organisations brand equity.

This study will take place within the South African context where the current economic climate is under pressure and this may cause the public to cut back on spending disposable income (if any) on luxury goods. For the purpose of this study, no economic or political factors will be identified and expanded upon as these factors have an effect on the economy as a whole and affects business in all industries.

This literature review contains some old sources as well as seminal sources as they are highly relevant to the study, however these older sources will be substantiated and supplemented with recent sources.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Keller's Brand Equity Prism

This model is commonly known as the CBBE model (Customer Based Brand Equity) (Bhasin, 2018). Customer focus has become the main focus area for companies as a happy customer is a buying customer which leads to the business turning a profit. Organisations have realised that in order to remain relevant and profitable, they need to build sustainable relationships with their customers through building a strong brand (Bhasin, 2018).

Keller's brand equity model forms a foundation on how organisations should go about building a strong brand equity (Bhasin, 2018). Understanding your customers and building the strategies around this information is the key to building a successfully equitable brand. The closer the connection between the customer and the brand, the greater the brand equity and the higher customer loyalty the brand will achieve (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015).

Keller's brand identity prism has four levels. Namely: brand identity, brand meaning, brand response and resonance (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015).

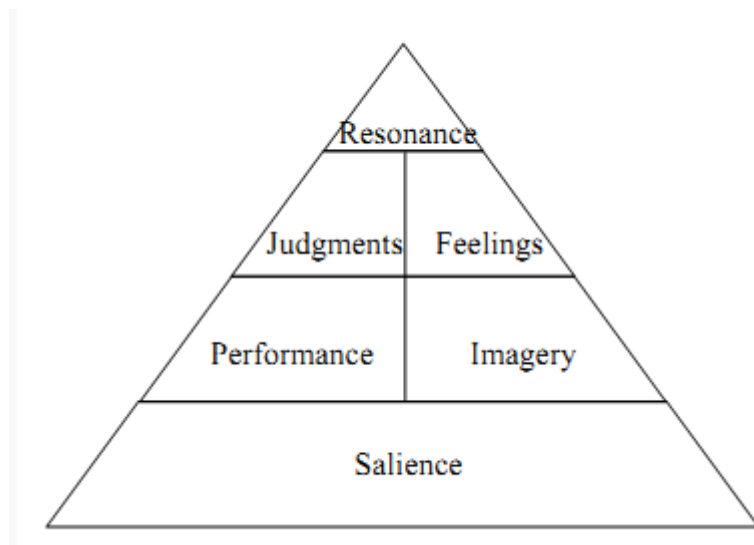


Figure 2.1: Keller's Customer-Base Brand Equity Pyramid (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015).

Level 1 – Brand Salience (Bhasin, 2018): this is where the question “who are you?” is answered and this forms the foundation for the prism. This is how the brand is viewed through a customers' eyes and what distinguishes it from another brand. It is vitally important for an organisation to create a strong brand identity as this will allow the organisation to attract the right customers and lead to a stronger brand equity.

Level 2 – Brand Meaning (Bhasin, 2018): the question “what are you?” is answered in this step. Consumers want to find out more about this brand and brand meaning provides the platform to answer these questions. Brand meaning can be split in 2, brand performance and brand imagery, which help define the brand meaning for customers.

Brand performance summarises how well the brand has performed over a period of time. Perceived quality of a product or service which performs it’s intended function well over a period of time.

Brand imagery: how the company is trying to portray the brand versus how the customer views the brand. A good brand imagery is when these 2 factors are closely aligned.

Level 3 – Brand Response (Bhasin, 2018): the question “what are the feelings towards the brand?” is answered and these answers are examined and aligned with the brand identity. Brand response is split in 2, feelings and judgements.

Feelings refer to positive emotions felt in response to a brand. Either when expectations are met or exceeded.

Judgements refer to negative emotions when the expectations of a brand are not experienced in reality.

Level 3 of the prism is extremely important because if the customers’ expectations are not met or exceeded, they will not move to the fourth and final level, brand resonance, and may break away from the brand all together (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015). All brands should aim to exceed customer expectations as this very often leads to word-of-mouth referrals or ideally, customer becomes a brand advocate (Bhasin, 2018).

Level 4 – Brand Resonance (Bhasin, 2018): this is the pinnacle and answers the question “what about you and I?”. This is where a strong relationship is developed between brand and customer. There is a strong emotional connection and customers become brand loyal. Ideally brands want all customers to reside in this level as this is where a customer becomes a brand advocate and brand equity is at its strongest (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015).

Keller’s brand identity model is useful in determining what level a brand is currently on and guide the brand to be able to achieve a strong brand identity or brand resonance amongst its customers (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015).

2.2.2 Aaker Brand Equity Model

This model was developed by Professor David Aaker (1992) and referred to brand equity as the value a customer attaches to a brand (Bhasin, 2018). According to Aaker, brand value is controlled by 5 linked components. These are brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and other proprietary (Bhasin, 2018).

Brand loyalty refers to how loyal a customer is to one specific brand.

Brand awareness is how many customers know about the brand

Perceived quality is determined by customers seeing value for the amount charged.

Brand association is how closely the brand imagery is aligned. Do they trigger the correct thoughts in the customers eyes?

Other proprietary refers to intangible offerings from the brand. For example, trade exchanges/agreements, patents lodged or pending.

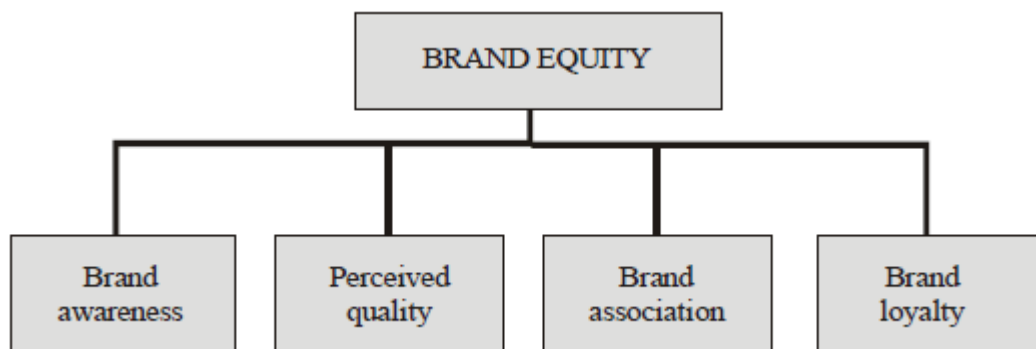


Figure 2.2: Aaker's Brand Equity Model (Aaker, 1996).

Brand value enables the customer to consume and process large amount of data (Bhasin, 2018). It has an influence over purchase choices as consumers tend to trust their frequently used brands more.

Customer satisfaction is improved through perceived quality and affiliations to brands. Promotional messages are better received if brand value is high amongst customers (Aaker, 1996).

Brand loyalty is reinforced when the customer's expectations and product quality are aligned and this in turn motivates the customer to re-purchase the product (Aaker, 1996).

Brands with high brand equity are able to charge a premium for their products because their perceived value is more than other brands with lower brand equity.

Furthermore, brands with a high brand equity are able to retain customers and are better equipped at stopping customers from switching (Bhasin, 2018).

Using Aaker's Brand Equity Model, brands are able to evaluate their level of value and determine whether brand value and customers' expectations are aligned (Aaker, 1996).

2.2.3 Stakeholders Theory

Stakeholder Theory was created by Edward Freeman (1984) and encourages businesses to notice and manage the interconnected relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders (Bhasin, 2018). He argues that organisations should create value for all of their stakeholders as they are vital to the functioning and going concern of the organisation. These stakeholders include customers, employees, suppliers, investors and the community (Bhasin, 2018).

Organisations need to become responsible citizens within the environment they are operating and acknowledge that without their stakeholder's support, the organisation would not survive.

Freeman mentions that organisations that foster a positive relationship with their stakeholders will be more profitable than ones which do not (Bhasin, 2018).

This theory has been chosen to be included in this study to show the importance of having strong relationships with stakeholders (Bhasin, 2018). With the noticeable decrease in foot traffic, the brand is relying upon these relationships in the hope that loyal customers will repeat purchase and add revenue for the business.

Stakeholder relationships are key to portraying the correct brand image which affects brand perception and equity (Bhasin, 2018).

