



**HSB421**

**Research Methodology (RESM8419p)  
Assignment 5: Research Report  
Final Version**

**An investigation of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it influences their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts in Strategic Brand Communication (HSB421) 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 degree purposes.

# **ABSTRACT**

## **Background**

Based on the growth of conscious consumerism, brands are under pressure to adapt their operations and offerings, which presents a problem in the potential development of a gap between their brand identity and brand image, because it can lead to a negative reputation and poor market performance. This study investigates this problem within the context of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it influences the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers, against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative, phenomenological and cross-sectional design was implemented. Furthermore, two data collection methods, a focus group and in-depth interview, were utilised and the data was analysed by means of a thematic content analysis.

## **Findings**

Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced an overall reduction in the gap between Spur's brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers. This finding contributes to the brand identity and brand image literature within a South African restaurant context, which was found to be an area that has rarely been studied.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing focus on modern consumerism's negative impact on issues such as climate change, environmental sustainability, personal health and animal welfare have contributed to the growth of conscious consumerism (Bizcommunity, 2020; Smithers, 2019; Accenture, 2018). These consumers are actively trying to minimise their impact on these issues through their purchasing behaviour (Wong, 2019). Their growth as a consumer segment has started to influence brands in various industries (Hackenberg, 2019), with the food sector facing particular scrutiny as it impacts all of the aforementioned issues (Cameron & Cameron, 2017). Consequently, there has been significant growth in demand for plant-based food products, both locally and internationally (Ishmail, 2020; Maharaj, 2019; Mourdoukourtas, 2019), which has a substantially smaller impact on these issues (Carrington, 2018). Conscious consumerism is therefore pressuring brands in this sector to adapt their operations and product offerings in order to remain competitive (Crowe, 2018).

This study therefore focuses on how a South African restaurant franchise, Spur, have adapted their menu by integrating a plant-based menu, and how this change has influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers. Thus, the aim of this research report is to provide an in-depth view of the investigation of this research problem, followed by the research design and plan to meet the study's objectives, and the presentation and analysis of the findings.

Firstly, the rest of the introductory chapter refines the study's rationale, problem and purpose, from which the appropriate research questions and objectives are determined. Thereafter, the literature review on the study's four key concepts (brand identity, brand image, menu design, and conscious consumerism) is presented. Chapter 3 provides insight into the study's research methodology by detailing the chosen research design and plan, after which Chapter 4 presents the findings and its analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes this research report by discussing the study's limitations and contributions, as well as proposed future research.

## **1.1 Rationale**

The growth of conscious consumerism and the increasing demand for plant-based foods has put pressure on brands in the South African food market to offer products that meet these consumers' needs (Ishmail, 2020; Mamacos, 2019; Smit, 2018). Major supermarket retailers such as Checkers, Pick n Pay and Woolworths have taken note of this growing demand and have increased their range of plant-based offerings (Pace, 2020; Smit, 2018). Furthermore, these retailers indicate that based on their research, this consumer segment not only includes an increasing number of vegans and vegetarians, who completely exclude meat from their diet, but also an increasing number of consumers that are simply reducing their meat consumption (Pace, 2020; Smit, 2018). This market's growth has also influenced many brands in the local restaurant industry to include more plant-based options in their menus (Maharaj, 2019).

Although major supermarket brands have started to respond to the needs of conscious consumers, brands within the restaurant industry are particularly exposed to the growing demand for plant-based foods. The reason being that supermarkets offer a variety of products in addition to food such as cosmetics, homeware, outdoor equipment, electronics and toys (Checkers, 2020; Pick n Pay, 2020; Woolworths, 2020). Thus, their identity is not as intrinsically linked to food as compared to restaurants, which are brands that essentially specialise in preparing and serving food (Cambridge, 2020). Major restaurant brands were therefore selected for further investigation.

The biggest restaurant brands in South Africa, based on number of outlets, are KFC (885 outlets), Steers (581), Debonairs (546), Wimpy (478), Nando's (340), Spur (290), McDonalds (240), Chicken Licken (240) and Fishaways (240) (BusinessTech, 2018; Spur, 2018). The researcher performed a review of each brand's menu, which confirmed that the vast majority of their meals contain meat, whilst a comparison revealed that Spur offers the most comprehensive and dedicated plant-based menu. Spur was therefore chosen as the appropriate brand for this research study.

In addition, according to Spur's Chief Operating Officer (COO), Kevin Robertson, their most important value is inclusivity, which is why they intend on offering a quality diverse menu (Spur, 2019). This means that, even though Spur's identity establishes that it's a steakhouse restaurant, they value customers with different preferences. Thus, it is important for Spur that the conscious consumer segment also has a positive perception of the brand. It is this premise that motivated the selection of this research topic. Lastly, considering the growth of conscious consumerism, further research into how the integration of a plant-based menu has influenced the potential gap between Spur's brand identity and brand image among these consumers can ultimately provide valuable insights and a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Due to the growth of conscious consumerism, brands are under pressure to adapt their operations and products to meet the needs of this consumer segment. In the context of this research study, restaurant brands have started to incorporate more plant-based foods in their menus in order to raise their appeal to conscious consumers. Thus, the challenge facing brands is to successfully evolve whilst maintaining the core elements of their identity and preserving a positive brand image. Failure to do so can result in the development of a gap between their brand identity and image, which is problematic, because the growth of this gap can lead to a negative reputation and poor market performance (Roy & Banerjee, 2007).

## **1.3 Purpose Statement**

Following the problem identified in Section 1.2, the purpose of this study is to investigate Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it influences the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers, against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to address the key research areas as per the problem statement (Section 1.2), this study's research questions are:

- 1. What is Spur's brand identity based on their menu design?
- 2. What is Spur's brand image among conscious consumers?

- 3. How has Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers, against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism?

## 1.5 Research Objectives

In addition to the research questions, this study's corresponding research objectives are:

- 1. To analyse Spur's brand identity based on their menu design.
- 2. To determine Spur's brand image among conscious consumers.
- 3. To evaluate how Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers, against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism.

## 1.6 Key Concepts

Based on this study's purpose (Section 1.3), the following four key concepts have been identified which provide the context for this study. First, *brand identity* is a set of brand associations which represent what the brand stands for and implies a promise to customers (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Second, *brand image* is both the result and interpretation of a brand's identity (Kapferer, 2008). Third, *menu design* refers to menu items' position, description and label, as well as a menu's characteristics (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015). Fourth, *conscious consumers* are consumers that take into account the consequences of their consumption and try to influence social change through their purchasing power (Webster, 1975, cited in Prendergast & Tsang, 2019). These key concepts will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study's purpose is the investigation of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how this has influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers. Thus, the key concepts derived from this topic, which will be explored further in this literature review, are: brand identity, brand image, menu design, and conscious consumerism.

### **2.1 Brand Identity**

Brand identity is a set of brand associations which represent what the brand stands for and implies a promise to customers (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). This promise can include the brand's functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits and aims to build a relationship with the customer (Aaker, 1996). It's these characteristics that enable a brand to create loyalty and differentiate it from competitors (Kapferer, 2008; De Chernatony, 1999).

The coherent communication of a brand's identity to potential customers is fundamental in determining its success (De Chernatony, 1999). It is on this principle which one of the most widely referenced brand identity models is constructed. The brand identity prism (Kapferer, 2008), builds on communication theory in the sense that there is a sender and receiver. The top of the prism represents the sender, which includes the brand's message about who it is and what it does (Kapferer, 2008). The bottom of the prism represents the receiver, which includes the customer and their interpretation of the message (Kapferer, 2008). Furthermore, in this communication process, the prism represents the following six facets of brand identity: physique, personality, relationship, culture, reflection, and self-image (Kapferer, 2008). Kapferer (2008) highlighted the importance of this communication process by stating that brands can only exist if they communicate, and become obsolete if they remain silent.

There are several other brand identity models which have also gathered widespread recognition in this field of research. De Chernatony (1999), acknowledged the value of Kapferer's (1997) brand identity prism, but contended that adaptations be made

that conceptualises the brand's identity in terms of its vision and culture. This model represents brand identity in terms of the interrelationships that a brand's vision and culture has with these four facets: presentation, positioning, personality and relationships (De Chernatony, 1999). Alternatively, Aaker (1996) developed a model that conceptualises a brand's core and extended identity, which is then separated into four categories: brand as product, brand as organisation, brand as person, and brand as symbol. These four categories each include unique descriptors which further establish a brand's identity (Aaker 1996). Finally, Keller's (2013) brand resonance model includes brand identity as the first of four steps for a brand to achieve resonance with its customers. However, the predominant focus of this model is to provide a structure for brand building with an emphasis on how customers perceive the brand (Keller, 2013).

For this study's purpose of analysing Spur's intended brand identity and conscious consumers' interpretation thereof, Kapferer's (2008) brand identity model is considered the most appropriate theoretical framework to conduct this analysis. In comparison with the various models investigated, this model underlines the process of a brand projecting its identity and customers interpreting that identity (Figure 1), which is central to this study's scope of investigation. De Chernatony's (1999) model contains similar brand identity facets to Kapferer (2008), but comprises of complex interrelationships between these facets, that also consists of internal brand stakeholders, which is outside of this study's scope. Aaker's (1996) model emphasises a broad platform from which to establish a brand's identity, whereas Keller's (2013) model emphasises customer perceptions of a brand. As these models predominantly focus either on brand identity or its interpretation, it has therefore not been considered suitable for this study.

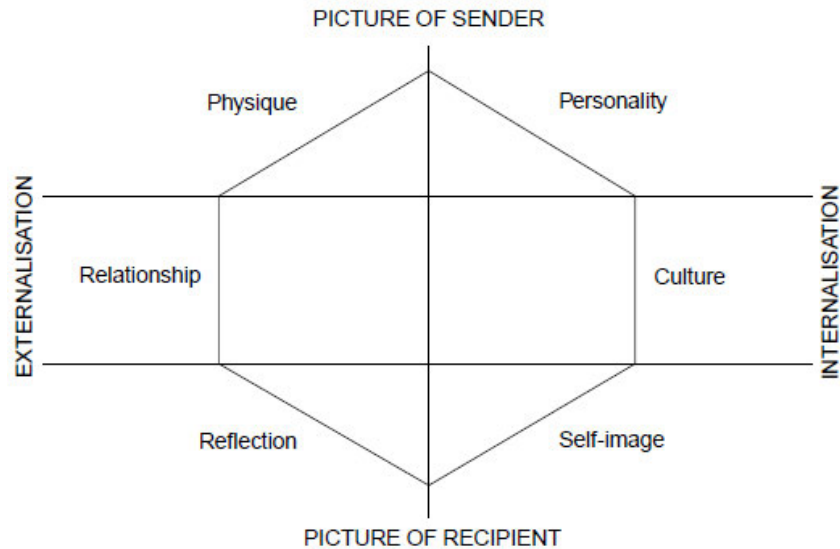


Figure 1: Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism

Source: Kapferer, 2008.

Considering the context of this study, which is the study of a brand in the restaurant industry, the concept of brand identity can be explored further. A restaurant's brand identity can also include the following four elements: properties, products, presentations, and publications (Witkowski, Ma & Zheng, 2003). These four brand identity elements contain significant aesthetic and sensory components such as colour, graphic design, light, smell and taste which can influence a customer's experience (Witkowski, Ma & Zheng, 2003). Furthermore, a restaurant's brand identity can influence customer choice, establish loyalty and increase market share (Selase, Abdoulaye, Mawuli & Brantston, 2018). It can therefore be concluded that a restaurant's brand identity is integral in communicating its value to prospective customers.

## 2.2 Brand Image

Brand image is both the result and interpretation of a brand's identity (Kapferer, 2008). In addition, this interpretation is comprised of a collection of associations and beliefs that consumers have about the brand (Kotler, 1994; Keller, 1993). These associations resulting in brand image can be formed in multiple ways simultaneously through a process called inductive inference, which includes personal consumption,

experience and social influence (Riezebos, 2003). Similarly, Kapferer (2008) states that brand image is a synthesis of various brand messages, but can also be influenced by noise which includes competitor brand communications, as well as a brand's false sense of its own identity. Thus, the resulting brand image is imperative, because a positive brand image will influence purchasing decisions and increase brand preference among customers (Falck, 2018; Vranesic & Stanec, 2003; Keller, 1993).

The link between brand identity and brand image is important, because the occurrence of a gap between these concepts, and failure to minimise this gap, can lead to a negative perception of the brand and poor market performance (Roy & Banerjee, 2007). A gap can occur if the brand values are not communicated in a consistent manner and are incongruent with customers' brand experience (Lindeberg, Blomkvist & Johanssen, 2018; De Chernatony, 1999). It is therefore essential that brands develop an understanding of their brand image to ensure that it is aligned with their brand identity (Falck, 2018; Colbert, 2003). Alignment between these two concepts can increase brand loyalty and derive benefits for both the customer and the brand (Nandan, 2005; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003).

Concerning brand image within the context of the restaurant industry, this concept can be further defined as the attitudes, emotions, and ideas that customers associate with restaurants (Jin, Lee & Huffman, 2012; Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012). A positive brand image is therefore integral to the success of a restaurant, because it influences a customer's decision making more than any other restaurant value (Hwang & Ok, 2013). This is due to customers simply relying on their image of restaurants when making a dining decision, rather than remembering every tangible and intangible attribute of various restaurants (Espinosa, Ortinau, Krey & Monahan, 2018). Thus, a restaurant needs to understand its brand image, as well as customers' consumption goals, in order to meet their needs effectively and ultimately increase their own profitability (Han, Nguyen & Simkin, 2016; Remar, 2015). This indicates the importance for Spur to understand their brand image among all segments of their target market and how this concept can be influenced by menu design, which is explored in the next section.

## 2.3 Menu Design

In an article dedicated to a comprehensive literature review of menu design, Ozdemir and Caliskan (2015) indicate that menu design consists of the following four components: menu item position, menu item description, menu item label, and menu characteristics. Menu item position refers to the specific location of the menu item on the menu (Dayan & Bar-Hillel, 2011; Choi, Lee & Mok, 2010). Menu item description refers to the details and complexity of menu item descriptions, and can also include the presentation of nutritional information and calorie labels (Roberto, Larsen, Agnew, Baik & Brownell, 2010; Hwang & Lorenson, 2008). Menu item label refers to the descriptive nature of menu items, such as labelling menu items with evocative names, instead of regular names (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015; Guéguen & Jacob, 2012). Finally, menu characteristics refer to the aspects of a menu which includes design features such as imagery, typography, colour, size, copywriting, paper, and including items in boxes (Guéguen, Jacob & Ardiccioni, 2012; Reynolds, Merrit & Pickney, 2005). Overall, these four components each form an important part of menu design, as they have been found to affect the choice and sales of menu items (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015).

The strategic design of a menu is intended to not only provide essential information, but also to be memorable and influence the customer to purchase a specific item over another (Lockyer, 2006). Thus, as a customer spends an average of two minutes browsing a menu, a well-designed menu which promotes certain items can potentially increase restaurant revenue by 2% - 10% (Mill, 2007). In addition to influencing impulse decisions (Lee, Wang & Lee, 2017), an aesthetic menu design can also attract customers (Riell, 2011). Therefore, it is not only important for a restaurant to design a menu that is noticeable and unique, but also to ensure that it is aligned with the needs of the market and the business (Lee, Wang & Lee, 2017).

Menu design has also been linked to a restaurant's brand image. A study by Remar (2015) indicated that the relationship between customers' perception of the menu and their perception of the restaurant was statistically significant. In terms of brand identity, a menu is a statement of a restaurant's philosophy and an important component of its marketing communications (Strong, 2006). Thus, the menu

functions as a key communication device between a restaurant's operations and the customer, and is a vital component of a restaurant's success (McCall & Lynn, 2008).

Aside from the few aforementioned sources, not a lot of research has been done that specifically investigates menu design's influence on both concepts of brand identity and image. In addition, none of the relevant literature focused on a restaurant's brand identity and image within a South African context. Consequently, a gap in the literature was identified. This study, with its focus on how the integration of a plant-based menu by a South African steakhouse restaurant franchise (Spur) can influence the potential gap between its brand identity and image, can therefore yield relevant knowledge to this particular field of research.

## **2.4 Conscious Consumerism**

Webster (1975) first introduced the concept of socially conscious consumerism and defined it as "a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change" (cited in Prendergast & Tsang, 2019: 146). Since then multiple related concepts such as green consumerism, ethical consumerism, and values-based consumerism have developed which share a similar definition, with the addition of highlighting specific issues such as environmental sustainability, worker's rights and animal welfare (Botha, 2018; Chen, De La Rosa, Peterson, Zhong & Lu, 2016; Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010; Pennington, 2005). Thus, for the purpose of this study, and for the sake of clarity and brevity, these overlapping concepts will simply be referred to as conscious consumerism.

The growth of conscious consumerism is attributed to increasing coverage by mainstream media and consumer activist groups of modern consumer culture's impact on society and the environment (Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010). Thus, conscious consumerism impacts brands in the sense that these consumers prefer brands whose values resonate with their own and boycott brands they believe to be harming society (Mohr, Webb & Harris, 2001). This contributes to the increasing empowerment of the consumer, which influences brands to integrate social

responsibility into their operations and product offerings (Prendergast, 2019, Botha, 2018).

Conscious consumerism has also impacted the restaurant industry (Wansink & Love, 2014). In addition to the aforementioned conscious consumerism values, an increased value of personal health has been found to be one of the main drivers of this group's food consumption decisions (Kim, Park, Kim & Ryu, 2013). Furthermore, the reported health risks associated with meat consumption (Richi, Baumer, Conrad, Darioli, Schmid & Keller, 2015), as well as animal agriculture's destructive impact on the environment (IPCC, 2018; FAO, 2006), have led to an increasing number of consumers reducing their meat intake (Morais, 2016; De Boer, Schösler & Aiking, 2014). This elimination or reduction of meat-consumption has contributed to the growth of lifestyle movements such as veganism (consumers who eliminate all animal-related products from their diet), vegetarianism (consumers who eliminate meat from their diet, but for example still consume dairy and eggs), and flexitarianism (consumers that reduce their meat consumption) (Clicer, Spinelli, Dinnella, Prescott & Monteleone, 2018; Mann, 2014, Raphaely & Marinova, 2014). In response, restaurants have been introducing new products and, in some cases, entire menus that feature health-focused and plant-based meals (Jelski, 2020; Mir, 2018; Jin, Line & Lee, 2017).

Conscious consumers value restaurants most which offer options that is aligned with their lifestyles, and by not considering this consumer segment, a restaurant risks losing customers to competitors (Morais, 2016). The risk of excluding plant-based options from menus is that it not only dissuades vegans or vegetarians from visiting the restaurant, but potentially their meat-consuming companions as well (Rivera & Shani, 2013). The reason being that the vegans or vegetarians in a group often have the "veto vote", which means that the group would prefer to dine at a restaurant where everyone, including the vegans and vegetarians, can enjoy a quality meal (Shani & DiPietro, 2007). The availability of plant-based options also affects conscious consumers' perceptions of the quality of a restaurant (Jin, Line & Lee, 2017; Morais, 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that it is important for restaurants to cater to conscious consumers in order to establish a positive brand image, which can ultimately influence its profitability (as stated in Section 2.2).

## **2.5 Summary**

This literature review has established the importance of each key concept in relation to this study. The relationship between a restaurant's brand identity and image is integral to its success, whilst menu design is also an important component that contributes to both brand identity and image. Finally, the growth of conscious consumerism has influenced restaurant operations, and specifically menu design, to such a degree that it potentially impacts a restaurant's brand identity and image as well.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter firstly presents a discussion of this study's research design, followed by a detailed description of the research plan that was implemented.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The deliberation of the research design is comprised of two parts, starting with a discussion of the study's selected paradigm, after which the chosen qualitative research methodology is further motivated.

##### **3.1.1 Paradigm**

A paradigm is a research tradition from which the researcher can determine the key theories, basic assumptions, models of quality research and suitable research methods to be utilised (Neuman, 2014). There are numerous research traditions among which the three most common are positivism, interpretivism and critical realism (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Between these three research traditions interpretivism is considered the best paradigm for this study, because its main objective is to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon by investigating social action and how humans construct meaning (Du Plooy-Cilliers 2014; Neuman, 2014). Thus, interpretivism's fundamental approach is aligned with this study's purpose, which is to obtain a deeper understanding of how Spur's integration of a plant-based menu has influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and image among conscious consumers.

Furthermore, a research paradigm can be systematically examined by unpacking its epistemological, ontological, metatheoretical, methodological and axiological positions (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Interpretivism is therefore explored according to these five positions, along with its influence on this study. Firstly, interpretivism's epistemological position constitutes valid knowledge as dependent on people's interpretation of the world (Weber, 2004). It means that this study would yield knowledge on conscious consumers' interpretation of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu. In addition, due to the subjective nature of knowledge in the interpretivist paradigm, the results of such a study cannot be generalised beyond the

context in which it was conducted (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalised beyond the context of its target sample, which is defined in Section 3.2.2.

Ontologically, interpretivism consists of the belief that reality is fluid and that a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations (Pham, 2018). This study reflects this ontological position as conscious consumers can potentially have different interpretations of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu. Metatheoretically, interpretivism consists of theoretical frameworks which aim to gather detailed information and reveal a deeper meaning of the phenomena being studied (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This study's key theoretical frameworks were analysed in Section 2.1, during which Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism was selected as the most suitable framework for this study.

Methodologically, interpretivism generally utilises a qualitative research methodology, as it helps researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomena (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This study therefore utilised a qualitative methodology, which is discussed further in Section 3.1.2. Lastly, interpretivism's axiological position is value-laden and biased, because this paradigm values the in-depth understanding of subjective realities (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015). It means that this study values conscious consumers' subjective interpretations of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu, and included the researcher's value-based interpretation of this data.

In conclusion, these five positions of interpretivism illustrate how this paradigm formed the appropriate foundation for this research study, as it enabled the researcher to follow a guideline to establish a suitable research design. This study's qualitative methodological approach, which extends from this paradigm, is explored further in the next section.

### **3.1.2 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research emphasises words rather than statistical data, and utilises flexible research methods that aid researchers in discovering how humans interpret,

experience and understand the world (Hammersley, 2013). These methods and the subjective nature of qualitative research allow the researcher to collect in-depth data in a specific social setting that contributes to a deeper understanding of the investigated phenomena (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Therefore, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of conscious consumers' interpretation of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu, a qualitative methodology was applied.

Depending on a research study's particular purpose, there are different qualitative research approaches that can be followed (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The predominant approaches are descriptive and exploratory research (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Descriptive research aims to describe the characteristics or relationships between phenomena, whereas exploratory research aims to explore and develop an understanding of unknown phenomena (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). In this research study, the unknown phenomenon was conscious consumers' perception of Spur based on their integration of a plant-based menu and therefore an exploratory research approach was followed.

Furthermore, there are multiple qualitative research designs that ultimately determine the data collection and analysis methods (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The most prominent qualitative research designs are: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies (Creswell, 2007). Among these designs, phenomenology was considered the most suitable for this study, because it focuses on how humans interpret their experiences, ascribe meaning and develop an understanding of a concept or a phenomenon (Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel, 2017; Creswell, 2007). A phenomenological design therefore provided the researcher with the opportunity to gather in-depth data on conscious consumers' perception of Spur based on their integration of a plant-based menu.

Finally, in terms of timeframe strategies the two most prevalent are longitudinal and cross-sectional studies (Du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014). A longitudinal study gathers data at multiple points in time, whereas a cross-sectional study collects data at a single point in time and provides a snapshot of the phenomenon under investigation (Neuman, 2014). Due to this study's time and resource limitations (Section 5.1), a cross-sectional timeframe strategy was implemented. In addition, a

cross-sectional timeframe was considered suitable as the aim of this study was not to generalise the results, but rather obtain a deeper understanding of the investigated phenomenon.

In summary, this particular qualitative research design guided the researcher to collect in-depth data on the investigated phenomenon. Following this qualitative design, an appropriate research plan is unpacked in the next section.