2.3 LITERATURE BY AUTHORS ON THE TOPIC

The literature review below will aim to address a number of issues related to the stated objectives.

Objective 1 – Determining if the Inside Out Windermere is located in the correct area.

Inside Out Windermere is located in Morningside, Durban and this area has steadily decreased over the years. Homeless people are found on most streets, drug addicts and alcoholics frequent the local parks and sex workers are found on most street corners. Crime has increased leading to the adjacent premises being vacant and giving the perception to the public that the store has closed down or moved. The literature set out to determine how big an influence location has on brand image and customer perception, even if the location of the store is in a well-known location.

2.3.1 Location

According to researchers (Dube, et al., 2016), positioning is crucial to the survival of an organisation. It is an important factor which influences customer perception and the survival of the business. The location of the business must always endeavour to be as close to the target market as possible as this creates ease of access for the target audience.

According to Location Theory (Jordaan, et al., 2004), businesses determine their locations based on where they see higher profit and lower cost opportunities but consumers look at location in terms of ease of access.

When businesses determine the location in which they wish to operate, they will consider a number of factors (Jordaan, et al., 2004). Business owners want to achieve a balance between profits and overheads in order to maximise the profit opportunity for the investor (Jordaan, et al., 2004). An example would be the increased rental costs of a space close to a busy area instead of the lower rental cost of a space in a quieter area. According to location theory businesses need to determine if the increased rental costs for a space in a busier area are going to lead to increased sales which will outweigh the financial impact of the higher rental (The Independent Institute Of Education, 2017).

This theory also mentions that businesses placed in areas synonymous with that industry, are more likely to have favourable results (Jordaan, et al., 2004).

This ties in with marketing efforts and considerations as well due to the fact that you are able to market your location more effectively if located within a well-known area (Jordaan, et al., 2004).

Businesses also consider stakeholders when considering location (The Independent Institute Of Education, 2017). This is because the businesses key stakeholders, namely their customers, employees, suppliers and communities, are vital to the survival of the organisation (Kimelberg & Williams, 2013). An organisation needs to be located in an area which attracts the correct demographic or target market, has access to the correct human resources, where suppliers have ease of, low cost of and timeous access, and where the local community accept, embrace and promote the business to enable it to remain a going concern (Oppong, 2018).

According to Patrick Wagner (2018), even the right placement on the street is key for the survival of the business. A business could be located in the ideal area with ample foot traffic, correct target market and not have too much competition nearby however the side of the road with which the traffic flows can affect the business (Wagner, 2018).

Natural barriers are also mentioned by Wagner (2018) as an element that can affect consumers from visiting your store. He mentions that these barriers make the locations ease of access inconvenient for consumers and are factors consumers will determine is worth their while beforehand. Natural barriers include elements such as making a right hand turn across a busy road with traffic or where the parking is far away from the shop. According to Oppong (Oppong, 2018), ease of access is a business's biggest advantage. Placing a business close to its target market and making it convenient to visit the store is vital to the survival of the business, especially organisations who sell goods and services directly to its customers from brick-and-mortar establishments (Dube, et al., 2016).

Wagner (2018) goes on to say that businesses must be located in an area that makes sense to what you are doing. It must be where the community will want to embrace the organisation (Wagner, 2018).

Amenities such as having sufficient parking bays is imperative to the success of a business as consumers will merely just drive on, if they cannot find a space (Dube, et al., 2016).

A location could have all the amenities and be free from all-natural barriers however the business is only as strong as the consumers supporting it (Kimelberg & Williams, 2013). Therefore, location is key as it is vital for the business to be placed as closely as possible to the ideal customer (Oppong, 2018).

Thomas Oppong (2018) mentions that the best location can increase brand visibility. Not only does the physical location affect the consumers perception. I.e., a business located in an upmarket area might unconsciously say that the business is of higher quality and therefore warrants a higher price (Kimelberg & Williams, 2013). These perceptions all effect the brand equity of the business (Bhasin, 2018). Furthermore, the physical building of the business could be used to market the business especially if it has road frontage or is located in an attractive building (Wagner, 2018).

Oppong (2018) also mentions that businesses must think about their suppliers. In a business where everything is brought from different suppliers, proximity to suppliers could have a massive impact on the business. The rate at which deliveries can be delivered can hugely affect the productivity of the business (Oppong, 2018).

Overall, if a business is conveniently located at the best place to attract customers, be close to suppliers and have sufficient amenities, this is likely to increase sales, brand visibility and lead to positive growth and brand equity (Crescitelli & Figueiredo, 2008).

Objective 2 – Assess whether Inside Out Ballito has drawn customers away from the Windermere store since opening on 1 March 2019.

January and February are historically slow months for Inside Out Windermere and the foot traffic rate did not raise any alarms as it was accepted as normal for the time of year. March is historically a busy month with noticeably more foot traffic through the store, however in 2019 this was not the case. The foot traffic rate did not noticeably increase in March and the literature set out to examine the effects of competition on a business, even if this competition is internal.

2.3.2 Competition

Internal and external business factors are significantly influenced by competition (Newgrove, 2019). Competition can sometimes negatively affect small organisations, especially in hard economic times, as people tend to hold onto their money and this decreased revenue puts the small business at risk as they do not have a sizable cash flow to fall back on (Startupbizhub, 2019).

Pricing is vital to the longevity and profitability of a business as the price of goods and services is the way an organisation can increase revenue. However, pricing is regulated by competition (Startupbizhub, 2019).

Organisations need to find a balance between high profitability and remaining competitive on pricing (Newgrove, 2019). Organisations which do not have competitors nearby, need not worry about slightly higher pricing but if there is competition nearby, the organisation may need to rethink its pricing strategy in order to attract new, and maintain, customer levels (Startupbizhub, 2019).

It is important for organisations to identify the competitors within their industry as this will allow the business to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Tough Nickel, 2016). This will enable businesses to determine where its, or the competitors, competitive advantage lies and how to differentiate themselves from their competitors, to gain or increase competitive advantage (Tough Nickel, 2016).

The location of the business may also have an impact on the organisation as it may be situated in an extremely competitive environment where each business is fighting for its share of the hard-pressed market (Startupbizhub, 2019).

However, competition does not always have to be seen as a negative to a business. Competition encourages innovation in order for the organisation to distinguish itself from others. Innovation also forces organisations to not become complacent and keep coming up with new and exciting ways to interact with their consumers (Newgrove, 2019).

Competition forces organisations to become customer service orientated, be responsible for the way they interact with and communicate with their customers. Great customer service should reward the organisation with a loyal customer base (Newgrove, 2019).

Competition encourages organisations to keep up to date with what their customer needs and wants (Tough Nickel, 2016). This will allow organisations to be better equipped to engage with their customers when they do come knocking. Competition can lead to strategic partnerships being formed as businesses look to leverage economies of scale.

Competition in industry can be positive as it regulates the pricing for a consumer, forces firms to adopt a customer centric approach and put the needs of the customer first (Newgrove, 2019). This should lead to a loyal and healthy customer base which can be tapped into in the future. Competition can also be negative for an organisation if they are not willing to adapt with the times and show customers that they are important to the organisation (Startupbizhub, 2019).

Objective 3 – Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing methods in creating the correct brand image and targeting the correct audience.

Inside Out mainly advertises on social media – Instagram and Facebook. The posts are more about awareness of available products than special pricing. Promotions are run infrequently in order to keep the excitement levels around them high. The literature sets out to determine how sales promotion and advertising effect the brand image and equity of a business.

2.3.3 Advertising and Promotion

The literature examined focuses on all elements of the promotional mix, namely advertising, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion (Allaham, 2015). For the purpose of this research study only advertising and sales promotion will be examined.

Promotion and advertising are essential to the success of a business (Allaham, 2015). According to Robert Morello (2019), it helps to establish a brand, grow the identified target market, uncover new markets, create and maintain customer loyalty and keep abreast of the competitors by conveying the correct messages to these stakeholders (Morello, 2019). Organisations which limit advertising and promotion may save money, however they are at a disadvantage in terms of brand image and brand equity (Kokemuller, 2017).

Advertising and promotional efforts help establish an organisation in the marketplace and makes the brand more visible to its consumers. Advertising and promotion help to portray the brand image and inform the consumer about the brand and its values (Kumar & Dr Sidheswar, 2017).