## **3.2 Research Plan**

This study's research plan is delineated into six sections, starting with the identification of the study's unit of analysis, after which the population and sample is described. Thereafter, the data collection and analysis methods are detailed, followed by a discussion of the collected data's trustworthiness and the study's ethical considerations which concludes the section.

### **3.2.1 Unit of Analysis**

A unit of analysis is the set of objects or entities on which data is collected and analysed (Trochim, 2020). These objects or entities can consist of individuals, groups, organisations, social and cultural artefacts (Cole, 2018; Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Thus, as this study implemented a phenomenological design which aimed to collect in-depth data on conscious consumers' perception of Spur based on their integration of a plant-based menu, the unit of analysis was individuals, namely conscious consumers. In addition, it is noted that although information was gathered from Spur (as per research objective 1 in Section 1.5), the existing information relating to the brand means that it did not form part of this specific unit of analysis. The aforementioned unit of analysis, as well as the population and sampling information related to Spur, is defined further in the next section.

### **3.2.2 Population and Sample**

A population consists of the total number of entities or people from which information is required in a research study (Pascoe, 2014). This can be further defined by establishing population parameters which generally refer to the nature, size and unique characteristics of a population (Pascoe, 2014). Thus, extending from the unit

of analysis (Section 3.2.1), this study's population consisted of conscious consumers and a Spur representative.

For this study, the population parameters applicable to conscious consumers were that they should be regular restaurant diners and reside in Johannesburg. According to market research by *Lightstone Explore*, the consumption habits of South African restaurant diners range from once a month up to three times a week (BusinessTech, 2017). Thus, for this study's purpose the mid-range of this data was used and a regular diner was defined as someone that visits a restaurant one to two times a week. Furthermore, due to the study's time and resource limitations (Section 5.1), only conscious consumers from Johannesburg were considered.

These parameters established the target population relevant to this study. However, to determine a suitable sample framework, an accessible population, which is the section of the population that can be realistically included in the study (Pascoe, 2014), was established. Thus, as conscious consumers are a broad categorisation of ethically minded consumers, the researcher considered vegans to be a more definitive segment of this consumer group, as identified in Section 1.1 and 2.4, and therefore a more accessible population. Furthermore, as vegans often have a dining group's veto vote and follow the most exclusionary diet in terms of animal products (Section 2.4), the researcher considered that their perception of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu could potentially yield more insightful data in comparison to other conscious consumer segments. Consequently, vegans were selected as the most suitable conscious consumer segment for data collection. Thus, to summarise, this study's sample framework was regular restaurant-dining vegans residing in Johannesburg.

Concerning the Spur representative, a similar process of delineation from population parameters to sample framework was applied. Firstly, the population parameters applicable to the Spur representative were that they should be employed at the Spur Corporation, which is the business entity that operates as a franchisor and manages Spur's restaurant operations (Spur, 2020). Furthermore, the Spur representative should be involved with, or at least be knowledgeable on, their menu design process. In terms of the accessibility of this population, a Spur representative from either the

Spur corporate head office in Johannesburg or Cape Town was considered suitable. Thus, in summary, the sample framework applicable to the Spur segment of the research population was a brand representative from either the Johannesburg or Cape Town head office who is involved with, or at least knowledgeable on, Spur's menu design process.

The selection process utilised for both the aforementioned vegan and Spur samples were non-probability sampling, which is a sample selection strategy that requires a researcher's judgement and interpretation (Gray, 2004). Non-probability sampling was selected, because the objective of this phenomenological research design was not to generalise this study's results, but rather to gather in-depth data on the investigated phenomenon.

There are multiple non-probability sampling methods such as convenience, quota, purposive and snowball sampling that can be utilised (Neuman, 2014). As purposive sampling consists of the researcher utilising a set list of characteristics to purposefully select a sample (Pascoe, 2014), this method was implemented in this study. The advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher can select a sample that will be especially informative (Neuman, 2014). The vegan and Spur representative samples were therefore selected based on their informative value.

Finally, the recruitment tactic pertaining to the vegan sample included posting an invitation to vegans to participate in the study on the Johannesburg Vegan Facebook group, which consists of approximately 3400 members (Johannesburg Vegan, 2020). The recruitment process was optimised through the listing of the three main inclusion criteria on the invitation poster, which is that the participants needed to be vegan, eat out at a restaurant at least once a week, and reside in Johannesburg. Based on the feedback received from the interested parties, the researcher asked three screening questions linked to the three main inclusion criteria to ensure the eligibility of each potential participant. Following this process the final sample was selected.

Concerning the recruitment of the Spur representative, Spur Corporation was contacted, requesting liaison with an employee that is involved with, or at least

knowledgeable on, Spur's menu design process. However, after a few follow-ups, no feedback was received. Subsequently, the researcher performed a LinkedIn search and contacted Spur's National Brand Manager, who agreed to participate in the study.

### **3.2.3 Data Collection Methods**

The aim of this qualitative, phenomenological research design was to gather in-depth information on the investigated phenomenon. Therefore, the appropriate qualitative data collection tools that enable the researcher to explore, understand and explain this phenomenon needed to be implemented (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The two most prominent qualitative data collection categories are field research and unobtrusive research (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Field research methods generally focus on a specific setting and consist of the researcher gathering in-depth information from the participants about the phenomena under investigation (Neuman, 2014). Contrastingly, unobtrusive research methods do not entail the researcher directly interacting with the participants (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Thus, as field research methods aligned with this study's purpose and research design, it was utilised for data collection.

The two most prominent field research data collection methods are focus groups and in-depth interviews (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Firstly, a focus group is a data collection method that consists of a group of participants being interviewed in a discussion setting to uncover their perceptions, feelings and experiences related to a phenomenon (Visocky O'Grady & Visocky O'Grady, 2017; Neuman, 2014). The advantage of focus groups is that they can provide data rich in detail that can be difficult to achieve with other methods, because participants can build on each other's ideas (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Secondly, in-depth interviews is a data collection method that consists of the researcher asking primarily open-ended questions to participants to discover more about their perceptions, feelings and experiences about a specific phenomenon (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The advantage of in-depth interviews is that it allows the researcher to probe for more information, request clarification, and observe a participant's non-verbal reactions (Visocky O'Grady & Visocky O'Grady, 2017; Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Considering their value in alignment with the study purpose and design, both methods were implemented. A focus group was conducted with the vegan sample, because this method allowed the participants to build on each other's responses and provide more detailed information concerning their perceptions of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu. In addition, an in-depth interview was conducted with the Spur representative, because this method allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth information relating to Spur's menu design and how it links to their brand identity. For both methods data was collected until data saturation was achieved. It should also be noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and loadshedding limitation (Section 5.1), that this focus group was conducted via a WhatsApp call, whereas the in-depth interview was conducted via Zoom.

The data collection tool utilised by both methods was an interview schedule, which is a set of questions that provide direction to the interview process (Neuman, 2014). This study's interview schedule consisted of three sections: an introduction, body, and conclusion, with the key questions listed in the body (Section 8.3 & 8.4). The key questions were based on the six facets of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism which are defined as follows. Firstly, *physique* refers to the brand's prominent physical aspects that a consumer can see, touch and experience. Second, *personality* reflects the brand's personality or character traits. Third, *culture* is the set of values that sets the foundation for the brand's inspiration. Fourth, *relationship* indicates the type of relationship between a brand and its customers. Fifth, *reflection* refers to how the brand perceives and portrays its target audience. Sixth, *self-image* reflects how customers of a brand see themselves and feel when interaction with a brand.

Based on these definitions the key questions were developed to provide information on Spur's brand identity and brand image according to their menu design as demonstrated in Table 1 and 2 below. Lastly, the focus group and in-depth interviews were audio recorded and transcribed during the data analysis phase, which is discussed in the next section.

Table 1: In-depth Interview Key Questions

|                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Physique                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the physical appearance of Spur's overall menu design?</li> <li>• Are there any physical attributes of Spur's menu that the brand specifically wants to stand out?</li> <li>• What does Spur want to communicate to customers through the appearance of their plant-based menu?</li> </ul> |
| Personality                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the personality traits that Spur intends to portray through its menu design?</li> <li>• How does Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu influence those personality traits?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   |
| Culture                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What values does Spur intend to convey to customers through its menu design?</li> <li>• What values does Spur intend to convey through the inclusion of a plant-based menu?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            |
| Relationship                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on Spur's menu design, what is the type of relationship that Spur wants to establish with their customers?</li> <li>• Based on Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu, what is Spur's intended relationship with vegan customers?</li> </ul>                                                                |
| Reflection                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does Spur's menu design portray its typical customers?</li> <li>• How does Spur's plant-based menu portray its vegan customers?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Self-Image                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on Spur's menu design, what feelings do you think the typical Spur customer associates with Spur?</li> <li>• Based on the plant-based menu, what feelings do you think vegans associate with Spur?</li> </ul>                                                                                               |
| These questions provided data on Research Question 1 (Section 1.4). |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Table 2: Focus Group Key Questions

|                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Physique                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the physical appearance of Spur's overall menu design?</li> <li>• Are there any physical attributes of Spur's menu that stands out?</li> <li>• What does the physical appearance of Spur's plant-based menu tell you about Spur?</li> </ul> |
| Personality                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of personality or personality traits do you associate with Spur based on their menu design?</li> <li>• How has this personality which you just described been affected by Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu?</li> </ul>                             |
| Culture                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you consider are Spur's values based on their overall menu design?</li> <li>• What does the inclusion of a plant-based menu tell you about Spur's culture?</li> </ul>                                                                                      |
| Relationship                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe your relationship with Spur based on their menu design?</li> <li>• Did Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu affect your relationship with Spur?</li> </ul>                                                                                |
| Reflection                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe Spur's typical customer based on their menu design?</li> <li>• Based on the plant-based menu, how do you think Spur views its vegan customers?</li> </ul>                                                                                   |
| Self-Image                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on Spur's menu design, what feelings do you associate with Spur?</li> <li>• How has Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu affected your feelings toward Spur?</li> </ul>                                                                                    |
| These questions provided data on Research Question 2 (Section 1.4). |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

### **3.2.4 Data Analysis Methods**

Qualitative data analysis is the process of organising and bringing meaning to a mass of data (De Vos, 2005). There are multiple qualitative data analysis methods that can be utilised, such as: content analysis, discourse analysis, conversational analysis and semiotics (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). Between these methods, content analysis, sometimes also referred to as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), was considered the most suitable method for this study. The reason being that it is a systematic technique for analysing a text, identifying categories and themes, and deriving meaning from these themes (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Furthermore, a content analysis can be conducted deductively or inductively (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). Deductive content analysis refers to the process of using a conceptual theoretical framework to develop categories according to which the data will be analysed, whereas the inductive process involves developing a framework (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). This study followed a deductive content analysis approach, because the data analysis was conducted against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. Thus, the six facets of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism determined the six categories according to which the data was organised and subsequently analysed for themes.

The deductive content analysis process for this study consisted of six steps, which were based on the thematic analysis steps as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). First, the researcher became familiarised with the data by transcribing the focus group and in-depth interview recordings, and re-reading the transcripts to identify emerging patterns. Second, preliminary codes were assigned to the data which the researcher considered to be meaningful in the context of the study. Third, the coded data was analysed by searching for themes, after which the fourth step included reviewing these themes to determine how they fit together and their validity in relation to the research objectives. The fifth step entailed defining and naming the themes by identifying its meaning and its relation to the research objectives. Thereafter, a report was produced that discusses the themes and their relevance in relation to the study objectives, which is presented in the next chapter.

Finally, at the completion of this data analysis process, two brand identity prisms were developed. The first brand identity prism represents Spur's intended brand identity (research objective 1), and the second brand identity prism represents Spur's brand image among conscious consumers (research objective 2). These two brand identity prisms were then compared to ultimately identify any potential gaps between Spur's brand identity and image based on their integration of a plant-based menu (research objective 3).

### **3.2.5 Trustworthiness**

The concept of trustworthiness refers to the manner in which researchers determine the reliability and validity of a research study's findings (Koonin, 2014). However, the concepts of reliability and validity are more intrinsically linked to a quantitative methodology, and are therefore not deemed entirely appropriate terminology to describe the trustworthiness of qualitative data (Koonin, 2014). Thus, in order to provide an appropriate evaluation of the quality of qualitative research findings, the concept of trustworthiness can be divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consequently, the trustworthiness of this study's research findings was determined by evaluating this study's design and methodology according to these criteria.