Organisations are able to gain growth within the identified target market and substantially improve their market positioning through the use of promotion and advertising (Morello, 2019). It keeps your business in the minds of your consumers and shows existing and new clientele what the business has to offer (Kokemuller, 2017).

Advertising and promotion can uncover secondary markets which the organisation was not aware of and these markets have the potential to add revenue and possibilities for development of the business (Allaham, 2015).

Promotions can be used to increase customer loyalty by encouraging existing customers to keep returning (Allaham, 2015). Information relating to special pricing, rewards and other purchase incentives may encourage customers to return more regularly than they usually

would. Research indicates that it is extremely important to keep existing clientele happy and loyal as it is easier and more cost effective for an organisation to communicate with existing customers than trying to find new ones (Kokemuller, 2017).

Advertising and sales promotion can be used to effectively combat the competition by constantly portraying your company into the market sphere your organisation operates in. You keep yourself in the minds of your existing clientele and reduce the possibility of a competitor gaining traction in your already secured target market (Davis, et al., 1992).

Organisations often fail to advertise and promote sufficiently due to the high cost implications. Research shows that a well-developed marketing strategy and communication message can repay the advertisement cost many times over (Allaham, 2015).

According to Neil Kokemuller (2017), sales promotions are used to encourage customers to buy products or services more regularly, or to purchase in bigger quantities, than they normally would. This is usually done by giving the customers discounts or inducements.

Companies make use of sales promotion for a number of reasons, namely increasing revenue and cash flow, trying to reduce the levels of outdated or excessive stock or to try encourage the consumer to try out the brand (Kumar & Dr Sidheswar, 2017). Sales promotion can impact the long-term value of the brand and this may not always have a positive impact (Davis, et al., 1992).

A brand is the meaning behind a name, logo, symbol, words or images commonly associated with a company or product (Morello, 2019). Brand reputation is developed over time through investment in quality products or services and marketing, which is used to convey benefits of the brand to targeted customers. Strong brand value can lead to customer loyalty, a strong brand image and greater brand equity (Kumar & Dr Sidheswar, 2017).

The value equation suggests customers see value as the correlation between a product's price and the benefits it offers. Brand building is generally intended to strengthen customer perception of quality benefits to enable the company to charge higher prices. However, sales promotions emphasize reduced prices as the reason for increased value in a purchase offer (Kumar & Dr Sidheswar, 2017). Getting customers to focus on price versus quality impacts their perception of your products worth. In essence, a sales promotion or price reduction suggests you cannot sell the product at the prescribed regular price because demand for your brand was limited (Allaham, 2015).

The increased sales rate which comes with promotions has long-term consequences for the organisation. Research shows that constant promotions could negatively impact the sales price of the product/service and the brand image but this is dependent on the type of promotion tool used (Allaham, 2015). Different types of promotional tools may influence sales, profitability and brand equity. These tools can be broken up into monetary and non-monetary tools (Allaham, 2015). Monetary promotional tools are when the consumer is able to purchase a product/service at a lower price point than usual. Non-monetary tools are where the incentives are not associated with the pricing of the product/service. For example, discounts or special offers (monetary) tend to have a negative effect whereas for competitions, gifts and loyalty bonuses (non-monetary) the opposite is true (Davis, et al., 1992).

Monetary promotional tools tend to negatively affect the brand image as the reduced product/service pricing reduces the brand pricing and this negatively affects and lowers the brand equity (Allaham, 2015).

Non-monetary tools tend to increase brand image, loyalty and ultimately brand equity amongst clientele as they do not affect the consumers internal reference prices (Allaham, 2015). Furthermore, non-monetary promotions also help brands to differentiate themselves in the market and can be used to maintain their competitive advantage as they are able to increase the consumers knowledge of the products without bringing price into the equation (Davis, et al., 1992).

This allows the brand to create and sustain meaningful relationships with their customers, increasing their chances of gaining loyal customers and this will positively affect brand equity (Kokemuller, 2017).

2.4 SUMMARY

This literature has provided context of key terms and theories. It has provided a brief understanding of the current research problem which the Inside Out Brand currently faces and has identified three key areas which may be a cause of this issue.

Businesses need to find a balance between a location that draws enough foot traffic and one with an overhead that is manageable. Competition is inevitable making customer service and customer relationships key for organisations if they want to survive in this highly competitive environment. In a world where everything can be found online. It is impossible for an organisation to survive with no online presence. Advertising and promotion communicate an organisations brand and effects the customers perception of the brand.

From analysing these objectives in the literature investigated it can be said that the Inside Out Brand may be affect by one or all of the issues identified.

Suitable frameworks and literature have been presented to support the research and the objectives of the study. The literature allowed for a strong foundation of knowledge that could be examined and explained in more detail for where there may have been gaps in the research.

Chapter three presents the research methodology and associated aspects of the research.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology and associated aspects of the research. In addition, the population and sample are discussed as are design of the research instrument, data collection and analysis as well as the limitations that may have come into consideration throughout the data collection process.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Research Paradigm and Design

3.2.1.1 Research paradigm

This study fits within the interpretivism tradition (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Interpretivism is a study of the social sciences and researchers merely want to understand human behaviour. Interpretivism is concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This tradition maintains that human action is meaningful and people therefore ascribe meaning both to their own and other people's actions (Creswell, et al., 2016). Interpretivists believe that humans have the ability to read meaning into one another's actions because they share a meaning system such as language (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). The current study fits within this tradition because it is trying to determine the reason behind the decrease in foot traffic to the Inside Out Windermere store.

3.1.2.1 Research design

This is a qualitative research study as its aim is to gain a deep understanding of a specific organisation or event, rather than a brief description of a large population sample (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Qualitative research aims to offer a clear interpretation of the structure and broad patterns found amongst individuals (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the reason walk in traffic at Inside Out Windermere has decreased. The study is not concerned with statistics and numbers but rather the reasoning behind the decrease in foot traffic (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

This is a cross-sectional design as it is a once-off analysis of a group consisting of twenty-four individuals. A cross sectional design aims to create an overall description of a phenomenon at a specific point in time and therefore the data collection will only be

conducted on one occasion (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Should this study be approved, a cross-sectional approach would be used as it would need to be conducted and concluded within one year (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

This research design utilises deductive theorizing. Deductive theorising makes use of existing theory which is used when conducting research (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This study will make use of the existing theories known as: Keller's Brand Equity Prism, Aaker Brand Equity Model and Stakeholders Theory. The general aspects of these theories will be explored and applied to the specific topic under investigation.

3.3 POPULATION

A research population consists of individuals who have a common, binding characteristic or trait (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.3.1 Unit of analysis

Unit of analysis refers to the specific entity in the research that will be studied. This entity can refer to individuals, groups or artefacts (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). For this particular study, individuals were studied to determine if the reasoning is the same among the individuals or if it differs per individual. The study will not examine groups or artefacts as they will not provide the correct insight needed.

3.3.2 Population characteristics or parameters

3.3.2.1 Nature

The sample consisted of regular customers, infrequent customers and lapsed customers residing in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The type of customer was broken down into private individuals and decorators.

3.3.2.2 Size

Twenty-four individuals made up of fifteen private individuals and nine decorators.

3.3.2.3 Unique characteristics

Private individuals and decorators – the customer base is comprised of private individuals and decorators and therefore both type of customers will be studied.

Walk in customers only – the study wants to determine the reasoning for the decrease in foot traffic through the Windermere store.

Windermere store – there are two branches and only the Windermere store will be taken into consideration.

Customers who frequently, in-frequently or used to (lapsed customer) purchase from the Windermere store. The foot traffic has decreased across the three listed customer categories and this study aims to determine if the reasoning is the same or different between the three categories.

Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa – the Inside Out brand only exists in Kwa-Zulu Natal and therefore customers residing in this area will be considered.

3.3.2.4 Target and accessible population

Target population refers to everyone falling within the population parameters (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This study's target population is every private individual or decorator, residing in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, who walks into the store and purchases or has been a walk-in purchaser from the Inside Out Windermere store.

Accessible population refers to the section of the target audience that can be reached and therefore can only be studied (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This study's accessible population will be all private customers and decorators who would be willing to take part in the interview.

3.4 SAMPLING

Sampling is defined as a group of participants which fall within an accessible population and have relevant characteristics (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Sampling is divided into two types: probability and non-probability sampling. This study will make use of non-probability sampling as it is better suited to a qualitative study and will be discussed further below.

3.4.1 Non-probability Sampling and Methods

Non-probability sampling is utilised when defining the population is extremely challenging or when gaining access to the defined population becomes difficult (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). The sampling method best suited to this particular study is non-probability sampling as the study has a very narrow scope of the population and requires a niche selection process (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). It also requires the researcher to select the participants from a list as opposed to a random selection of the entire population. The sample will therefore not consist of a population that has equal opportunity to take part in the study and thus non-probability sampling will be employed (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Non-probability sampling will be utilised in this study as it enables the researcher to identify deep, meaningful reasoning of phenomena as opposed to probability sampling which concerns itself with generalization across a population (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.4.1.1 Accidental sampling

This sampling method does not make use of a sampling frame and rather happens upon the participants by chance as they happen to be in the right place at the right time (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This study will make use of this sampling method when either private individuals or decorators, falling into the categories of frequent, in-frequent or lapsed customers, enter the store and are asked if they would be willing to take part in the study.

The dangers of this sampling method are researcher bias, location bias and population bias however these will be overcome in this study due to the following (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015): the researcher has knowledge of the customer base and the assumption can be made that individuals who enter the store are there for a purpose and have an interest in the goods or services the store has to offer.

3.4.1.2 Convenience sampling

Convenient sampling is when the researcher has access to the customer database and the population is already known to them (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This study will make use of convenient sampling as it will be dealing with existing clients and asking them to participate in the study.

3.4.1.3 Purposive sampling

A population sample is selected using certain criteria such as characteristics and traits (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). For this study, the characteristics of frequent, in-frequent and lapsed customers are important elements to the research and therefore decorators and private individuals falling within these parameters will be contacted and sampled. The advantage of this sampling method is that it allows the researcher to hen pick the population who will add value to the research and minimise irrelevant data. (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015)

3.4.2 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of individuals in a population who opt to participate in a study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Non-probability sampling is not concerned with the number of participants in the population, rather it concerns itself with the point at which data saturation will be realised (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). In the following study, the researcher will aim to have just enough of a sample to reach a point of data saturation.

A population sample of twenty-four will be selected based on the following criteria: they will be split between fifteen private individuals and nine decorators. These will be further broken down into frequent, in-frequent and lapsed customers.

3.4.3 Limiting Factors

Limiting factors refer to factors that exhibit concern and may prohibit the researcher from being able to conduct their research effectively or being able to gather and collect the necessary data efficiently (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.4.3.1 Budget

In every study is important for the researcher to weigh up the costs versus the value gained and therefore the researcher needs to ensure that the sampling methods employed are the most cost-effective whilst still enabling valuable data to be gathered.

3.4.3.2 Time

All researchers need to work within time constraints and need to make sure that the sampling and analysis methods are time-conscious as it takes time to source the sample, contact them, collect the data and then analyse and report the findings. Although qualitative studies are known to be time consuming, the researcher will negate this issue by having a smaller sample.

3.5 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data collection usually consists of field research and non-reactive research (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Field research is suitable when it is necessary to make observations about phenomena in their natural environment (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). When conducting field research, we assume that the behavior of the individuals we observe has a purpose and is an expression of deeper feelings and experiences. This type of research may not be completely accurate as the individuals know they are being observed by an outsider and may not act naturally (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Non-reactive research overcomes the dangers or short comings of field research as they are not directly involved with participants whilst they are being observed (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

For the purpose of this study, field research in the form of in-depth interviews will be utilised as it allows the researcher to pose questions to the participants with the aim of learning more about their views, opinions and experiences relating to the Inside Out Windermere store.

3.5.1 Standardised, Open-Ended Interview

This type of interview allows the researcher to ask each participant the same set of questions and easily analyse the answers given (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). A detailed interview consisting of no more than ten open-ended questions, designed to determine the reasons behind the decrease in foot traffic at the Inside Out Windermere store, will be carried out. All participants will be read the parameters and be given the opportunity to engage or not in the interview (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Although this type of research may be time consuming, it is necessary to conduct valuable qualitative research and also enables the interpretation of non-verbal behaviour (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This issue will be overcome by offering the participant a small incentive. The participant will be compensated with a R250 voucher which can be redeemed in either of the Inside Out stores. The research will be relatively inexpensive as it will be done in-store and the only cost implications will be the telephone calls to set up the interviews. An existing device will be utilised as a voice recorder to record the interviews. This allows the researcher to analyse the interviews in detail and not to ascribe their own meaning to the participants answers. No additional human resources are necessary as the interviewer will collect and interpret all the information.

In order for the researcher to gain maximum value from the in-depth interview, they need to ensure that the questions are truly open-ended and do not lead the participants to answering in a certain way (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Double-barreled and leading questions should be avoided as this may cause confusion for the participants or it may incline the participant to answer how they feel the researcher wants them to rather than with their true feelings and experiences (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

The researcher should formulate clear, simple and broad questions as this allows for natural conversation to take place and allows the participant to feel more comfortable in explaining their true feelings. The researcher is then also able to clarify any answers should the need arise (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.5.2 Qualitative Tool

Qualitative interviews are a form of conversation with the primary aim of obtaining information based on open-ended questions (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Interviews are able to provide valuable sources of information as it allows the researcher to interpret and understand the meanings of the participants answers. Interviews also allow the researcher

the opportunity to ask the participants for clarity on unclear points or answers (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Non-verbal behaviour is also able to be analysed and this adds value to the study.

In order for a qualitative tool to be successful, all participants must be given enough space to give their full views and opinions (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). The researcher needs to ensure that there are adequate guidelines in place to limit the participant from straying off topic and providing irrelevant information.

3.6 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is the process of creating order, structure and meaning to a mass of data by utilising data analysis tools (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.6.1 Conversational Analysis

Conversation analysis is a time consuming and intensive process whereby the researcher highlights subjective ideas and the understanding that people exhibit in their everyday communication (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). The researcher will analyse certain pieces of text therefore making this method not suitable for analyzing large amounts of data (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Making use of audio and video recordings is essential to this method as it allows the researcher to go over the data multiple times and analyse the data in detail.

Participants consent is vital when making use of conversational analysis. All participants that take part in the study will be informed as to what the study is about, whether or not their conversation, or parts of it, will be published and how their identities will be protected (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Conversational analysis will be utilised in this study whereby the researcher will listen and interrupt the responses of the participants in order to determine the deep-rooted reasoning behind the decrease in foot traffic of the Inside Out Windermere store.

3.6.2 Multimodal Analysis

Multimodal conversational analysis can be seen as using a set of communicative modes such as posture, head movement, gestures, gaze and spoken language as set of representation to understand the meaning of both implied and overt messages (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This method of analysis attempts to take body language and other modes of expression used as part of a conversation into account.

Multimodal analysis can be useful to studies when non-verbal cues are important to the communication process (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). The interviews for this particular study will be taking place face to face in the location of the store. Sometimes people do not speak what they truly feel and their non-verbal cues could say something completely different. Non-verbal cues can provide a research with vital information as the participant is often unaware of them and they provide a more realistic report of someone's feelings and emotions (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

Multimodal conversational analysis in the form of posture will be utilised in this study to increase the credibility of the findings. It will allow the researcher to analyse and interpret body language of the respondents. This will reinforce what the respondent is saying or it will contradict it (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE STUDIES

3.7.1 Credibility

This is the level of accuracy that the researcher interpreted the data given by the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). When the researcher spends long periods of time with the participants, this increases the credibility as the researcher should be able to gain a better insight and understanding into each participants' circumstances. The more believable the findings are from a participants' perspective, the more credible the study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is how easily the findings can be applied to another study with similar results (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). This allows for generalisation within approaches but without creating generalised findings. It is the level of ease that the results and analysis are able to be applied to other studies beyond this specific approach (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is the quality at which integration takes place between data collection method, analysis and the theory generated from said data and the process thereof (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is how well the researcher interpreted the data collected and communicated the findings so that should another researcher analyse the same data, they should determine similar findings (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refer to a set of moral standards that guide an individual's decisions and behavior. This research proposal will look at the ethics that relate to the researcher and those which relate to the participants.