Credibility refers to the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation and representation of the data provided by the participants (Koonin, 2014). This can be achieved through triangulation of research methods, prolonged investigation by the researcher, peer debriefing, implementation of well-established research methods, and a theoretical underpinning that is in alignment with the research question and methods (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Collis & Hussey, 2003). Thus, the credibility of this study was established through the use of an interview schedule which was constructed in alignment with Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. Furthermore, the focus group and in-depth interviews were recorded and precisely transcribed which ensured the accuracy of the data used for analysis and interpretation.

Transferability refers to whether the research findings can be applied to a similar situation and deliver similar results (Koonin, 2014). As this study utilised a cross-sectional timeframe strategy, which aligned with the study's purpose, the transferability of the collected data was not considered to be a relevant trustworthiness criteria for this study.

Dependability refers to the quality and integration of the research design and methodology (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Koonin, 2014). This can be achieved through a systematic, thorough and clear documentation of the study's research design and methodology (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Thus, the dependability of this study was ensured through the systematic, thorough and clear documentation of the study's design and methodology from Section 3.1 to 3.2.4.

Confirmability refers to the quality of the connection between the collected data and the researcher's interpretation thereof (Koonin, 2014; Gray, 2004). This can be ensured through developing an audit trail of the research process which allows an observer to fully examine the entire process (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Thus, the confirmability of this study can be achieved in the event that the interpretation of the data is specifically examined in addition to the final study report assessment.

In summary, the trustworthiness of this study's findings was highlighted especially through its credibility and dependability.

### **3.2.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics within a research context refers to the implementation of appropriate measures to ensure that the study is conducted in an acceptable manner (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). If a research study involves individuals, informed consent must be obtained from the participants (Collis & Hussey, 2003). This entails informing the participants of the study's purpose, how their personal identifiable information (PII) will be used, that their participation is voluntary, and finally obtaining their agreement in this regard (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Gray, 2004; Collis & Hussey, 2003).

For this study, Vega's latest informed consent document template was utilised and adjusted with study specific information to ensure that all of the aforementioned aspects were clearly stipulated for the participants' consideration. This included a confirmation of the participants' anonymity in the research report and the confidentiality of their PII which is only accessible by the researcher. Additionally, the participants were notified that the audio recordings of their focus group and in-depth interviews will be securely stored on the researcher's personal computer, which is password protected, and will be destroyed after five years. Finally, all participants signed an informed consent document prior to their participation in the study.

Furthermore, the researcher reported the research findings truthfully, which is supported by the transparent delineation of the research design and methodology, and the availability of the study data to Vega staff for audit purposes. No further ethical issues, other than the aforementioned, were foreseen nor experienced as the study did not include any vulnerable populations or contained the risk of any physical or psychological harm posed by the research topic.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis from both the in-depth interview and focus group. The findings are presented in the sequence of the three research questions and within each of these sections the data presentation and analysis are structured according to the six facets of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. At the conclusion of Section 4.1 and 4.2 the summarised brand identity prisms are illustrated, and in Section 4.3 these brand identity prisms are compared and discussed, after which a final conclusion of the study findings is reached.

### 4.1 Spur's Brand Identity

This section addresses research question 1: What is Spur's brand identity based on their menu design? In order to collect data to address this question an in-depth interview was conducted with a Spur Representative (SR) that met the sample selection criteria as stipulated in Section 3.2.2. The SR is currently the National Brand Manager of Spur and has been employed in this position for two years. In addition, the SR has been working for Spur Corporation for approximately 11 years and has held several positions in the company prior to that of National Brand Manager. The SR is very knowledgeable on Spur's menu design process and detailed the steps involved at the request of the researcher. Thereafter, the menu specific questions were discussed, from which the findings are presented according to the six facets of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism below.

Table 3: Physique of Spur's brand identity

| Themes  | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Variety | 7         | <p>"We want them to know the variety."</p> <p>"We just integrate everything. And then we not only give you chips and onion rings – you can have chips and onion rings or a baked potato or two hot veg – so, the options for you as a customer are quite vast."</p> |

|            |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            |   | “And you find that maybe out of a family of five that one of them is a vegan, but they’re going to go to the Spur now, because there’s more options. So that’s why we introduced it.”                                                                                                                |
| Generosity | 4 | “We’ve always been about value for money. We’ve always been about generosity. And we’ve always been about giving the customers more than what they expect.”                                                                                                                                          |
| Modernity  | 4 | <p>“When we introduced this new menu we wanted to make a bit of a bold statement. So, that’s why you’ll see these massive food images, because people eat with their eyes.”</p> <p>“. . . it’s just big bright beautiful food shots. It’s a little bit more modern than what we’ve been before.”</p> |

The main theme pertaining to the *physique* of Spur’s menu was *variety*. The SR indicated that Spur wants the appearance of their menu to convey that there are a wide variety of meals on offer for a diverse set of customers. This motivated their inclusion of the plant-based menu, as the SR confirmed that they found that a number of diverse families, which includes vegan or vegetarian family members, would previously exclude Spur as a dining option, since they felt that there were no options available. This finding links with the vegan or vegetarian “veto vote” in the literature (Shani & DiPietro, 2007). It means that this plant-based menu increases the potential for Spur to not only gain vegan or vegetarian customers, but their meat-eating family members or companions as well, because the entire family or whole group would otherwise have chosen a different dining option which was considered suitable for everyone.

Furthermore, Spur intends to portray *generosity* through the display and provision of big portion sizes and giving their customers value for money. In addition, the redesign of their menu with the display of big food photographs intends to convey an appetising and *modern* appeal of their restaurants. Thus, as an aesthetic menu can

influence impulse decisions and attract customers (Lee, Wang & Lee, 2017; Riell, 2011), the modernising of Spur's menu can ensure that it stays appealing and relevant to modern consumers, and then reinforce a key part of their identity which is their *generosity*.

Table 4: Personality of Spur's brand identity

| Themes       | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contemporary | 5         | <p>"Now we're trying to be a little bit more funky. A little bit more up with the times. A little bit more on trend with what's happening in the rest of the world."</p> <p>"Because we became more modern, we had to think about the more modern consumer. There's a huge drive for people to be more healthy, to look after the environment."</p> |
| Inclusive    | 3         | <p>"I know we're a steakhouse and we're probably against everything that you stand for, but we are trying to cater for all kind of eating types."</p> <p>"We're a family brand and if we're excluding one part of your family, that's not really what we stand for. So, that's why we want to bring that in."</p>                                   |

The two main themes of Spur's intended *personality* were *contemporary* and *inclusive*. The SR confirmed that the modernising of Spur's menu intends to position Spur in line with the current trends, not only in terms of the menu's visual design, but also in appealing to a modern consumer who has a greater interest in personal health and environmental issues. Thus, by establishing an element of *contemporariness* in their identity, Spur increases their appeal to conscious consumers, as these consumers value restaurants which offer options that are aligned with their lifestyles (Morais, 2016).

The theme of *inclusivity* links to the aforementioned theme of *variety*, where an important part of Spur's identity is to communicate that everyone is welcome at Spur. The SR acknowledged that Spur's identity as a steakhouse is essentially at odds with a vegan's ethics (Mann, 2014). However, as a family-focused brand Spur addresses this dichotomy through their inclusion of a plant-based menu with the intention that no one feels excluded. This finding provides information to the gap found in the literature (Section 2.3), by illustrating how the integration of a plant-based menu by a steakhouse franchise (Spur) intends to influence its brand identity.

Table 5: Culture of Spur's brand identity

| Themes        | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Family        | 2         | "Our values have always been family oriented. Offering good value for money. Generosity."                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Accommodating | 2         | "We listen to our customers. And when our vegan and vegetarian customers are saying: 'Guys you know coming to Spur for a salad or a crumbed mushroom, it's not working for us.' So that's why we really had to look and see: 'Okay, our customers are asking for something, let's give it to them.'" |
| Excellence    | 1         | "We strive for excellence in everything that we do. So, those values are what we've done with our menu – you can see how it's improved."                                                                                                                                                             |

The main themes from the *culture* facet are *family*, *accommodating* and *excellence*. Spur's familial focus links to the aforementioned themes of *variety*, *generosity* and *inclusivity*, which defines their brand identity, because it represents what the brand stands for and implies a promise to the customers (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). The inclusion of Spur's plant-based menu also communicates their willingness to listen and *accommodate* this segment of consumers. Additionally, the SR confirmed that Spur's commitment to *excellence* is one of the reasons for the improvement in their menu design. As a brand's culture is the set of values that sets the foundation for the brand's inspiration (Kapferer, 2008), these three primary values represents Spur's culture.

Table 6: Relationship of Spur's brand identity

| Themes    | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Family    | 8         | <p>"We've always wanted to have a close relationship with our customers."</p> <p>"We want them to come because they enjoy the atmosphere, they enjoy the attention that they get from waiters, from managers when they're there. And it's like family. We want them to be part of our family."</p> <p>"Everyone is part of the family. We want all different kinds of people in our business. So, you know, families are made up of all different types of people and those are the kind of customers in our business."</p> |
| Community | 3         | <p>"We want to establish that rapport with our customers, that we get to know them, because it's very important in your community. That's why we always encourage our Spur franchisees to get involved in their communities, get to know your customer. Because that's what builds loyalty and we want loyal clients."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

The main themes from Spur's intended relationship with their customers are *family* and *community*. The SR iterated Spur's intention to develop a close relationship with their customers through establishing familiarity and welcoming diversity. This intended *familial* relationship with their customers links closely with the themes identified in Spur's personality and culture as well, and highlights its importance for Spur's brand identity.

Furthermore, the theme of *community* expands on Spur's preferred *familial* relationship with their customers and indicates their intention to positively influence the local communities of its respective restaurants. In turn, Spur anticipates that this will build loyalty with their customers. Should the projection of this brand identity be

successful then it can influence customer choice, establish loyalty and increase market share (Selase et al, 2018).

Table 7: Reflection of Spur's brand identity

| Themes   | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Relaxing | 3         | “Mainly we have a very big family following. So, those are parents with kids, more than likely under the age of 11. Very big family orientated, because of our play-areas. So, parents want to go to a Spur, they just want to have a little bit of a conversation between themselves while the kids play. And they don’t need to worry. They know that it’s a safe environment and that they can go there and just relax with their partner, have a conversation, have a lovely meal, and know that their kids are safe and being looked after in the play canyon.” |
| Fun      | 3         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Diverse  | 3         | “I think by giving that page, a whole page by itself in the menu was a really good indication of how serious we were taking it. And how much we wanted to attract that kind of customer.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

The main themes from the *reflection* facet, which is how Spur perceives and portrays its target audience (Kapferer, 2008), are *relaxing*, *fun* and *diverse*. The themes of *relaxing* and *fun* go hand-in-hand, since it has a dual purpose in Spur’s brand identity of appealing to parents as a place to relax and connect with each other, whilst conveying to kids that it’s a place to play and have fun. The *diverse* theme reflects the aspect of Spur’s identity which intends to showcase their commitment to attract the conscious consumer segment, which links to how conscious consumerism has influenced restaurants to introduce plant-based meals and menus (Jelski, 2020; Mir, 2018).

Table 8: Self-image of Spur's brand identity

| Themes      | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Joy         | 1         | "Our biggest customers are kids. So, I would hope that Spur gives them a feeling of that they just love going there because they get to play."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Celebration | 3         | "For parents, we grew up with Spur, so it's almost like a nostalgic feeling. And I think by modernising it slightly, it's kind of making our customers realise that we are trying to keep up with the trends. We are not staying in the past, but we're still giving you that same feeling that you used to feeling when you go to Spur. You know it was always like a nice celebration. It was always a family time. The food was always good. Great quality and generous helpings."                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Included    | 3         | <p>"I think if vegans are going to have a choice of where to go, I don't think Spur's going to be their first option, to be honest. We are not a vegan restaurant. However, I think that they're going to feel much happier about when they go out with friends or they go out with family, if that's where the family or the friends want to go, they'll be like: 'Okay I can handle this.'"</p> <p>"I would hope that over time they would think: 'I don't mind going to Spur', even if we're not their first choice. But I would hope that they would think: 'I'm happy to go to Spur, because they've got something that I can choose. I have a variety and I feel like I've been looked after.'"</p> |

The main themes from the *self-image* category, which is a reflection of how a brand's customers perceive themselves and feel when interacting with a brand (Kapferer, 2008), are *joy*, *celebration* and *included*. The themes of *joy* and *celebration* work in tandem, because Spur's brand identity intends to excite kids, whilst also intending to

elicit feelings of celebration, nostalgia and comfort among parents. These two segments form Spur's core target audience, which illustrates the importance of communicating these aspects of Spur's brand identity coherently, because it will enable the brand to establish loyalty and differentiate it from competitors (Kapferer, 2008).