Get informed consent from respondents that the research will be conducted with confidentiality. All respondents' names will be concealed and they will be free to withdraw at any time (Creswell, et al., 2016).

Gate keepers' letter will be applied for. Ethical clearance will be applied for and will not be conducted until confirmation is given (Creswell, et al., 2016).

Researcher bias will be minimised by analysing the responses specifically in terms of each theme/objective on a factual basis, in an objective manner, without subjective interruptions (Creswell, et al., 2016).

In the interest of ethical compliance, no persons under the age of eighteen will be interviewed. In order to secure informed consent, a signed letter of consent will be completed by each participant before interviews are conducted. All participants will be informed of and have the right to anonymity. Participants will be informed about the nature of the research and the security of all obtained data (Creswell, et al., 2016).

The researcher will conduct themselves in a most ethical manner at all times. This implies having respect for the participants as well as being timeous, courteous and highly professional (Creswell, et al., 2016).

3.8.2 Limitations

Limitations refer to constraints that fall outside the researcher's control. This study has a few limitations (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). These limitations are time, financial and human resources and access to large enough sample and will be described below.

3.8.2.1 Time

Time is most valuable and this study will require a lot of one on one data collection as well as an in-depth data analysis of the findings. The researcher works full-time and the data collection, compiling, analysis and feedback will need to be done after hours in their own time. Additionally, this study is a cross-sectional analysis and this has a finite timeline attached to it adding to the time constraints.

3.8.2.2 Financial and Human Resources

Even though this study does not require a big budget or large amount of financial resources, there will be some form of financial implications around the arranging and carrying out of interviews and analysis of the data.

Human resources are limited as the researcher will be tackling this study alone and the researcher does not have the financial means to hire researchers to assist with data collection and analysis.

3.8.2.3 Large Enough Sample Size

Even though Inside Out has a decent customer database, the researcher is going to rely on walk-in traffic for participants. If the walk-in traffic is not enough, the researcher will need to overcome this limitation by offering a small incentive to participate in the study.

3.9 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION

This study intended on contributing to the social science field by attempting to provide qualitative phenomena in the form of an in-depth understanding of customer perceptions and behaviour (Stofan, 2018). The goal of these findings is to be used in future research and to provide data to add to the existing body of knowledge around customer perceptions and foot traffic in retail businesses (Kimelberg & Williams, 2013).

The findings may also prove useful to the Inside Out Brand as they could provide insights into ways of increasing foot traffic and improving overall brand equity.

Based on the findings of this research proposal, the research will be able to determine if the research question has been answered or not (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015). Suggestions will be provided by the researcher on ways to improve on future studies and will add value to society as it will contribute to an existing body of knowledge. The researcher hopes to create awareness around the topic and be able to hopefully better equip researchers around the effects that customer perceptions have on the foot traffic of retail businesses.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented and outlined the research methodology, population, sample and methods used. Qualitative research was selected in order to gain perceptions and opinions of individuals towards the Inside Out Brand and the Windermere Store. Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were explained to ensure that the research is trustworthy. Despite obstacles, the research was undertaken and suitable data was collected.

Chapter four presents the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data collected from the one-on-one interviews are presented. The data is displayed using both word clouds and graphs in order to interpret the results easily. Although graphs are usually used in a quantitative study, there are some questions shown using a quantitative method simply for illustrative purposes however the analysis will be explained in a qualitative manner.

The above mentioned will be explained and discussed in greater detail in order for a deeper understanding and further insight into the findings. The analysis of the data was conducted as per the research methodology discussed in Chapter 3 in order for the study to remain credibly. It is important to note that because it was a small-scale qualitative study, results are such that they cannot be generalised to the broader population.

4.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Figures consisting of pie charts as well as word clouds have been used to present the findings in order to display the common themes that have been found throughout the research. The findings have been presented according to how the interview questions have been asked to answer the objectives.

4.2.1 Demographics of the Respondents

One-on-one Interviews

The respondents were males and females between the ages between the ages 19 and 59 years of age, currently living in Durban. There was a total of 24 respondents who took part in the one-on-one interviews, 15 private customers and 9 decorators.

Below is a pie chart representing the age of the respondents who participated in the study. The pie chart shows that most respondents were between the age of 50-59 years old.

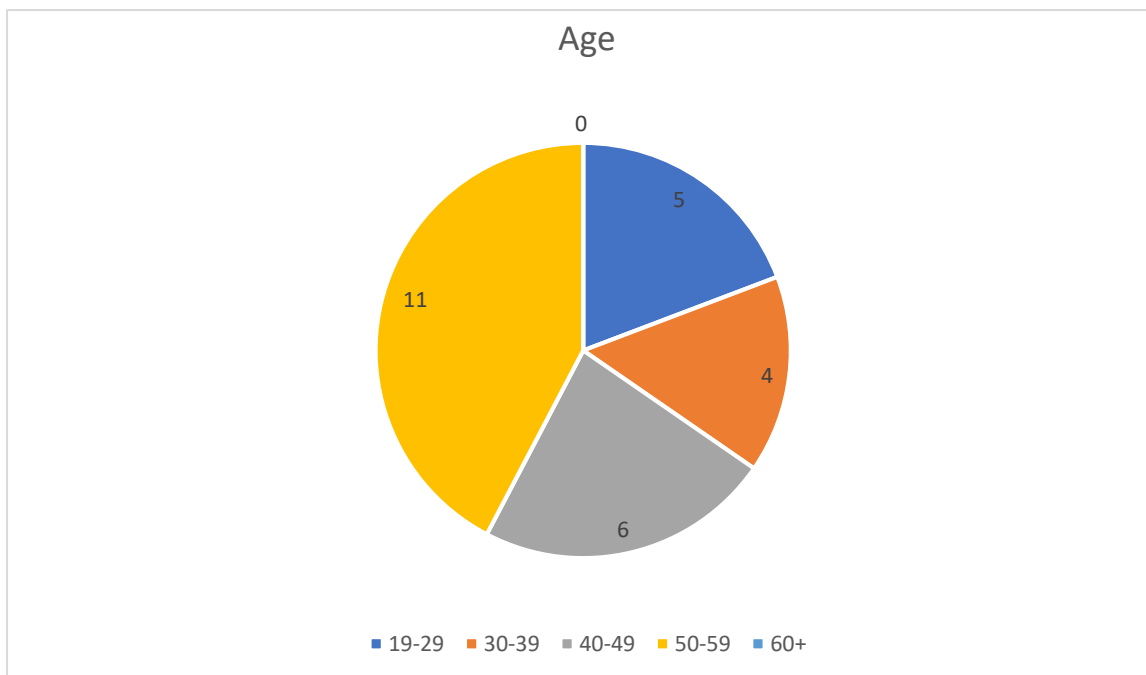


Figure 4.1: The age of respondents

4.2.2 Results and Discussion of Inside Out Brand and Windermere Store

Although some of the below questions may be presented in a quantitative approach by using percentages, results are further discussed in a qualitative approach by identifying themes and patterns that have been gathered through one-on-one interviews. The one-on-one interviews allowed the research to gain an in-depth understanding of the responses and also observe the body language of the respondents. The one-on-one interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow up questions should they have felt a response was unclear.

Some of the questions asked in the one-on-one interview were direct allowing the researcher not to waste time asking questions that were irrelevant to the respondent.

Other more in-depth questions were also asked to gain a deeper understanding of the respondents' feelings and experiences.

4.2.2.1 Objective One - Determining If Inside Out Windermere Is Located in the Correct Area

Questions 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 were asked to answer this objective.

Question 3.

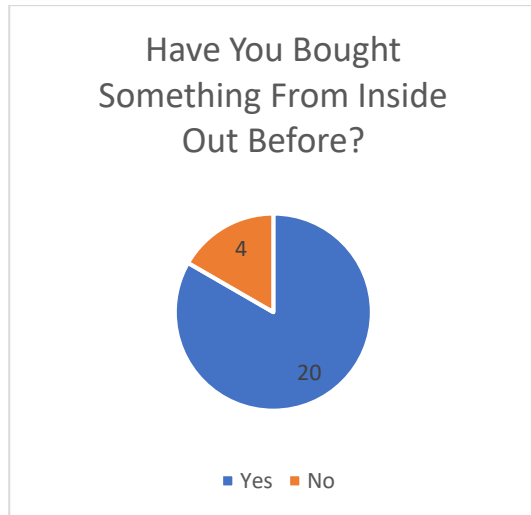


Figure 4.2: The number of consumers which have bought from Inside Out

Question 3.1



Figure 4.3: The store which consumers have bought from

The third question was asked to determine whether individuals/ decorators had purchased from the Inside Out Store's. This question was necessary in order to determine whether the location of the store was convenient for its consumers.

As can be seen from the data above, most respondents have purchased something from Inside Out stores before with the majority purchasing from the Windermere store. This could be due to the fact that the Ballito store has only been open for six months at the time of the study.

Question 4 – what factors limit you from purchasing more often?

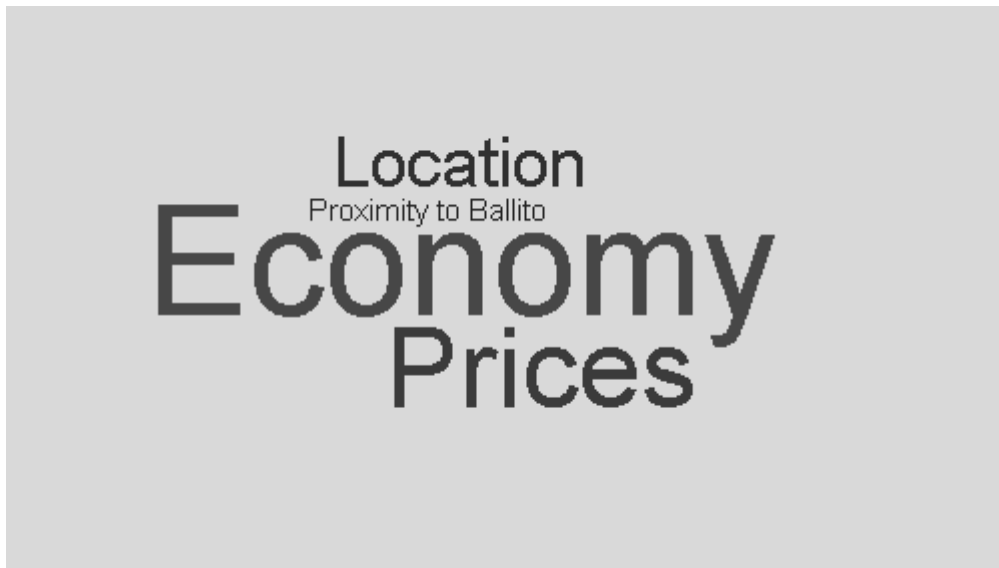


Figure 4.4 Factors which limited customers from purchasing more often

The researcher aimed to determine, from the above question, why the foot traffic and overall sales had declined at the Windermere store. The economy and limited disposable income were sighted as the main reasons for the limited purchases.

Pricing of the items was also a common response to this question among the private customers. They felt that when wanting to purchase accessories and soft furnishings for their home, they had to purchase more than one of something and this became an expensive exercise which often surpassed their budgetary allowances. Pricing did not come up often with decorators and this could be due to the fact that individuals hiring decorators to help with their homes, may have more disposable income.

Location of the store was a regular answer amongst decorators as these individuals tend to browse the store more often than private customers and hence would be more critical of the surroundings. Decorators also mentioned that majority of their customers were based outside of the Durban area (mostly Johannesburg or Cape Town) and this made it difficult to do final pick -ups of soft furnishings and accessories whilst they were busy with their installs.

The proximity of customers to the Ballito store was mentioned a few times but this could be because the customer spends more time in Ballito and would prefer to visit the Ballito store rather than the Windermere store.

Question 5 – when was the last time you visited the store?

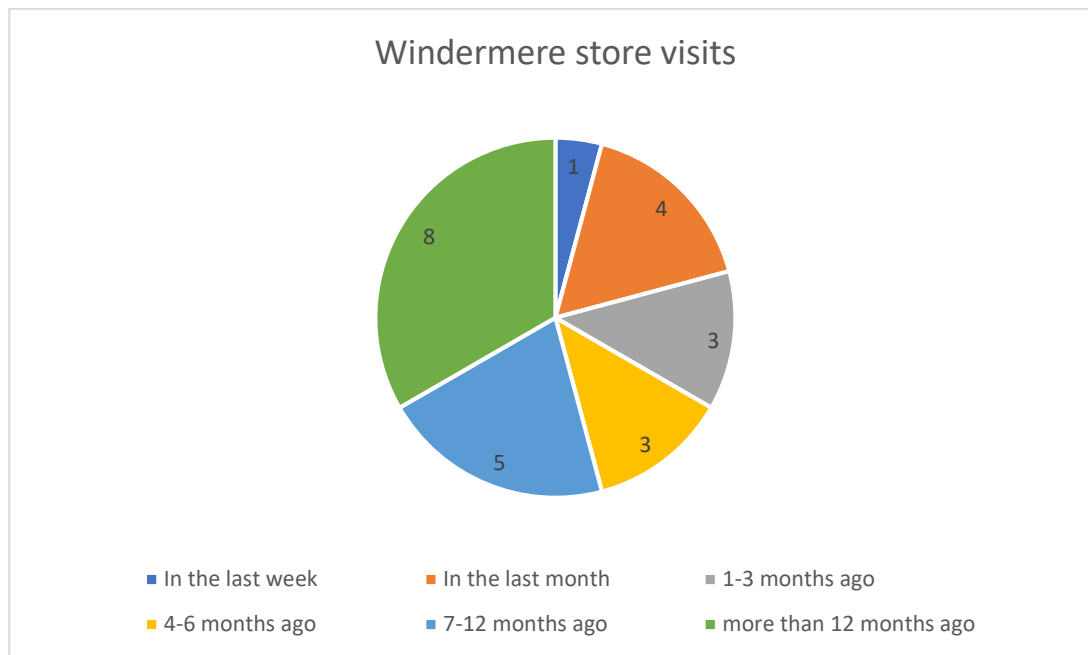


Figure 4.5: Windermere Store Visits

As can be seen from the above diagram, more than half of the respondents have not visited the Windermere store for over 7 months. Majority of these responses are from private customers and decorators who used to frequently visit the store but are now only visiting the store less than once a year.

Private customers who mentioned the economy in the previous question, also mentioned that they did not visit the store so as to avoid the temptation to purchase something unnecessary and spend money they may not have had. This could be a factor in the lack of sales and foot traffic through the Windermere store.

The lack of jobs which decorators in the Durban area are not being allocated, could be the reason for the decreased decorator foot traffic through the Windermere store.

Question 7 – how do you feel about the location of the Windermere store?

Answers varied from out of the way to great location. Twenty out of twenty-four responses stated that the location of the store was good with great parking options. Only one of the private customers mentioned that at times there are some unscrupulous individuals around and not one respondent mentioned the vacant properties on either side of the Windermere store.

Once again, the respondents who mentioned that they preferred to shop at the Ballito store did so because they spend more time in Ballito and the new shop is much more convenient for them. When those respondents were asked if they would still support the Windermere store if there was no Ballito store, they all mentioned that they would continue to support the store.

Question 8 – do you feel that safety is a concern when visiting the Windermere store?

Although respondents answered no to this question there was mention made of the lack of secure parking for the store as well as the increased number of prostitutes in the Windermere area. These respondents said that these factors would not deter them from visiting the store.

Question 9 – what do you love about the Inside Out Windermere store?

Beautiful building, convenience and a great destination were the three most common threads in the responses received. This adds to the argument that the Windermere store is located in the correct area for their clientele.

Question 10 – what do you think Inside Out could do differently?

When the researcher asked respondents what the brand could do differently, only one respondent mentioned increased security for customers and the store at its current location. Many indicated a more affordable range would be received favourably by the customers. Minimal responses came back about moving the store to a different location.

4.2.2.2 Objective Two - Assess whether Inside Out Ballito has drawn customers away from the Windermere store since opening on 1 March 2019.

Questions 3, 4, 7 & 11 were asked to answer this objective.

Question 3.