Concerning the vegan segment, the SR acknowledged that Spur will most likely not be this group's first dining choice. However, through the inclusion of a plant-based menu, Spur's brand identity intends to establish goodwill among this segment and a feeling of being *included*.

## Summary

All of the key themes from each facet of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism, as derived from the research findings, have been listed as a key brand identity characteristic in Figure 2 below. This brand identity prism therefore addresses research question 1 as it summarises and defines Spur's brand identity according to their menu design.

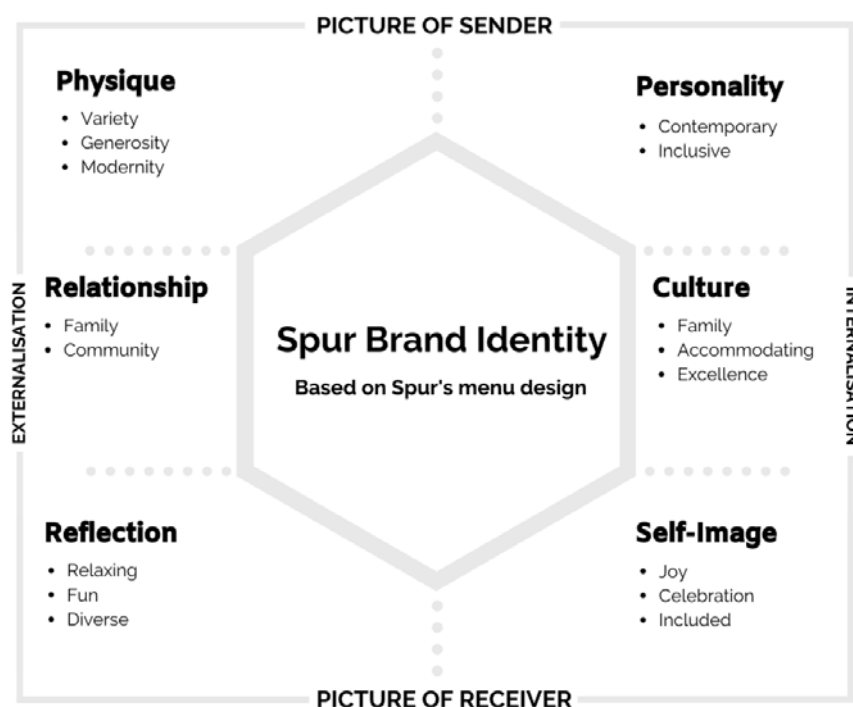


Figure 2: Spur's brand identity based on their menu design

## 4.2 Spur's Brand Image

This section addresses research question 2: What is Spur's brand image among conscious consumers? In order to collect data to address this question a focus group was conducted with four vegans that met the sample selection criteria as specified in Section 3.2.2. The details of the four participants in relation to these sample selection criteria are illustrated in the following table.

Table 9: Vegan participants' eligibility information

|               | <b>Years vegan</b> | <b>Restaurant dining regularity</b> | <b>City of residence</b> |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participant 1 | 3                  | Once a week                         | Johannesburg             |
| Participant 2 | 2                  | 1-2 times a week                    | Johannesburg             |
| Participant 3 | 1                  | 2-3 times a week                    | Johannesburg             |
| Participant 4 | 2.5                | 2-3 times a week                    | Johannesburg             |

Once the introductory part of the focus group was completed, the menu specific questions were discussed, from which the findings are presented according to the six facets of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism below.

Table 10: Physique of Spur's brand image

| <b>Themes</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Verbatim Quotes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaty         | 5                | <p>"It makes me think of the sort of place where there is a lot of meat and barbeques and steaks."</p> <p>"Looking at the choice of images . . . first of all Spur is obviously a steakhouse."</p> <p>"The front page is pretty meaty. There's not like a sort of a salad on there. That's kind of the dichotomy of it being Spur, because most people go to Spur to get meat stuff. So they obviously can't chase those people away. But I still think it's more likely that they're not going to attract vegans like this. It's more</p> |

|          |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |   | like if you're going with someone else then it's nice that you've got an option. But I can't think if I'm with my vegan-only friends, I can't imagine us choosing Spur. So that's just an observation from that front page."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Inviting | 6 | <p>"More often than not, we have to be very honest, it's very difficult to eat out as a vegetarian or a vegan and the first thing you need to look at before you even agree to go out with somebody who is not a vegetarian or vegan is, is there going to be anything to eat for me. Or am I going to start playing a miss match game where I'm trying to make up a menu for myself. So the fact that Spur has even put something like this forward, it's very inviting, I must admit. The fact that they've actually put thought into it and they've actually considered a segment of their customers that often go out and don't have something to eat."</p> <p>"From a social aspect if you are trying to go out with people who are not all vegetarian, you know a mixed group of people, it becomes an option now where it usually wouldn't have been. So it does make you feel more included."</p> |

The main themes pertaining to the *physique* of Spur's menu from the vegans' perspective are contrasting in that they perceive it to be both *meaty* and *inviting*. Participant 2 noted this dichotomy by stating that Spur's core target audience are meat-eating consumers and will most likely not be a group of vegan diners' first choice. However, the availability of a plant-based menu does make Spur more appealing as a dining option. This links to the *inviting* nature of the plant-based menu as stated by Participant 3, who acknowledged that vegan dining options are limited, especially when dining out with people who are not vegan or vegetarian.

Thus, despite Spur's meat-centric offerings, their plant-based menu is perceived to be *inviting* and inclusive, which means that this aspect of Spur's brand identity has increased their potential of being considered as a dining option among a mixed group of diners. This finding highlights menu design's link to a restaurant's brand image (Remar, 2015), as well as the influence of the vegan or vegetarian "veto vote" (Shani & DiPietro, 2007).

Table 11: Personality of Spur's brand image

| Themes         | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| People-pleaser | 3         | <p>"For me it's like the people-pleaser. It feels a bit like Grandma at Thanksgiving. You know, there's 3 vegans, 2 who's gluten-free, somebody that only has meat – you know trying to please everybody."</p> <p>"Really similar to what (Participant 2) said. Like a people-pleaser. You know their food is not fussy as such. It's simple things. It's burgers, it's nachos, it's things that are simple. It's not complicated. So it's sort of like that kind of person, who's welcoming you, but at the same time trying to make you happy and make you something quickly, but not overly complicated."</p> |
| Inclusive      | 4         | <p>"It's warm and inviting. Casual. Laid-back. You feel like you've been considered, without having someone go out of their way to cater for you. It allows you to fit in with a mixed group of people. It's nice you know. So you don't stand out and be the odd one out."</p> <p>"This definitely makes me feel a lot more included. I also think about when I was younger and then we used to go to Mike's kitchen a lot. I mean there was hardly anything that I could eat, even as a vegetarian. And feeling so awkward at that stage – this will be great for kids and families that decided to become</p> |

|       |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |   | plant-based, but their family hasn't. So I think that's a really important thing, including young adults as well. So it definitely changed my perception."                                                                                                               |
| Macho | 2 | "If I can say one word it would just be macho."<br><br>"I will say before the inclusion of the plant-based menu it was very much a macho, Texan-thing, all of that. Now the macho personality has been a bit more calm and more inclusive. It should be more inclusive." |

The main themes from the vegans' perceived personality traits of Spur are *people-pleaser*, *inclusive* and *macho*. Based on Spur's menu design, the majority of the participants perceive Spur as considerate and intent on satisfying the needs of a variety of customers. This theme of the *people-pleaser* is expanded on with the theme of *inclusivity*. The importance of the plant-based menu was underlined, as a few participants explained how this removes a sense of alienation, and helps them to feel welcome and included. However, one participant still perceived Spur's personality as predominantly *macho*, but acknowledged that the inclusion of the plant-based menu did influence this personality trait to be a bit more inclusive.

Thus, although one participant had a negative perception of Spur's *personality*, the vegans' overarching feeling is that Spur is considerate of them as customers. These findings provide information on the gap identified in the literature (Section 2.3) by illustrating how the integration of a plant-based menu has influenced this facet of Spur's brand image among vegans.

Table 12: Culture of Spur's brand image

| Themes                    | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environmentally Conscious | 8         | "I was thinking that whole section where they've got the eco-section, where they say that they're not using plastic bags, they're not using palm oil, that specific little thing I think is really good. And I think it's really educational for kids as well. It generates discussion |

|        |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        |   | <p>around ecological elements, which I think are really important. I've got a lot of respect for that."</p> <p>"The eco-side also stands out in terms of helping people understand the issues of the environment and sustainability and that kind of thing."</p> <p>"No other steakhouse restaurants that I know of has gone to the lengths of actually educating in this way. I think that's quite great. It makes you think that Spur are actually really committed to it. So even if, no matter what people choose to eat, to be aware of ecological factors and stuff is really good. So I quite like that they seem to be the forerunners of this."</p> |
| Family | 3 | <p>"Spur has always been a family-restaurant. It's a place where you hang out with your friends, hang out with your family and the same concept goes for that as well with the plant-based menu. It's inclusive. We want everybody to be there. You want all your friends to be there and you want all your family to be there. So it just carries on perpetuating that belief system."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

The main themes relating to the vegans' perception of Spur's *culture* are *environmentally conscious* and *family-oriented*. The majority of the participants felt that Spur's menu design communicates an awareness of ecological factors and the importance of sustainability. This links to one of conscious consumers' primary motivations (Botha, 2018; Chen et al, 2016; Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010), and illustrates why this aspect of Spur's menu design resonated with the participants.

Spur's *family* values were also identified as part of the brand's core values. This value has been highlighted through Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu, because it is perceived to have a unifying effect by providing family and friends the

opportunity to spend quality time together. Thus, despite being a steakhouse, the vegans have a positive interpretation of their brand values, which confirms that the availability of plant-based options affects conscious consumers' perceptions of the quality of a restaurant (Jin, Line & Lee, 2017; Morais, 2016).

Table 13: Relationship of Spur's brand image

| Themes    | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unaware   | 4         | <p>"If you're aware of the inclusion of a plant-based menu it now makes it a place that you can consider. But the point is that it's not marketed nearly as well. I haven't heard of it until I saw this discussion."</p> <p>"I mean I wouldn't have thought of going in there at all, and I wouldn't have noticed it. They don't market the fact that they have plant-based opportunities or options available."</p> <p>"I agree with that as well. I didn't know about this otherwise. I think that's a very good point actually."</p> |
| New       | 3         | <p>"Based on the inclusion of the plant-based menu, I think it begins a relationship for me. I think I'm more eager to go there with my meat-eating friends and definitely more eager to suggest it."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Endearing | 1         | <p>"What I really do like, even if they hadn't included the plant-based menu, the fact that they included that eco-section and education and a little bit of social community stuff, I find that that definitely endears me to them a lot more. So, even if they hadn't had the plant-based, I would have definitely engaged with the kids around that."</p>                                                                                                                                                                             |

The main themes from the vegans' relationship with Spur ranged from participants being *unaware* of the plant-based menu to the development of a *new* an *endearing*

relationship for some participants. Firstly, the most prevalent theme was that the majority of the participants had no existing brand relationship with Spur. The primary reason was that they were unaware of Spur's plant-based menu and cited a lack of marketing in this regard as the main factor preventing them from establishing a relationship. However, based on the inclusion of a plant-based menu, and their acquaintance with it, this menu has influenced the development of a new relationship with the brand.