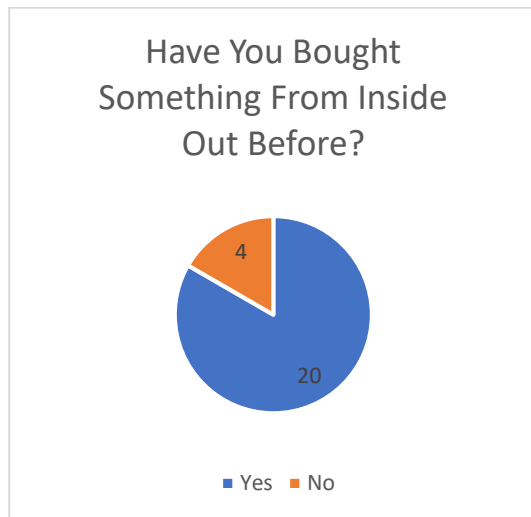


Figure 4.6: The number of consumers which have bought from Inside Out

Question 3.1



Figure 4.7: The store which consumers have bought from

As can be shown from question three, a quarter of the customers have purchased solely from the Ballito store and another quarter have purchased from both stores. It can be determined then that with the opening of the Ballito store, a quarter of the customers have potentially been lost by the Windermere store.

Question 4 – what factors limit you from purchasing more often?

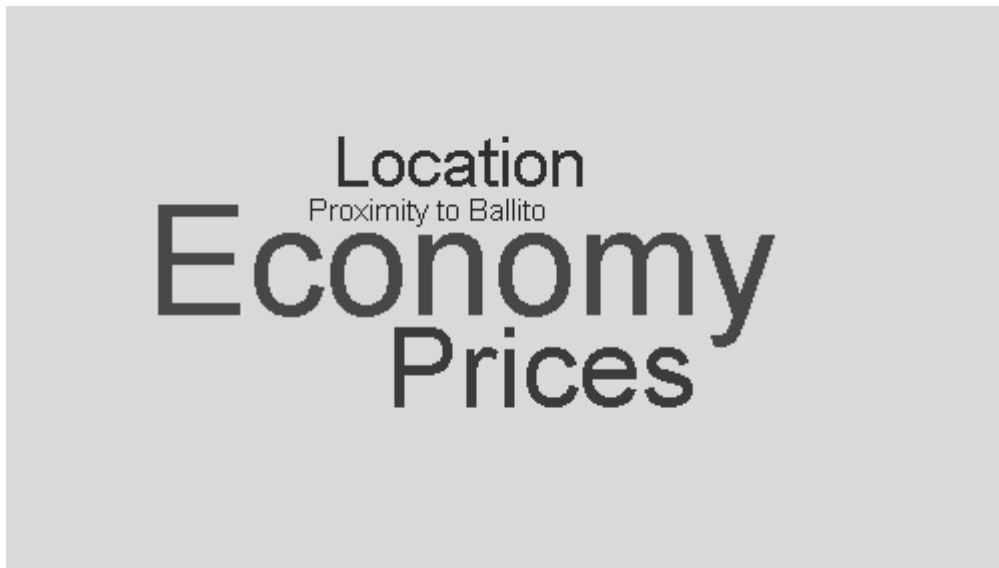


Figure 4.8: Factors which limited customers from purchasing more often

Proximity to Ballito was mentioned by respondents showing that some customers may live closer to, or spend more time in and around Ballito, making the Ballito store more convenient for them to shop at.

Question 7 – how do feel about the location of the Windermere store?

The private customers and decorators who mentioned location as a factor due to the unscrupulous individuals in the area, may be drawn to the Ballito store if they love what this store has to offer.

A few respondents also mentioned secure parking as a factor and the Ballito store does offer this. Clients may be drawn to Ballito because of the availability of secure parking.

Question 11 – Are you aware that Inside Out has a Ballito store?

Seventeen out of the twenty-four respondents are aware of the Inside Out Ballito store showing that there is a potential for North Coast customers and decorators who used to shop at the Windermere store to now purchase from the Ballito store due to proximity and ease of access for them.

4.2.2.3 Objective Three - Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing methods in creating the correct brand image and targeting the correct audience.

Questions 6, 9, 10, 12 & 13 were asked to answer this objective.

Question 6 – describe the Inside Out brand in five words.



Figure 4.9: Perceptions of the Inside Out Brand

Unique, elegant, trendy, quality, sophisticated and beautiful were some of the most popular responses to this question. This shows that the Inside Out brand is currently effectively communicating the desired brand identity and image to its clientele.

Even though some of the respondents were between 30-49 years of age, majority were between the ages of 50-59 showing that the Inside Out brand is possibly targeting an older age segment than desired.

Question 9 – what do you love about the inside out Windermere store?

Eighteen respondents mentioned that they love the layout of the store and the products offered in the store. This in-store marketing is the foundation for creating the desired brand image which Inside Out are wanting to portray to past, present and future clientele. It can therefore be determined that the current instore layout is effectively communicating the desired brand image and could potentially enhance the brand equity of the Inside Out brand.

Question 10 – what do you think Inside Out could do differently?

As mentioned under objective one, fifteen respondents mentioned that Inside Out should try and offer secure parking for its customers. Should incidents happen or customers feel unsafe in the area, this could tarnish the positive brand image which Inside Out has worked so hard to create. This may land up being the first thing which comes to mind for a consumer rather than what the brand has to offer resulting in a negative effect on brand equity.

Question 12 – do you follow Inside Out on social media?



Figure 4.10: Inside Out customer following on Social Media

Out of the twenty-four respondents who contributed to this research study, twenty-three follow Inside Out on Facebook, Instagram or both. Only one respondent said they do not follow the brand on social media. It can be determined that social media needs to be the marketing channel of choice for the brands clientele. Facebook is the most popular channel amongst Inside Out customers and this is in line with the 50-59 age group. Due to the smaller

size of the organisation, social media is an easier, more effective way to communicate the brand image and positively affect the brand image for Inside Out.

Question 13 – what forms of advertising have you seen the Inside Out brand in?



Figure 4.11: Forms of advertising which Inside Out customers have seen

Based on question 13, the only form of marketing which the Inside Out brand is utilising to effectively communicate its brand image is social media. The findings show that only a select few private customers and decorators have seen the brand marketed in the various other platforms mentioned.

4.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The research provided detailed findings and insights that were able to answer the research problem as well as the objectives that were set for this study. The research from the one-on-one interviews and the literature in chapter two allowed for analysis of the research to enable credibility and trustworthiness to back up the findings from the respondents.

Even though the research findings showed that location, competition and advertising and promotion are key to the success of a business, they are not the only factors which may affect a business's foot traffic. Although this study excluded economic factors, the findings show that the economy and rate of disposable income are key factors which influence the rate of foot traffic for a business and overall brand equity.

Recommendations can be found in Chapter 5

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The conclusions and recommendations of the research have been explained and presented in this chapter by relating each to the different research objectives. This is done by briefly examining the findings of the literature as well as findings from the research and then providing conclusion and recommendations for each objective. The chapter ends by concluding the research and recommending future research studies.

5.2 OBJECTIVE ONE

Determining if Inside Out Windermere is located in the correct area.

5.2.1 Findings from the Literature

After reviewing the literature in chapter two it can be determined that the physical location of a business is vital to its success. The location of a business not only influences customer perception but also needs to be relative to the target market (Dube, et al., 2016). Businesses need to find the ideal balance between ease of access for customers and cost opportunities relating to the location of the business (Oppong, 2018).

5.2.2 Findings from the Research

The research findings correlated with the findings from the literature above. Ease of access and ample parking invited customers to the store. The findings also mentioned that the store was in a good location but this could be due to the fact that the building is synonymous with a decorating shop as there has been a decorating store trading from there for the past twenty-five years.

5.2.3 Conclusion

Morningside used to be an upmarket, trendy area but with the influx of prostitutes and other unscrupulous individuals, this has tarnished the reputation of area. Even though the research results show the Windermere store to be in a good location, remaining in this location could be detrimental to the Inside Out Brand and the number of customers visiting the store. The costs associated with the property far outweigh the current foot traffic levels for the store, making the cost opportunities far greater than the benefits for the organisation.

5.2.4 Recommendations

Inside Out Windermere store may need to re-consider the future of the store at the current address. Customers are wanting secure parking which cannot be offered at the current location. The tarnished and ever-decreasing reputation of the Morningside area may have negative influence over the brand reputation and the amount of foot traffic, should it continue to operate from the current address. Therefore, it would be advisable for the Inside Out Brand to relocate to another location which offers secure parking and lower cost opportunities.

5.3 OBJECTIVE TWO

Assess whether Inside Out Ballito has drawn customers away from the Windermere store since opening on 1 March 2019.

5.3.1 Findings from the literature

The literature states that competition is not only external. Internal competition can greatly affect the revenue of the business, especially when the new premises is located closer to the existing clientele (Startupbizhub, 2019).

Competition has a bigger impact on small businesses during tough economic times as customers have less disposable income and tend to not spend on luxury items. These smaller businesses do not have the benefit of a big cash flow to keep them going during tough times (Tough Nickel, 2016).

5.3.2 Findings from the research

The findings from the research showed that some of the clientele who used to shop at the Windermere store have moved to shopping at the Ballito store due to its proximity to said clientele. This showed that even though the competition is internal, the opening of the Ballito store has taken customers away from the Windermere store due to its location and proximity to those clients. In addition, many respondents noted that they did not go to either store as they did not have the means to purchase items and did not want to be tempted into committing themselves to something they do not need.

5.3.3 Conclusion

By Inside Out opening another store in Ballito, this has created a certain amount of internal competition as it would attract North Coast customers to the new Ballito store due to its proximity to them. However, it is not the only factor which has caused the decreased foot traffic in the Windermere store. It can be said that the tough economic climate currently being experienced in South Africa and the lack of disposable income among South Africans is the main reason for the decreased foot traffic through the Windermere store.

5.3.4 Recommendations

Inside Out should look at stocking more affordable products in order to keep customers coming through the doors during tough economic times. This could also limit the customers from searching for an alternate supplier and keep the Inside Out brand top of mind for when the customer has more disposable income to purchase the more luxurious items.

5.4 OBJECTIVE THREE

Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing methods in creating the correct brand image and targeting the correct audience.

5.4.1 Findings from the literature

The literature shows that advertising and promotion is both monetary and non-monetary (Davis, et al., 1992). Advertising keeps communicating with your customers and target market. It aims to constantly remind these individuals of your brand so when they are in the market, they will consider your brand before another (Kumar & Dr Sidheswar, 2017). Monetary promotions may be harmful to the brand as it lowers the perceived price point of the product. Non-monetary promotions tend to build brand equity and guide customers into becoming loyal, regular customers and even to the point of being brand advocates (Davis, et al., 1992).

5.4.2 Findings from the research

The research findings indicate that most respondents have seen the Inside Out brand on social media, namely Facebook. However, majority were unaware of the company website and only a few respondents mentioned they had seen other various forms of advertising and promotion. Even though Inside Out advertising and promotion is limited, it has been successful in communicating a desired brand image.

5.4.3 Conclusion

Organisations and brands need to look at building relationships with their customers through channels other than monetary benefits, in the hope of building relationships with younger customers who become loyal and will support the company for many years. Overall, the majority of Inside Out clientele are from an older generation who might not be looking at outlaying funds on their homes as they may be saving towards retirement. Inside Out lacks a younger demographic who might support the brand for many years.

5.4.4 Recommendations

Inside Out should consider making improvements to their website and online store as well as diversify their advertising and promotional mediums in order to communicate with, interact with and build relationships with, a younger clientele.

The respondents who interacted with the Inside Out brand through Facebook were aged 50 – 59 years old. Inside Out must consider creating a more diverse target audience in order to capitalise on the younger professionals who purchase online and have more disposable income available.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Expanding the research respondents to a younger demographic will allow the researcher to identify whether or not their responses correlate with the older demographic. This will enable a better understanding of the market as a whole rather than just one part of the market. Further research could also look at other forms of data collection in order to provide a more accurate representation of the findings as some respondents may not feel completely comfortable with giving their honest opinions during personal interviews.

There is a need for research on retail foot traffic in developing or infant economies as this would provide a better understanding of the retail space for the businesses which operate in those conditions. There is a need for research which solely focuses on the upmarket sector – which gets cut back when times get tough.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is inevitable that businesses will be affected by the economy regardless of what industry they operate in. Finding a balance between a manageable overhead and a great location which encourages foot traffic, is imperative to the financial stability of an organisation. With the increase in online purchasing power, businesses will need to focus on building sustainable relationships and improving their online presence with their customers, if they are to remain a going concern as competition is unavoidable.

By doing one-on-one interviews, this study allowed for the research question to be answered and by giving various insights to what affects the foot traffic of a retail business and what affect this has on the organisations overall brand equity.

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ANNEXURE 1
CONSENT FORM

Explanatory Information Sheet

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To respondent,

My name is Chelsea La Reservee and I am a student at Vega School of Brand Leadership. I am currently conducting research under supervision of Gareth Gray to investigate consumer perceptions and the reasons behind the decline in foot traffic through the Inside Out Windermere store. This will be done by looking at three key factors; location, competition and advertising and promotion, to determine how these factors influence customer perceptions and overall foot traffic in an organisation. I hope that this study will add valuable insights into how to avoid a decline in foot traffic and build positive brand perception with customers.

Confidentiality and anonymity of records are ensured. Should you have queries or concerns relating to the study, please contact myself or my supervisor, Gareth Gray.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. The survey should take between twenty to thirty minutes and your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Warm regards,

Chelsea La Reservee

082 892 8980

Consent Form for Participants

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Chelsea La Reservee.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research involves. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality is ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

ANNEXURE 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are you a decorator or a private client?
2. Which age category best represents you? 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+
3. Have you bought from an item from an Inside Out store?
4. Did you purchase the item from the Ballito or Windermere store or both? And why?
5. What factors limit you from buying more often?
6. When was the last time you visited the Windermere store? Why?
7. Please could you describe the Inside Out Brand in five words?
8. How do you feel about the location of the Windermere store?
9. Do you feel that safety is a concern when visiting the Windermere store? Please Elaborate.
10. What do you love about the Inside Out Windermere Store?
11. What do you feel that Inside Out could do differently?

ANNEXURE 3

PERMISSION LETTER

ANNEXURE 4

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

ANNEXURE 5

ORIGINALITY REPORT

ANNEXURE 6

TITLE: Investigate Consumer Perceptions to Explore the Reasons Behind the Decline in Foot Traffic Through the Inside Out Windermere Store

Research Purpose	Research Question	Research Rationale	Sources	Literature Review	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Methods	Ethics	Anticipated Findings
To determine why the rate of walk-in customers has declined in order to protect the brand and remain a going concern.	Why is there a decrease in foot-traffic at the Inside Out Windermere Store?	Survival of the brand. Business to remain a going concern. Possibly lead to increase in foot traffic and increase sales	(Bhasin, 2018) (Friederichsen, 2017) (Mind Tools, 2019) (Aaker, 1996) (Enslin & Kloppe, 2014)	Theme 1 – location Theme 2 – competition Theme 3 – advertising and promotion	<u>Paradigm</u> Interpretivism <u>Ontology</u> Reality created by individuals' experiences <u>Epistemology</u> Reality is interpreted <u>Axiology</u> Provides insight & understanding to the research problem.	Qualitative	<u>Secondary:</u> Historical data analysis <u>Primary:</u> Standardised open-ended interviews	Ethical clearance – to be obtained POPI act – previous customer Gatekeeper letter – to be obtained Consent requests obtained Verify age of respondents	Location is unsafe. Vacant shops led us to believe you had closed/moved. Location creates negative brand perception
						Population			
						Existing clientele from business database			
Research Problem	Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Methods	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution
Aims to explore customers perceptions and the reasoning behind declining foot traffic which has led to fewer sales.	Determining if Inside Out Windermere is located in the correct area. Assess whether Inside Out Ballito has drawn customers away from the Windermere store since opening on 1 March 2019. Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing methods in creating the correct brand image and targeting the correct audience.	Customer Perception Foot Traffic	Aaker's Brand Equity Model Keller's Brand Equity Model Stakeholder Theory			24 respondents. 15 private individuals and 9 decorators. Further broken down into 3 categories: Regulars In-frequent Lapsed	Conversational analysis Multimodal analysis	Time Financial and human resources Large enough sample size	This research might help other small business determine why their traffic has declined leading to fewer sales.