These findings add information to the gap identified in the literature (Section 2.3), because it illustrates that despite the positive influence of Spur's plant-based menu on the vegans' brand relationship intentions, their unawareness of this menu means that the *relationship* facet of Spur's brand identity is underdeveloped. Furthermore, this unawareness can potentially be a deterrent as more vegans might have a similar out-dated image of Spur as a restaurant that does not cater to vegans.

Table 14: Reflection of Spur's brand image

| Themes          | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Casual Diner    | 6         | <p>"Somebody who is not a fussy eater. A casual who likes to go out and eat somewhere without the frills etc. They don't want to think too much about what's in the dish itself. You know, that sort of eater."</p> <p>"To me what they're offering is comfort food and it's nice. You can go with a group of friends and relax and not think too much about what's on the menu. You know it's something that you can eat that's not overly complicated."</p> |
| Meat-eating Man | 5         | <p>"For me it's that typical person who would go and watch a game of football and have a beer and some steak and ribs. For me even though they have made a lot of improvements to their menu and it is very eco and green. I still get very much a manly vibe from it. And maybe that's just my perception having grown</p>                                                                                                                                   |

|                       |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       |   | <p>up in England. When I look at this menu I get that very typical South African meat-eater macho vibe.”</p> <p>“The first thing that came into my mind when you asked the question was like my dad. That kind head of the family type father who probably works really hard during the month . . . Appealing to the sort of head of the household, traditionally the very meat-eating guys. We’re obviously talking very general here.”</p> <p>“Yes, there is a huge element that it reaches out to a person who is a meat-eater. That’s a given. And I think that’s because the brand has always been associated with that over the years. It’s going to take time to loosen that reputation and that link to that belief.”</p>             |
| Transitional<br>Vegan | 6 | <p>“For me it’s more of a transitional menu than a vegan menu. It’s more geared for people who are moving away from meat. Especially, the Beyond Burger is quite a transitional thing, because I’ve had one and it really is like eating meat. I know it’s all plant-based, but it’s definitely for people more who are moving away from meat, but they like the taste of meat.”</p> <p>“If I think about when I was younger and I was transitioning to vegetarianism it was really great to have the substitutes.”</p> <p>“It’s very much Spur’s take on veganism. And Spur’s version of a vegan. My personal perspective of vegan and plant-based is purely that – it is plants. I know a lot of other vegans like their fake meats. So</p> |

|  |  |                                                                                                                                         |
|--|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | I'm not saying it's negative, but for me personally I feel like it's a very Spur take on veganism, which doesn't appeal to me as much." |
|--|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The main themes from the *reflection* facet, which is the vegans' perceptions of how Spur portrays their target audience according to their menu design, are *casual diner*, *meat-eating man*, and *transitional vegan*. Firstly, a few participants identified Spur's menu items as not overly complicated and comfort food, and therefore creates the impression that they are targeting *casual diners*. Additionally, the vegans also indicated that the amount of meat displayed in the menu creates the image of a typical South African *meat-eating man*. These findings indicate how a menu is a statement of a restaurant's philosophy and marketing communications (Strong, 2006), as the menu informed what the vegans perceive to be Spur's target audience.

Concerning the plant-based menu's design, the participants considered this to represent an image of a transitional vegan who is moving away from meat or who still likes to eat meat imitation products. The majority of the participants felt that this menu didn't represent their approach to veganism and was more aligned with Spur's brand of menu items. This finding illustrates the challenge facing restaurant brands to adapt their offerings to appeal to conscious consumers (Crowe, 2018), because from a brand identity perspective Spur maintained their core identity despite the inclusion of plant-based menu. However, from the brand image perspective, the vegans still felt that despite Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu that the brand was not reflective of their vegan identities.

Table 15: Self-image of Spur's brand image

| Themes   | Frequency | Verbatim Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Included | 2         | "I definitely always related to Spur is the biggest T-bone steak, cattle ranching, you know it was all about that. And to be honest I am very surprised that they're the first major restaurant to bring out a separate menu. Because I think they were all about the Tex-Mex, like it was mentioned earlier. You know |

|          |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |   | <p>even the décor is a bit like that. There's longhorn cows all over the walls and stuff like that. So I think it was very much about that. So the inclusion of this definitely changed my perception. The fact that they are actually looking at at least moving towards a more ecologically sound system and also including people that don't just eat T-bone."</p> <p>"Back in the days when I ate meat, it was the place to go for ribs and that kind of thing, which was fine. But as I went to vegetarianism it wasn't an option anymore. So I didn't go there anymore. I'd occasionally get dragged along by friends who have kids and then you sit there and you either have a Margarita pizza or something and that's about it. Then what they've done now makes it more acceptable. So you can actually, when you have a mixed group of friends, and they just want to go and hang out and chat and have a social get together, then it becomes an option where it becomes acceptable to everybody."</p> |
| Welcomed | 2 | <p>"Yes, I tend to agree with that. I see it more as a positive. I know there was the comments about that there may be a misunderstanding etc. I still see it as a step towards something good. I see it more welcoming in terms of other restaurants who haven't really made much of an effort to welcome more customers with that particular dietary requirements."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

The main themes from the *self-image* facet, which is a reflection of how the vegans feel when interacting with Spur based on their menu design and their inclusion of a plant-based menu, are *included* and *welcomed*. The consensus among the participants was that the inclusion of Spur's plant-based menu had a positive effect

on the feelings that they normally associated with Spur. The reason being that in the past they associated Spur's meat-centric offerings as aimed only at attracting heavy meat consumers, but the integration of the plant-based menu has inspired a feeling of being *included* and *welcomed*. These findings add information to the gap identified in the literature (Section 2.3), because on this facet of Spur's brand identity, the integration of a plant-based menu positively influenced Spur's brand image among vegans.

## Summary

All of the key themes from each facet of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism, as derived from the research findings, have been listed as a key brand identity characteristic in Figure 3 below. This brand identity prism addresses research question 2 as it is based on the vegans' perceptions of Spur based on their menu design, and therefore summarises and defines Spur's brand image among this group of consumers.

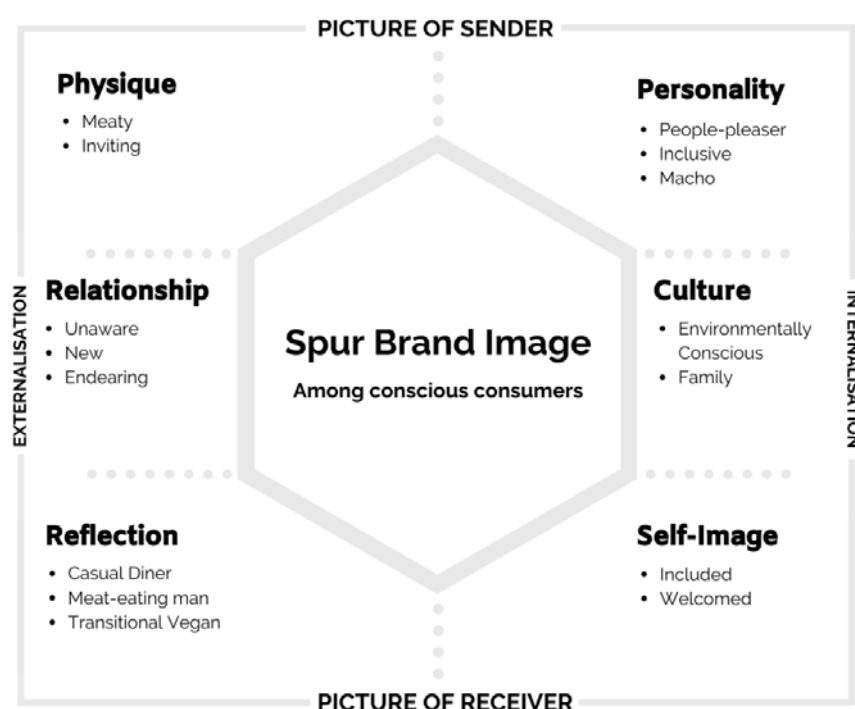


Figure 3: Spur's brand image among conscious consumers

### 4.3 Comparison Between Spur's Brand Identity and Brand Image

This section addresses research question 3: How has Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers, against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism? In order to address this question the two brand identity prisms which respectively illustrates Spur's brand identity (Section 4.1) and brand image (Section 4.2) will be compared (Figure 4). In this comparison each facet of the brand identity prism will be analysed and discussed.

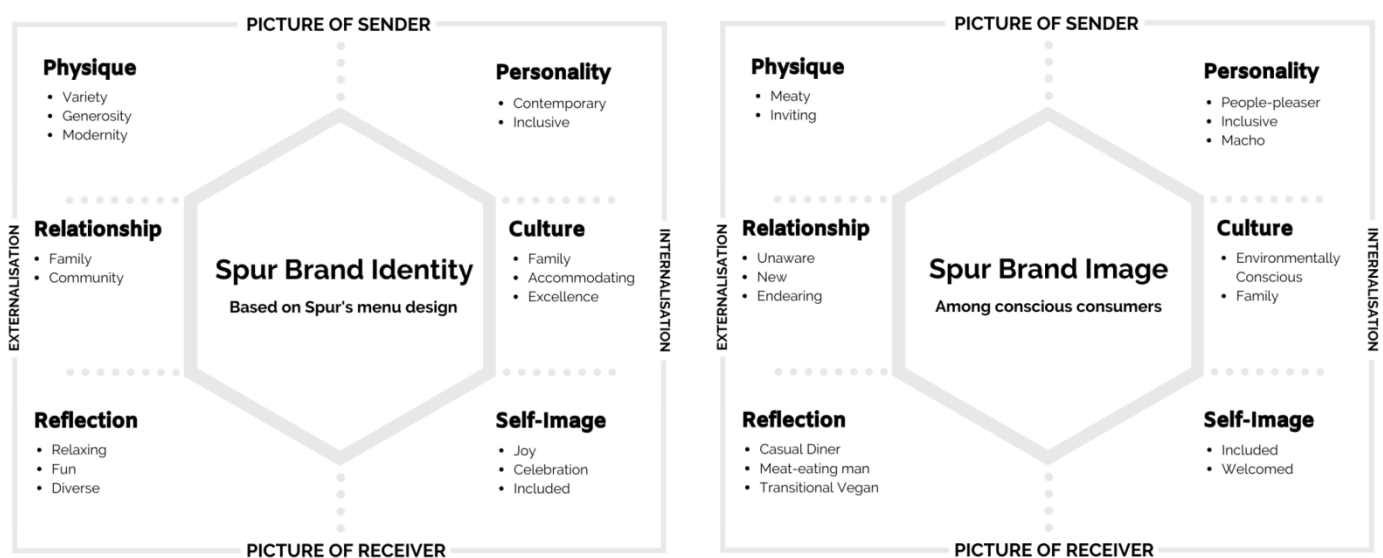


Figure 4: Comparison between Spur's brand identity and brand image

Firstly, the *physique* facet of Spur's brand identity and image contain both similarities and differences. There is some resonance between the characteristics of *variety* and *inviting*, as the SR indicated that Spur's menu design intends to communicate *variety* to appeal to a diverse set of customers, which in turn was perceived by the vegans as *inviting*. The biggest difference is that the vegans didn't specifically notice the intended *generosity* and *modernity* of the menu, but rather highlighted the *meatiness* of the menu. This gap is to be expected, as Spur's identity as a steakhouse franchise is essentially at odds with the vegans' animal welfare ethics (Mann, 2014). Thus, as long as Spur maintains its steakhouse identity, the *physique* facet of Spur's brand identity will most likely not result in a strong resonance among vegans. However, the fact that the integration of the plant-based menu influenced the vegans to perceive

Spur as *inviting*, it can be considered as a reduction in the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

Second, the *personality* facet of Spur's brand identity and image strongly resonated on the *inclusive* characteristic, whilst there is a difference between the intended *contemporariness* of the menu and the perceived *macho* nature thereof. The strong resonance of *inclusivity* is of most importance for this facet of Spur's brand identity, because it is the brand's most important value according to Spur's COO (Spur, 2019) and the SR. The difference between the *contemporary* and *macho* characteristics is not considered to be as impactful due to the emphasis that was placed on *inclusivity*. Thus, the integration of the plant-based menu influenced the predominant resonance in the *personality* facet, which is therefore determined to be a reduction in the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

Third, the *culture* facet of Spur's brand identity and image strongly resonated and contained no negative differences. There is a direct resonance on the *family* characteristic which was influenced by Spur's integration of a plant-based menu, because the vegans felt this underlined Spur's familial values. In addition, the difference between Spur's intended *accommodating* and *excellence* characteristics and the vegans' perceived *environmentally conscious* characteristic is not considered to be detrimental, because the vegans' perception still reflects positively on the brand and a positive brand image influences a customer's dining decision more than any other value (Hwang & Ok, 2013). Thus, the overall positive resonance of the *culture* facet has resulted in a narrowing of the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

Fourth, the *relationship* facet of Spur's brand identity and image is incongruent. The difference is not entirely negative, because some of the vegans indicated that the introduction of the plant-based menu means the start of a brand relationship with Spur for some of them, which highlights how conscious consumers value brands that cater to their lifestyles (Morais, 2016). However, their lack of awareness of this menu was identified as the main brand relationship inhibitor. As a result Spur's intended *family* and *community* relationship characteristics was not similarly interpreted by the vegans. Thus, although the plant-based menu's influence was positive, the

overarching unawareness of this menu means that on the *relationship* facet there is a gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

Fifth, the *reflection* facet of Spur's brand identity and image contain some similarities, but is mostly different. The area of resonance is Spur's intended portrayal of their target audience through their menu design as *relaxing*, *fun* and *diverse*, which links to the vegans' perception of a *casual diner*. However, the vegans also felt that the amount of meat displayed in Spur's menu design reflects Spur's target audience as a *meat-eating man*, whilst they felt that the meat-imitating nature of the plant-based menu reflected a *transitional vegan*. These differences mean that the integration of the plant-based menu therefore did not influence a strong resonance in terms of the *reflection* facet. Thus, on this brand identity facet a gap exists between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

Sixth, the *self-image* facet of Spur's brand identity and image strongly resonate and contain no negative differences. Spur's integration of a plant-based menu intends to communicate a feeling of *inclusivity*, which is exactly what the vegans perceived. The differences are that the vegans did not specifically perceive Spur's intended associations of *joy* and *celebration*, however, their perception was predominantly positive as the inclusion of the plant-based menu made them feel *welcomed*. Thus, on the self-image facet, the integration of the plant-based menu did influence a reduction in the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

## Summary

The integration of the plant-based menu influenced a reduction in the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans on the *physique*, *personality*, *culture* and *self-image* facets of the brand identity prism. The most notable differences were on the *relationship* and *reflection* facets which contained gaps between Spur's brand identity and image. These differences were due to the vegans' unawareness of the plant-based menu and their perceived meat-centric nature of Spur's menu. Although a gap between a brand's identity and image can lead to a negative reputation and poor market performance (Roy & Banerjee, 2007), the extent of these two gaps between Spur's brand identity and image are not considered to be major. Firstly, the unawareness could be addressed, whilst secondly, the *reflection* facet will most likely

not change vegans' perception as long as Spur maintains and iterates its identity as a steakhouse franchise. Thus, considering that the perceptions from the vegans were generally positive in nature and resulted in a reduction of a gap on four of the six brand identity prism facets, it can be concluded that Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced an overall reduction of the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans.

## 5. LIMITATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### 5.1 Limitations

Limitations are a study's constraints that are out of the researcher's control (Enslin, 2014). For this study, time was a limitation due to the final report deadline which limited the data collection and analysis period to less than a month. In addition, the lack of financial resources constrained nationwide data collection and limited data collection to the researcher's city of residence, Johannesburg. The phenomenological and cross-sectional research design also limits the ability of the study results to be generalised beyond its specific context of regular restaurant-dining vegans residing in Johannesburg.

Furthermore, the social restrictions in place at the time of data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic inhibited the face-to-face conduct of the focus group. The focus group was subsequently scheduled to be conducted via a Skype video call. However, on 16 July 2020 Stage 2 load shedding was implemented in South Africa (BusinessTech, 2020), which prompted the researcher to conduct the focus group via a telephonic WhatsApp call as it was the least data intensive method for all participants. Although the aforementioned factors limited the ideal conduct of the focus group, it is not considered to have impacted the data collection, because the telephonic focus group proceeded smoothly and still delivered quality data.

### 5.2 Contributions

Despite the aforementioned limitations this study still delivered data that can be of value from both a theoretical and a business perspective. Theoretically, this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of menu design's influence on a brand's identity and image within a South African restaurant context, which was found during the literature review (Section 2.3) to be an area that has rarely been studied.

From a business perspective, the research findings can be of value to Spur in gaining a deeper understanding of how conscious consumers perceive their brand based on their integration of a plant-based menu. It is especially the gap identified in the *relationship* facet of Spur's brand identity (Section 4.3) which presents an

opportunity for Spur to increase resonance among conscious consumers. As unawareness of the plant-based menu was the main inhibitor of a brand relationship among this segment, Spur can consider increasing their brand communications of the plant-based menu and specifically target this segment. This can potentially encourage new brand relationships and better align the brand among conscious consumers.

### **5.3 Future Research**

As this study implemented a qualitative, phenomenological design and the sample consisted of a vegan segment of conscious consumers that reside in Johannesburg, the results cannot be generalised beyond this context. Thus, a recommendation for future research on a similar topic would be to also include vegetarians and flexitarians in the sample and to recruit participants from various regions in South Africa in which the respective restaurant franchise operates. This can potentially broaden the insights gained on this phenomenon.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the growth of conscious consumerism, brands are under pressure to adapt their operations and offerings, which presents a problem in the potential development of a gap between their brand identity and brand image. This study investigated this problem within the context of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how this has influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and image among conscious consumers. Thus, the purpose of this research report was to provide an in-depth view of the investigation of this research problem, followed by the research design and plan to meet the study objectives, and the subsequent presentation and analysis of the findings.

This research report consisted of five chapters, the first of which refined the study's rationale, problem and purpose, and also identified the corresponding research questions and objectives. Thereafter, the literature review of the study's four key concepts: brand identity, brand image, menu design, and conscious consumerism were conducted, which established that the relationship between a restaurant's brand identity and image is integral to its success. In addition, a restaurant's menu design also plays an important role as it contributes to both brand identity and image.

The third chapter provided a detailed description of the study's research design and plan. During the discussion of the research design, interpretivism was identified as the study's research paradigm, from which a qualitative, phenomenological and cross-sectional design was established. The research plan revealed the study's target sample consisted of regular restaurant-dining vegans from Johannesburg and a Spur representative that is knowledgeable on Spur's menu design. Furthermore, the data collection methods utilised were a focus group and in-depth interview, which both implemented an interview schedule as a data collection tool. Subsequently, the data was analysed by means of a thematic content analysis. Finally, the research design and methodology's trustworthiness was established by highlighting the study's credibility and dependability, followed by a discussion of the steps implemented to ensure the ethical conduct of the study.

Chapter 4 revealed the study's findings according to the three research questions by constructing two brand identity prisms before finally comparing them. Firstly, Spur's brand identity according to their menu design was identified, which highlighted *family values*, *inclusivity* and *diversity* as their most important brand identity characteristics. Secondly, Spur's brand image among vegans was determined, which highlighted *heavy meat consumption* and *inclusivity* as Spur's most prominent brand identity characteristics. Thirdly, these two brand identity prisms were compared, which found that Spur's integration of a plant-based menu resulted in a reduction of the gap between Spur's brand identity and image on the *physique*, *personality*, *culture* and *self-image* facets of the brand identity prism. However, gaps were identified on the *relationship* and *reflection* facets of the brand identity prism, which were attributed to the vegans' unawareness of the plant-based menu and the overall meat-centric nature of Spur's menu.

Lastly, Chapter 5 discussed the study's time, resource, COVID-19 and load shedding limitations. Additionally, this chapter highlighted the study's contributions to brand identity and brand image literature within a South African restaurant context, and Spur by illustrating how conscious consumers perceive their brand.

Ultimately, this research study revealed that the vegans' perceptions of Spur was generally positive based on the brand's integration of a plant-based menu, as it resulted in a reduction of a gap on four of the six brand identity prism facets. It was therefore concluded that Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced an overall reduction in the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among conscious consumers.

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## 8. ANNEXURES

### 8.1 In-depth Interview Consent Form

#### **EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS**

To whom it may concern,

My name is André Kluyts and I am a student at Vega. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Helena van Wyk about Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it has influenced their brand identity and brand image among a segment of conscious consumers, namely vegans. The purpose is to enhance my understanding of the concepts of brand identity and brand image, as well as developing insights concerning Spur's integration of a plant-based menu.

I would therefore like to invite you to participate in my study. Thus, in order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions and answers so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

#### **What will I be doing if I participate in your study?**

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because as Spur's Brand Manager you have valuable insight into aspects of Spur's brand identity, such as menu design, and what it intends to communicate to the customers. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to conduct an interview with you in order to find out more about Spur's brand identity according to its menu design. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you

can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

### **Are there any risks or discomforts involved in participating in this study?**

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about Spur's brand identity according to its menu design. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

### **Do I have to participate in the study?**

- Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

### **Will my identity be protected?**

Yes, both the anonymity and confidentiality of your personal identifiable information (PII) will be ensured. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my lecturer and I will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega will have access to your interview information. The purpose of the audio recording is to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and the subsequent data analysis. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

### **What will happen to the information that participants provide?**

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BA Honours in Strategic

Brand Communication. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

**What happens if I have more questions about the study?**

Please feel free to contact me or my lecturer should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

**My contact details are as follows:**

André Kluyts Contact: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

**The contact details of my lecturer are as follows:**

Helena van Wyk Contact: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**I hereby give consent to take part in the above-mentioned study:**

Name: .....

Position at Company (if applicable): .....

Company (if applicable): .....

Date: .....

Signature: .....

## 8.2 Focus Group Consent Form

### EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is André Kluyts and I am a student at Vega. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Helena van Wyk about Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it has influenced their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers. The purpose is to enhance my understanding of the concepts of brand identity and brand image, as well as developing insights from your perspective concerning Spur's integration of a plant-based menu.

I would therefore like to invite you to participate in my study. Thus, in order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions and answers so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

#### **What will I be doing if I participate in your study?**

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because your perception as a regular restaurant-dining vegan is considered to be valuable in obtaining and in-depth understanding of how the vegan segment of conscious consumers perceive Spur based on their integration of a plant-based menu. If you decide to participate in this research, you would form part of a focus group of vegans where you will be interviewed by the researcher concerning aspects of Spur's plant-based menu. Please note that dependent on the social restrictions in place at the scheduled time of the focus group, there is a possibility that this focus group will proceed digitally via software such as Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, or Microsoft Teams (whichever is

deemed suitable by all participants). You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

### **Are there any risks or discomforts involved in participating in this study?**

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your experiences as a regular restaurant-dining vegan. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

### **Do I have to participate in the study?**

- Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

### **Will my identity be protected?**

Yes, both the anonymity and confidentiality of your personal identifiable information (PII) will be ensured. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my lecturer and I will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega will have access to your interview information. The purpose of the audio recording is to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and the subsequent data analysis. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

### **What will happen to the information that participants provide?**

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BA Honours in Strategic

Brand Communication. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

**What happens if I have more questions about the study?**

Please feel free to contact me or my lecturer should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

**My contact details are as follows:**

André Kluyts Contact: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**The contact details of my lecturer are as follows:**

Helena van Wyk Contact: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**I hereby give consent to take part in the above-mentioned study:**

Name: .....

Position at Company (if applicable): .....

Company (if applicable): .....

Date: .....

Signature: .....

### 8.3 In-depth Interview Data Collection Tool

| Introduction                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Researcher Guide                                                                                                            | Example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Researcher introduction, followed by welcoming of participants and brief overview of the research study.                    | <p>Good morning, my name is André Kluyts and I am a Vega student completing my honours in Strategic Brand Communication.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study, it is very much appreciated.</p> <p>My research broadly deals with the relationship between the concepts of brand identity and brand image, and how this can potentially be influenced by conscious consumerism.</p> |
| Establish the research study's purpose.                                                                                     | More specifically, I am interested in how Spur's integration of a plant-based menu has influenced the relationship between their brand identity and brand image among a segment of conscious consumers, namely vegans.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Establish how this information will be used.                                                                                | This interview will assist me in collecting data on Spur's intention to integrate a plant-based menu and how it links to Spur's brand identity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Body                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Set the stage for the interview by starting with easy, introductory questions that establish the participants' credibility. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your current position at Spur?</li> <li>2. How long have you been working at Spur?</li> <li>3. Have you held any other positions at the company?</li> <li>4. What is your involvement in Spur's menu design process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If not directly involved in this process, what is your</li> </ul> </li> </ol>                             |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>knowledge on Spur's menu design process?</p> <p>5. Can you tell me a little bit more about how Spur's menu design process works?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example: Who decides what is included on the menu? And how is that decision made?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b><u>Key Questions</u></b></p> <p>Ensure that the questions relating to the 6 elements of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism are asked and sufficiently answered by participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physique</li> <li>- Personality</li> <li>- Culture</li> <li>- Relationship</li> <li>- Reflection</li> <li>- Self-image</li> </ul> | <p>Now we are moving into the menu specific questions.</p> <p><u>Physique</u></p> <p>6. How would you describe the physical appearance of Spur's overall menu design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In other words, what does Spur's menu tell a customer about a Spur restaurant?</li> </ul> <p>7. Are there any other physical attributes of Spur's menu that the brand specifically wants to stand out?</p> <p>8. What does Spur want to communicate to customers through the appearance of their plant-based menu?</p> <p><u>Personality</u></p> <p>9. What are the personality traits that Spur intends to portray through its menu design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In other words, if Spur were a person, what type of person would it be based on their menu design?</li> </ul> <p>10. How does Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu influence those personality traits?</p> <p><u>Culture</u></p> <p>11. What values does Spur intend to convey to customers through its menu design?</p> |

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 | <p>12. What values does Spur intend to convey through the inclusion of a plant-based menu?</p> <p><u>Relationship</u></p> <p>13. Based on Spur's menu design, what is the type of relationship Spur wants to establish with their customers?</p> <p>14. Based on Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu, what is Spur's intended relationship with vegan customers?</p> <p><u>Reflection</u></p> <p>15. How does Spur's menu design portray its typical customer?</p> <p>16. How does Spur's plant-based menu portray its vegan customers?</p> <p><u>Self-image</u></p> <p>17. Based on Spur's menu design, what feelings do you think the typical Spur customer associates with Spur?</p> <p>18. Based on Spur's plant-based menu, what feelings do you think vegans associate with Spur?</p> <p>Note: All of these questions will provide information for Research Question 1 (Section 1.4)</p> |
| <b>Conclusion</b>               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Start concluding the interview. | <p>That brings us to the end of the discussion.</p> <p>19. Is there anything else that you would like to add? Anything that you feel that we did not cover?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provide example of how participants' input contributed to the value of the study's data. | Thank you for your input, this interview has really deepened my understanding and provided valuable data on Spur's menu design and the integration of a plant-based menu, and how it links to Spur's brand identity. |
| Give last opportunity for questions from participants.                                   | 20. Before we sign-off, is there perhaps any questions that you have?                                                                                                                                                |
| Provide final gratitude.                                                                 | Thank you for participating in this discussion, it has been a pleasure to speak with you.                                                                                                                            |

## 8.4 Focus Group Data Collection Tool

| Introduction                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Researcher Guide                                                                                         | Example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Researcher introduction, followed by welcoming of participants and brief overview of the research study. | <p>Good evening, my name is André Kluyts and I am a Vega student completing my honours in Strategic Brand Communication.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study, it is very much appreciated.</p> <p>My research broadly deals with the relationship between the concepts of brand identity and brand image, and how this can potentially be influenced by conscious consumerism.</p>                                                                                   |
| Establish the research study's purpose.                                                                  | More specifically, I am interested in how Spur's integration of a plant-based menu has influenced the relationship between their brand identity and brand image among a segment of conscious consumers, namely vegans.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Establish how this information will be used.                                                             | This focus group will assist me in collecting data on your perceptions as vegans of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Provide background on the concept of menu design and what it entails.                                    | <p>Before we start with the questions, I just want to provide some clarity on the concept of menu design, which we will be specifically looking at.</p> <p>Firstly, the expectation is not that anyone of us should be experts on menu design. So don't stress about that. Thus, the idea is that when we go to a restaurant and browse through a menu, we all still do form an opinion or perception about it - even though we are not experts on menu design. We form opinions on whether the menu is</p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>good or bad, interesting or uninteresting, mouth-watering or bland, etc. So my research is focused on obtaining a deeper understanding of your perceptions of Spur's menu.</p> <p>Therefore, just to clarify, the concept of menu design basically refers to any aspect of the menu, and not necessarily just the graphic design aspect of the menu.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Body</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Set the stage for the interview by starting with easy, introductory questions that establish the participants' credibility.</p>                                                            | <p>1. Can you please introduce yourself?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example: What is your name?</li> <li>• How long have you been vegan?</li> <li>• Why did you decide to go vegan?</li> </ul> <p>(Please rest assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of your personal information. The provision of your name is just to simplify the initial transcription process.)</p> <p>2. On average, how often do you eat out at a restaurant per week?</p> <p>3. What is your favourite restaurant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is this your favourite restaurant?</li> <li>• Was there anything specific about that restaurant's menu that stood out to you?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b><u>Key Questions</u></b></p> <p>Ensure that the questions relating to the 6 elements of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism are asked and sufficiently answered by participants:</p> | <p>Now we are moving into the specific questions about Spur's menu.</p> <p><u>Physique</u></p> <p>4. How would you describe the physical appearance of Spur's overall menu design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In other words, from your perspective, what does Spur's menu tell you about a Spur restaurant?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physique</li> <li>- Personality</li> <li>- Culture</li> <li>- Relationship</li> <li>- Reflection</li> <li>- Self-image</li> </ul> | <p>5. Are there any other physical attributes of Spur's menu that stands out?</p> <p>6. What do you think about the plant-based menu's design?</p> <p>7. What does the physical appearance of Spur's plant-based menu tell you about Spur?</p> <p><u>Personality</u></p> <p>8. How would you describe Spur as a person based on their overall menu design?</p> <p>9. What type of personality and personality traits do you associate with Spur based on their menu design?</p> <p>10. How has this personality which you just described been affected by Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu?</p> <p><u>Culture</u></p> <p>11. What do you consider are Spur's values based on their overall menu design?</p> <p>12. What does the inclusion of a plant-based menu tell you about Spur's culture?</p> <p><u>Relationship</u></p> <p>13. How would you describe your relationship with Spur, simply based on their menu design?</p> <p>14. Did Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu affect</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                          | <p>your relationship with Spur?</p> <p><u>Reflection</u></p> <p>15. How would you describe Spur's typical customer based on their menu design?</p> <p>16. Based on the plant-based menu, how do you think Spur views its vegan customers?</p> <p><u>Self-image</u></p> <p>17. Based on their menu design, what feelings do you associate with Spur?</p> <p>18. How has Spur's inclusion of a plant-based menu, affected your feelings toward Spur?</p> <p>Note: All of these questions will provide information for Research Question 2 (Section 1.4)</p> |
| <b>Conclusion</b>                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Start concluding the interview.                                                          | <p>That brings us to the end of the discussion.</p> <p>19. Is there anything else that anyone would like to add? Anything that you feel that we did not cover?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Provide example of how participants' input contributed to the value of the study's data. | Thank you for your input, this focus group has really deepened my understanding and provided valuable data on how vegans perceive Spur based on their integration of a plant-based menu.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Give last opportunity for questions from participants.                                   | 20. Before we sign-off, is there any questions that anyone has?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Provide final gratitude.                                                                 | Thank you for participating in this discussion, it has been a pleasure to speak with you.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## 8.5 Ethics Clearance Letter



15 July 2020



Student name: Andre Kluyts

Campus: Vega Bordeaux



Re: Approval of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Strategic Brand Communication Proposal and Ethics Clearance



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



Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and we hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your data collection.



There may be some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. If this is the case, feedback will be provided to you in writing. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor.

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

Helena van Wyk  
Supervisor



Dr. Helena van Wyk  
Campus Postgraduate  
Coordinator – RESM8419

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Inanda Greens  
54 Wierda Rd West  
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P.O. Box 2369  
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#### CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

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

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

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

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

The Independent Institute of Education Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors, are indemnified against all claims which may arise in connection with or as a result of any loss, damage or injury to you as a researcher entering into an agreement with a participant in the course of your research, provided that such loss, damage or injury is caused by the gross negligence or intentional act(s) or omission(s) of The Independent of Institute Education Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors.

Wishing you the very best of luck.

Yours sincerely,



**Campus Postgraduate Coordinator – RESM8419**

Dr. Ria van Zyl

National Post-graduate Coordinator – IIE-Vega

The Independent Institute of Education

## 8.6 Research Report Summary Table

Title: An investigation of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it influences their brand identity and brand image among conscious consumers.

| Research Purpose/Objective                                                                                                                                                                                        | Primary Research Question                                                                                                  | Research Rational                                                                                                                                                                                               | Seminal Authors/ Sources                                                                                                    | Literature Review – Conceptual Framework                                                                                                                      | Paradigm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Approach                                                                                                                    | Data Collection Method(s)                                                                                         | Ethics                                                                                                                                                             | Key Findings                                                                                                                     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| To investigate Spur's integration of a plant-based menu and how it influences the potential gap between their brand identity and image among conscious consumers, against Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. | How has Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced the potential gap between their brand identity and image?      | Spur's has the most extensive plant-based menu of all major restaurant franchises in SA.<br><br>Their integration of this menu aims to appeal a diverse group of customers, which includes conscious consumers. | - Jean-Noël Kapferer<br><br>- David Aaker<br><br>- Erich Joachimsthaler<br><br>- Kevin Keller<br><br>- Leslie De Chernatony | <b>Theme 1:</b><br>Brand Identity<br><br><b>Theme 2:</b><br>Brand Image<br><br><b>Theme 3:</b><br>Menu Design<br><br><b>Theme 4:</b><br>Conscious Consumerism | <b>Paradigm</b><br>Interpretivism<br><br><b>Epistemology</b><br>Conscious consumers' interpretation of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu.<br><br><b>Ontology</b><br>Reality is fluid and a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations.<br><br><b>Axiology</b><br>This study values conscious consumers' interpretations of Spur's integration of a plant-based menu. | Qualitative: Phenomenological and cross-sectional design                                                                    | <b>Methods</b><br>Field research:<br>- Focus Group                                                                | Participants' personal identifiable information need to be protected.<br><br>This was confirmed via a consent form.<br><br>No other ethical obstacles experienced. | Spur's integration of a plant-based menu influenced a reduction of the gap between Spur's brand identity and image among vegans. | Unawareness of the plant-based menu was a major inhibitor for the conscious consumers to develop a brand relationship with Spur.<br><br>Spur can therefore consider increasing their brand communications of their plant-based menu and specifically target conscious consumers. |                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Population</b>                                                                                                           | - In-depth interviews                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Tools</b><br>Interview schedules |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | - Regular restaurant-dining vegans in Johannesburg<br><br>- Spur representative knowledgeable on their menu design process. | <b>Data Analysis Method(s)</b>                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Limitations</b>                  |
| Research Problem                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Secondary Question/ Hypotheses/ Objectives                                                                                 | Key Concepts                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Key Theories                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sampling                                                                                                                    | Data Analysis Method(s)                                                                                           | Limitations                                                                                                                                                        | Key Contributions                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
| Conscious consumerism is pressuring brands to adapt to meet their needs.<br><br>Thus, brands need to evolve and ensure no gap develops between their brand identity and image.                                    | - What is Spur's brand identity based on their menu design?<br><br>- What is Spur's brand image among conscious consumers? | - Brand Identity<br><br>- Brand Image<br><br>- Menu Design<br><br>- Conscious Consumerism                                                                                                                       | - Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Non-probability: Purposive sampling<br><br><b>Size</b><br>Until data saturation has been achieved.                          | <b>Unit of Analysis</b><br>Conscious consumers<br><br><b>Data Analysis Method(s)</b><br>Thematic content analysis | - Time<br>- Financial<br>- Results cannot be generalised<br>- COVID-19<br>- Loadshedding                                                                           | Adds to brand identity and brand image literature within a SA restaurant context.                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |