

VEGA SCHOOL OF BRAND LEADERSHIP

Determining how *andBeyond*, a travel operator, make use of corporate social investment to strengthen brand equity in an African context.

Dominique Geyser

15004759

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Name: Dominique Geyser	No:15004759	
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Supervisors Name: S. Grainger		
Supervisors Signature:		
Date:	25 th October 2019	

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Name: Dominique Geyser

Signature:

Date: 25Th October 2019

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ABSTRACT

When considering the concept of Corporate Social Investment (CSI) it is clear that the concept is not new. Numerous studies focusing on CSI have been conducted worldwide. Multiple theories as well as perspectives have been developed around the concept of CSI.

By implementing CSI initiatives, organisations have an opportunity to give back to the community as well as reflect a level of commitment to stakeholders. Consumers can be seen as one of the key stakeholder groups to any organisation and therefore the organisation should aim to meet the needs of this stakeholder group. This research has been driven by the need to understand the impact that CSI initiatives, undertaken by *andBeyond* has on the brand equity of the organisation.

Literature regarding various topics relating to CSI, such as the benefits of CSI, consumer perceptions of CSI as well as consumer buying decisions were studied to gain a well-rounded understanding of the research objectives. The research included the collection of primary data through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to consumers in order to gain an understanding of their views on the topic of the research.

The study uncovered that consumers are interested in purchasing products and supporting *andBeyond* as they invest in CSI initiatives. The study shows that consumers are willing to continuously support *andBeyond* as long as the brand continues to meet high quality standards expected by guests.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The concept of Corporate Social Investment (CSI) is not new. CSI initiatives have been used and adopted to many countries worldwide. Although many studies have been conducted worldwide investigating the various perspectives on CSI. No research has been conducted regarding the effect of CSI on the brand equity of *andBeyond* as an organisation. In light of this, the research was planned as well as conducted in order to gain an understanding of the effect that CSI has on the brand equity of *andBeyond*.

In this chapter, an overview of the research is presented. The problem statement is put forward, followed by the significance of the research as well as the objectives.

1.2 Title of study

Determining how *andBeyond*, a travel operator, make use of corporate social investment to strengthen brand equity in an African context.

1.3 Problem statement

Although extensive research exists with regards to both corporate social investment (CSI) and brand equity, there is a limited amount of research regarding the link between the two concepts as well as the affect that CSI has on brand equity (Abdolvand & Charsetad, 2013). Thus, the problem being researched is whether *andBeyond* benefits from its CSI initiatives as well as how it builds brand equity.

1.4 Purpose statement

To determine how CSI affects brand equity at *andBeyond* and how *andBeyond* has used CSI initiatives to strengthen brand equity. Thus, the research will be done to determine the effect that CSI has had on the brand equity of *andBeyond*.

1.5 Justification of why the problem is relevant

Having a CSI strategy in place is an integral part of ensuring competitive advantage and should be integrated in an organisation as a whole (Financier Worldwide Magazine, 2015).

Brand equity can be conceptualised as an intangible market-based asset that can be used to improve the performance of the organisation (Klopper & North , 2016). Brand equity can further be explained as being more than just the product or service that is offered by an organisation but how it benefits the customers and employees (Klopper & North , 2016). Brand equity is consumer dependent and is influenced by consumer perceptions and experiences (Klopper & North , 2016).

CSI has generated a growing interest amongst stakeholders as well as organisations (Hur, et al., 2013). Organisations have been placing much more effort and resources of CSI initiatives as numerous studies have shown that organisations greatly benefit from engaging in CSI initiatives (Hur, et al., 2013). By generating a favorable consumer awareness of the organisation as well as a positive attitude among stakeholders. *andBeyond* does this by ensuring that the mantra that they follow: '*Care of the People, Care of the Land and Care of the Wildlife*' is upheld in all aspects of business. This also aids in building a positive corporate image as well as a favorable reputation in the long run (Hur, et al., 2013).

1.6 Reference to key theories and literature

- Normative stakeholder theory looks at what is morally correct for majority of the population. This theory is relevant to the research due to the fact that most organisations engage in CSI as it is the morally correct thing to do (Zakhem, 2017)
- Corporate citizenship theory looks at the social responsibility of an organisation and the extent to which they do business in an ethical, legal and economically responsible manner, this theory is relevant to the research as it determines a bassline of ethical business
- Aaker's brand equity model defines brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities that are linked to a brand that either add value or subtract value from the product or service (James, 2001). This model is relevant to the research as it deals with how brand equity adds value to an organisations product or service

1.7 Conceptualisation

- Corporate social investment
- Corporate brand equity
- Reputational capital
- *andBeyond*

1.8 Research objectives

- In which ways does CSI influence brand loyalty in relation to *andBeyond*?
- How does CSI influence perceived quality in relation to *andBeyond*?
- What effect has CSI had on *andBeyond's* brand equity?

1.9 Research questions

- Has CSI affected *andBeyond's* brand equity?
- How has CSI affected *andBeyond's* brand association?
- How has CSI influenced the perceived quality for *andBeyond*?

1.10 Chapter outline

Chapter one looks at an introduction of the topic as well as provides an overview of the research study. The problem statement as well as objectives of the study are clearly defined in this chapter. The chapter provides an overview of the research methodology, literature review as well as the limitations of this study.

Chapter two is focuses on relevant literature to the study obtained from journals, published books as well as periodicals.

Chapter three of this study covers the research methodology used in the study. The chapter also includes the fieldwork undertaken in order to collect data for the study.

Chapter four is a presentation as well as analysis of the findings, this is in line with the objectives of the study.

Chapter five is a discussion of the findings with reference to the objectives of the study. This chapter includes a conclusion as well as recommendations.

1.11 Conclusion

Organisations consciously aim to gain value from investments. CSI initiatives and investments are undertaken by many organisations worldwide. CSI initiatives are mainly aimed at building up organisations by creating positive public image. Consumers view in regard to CSI initiatives make significant difference to organisations as well constructed and targeted CSI aids in building loyal customer support.

This therefor, warranted the study to be conducted in order to gain insights into consumers perceptions in order to make recommendations.

This chapter has introduced the problem statement as well as touching on the objectives of the study. The obstacles encountered, which were beyond the researchers control have been discussed in the limitations of the study.

The next chapter covers as well as refers to literature relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.12 Introduction

The literature review will present literature that is relevant to the objectives of the research as well as the title. The concept of CSI has grown in popularity amongst organisations as well as organisations' stakeholders. Copious amount of literature covering all aspect of the subject exists. An emphasis has been placed on literature regarding the impact that CSI has on organisations that have invested resources in one or more CSI initiatives. The following research makes reference to the available literature and will focus on CSI initiatives by investigating what CSI is by definition as well as examples of how these initiatives are linked to corporate reputation with the ultimate goal being to determine the impression created in the minds of the consumers.

In today's society, consumers have an ever-increasing interest in the organisation that is behind the product or service they purchase. This can be translated to the image that the organisation portrays to its consumers, this image in turn reflects the reputation of the organisation.

This literature review will address CSI initiatives, the benefits of CSI, CSI from the perspective of the stakeholder and finally the consumers perception of CSI and how these influences buying behaviour.

1.13 Corporate social investment defined

In order to fully investigate and understand the affect that CSI has on consumers, it is important to first define the concept. According to Hinson and Ndhlovu (2011),

corporate social investment (CSI) can be defined as the responsibilities that an organisation pursue in such a way that the interests of both the organisation as well as the community are considered in order to achieve the goals of the organisation.

CSI according to the Business for Social Responsibility, involves the incorporation of ethical values, taking care of the community, the natural environment, as well as taking care of people, as key ingredients of a business to operate successfully (Anadol, Youssef, and Thiruvattal, 2015). A similar definition is provided by The World Business Council for Sustainable Development, which defines CSI as a continuing commitment by an organisation to act in an ethical manner as well as contribute to the economic development whilst improving the quality of life of the organisations' workforce as well as the local community and society in general (Anadol et al., 2015).

Extensive research conducted into the area of CSI has revealed different aspects of the concept. These aspects include the economic view of maximising the profit of the organisation as well as the return to shareholders. Another aspect was that of CSI in relation to the performance of the organisation (Taghian et al., 2015), CSI in relation to culture (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013), and lastly CSI in relation to reporting (Bebbington, et al., 2008).

Organisations have the expectation of continuously achieving profits whilst still keeping the standard of governance to the highest possible level. In recent years, organisations have been more focused on how they related to stakeholders in terms of the quality of the product or service provided to the consumer by the organisation, as well as the engagement of charitable activities (Valmohammadi, 2014).

Companies who engage in CSI respond to the triple bottom line obligation of business as they demonstrate that they actively embrace sustainable as well as integrated business practices (Hinson and Ndhlovu, 2011).

The scope of activities of CSI include dimensions such as development programmes, the empowerment of women and children, the distribution of food, educational and health related projects, water projects and any other efforts that are focused on providing aid to communities.

The European Commission (2001) as quoted by (Odriozola, Martin and Luna, 2015) identified that there are two dimensions of CSI; namely the internal and external. The internal dimension related to the responsible management of human resources, the health and safety of all employees as well as the management of natural resources that are relevant to the suppliers, consumers, public authorities and well as the community and the environment. CSI is internal to an organisation as it looks at the way in which an organisation plans and carries out the goals of the organisation with regards to society (Nalband and Al-Amri, 2013).

It is widely agreed by numerous institutions, that CSI is undertaken in order to achieve a balanced and incorporated stakeholder interest into the organisation, however, the question has been raised as to whether CSI should be voluntary or not, given the escalating environmental challenges being faced (Hinson and Ndhlovu, 2011).

1.14 Benefits of CSI

Based on the value that society places on CSI initiatives, organisations need to take into account the cost as well as the benefits to the organisation as well as the positive and negative externalities accruing to the larger community (Maltz et al., 2011). From an ethical perspective, it does not make viable business sense if CSI initiatives incur costs to the business without making profit (Taghian et al., 2015) (Lenz, Wetzel and Hammerschmidt, 2017).

Organisations are increasingly investing, as well as reporting on CSI initiatives. This serves as confirmation that these initiatives are having a positive impact on organisations (Malik, 2015). CSI can be used as a way of creating a competitive advantage. This is created by the demand in the market environment that organisations operate in. This is concurred by Manning (2013) which states that over and above the efficient use of assets, CSI initiatives creates a competitive advantage for the organisation through product and corporate differentiation. Arguments against this are highlighted by Liu, Wong, Shi, Chu, and Brock (2016) as they state that there is no guarantee that an organisation that is perceived to be socially responsible will have a competitive advantage. Upon further explanation it became clear that no matter how positive the CSI initiative is, it cannot override negative aspects such as a product or service being perceived as low quality by the consumer (Lenz, Wetzel and Hammerschmidt, 2017).

As suggested by Nalband and Al-Amri (2003) an evaluation system should be put in place in order to evaluate CSI initiatives. CSI initiatives create a competitive way for the performance of an organisation. When a CSI programme is properly implemented and executed, it becomes a reflection of a lasting commitment of organisational ethics, and in turn improves stakeholders' interest and the support for sustainable development of society (Liu et al., 2016)

In addition, according to Malik (2015), the fact that CSI forges meaningful relations with consumers, CSI initiatives aim to:

- Enhance the reputation and value of the brand
- Increase staff involvement and commitment
- Enhance an organisations' innovations and capacity
- Secure long-term return on investment
- Improve the financial performance

- Reduce operating expenses
- Reach long term sustainability for the organisation

Malik (2015) agrees with Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) whom allude to CSI enhancing an organisations performance as a result of increased productivity by employees, the expansion of the product market, as well as ensuring that there is a strong relationship between society, stakeholders and regulators.

Aksaka et al (2016) states that there are non-economic benefits of investing in CSI which include corporate visibility, trust, as well as building strong relationships. Remi and Julien (2014), however believe that CSI can be very costly when it entails a true commitment from the organisation.

Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) states that studies have reported that CSI initiatives that positively influence consumer perceptions towards an organisation, translates into an organisations' competitive advantage. According to Valmohammadi (2014), when an organisation is a good corporate citizen it attracts consumer loyalty which leads to consumers becoming brand ambassadors who are willing to defend the organisation against negative publicity (Valmohammadi, 2014). Organisations who invest in CSI are able to enhance their image as they are able to build trust as well as a virtue.

CSI in relation to human resources has its own benefits. Usman and Amran (2015) cited (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006) who mentioned that CSI related to HR is beneficial to a company in that it fosters commitment, motivation and loyalty of employees and subsequent development of employee-related internal resources and capabilities. Usman and Amran (2015) also cited (Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012) stating that employees who are motivated and loyal, help the company to achieve its goals and objectives as employee turnover and absenteeism is minimized.

Another CSI view suggests that companies should only be involved in CSI simply because it is the right thing to do without expecting to achieve financial gains from their socially responsible actions (Quazi and Richardson, 2012).

1.15 Impact of CSI on corporate reputation

Abdullah and Aziz (2013) define reputation as intangible assets that contributes to the long-term suitability of an organisation. Reputation is an invaluable asset to an organisation that must be developed and protected.

Due to the current insecure business environment, many organisations feel that they should move away from CSI initiatives as it has become unaffordable (Giannarakis and Sariannidis, 2012). They further went on to highlight that CSI initiatives might have a negative impact on an organisations' reputation as it has ruined the trust and goodwill of stakeholders. Conversely, Sanchez et al., (2015) believes that CSI initiatives can be a useful tool to assist organisations in maintaining or rebuilding corporate reputation during turbulent environments.

According to Šontaitė-Petkevičienė (2015) organisations engage in CSI initiatives for many reasons, all of these result in building a favourable corporate reputation. Some of the reasons are:

- Altruistic intentions
- To boost employee motivation
- Retention and recruitment
- Customer-inspired motivations

Organisations need to manage CSI programmes as they have an impact on the fundamental intangible assets such as identity, image and reputation (Abdullah and

Aziz, 2013). A study conducted by Abdullah and Aziz (2013) revealed that in order to sustain a corporate reputation an organisation should honour the moral obligation to treat employees fairly, support them and involve employees directly in philanthropic activities. This will in turn, fosters relationships with consumers, employees as well as stakeholders. Adbullah and Aziz (2013) concurs that CSI initiatives can be used as a strategic tool to build corporate identity as opposed to the public relations agenda in which there is a delusion that giving back to the community is a once off event.

1.16 Stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholders are placing more and more pressure on organisations to contribute towards meeting social and community issues that affects them (Shareef et al., 2014). As a result of this, organisations have restructured their CSI initiatives in such a way that it is aligned with what stakeholders believe is the true significance and meaning of CSI.

The stakeholder theory by Freeman as quoted by Taghian et al., (2015) defines a stakeholder as an individual who stands to gain when the organisation achieves all its objectives. This has an implication to managers as they should keep stakeholders' interest in mind when crafting strategy and implementing CSI initiatives that meet stakeholder expectations. Crisostomo, Freire, and Vasconcellos (2011) are in agreement with Taghian (2015), as they believe that when an organisation is concerned with the value of their stakeholders, it allows the organisation to achieve positive productivity, value creation and financial outcome.

Some theorists are in opposition of this, and argue that social responsibility is a waste of organisational resources and has negative influences on an organisation from a financial perspective (Crisostomo et al., 2011).

Friedman, who strongly opposes the stakeholder theory, has argued that identifying the interests of stakeholders of an organisation, does not guarantee increased value from CSI initiatives. According to the stakeholder theory by Valmohammadi (2014), stakeholder are only one category amongst many others to whom an organisation should be accountable to.

Stakeholder make use of past actions as well as what they expect from an organisation in the future in order to assess an organisations reputation (Odrizola et al. 2015). This view is echoed by Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) who define corporate reputation as 'a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes the overall appeal to all its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals.' A study conducted by Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) found that there are various social actions that play different roles in building the reputation of an organisation.

Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) states that each stakeholder has a different expectation, the organisation can use this in order to make a more accurate decision as to what CSI initiatives to invest in, in order to achieve a positive reputation with a targeted stakeholder group. This belief is underpinned by a theory that suggests that building a reputation is a process where signals on strategic choices by an organisation are communicated to stakeholders, from which stakeholders form impressions (Fernandez Sanchez, et al., 2015) (Chatzoudes, Papadopoulos, and Dimitriadis, 2015).

Due to the fact that organisations are a part of an extended network, there are multiple stakeholders. Stakeholders differ from each other as they all have different demands as well as different beliefs (Biggemann, Williams, and Kro, 2014). Maldives Shareef et al., (2014) notes that organisations lack a general understanding of CSI as they do not perceive economic activities under the broader scope of CSI. It has become apparent that stakeholders do not believe that there is an integration between CSI and the economic responsibilities of a corporation. It is vital for an organisation to firstly understand the needs of their stakeholders so that they are able to make decisions that do not taint its corporate reputation (Moura-Leite and Padgett, 2014) (Axjonow, Ernstberger and Pott, 2016).

1.17 Consumers' perceptions on CSI

"Consumers' responses to 'good' acts done for the right reasons might be assumed to be positive, but those reactions are not as predictable as they might at first seem"(Anon, 2013).

Consumers, who are considered key stakeholders of an organisation need to be in control and afforded a platform where they are able to raise their concerns by keeping them informed of the social responsibility of the organisation. This in turn ensures the future sustainability of the organisation (Anadol et al., 2015)(Love and Kraatz, 2016). A consumer's perception of CSI is reflected in the valuation of service of an organisation as a direct positive correlation exists between CSI initiatives and attitude loyalty (Mandhachitara, and Poolthong, 2011) (Scheidler, Schons and Wieseke, 2016). Consumers value CSI initiatives and believe that profit can still be maximized in conjunction with social investment.

Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) believe that although numerous studies have found that there is a positive impact of CSI and consumer perception, many individuals do not consider this as a main determining factor when making purchasing decisions.

When CSI efforts are communicated to consumers, trust is built and this leads to consumers becoming more likely to consider the organisation over organisations who do not communicate their CSI initiatives (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013) (Scheidler, Schons and Wieseke, 2016). In a study conducted by Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) it has been established that consumers are willing to pay a premium for CSI products that are manufactured and are of high quality, produced by and organisation who are concerned with the environment.

An organisations good deeds, carried out with good intentions do not always gain the positive responses expected (Anon, 2013). Consumers are interested in what they can gain prior to pledging their support to a firm who carry out CSI initiatives. This has come about due to the fact that consumers believe that socially responsible goods are of lower quality. While this rings true for some consumers, the opposite is also true as some consumers associate CSI with products that are of a higher quality (Anon, 2013). In times of economic turmoil, however, consumers place lower priority on CSI initiatives that appeal to their social or emotional gain (Green, and Peloza, 2011).

Joshi and Gao (2009) was quoted by Usman and Amran (2015) stating that consumers respond in a positive manner to products and services of a company that carries out CSI initiative in a way that is aligned with the values of the consumer. If this is not done, the organisations corporate image, their products and services could be jeopardised as it will lead to negative responses from consumers.

Consumers attitudes are influenced by the positive response from an organisations CSI initiative. This is due to the fact that consumers place their need above the needs of other stakeholders (McDonald and Lai, 2011).

Research conducted by McDonald and Lai (2011) shows that consumers react in a positive manner when CSI initiatives benefit them individually rather than benefiting the community, this refers directly to philanthropic initiatives.

1.18 Impact of CSI on consumer buying decision

CSI initiatives have many positive reactions by consumers, these include satisfaction, product appraisals, social benefits, perceived corporate benefits, brand equity as well as purchase interests (Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2013).

How CSI influences consumption is summarised by Anon (2013) as "when CSI is delivered through product features the consumer is repeatedly reminded of the functional CSI benefit, creating a higher level of involvement and awareness of the impacts of consumption" and further stated that "through the effect of positive cueing, this can lead to greater emphasis on environmental attributes in other consumption experiences for that same consumer."

Organisations that seize the reputational advantages of good CSI are able to increase their customer base which in turn generates more sales and allows the organisation to be more profitable. This is due to the fact that consumers reflect on an organisations involvement in CSI initiatives when making purchasing decisions (Aksaka et al. 2016).

Many organisations have taken to developing their CSI initiatives to become part of a public relations strategy as a way to win over consumers, this is due to the fact that CSI has an influence on consumers purchasing decisions (Aksaka et al., 2016). This view is concurred by McDonald and Lai (2011), who state that consumers are increasingly making purchasing decisions based on organisations participation in being a socially responsible organisation.

Rodrigies and Borges (2015) believe that even though initially, consumers will not be persuaded by an organisations CSI initiatives, it was concluded that organisations and brands that are socially responsible are preferred by consumers. Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) founded a similar conclusion as they found that consumers do not mind paying a premium for products or services that take the environment into account and practice business in a socially responsible manner.

1.19 Summary

This literature review has provided a broad definition of what the concept of CSI entails. The benefits of CSI were discussed in an in-depth manner. The literature investigated the influence that CSI has on stakeholder perspectives with regards to CSI. It lastly investigated the influence that CSI initiatives has on the buying decisions of consumers.

In reviewing the copious amounts of literature available online, it has become clear that CSI is an aspect of business that should not be underestimated.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Business research as defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2013) an organised, systematic, data-based, critical, objective, inquiry or investigation into a specific problem undertaken with the purpose of finding answers or solutions to it.”

As the word research methodology implies, it is about the methods used in order to gather data. Research methodology consists of a series of stages ranging from the philosophy, the research approach, the research strategy and the data collection methods. Research objectives dictate the type of methodology used, this can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods.

Quantitative data is numerical and is gathered through structured questions while qualitative data is expressed in words and collected through the use of interviews or questionnaires consisting of open ended questions as well as through observations (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). The mixed methods approach is a combination of both the quantitative and the qualitative methods.

2.2 Research methodology

2.2.1 *Population and sampling*

Population according to Sekrana and Bougie (2013) is ‘the entire group of people, events or things that the researcher desires to investigate.’ The target population of this study is individuals who visit **andBeyond** lodges. The researcher will have a sample size of 20 individuals.

2.2.2 Sampling unit

The sample unit that was used was 35 individuals. Volunteer sampling will be used as the sampling method, due to the fact that individuals were asked to complete the survey.

2.2.3 Sampling method and size

A sample is a representation of the entire population. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) there are two types of sampling; probability and non-probability. The former referring to whether or not each unit in the population has an equal opportunity to be a part of the sample. This method is preferred and thus often used in quantitative studies, because it removes human bias by using methods that involve strict step-by-step procedures.

Probability sampling lends itself to research situations where you want to draw a sample that:

- That fits with the parameters/characteristics of the research
- Is drawn randomly from the population
- Requires little/no influence from the researcher
- Leads to generalizable findings

Non-probability sampling is used when it is nearly impossible to determine who the entire population is or when it is difficult to gain access to the entire population. Unlike in probability sampling, the elements in the population will not have an equal opportunity to form part of the sample. This type of sampling is common in qualitative research and the representativeness and reliability of the sample is not considered to

be important. The findings will often not be generalisable to the larger population and there is greater opportunity for researcher bias to influence the results.

Non-probability sampling can be used when we want to draw a sample:

- That is in line with parameters/characteristics of the research
- Where not all individuals/social artefacts in the population are easy to access or are known
- Where drawing a representative sample to generalize the results is not the goal of the study

2.3 Validity and reliability

Validity relates to testing how well an instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013), while reliability refers to how an instrument is able to measure with stability and consistency, it assists in testing the goodness of measure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Validity was ensured by making use of face validity, Chief Marketing Officer of **andBeyond** along with a research supervisor were requested to validate the survey used as well as highlight areas for improvement as well as improvements on the design and presentation.

To ensure reliability of data a pilot test will be conducted. The pilot test will be done by distributing the survey to 5 individuals to test for flaws in the design.

The analysis of data will be done by using both inductive and deductive methods. The study adopted a positivist approach, the deductive approach was used to test

theories while the inductive approach addresses the qualitative aspects of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013)

2.4 Questionnaire design

Questions included in the survey addressed the objectives of the study. Questions were statements which respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements related to attitude or subject. This results in fast response due to the fact that they do not need to write down an answer. One open-ended was included which allowed the respondent to freely express their views and opinions

2.5 Data collection and analysis

Primary data was gathered and used for this particular study, the researcher did not make use of any data from previous studies. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), primary data is data collected first hand for subsequent analysis to find solutions to the problem being researched. On the other hand, secondary data already exists and does not need to be collected by the researcher. Primary data is obtained from sources first-hand, for the purpose of this study, primary data was collected from respondents via a survey. The data collection method is influenced by the objectives of the study.

As a data collection tool, an online based survey was distributed. The questionnaire was designed following the guidelines for questionnaire design

2.6 Anticipated contribution

The anticipated contribution of this research will assist the company in question (*andBeyond*) determine the extent to which their corporate social investment influences the brand equity. Brand equity can be seen as an extremely valuable asset to an organisation. positive brand equity can be leveraged in order to charge a premium price, along with being able to charge a premium price for, strong brand equity results in customer loyalty. Positive brand equity may facilitate expansion opportunities, this is done by leveraging the value of the brand. It enables more products or services to be added to an organisation as consumers trust the brand and will be willing to try a new product or service. The brand can easily be expanded into new geographical areas as consumers will recognise the brand.

2.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher will ensure that all participants are aware that the research will only be used for academic purposes. The researcher will ensure that all participants are respected and informed if the information will be used for another purpose. The researcher will ensure that all participants view's and opinions are respected. The researcher will ensure that there is no bias in the research conducted. The researcher will ensure that a gatekeeper's letter is attained prior to the commencement of the research, as well as ensuring that all participants have given their informed consent and signed an informed consent document.

2.8 Limitations

The researcher has limited time as well as financial resources, this led the researcher to the sample size of 35 consumers as the researcher will be analysing all the responses

from the survey. The survey will be sent out along with a welcome home email consumers receive when returning from their visit to an *andBeyond* lodge, thus the researcher will need to constantly be engaging with the representative allocated by the organisation to lease with guests. Due to the relative small sample size the researcher might not be able to generalise the findings of the researcher to the entire population.

2.9 Summary

The chapter on research methodology has explained the method that was used as well as reasons surrounding the suitability of the chosen method in relation to the research objectives. The research instruments used as well as challenges encountered during the data collection phase have been mentioned. Validity as well as reliability of results have been justified and mentioned. It was discussed that the research was conducted in an ethical manner with adherence to ethical guidelines. Presentation of the findings gathered during the data collection are presented in the next chapter

CHAPTER 4 : PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the findings that were extrapolated from the survey responses. The findings have been presented in the same sequence as the questions appeared in the survey. This chapter includes an interpretation of the findings.

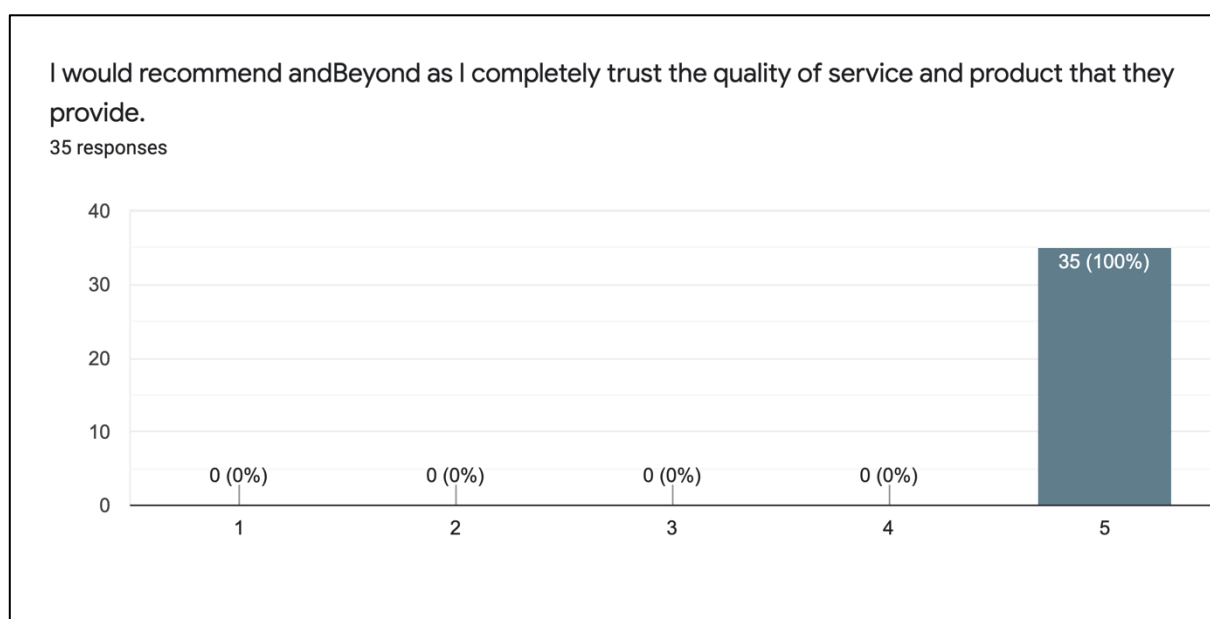
3.2 Analysis Technique

The Microsoft Excel Package was used to analyse the results as they would be meaningless in their raw data mode.

3.3 Analysis of Responses

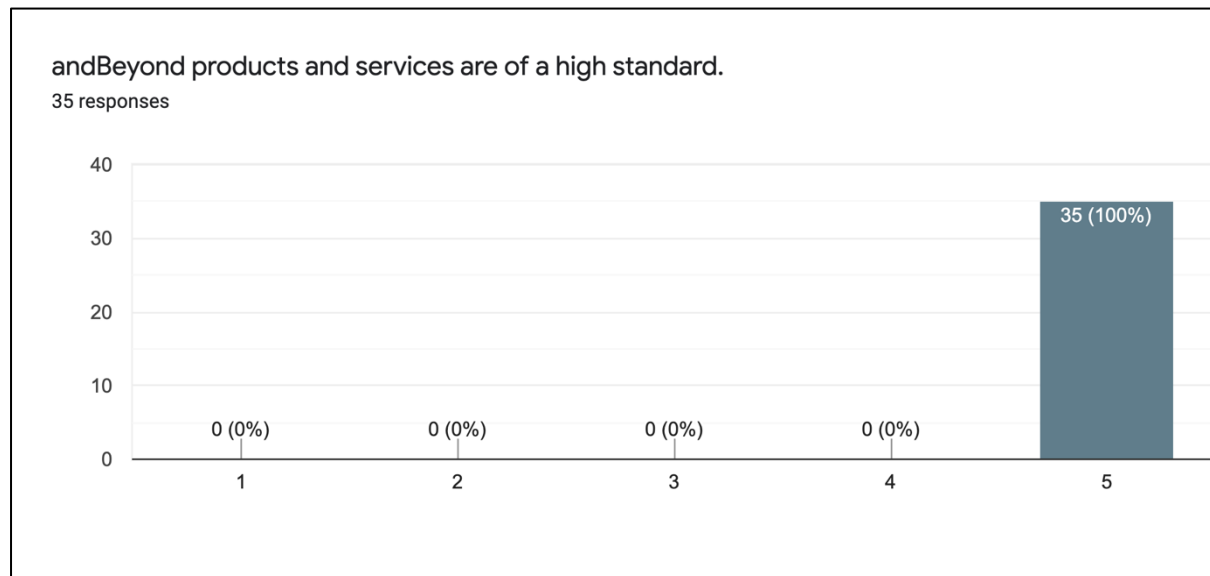
Observing the results according to the questions posed in the questionnaires that were distributed for this study, the results were as follows:

3.3.1 Analysis of service quality



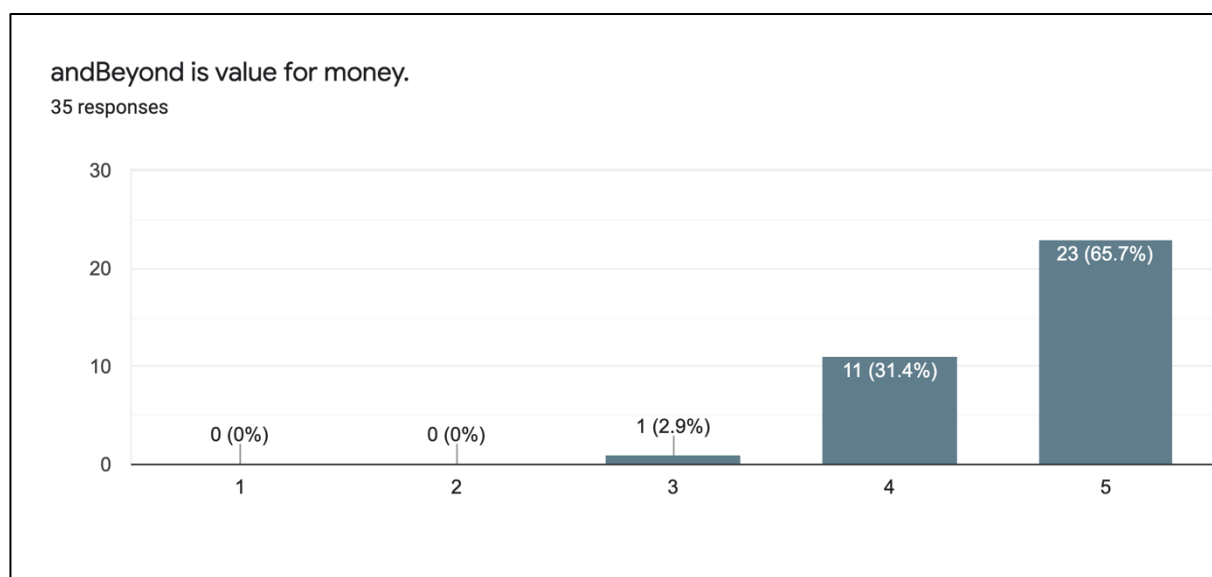
The responses of the above question saw that 35 out of 35 respondents said that they strongly agree to trusting the quality and service provided by **andBeyond** and would recommend the brand.

3.3.2 Analysis of the standard of service



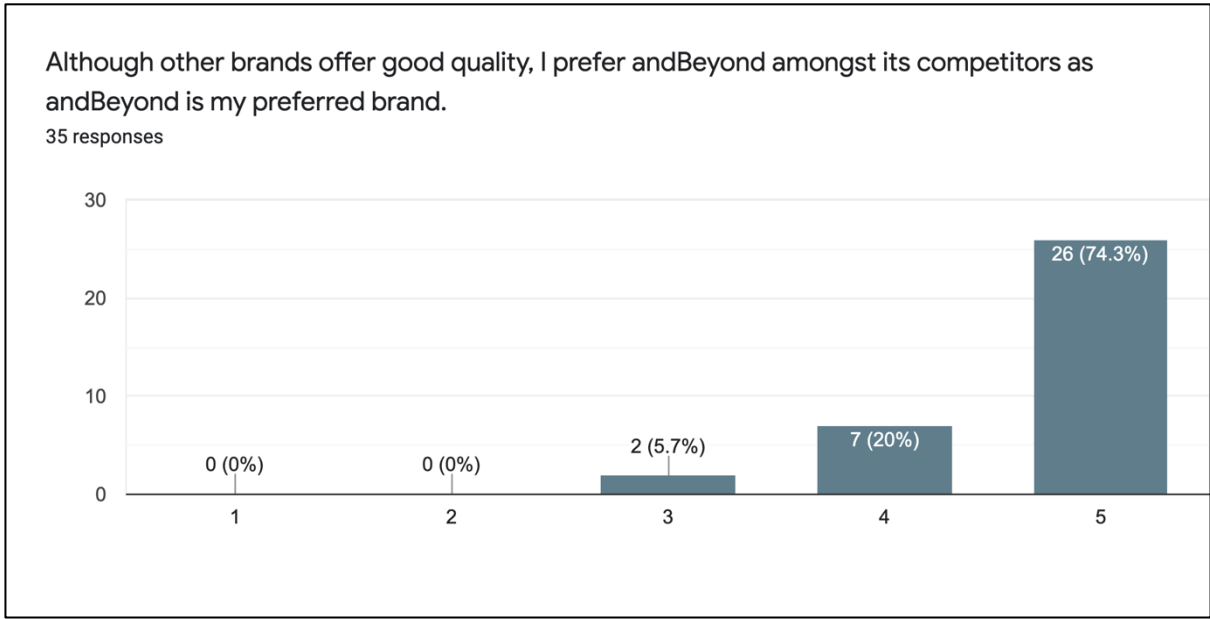
The responses to the above question saw 35 out of 35 respondents say that they strongly agree that **andBeyond's** products and services are of a high standard.

3.3.3 Analysis of value for money



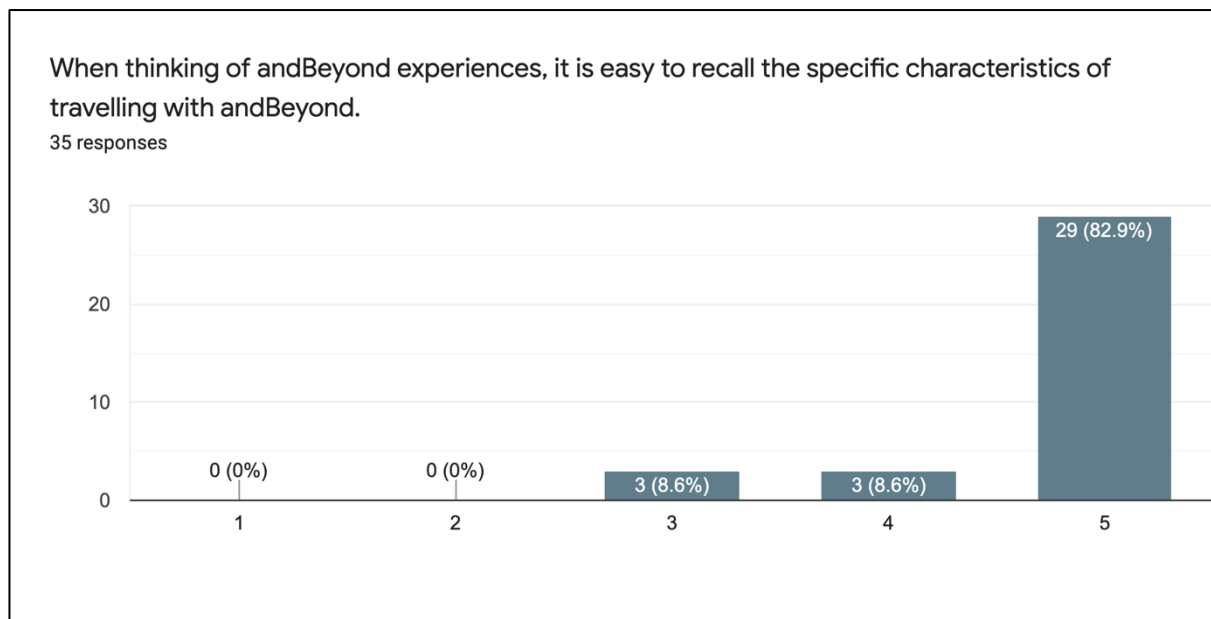
The above question saw 23 out of 35 respondents say that they believe *andBeyond* is value for money. 11 of the 35 respondents said that they agree that *andBeyond* is value for money, while 1 respondent indicated that they are neutral to the value for money received.

3.3.4 Analysis of *andBeyond* versus their competitors



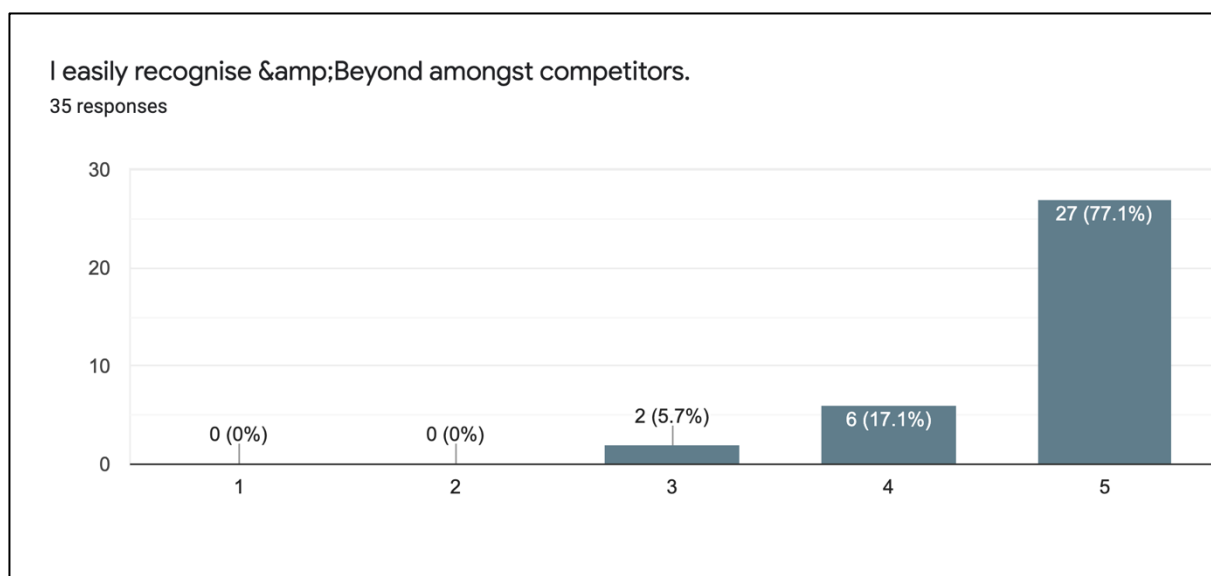
The above question saw 26 out of the 35 respondents indicate that they strongly agree that *andBeyond* is their preferred brand versus that of its competitors. 7 out of the 35 respondents indicated that they agree with andBeyond being their preferred brand. 2 out of the 35 respondents indicated that they are neutral when it comes to choosing *andBeyond* over its competitors.

3.3.5 Analysis of **andBeyond** characteristics



This question saw 29 of the 35 respondents strongly agree that they are able to recall specific characterises when travelling with andBeyond. 3 of the 35 respondents indicated that they agree with being able to recall characteristics, while 3 respondents were neutral.

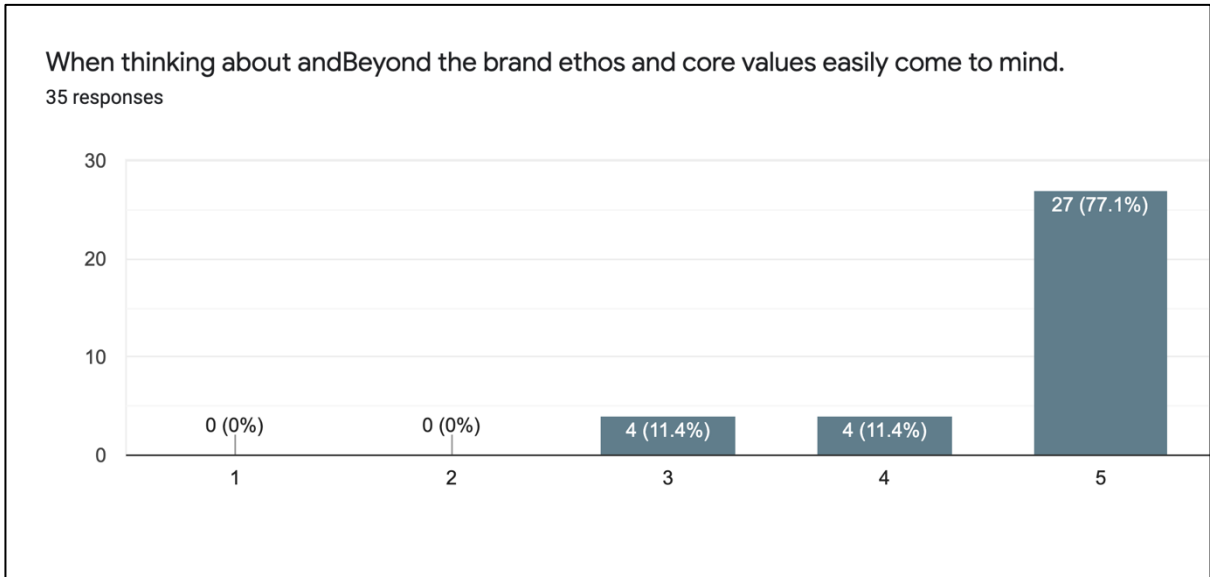
3.3.6 Analysis of **andBeyond** and their competitors



The above question saw that of the 35 respondents, 27 said that they strongly agree that they are able to recognise **andBeyond** amongst its competitors. 6 of the 35

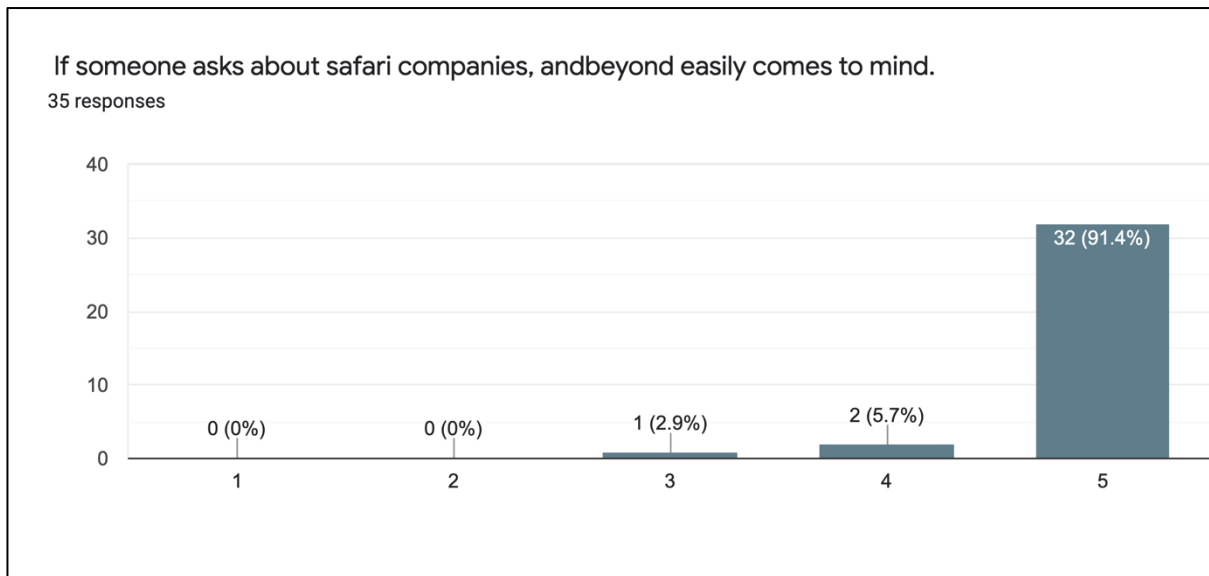
respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, while 2 respondents remained neutral.

3.3.7 Analysis of **andBeyond** brand ethos and core values



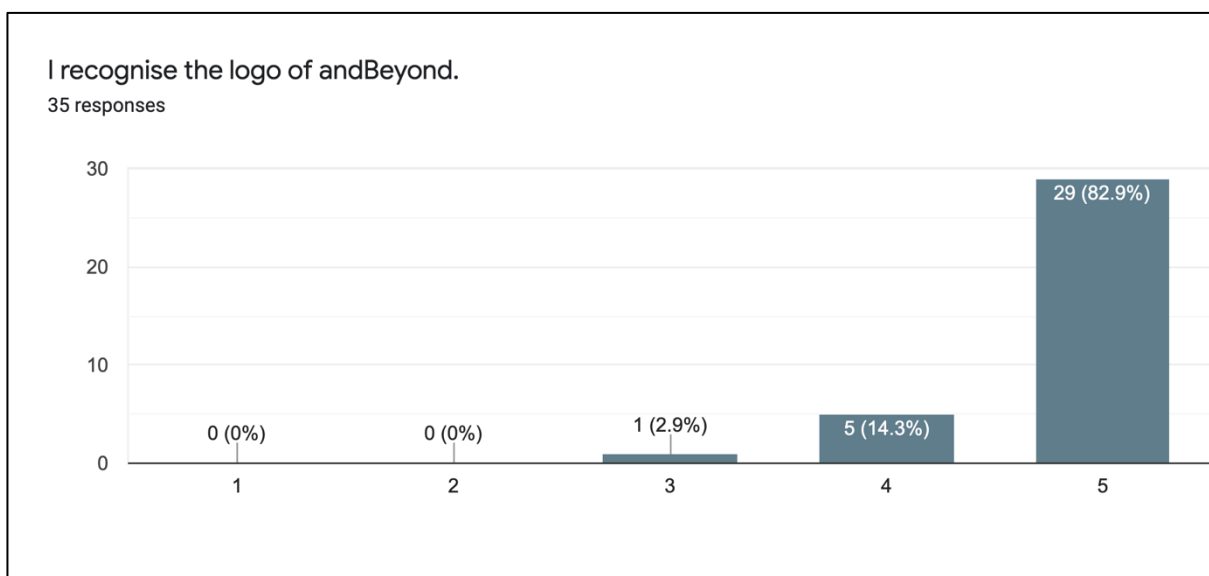
When looking at the brand ethos and core values of **andBeyond**, 27 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree that **andBeyond's** brand values and ethos easily comes to mind. 4 respondents indicated that they agree with the statement while 4 respondents remained neutral.

3.3.8 Analysis of safari companies in relation to **andBeyond**



The above question looked at top of mind interest to consumers. 32 of the 35 respondents indicated that when thinking about safari companies, **andBeyond** easily comes to mind. 2 of the respondents indicated that they agree while 1 of the respondents remained neutral.

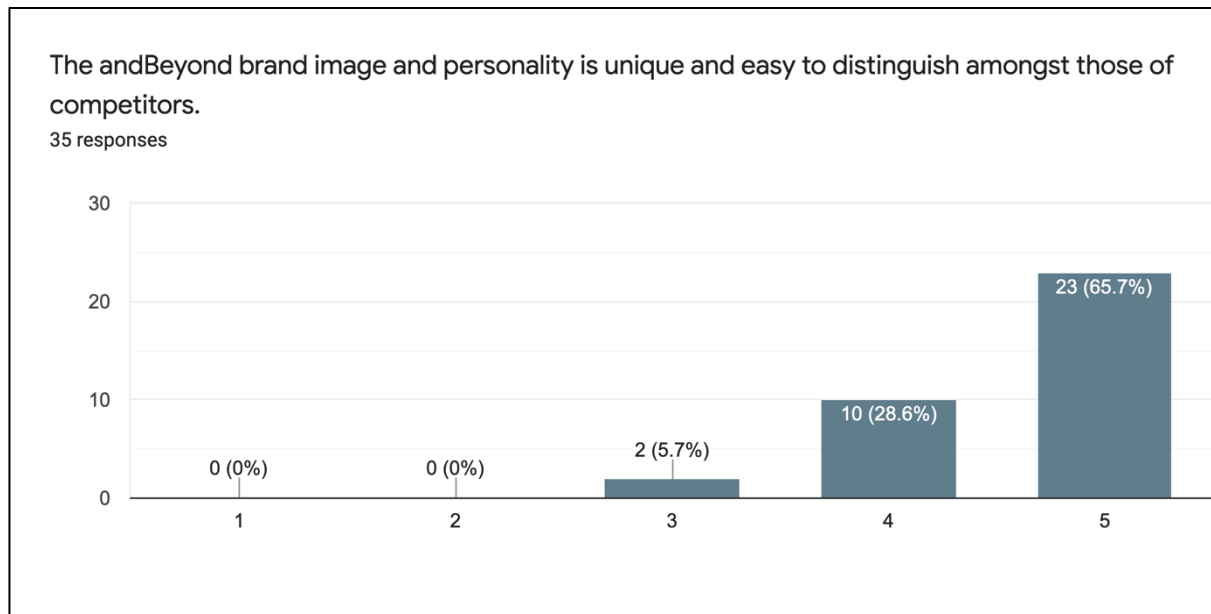
3.3.9 Analysis of **andBeyond** logo recognition



When looking at the logo recognition of consumers, 29 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree to being able to recognise the logo. 5 of the

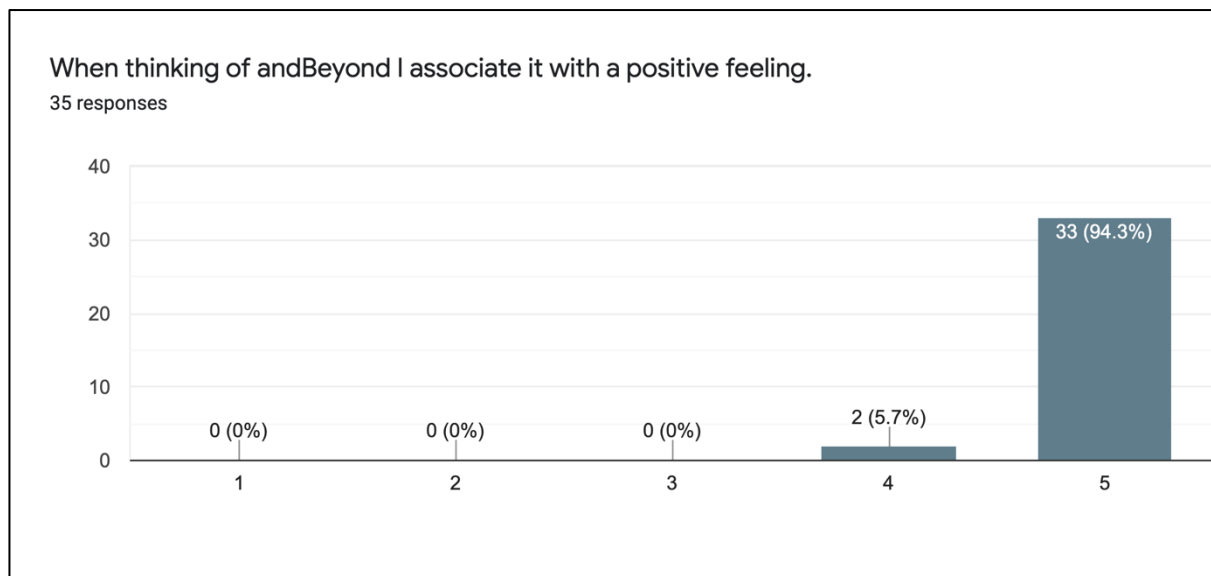
respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, while 1 respondent indicated that they are neutral.

3.3.10 Analysis of **andBeyond** brand image and personality



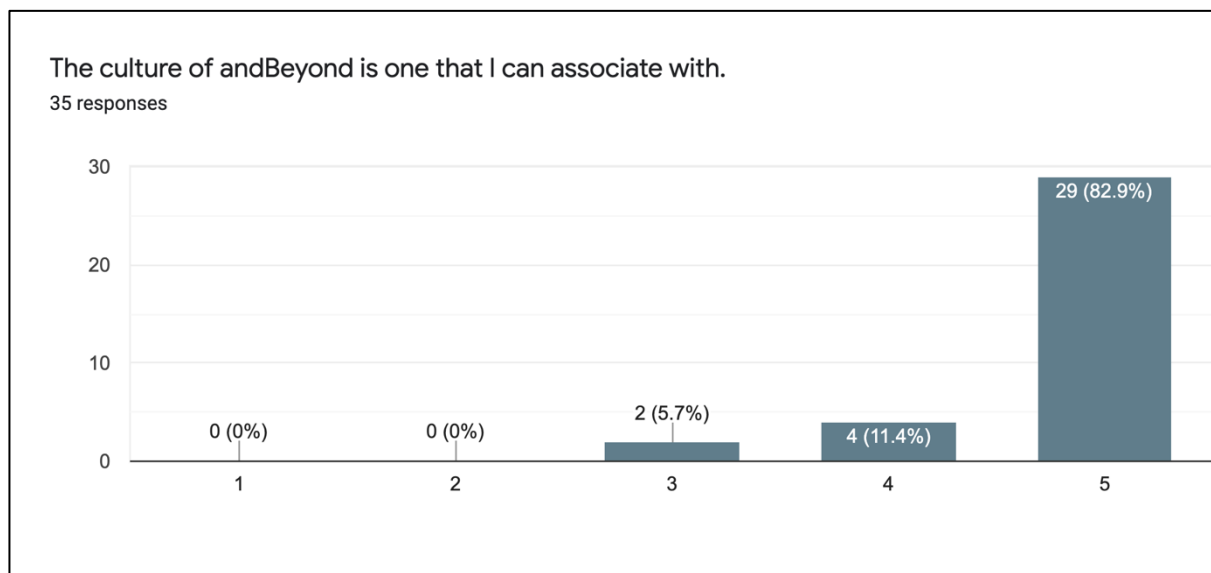
When looking at consumer perception regarding the image and personality of the brand in relation to competitors, 23 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree that **andBeyond** differentiates itself from its competitors. 10 respondents indicated that they agree with the statement while 2 respondents remained neutral.

3.3.11 Analysis of feelings associated with travelling with **andBeyond**



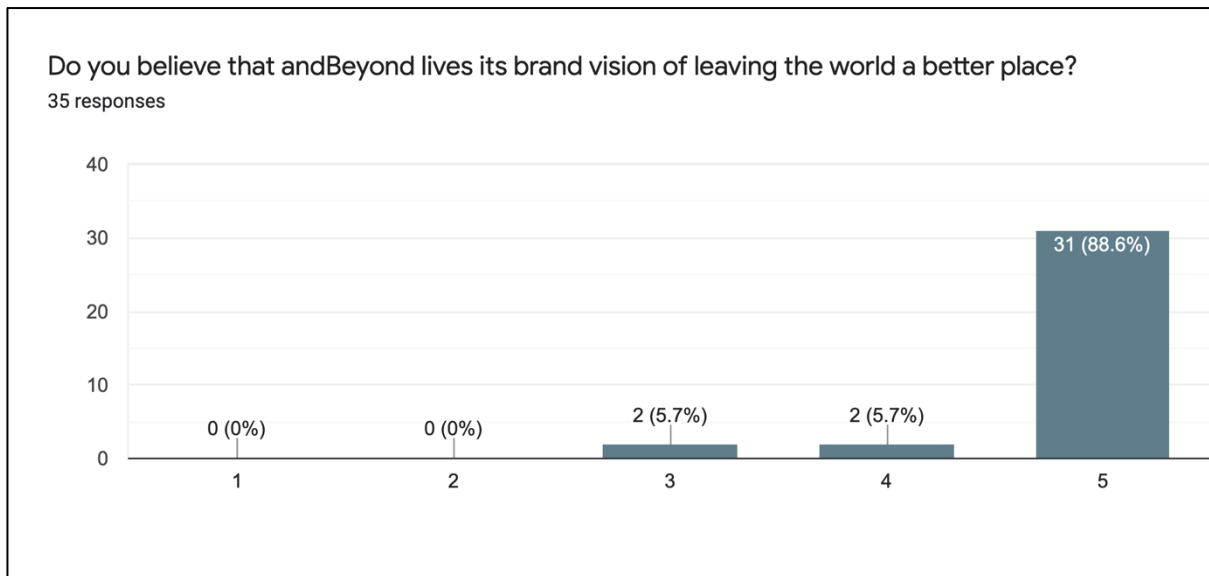
When looking at consumer perception regarding the feeling of traveling with **andBeyond**, 33 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree, while 2 respondents indicated that they agree with the statement.

3.3.12 Analysis of the culture associated with **andBeyond**



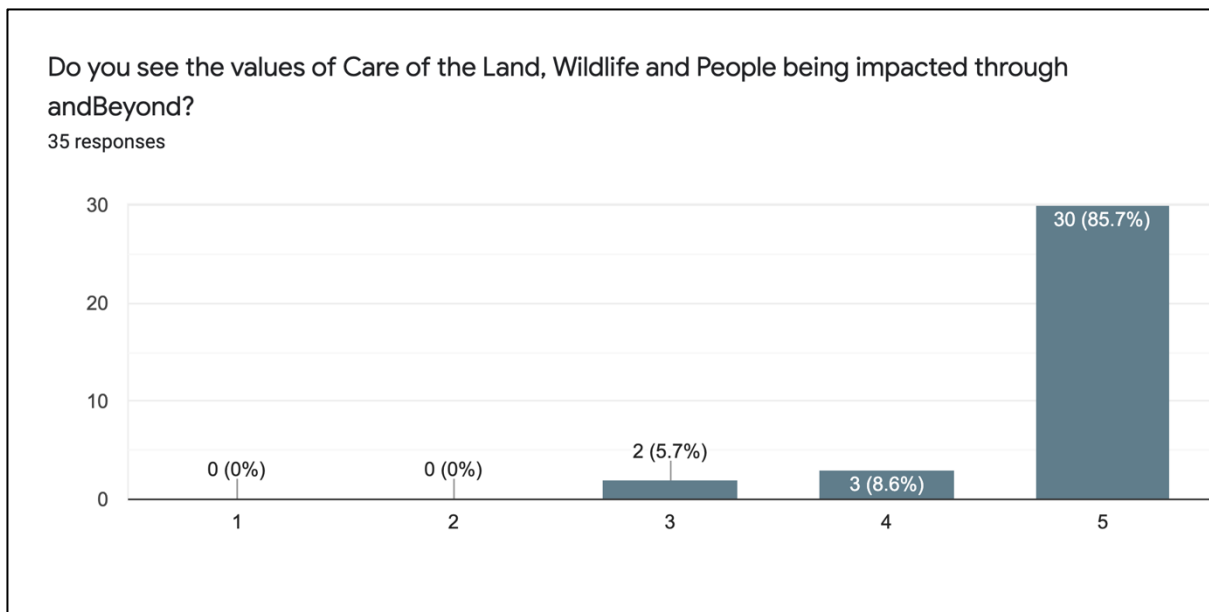
When looking at consumer perceptions regarding the culture of andBeyond, 39 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree with being able to associate with the culture of andBeyond. 4 of the respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, while 2 respondents indicated that they are neutral.

3.3.13 Analysis of **andBeyond** brand vision



When looking at consumer perception regarding the brand vision followed by **andBeyond**, 31 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree that **andBeyond** lives the vision of leaving the world a better place. 2 of the respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, while 2 consumers remained neutral.

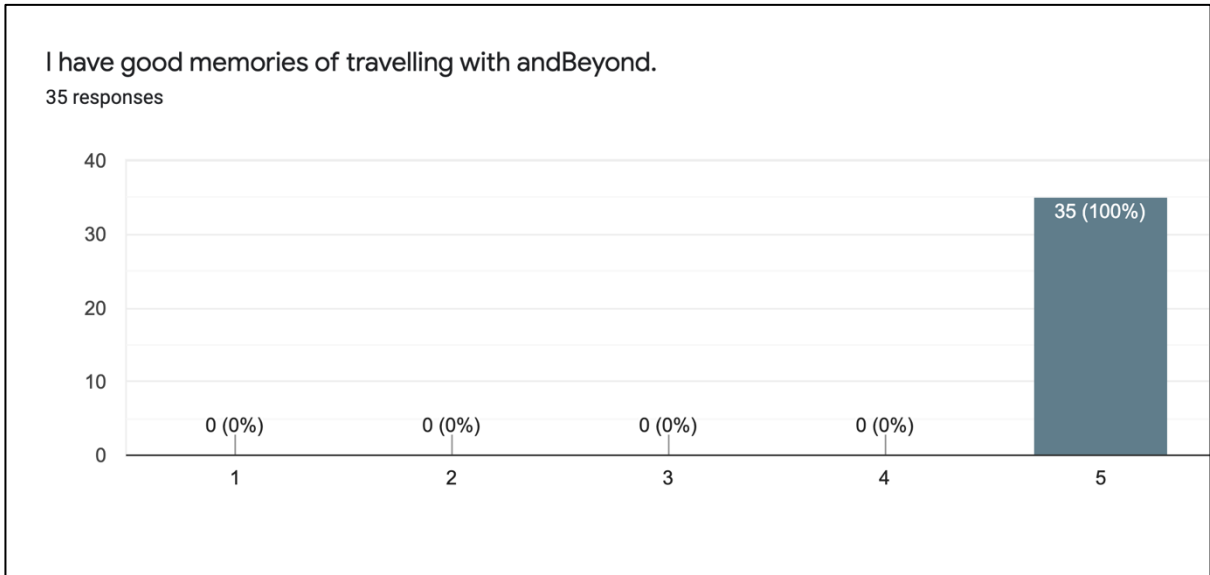
3.3.14 Analysis of **andBeyond** core values



When looking at the core values implemented by andBeyond, 30 of the 35 respondents said that they strongly agree that **andBeyond** conducts business by

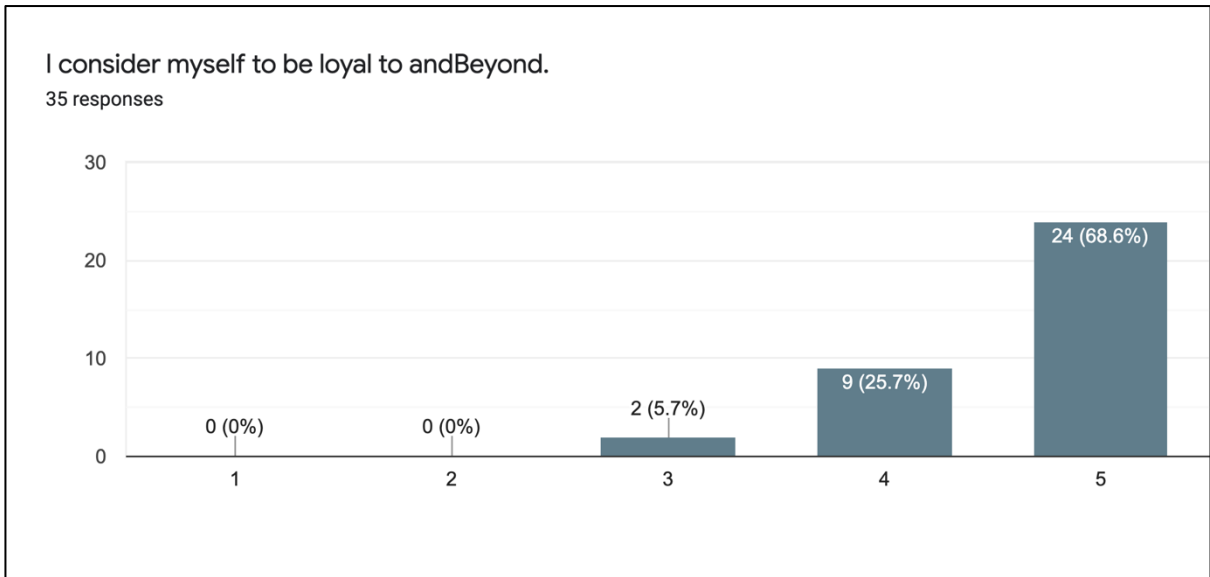
following the three core values. 3 of the respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, while 2 respondents indicated that they are neutral.

3.3.15 Analysis of memories traveling with **andBeyond**



When looking at the memories respondents had of travelling with **andBeyond**, all of the respondents said that they strongly agree to having good memories.

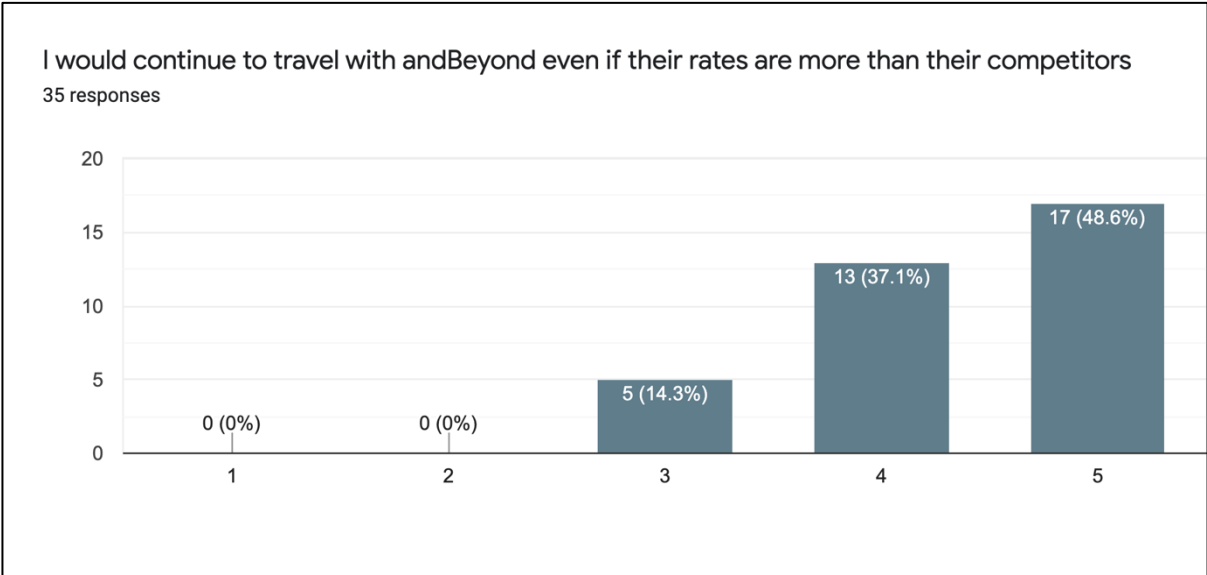
3.3.16 Analysis of customer loyalty



When looking at customer loyalty, 24 of the 3 respondents indicated that they strongly agree to being loyal to andBeyond. 9 of the respondents indicated they strongly

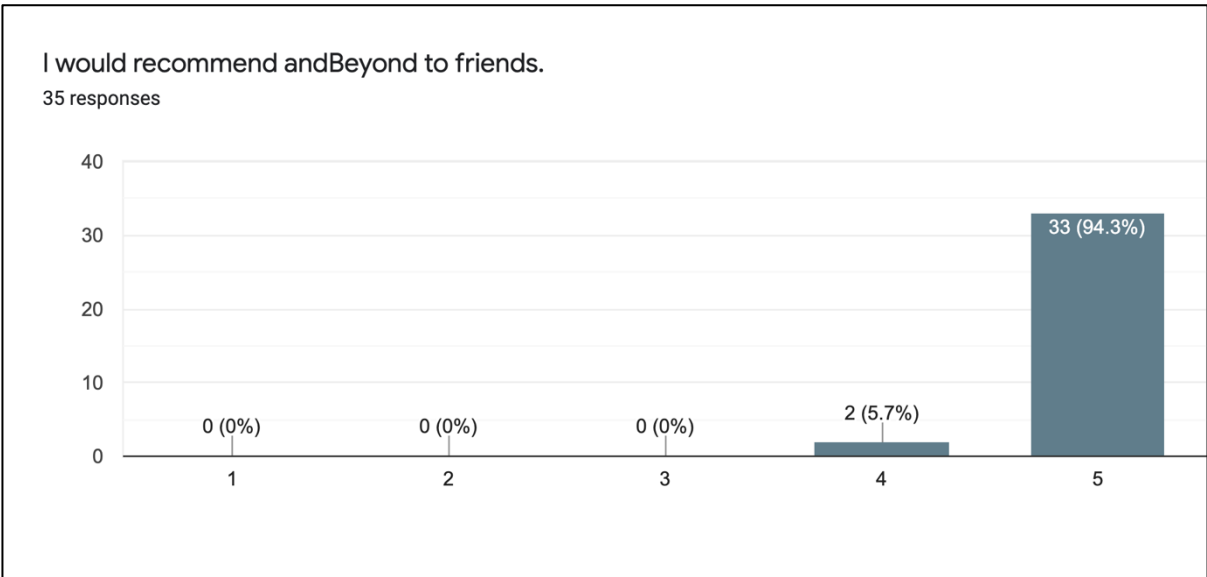
agree, while 2 of the respondents indicated that they are neutral when it comes to brand loyalty.

3.3.17 Analysis of price elasticity of consumers travelling with **andBeyond**



When looking at price elasticity of consumers, 17 of the 35 respondents indicated that they would continue travelling with **andBeyond** even if the price increases. 13 respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, while 5 respondents remained neutral.

3.3.18 Analysis of consumers recommendations of **andBeyond**



When looking at consumers perceptions on recommending the brand to family and friends, 33 of the 35 respondents indicated that they strongly agree to recommending the brand, while 2 respondents indicate that they agree with the statement.

3.3.19 Analysis of comments left by respondents

- *'The questions I have answered '4' to, are around cost. It is worth it, but our concern is that increasing costs may put andBeyond out of our price range and we earn reasonably good salaries. We would be absolutely gutted if we had to use other lodges because we could not afford andBeyond anymore. I considered answering '3' to the question 'I would continue to travel with andBeyond even if their rates are more than their competitors' as it's quite generic and it depends on the how much more the rates are. Whilst andBeyond is worth paying more for, it becomes relative to our available income.'*
- *'Magical experiences always with Andbeyond'*
- *'One of the best things about andBeyond was the excellent service of my agent, Melissa Adey. On the other hand, at each andBeyond camp we were provided with the same material touting andbeyond's services and values. They seemed to use a LOT of paper to talk about their commitment to ecology. I think they could have given us less material.'*
- *'What I already noted for Carla Glasspool : my only worries are intercontinental flights , once it is in their hands I relax'*

- *'I know I did all 5's, but it's really true, it's an unbelievable company, and I loved every minute of my trip, would recognize that Bataleur eagle anywhere and have already recommended it to others.'*
- *'The quality of And Beyond is consistently high across all its lodges - great recent upgrades to a number of lodges reflect its confidence in the future '*
- *'Our first trip to Africa was incredible and we would definitely use them again for other camps in other countries. The people/staff we met were wonderful, caring and absolutely delightful.'*
- *'Always a happy satisfied customer Well done !'*
- *'andBeyond is a big family that care of the people land and wildlife'*
- *'andBeyond is the best!!!'*
- *'AndBeyond is an incredible company and I wouldn't hesitate to travel with them again. To me they are head and shoulders above their competitors and their standard is of the highest!'*
- *'All my bookings were done by Anika Oosthuizen, she is amazing and comes through every time, I consider her a friend that I can fully trust, this is something i think to be very important.'*

The above quotes were taken from responses to the last questions which encouraged consumers to share any other information they feel relevant.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The final chapter of the paper focuses on discussing the research findings in detail as well as how they are linked to the literature review in chapter two. This chapter further provides recommendations that will be of value to the organisation to ensure that sound CSI will enhance their image. To address the topic, objectives were developed and a questionnaire designed to include questions that achieve the objectives of this study.

4.2 Objective 1: In which ways does CSI influence brand loyalty in relation to *andBeyond*

The desire to improve the company's image and reputation is the main motivation for engaging in CSI. CSI is the tool or a vehicle through which companies gain popularity and become visible to the public and their important stakeholders.

This research question aimed to establish the consumers' opinions on how they perceive *andBeyond's* CSI based on their initiatives. Consumers may have different expectations and if companies fall short of meeting them the reputation of these is negatively affected. The study would help determine whether a company's involvement in CSI initiatives is beneficial in terms of enhancing its reputation and image. It would also be derived from the way consumers responded to some of the questions as to whether CSI companies have captured their interests such that they perceive them to be good and doing the right thing. This would be in line with

literature according to Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) who proclaimed that reputation by definition is a term that relates to the perceptions held about the subject matter, it aggregates overall perceptions of all stakeholders and it links to certain standards.

Findings –Literature

- The literature highlighted benefits of CSI in terms of enhancing a company's reputation. According to literature by Šontaitė-Petkevičienė (2015) investing in CSI does improve corporate reputation of an organization although the act of CSI is not a promotional opportunity.
- The literature goes on to highlight that the Corporate reputation as an outcome of CSI activities produces good feelings for employees and the public who may thus pledge their support (Taghian et al., 2015)
- Literature also points out that findings of a study conducted by Liu et al., (2014) indicated that casinos that engage in CSI are well able to alleviate negative corporate images and improve their brand liking. This implies that even a tarnished company image is restored through engaging in CSI.
- Literature according to Sánchez et al., (2015) also indicated that CSI helps companies build their corporate reputation in turbulent environments which conflicted with Giannarakis and Sariannidis (2012) who said "the insecure business environment prompts companies to move away from CSI as the cost of initiatives is unaffordable"
- In Literature, Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) highlighted that CSI activities is a valid communication tool through which buyers assess a firm. When buyers need to make judgment about a firm they refer to its CSI status

- Literature as highlighted by Šontaitė-Petkevičienė (2015) argued that since CSI and corporate reputation are positively correlated, stakeholder groups' perceptions of an organization's CSI activities is a vital aspect ,their consciousness of an organization's CSI activities is a guarantee that an organization's corporate reputation will improve.

4.3 Objective 2: How does CSI influence perceived quality in relation to *andBeyond*?

Engaging in CSI initiatives is not cheap. *andBeyond* invests millions in building community schools, community water projects, Sports sponsorships and educating the youth to mention a few. The question is do consumers as a distinct stakeholder group of the companies have an appreciation of these efforts; how do they view companies that do CSI initiatives? This objective aimed to answer that question with reasons.

The following questions were asked to determine the perceptions of consumers pertaining to *andBeyond*'s CSI initiatives:

- When thinking about *andBeyond* the brand ethos and core values easily come to mind.
- Do you believe that *andBeyond* lives its brand vision of leaving the world a better place?
- Do you see the values of Care of the Land, Wildlife and People being impacted through *andBeyond*?

Findings – literature

- The literature stated clearly that a customer's perception of CSI has a reflection in the valuation of services of the company as there exists a direct and positive correlation between CSI activities and attitudinal loyalty (Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011)
- According to literature, customers' attitudes are strongly influenced by how positively they respond to CSI initiatives.
- Usman and Amran (2015) in literature quoted (Joshi and Gao, 2009) asserting that consumers respond well to products and services of a company that conducts CSI in a way that appeals to their values, if not, the company's corporate image, products and services would be jeopardized as it would receive negative response from these consumers.
- The literature highlighted that, while enjoying their profits, business should not forget to plough a portion of the profits back to the society and the stakeholders to make the society a better place (Liu et al., 2014).

4.4 Final Remarks

The aim of the research was motivated by the desire to gather information on how consumers perceive companies that engage in CSI, the focus was on **andBeyond** as a brand.

The research was able to identify the perceptions of **andBeyond** consumers on the CSI initiatives. It was observed however that even though most of the results were in line with available literature there were a few that came different.

As it was with available literature on the study, some findings were diverse in terms of the expression of views, however conclusions were drawn and inferences made by focusing on common themes and majority views. The literature was in harmony with

the finding that consumers like companies who are involved in CSI. They are willing to support such companies by buying their products and even paying extra. They perceive that all companies are equally responsible for taking the initiative to give back to the community because they also stand to benefit in many ways, the ultimate benefit being a healthy bottom line for companies involved.

Although the findings cannot be generalized to the population of *andBeyond* consumers in large due to the limitation of the small sample used which was not representative enough of the entire population/ It does however provide an indication of consumer perceptions of CSI that caring companies need to consider in order to implement meaningful CSI and to reap the rewards of being good corporate citizens. This research could be a base for future research in this area where a larger sample will be selected. Then the results of the future research will validate the present findings.

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ANNEXURES

9.1 Letter of consent



20 September 2019

Dear Dominique Geyser

andBeyond will be delighted to grant permission to you with regards to your research relating to how andBeyond, a travel operator make use of corporate social investment to strengthen brand equity in an African context.

The research collected should be used for academic purposes and conducted independently from andBeyond as an organisation.

Wishing you luck with your research ahead.

Regards

Nicole Robinson | Chief Marketing Officer | **&BEYOND** | nicole.robinson@andBeyond.com | T +27 11 809 4300 | D +27 11 809 4318 | F +27 11 809 4504 | C +27 71 688 8000 | South Africa | www.andBeyond.com



Beyond South Africa Block F, Pinmill Farm, 164 Katherine Street, Sandown, South Africa
T (+27 11) 8094300 | F (+27 11) 8094501
Private Bag X27, Benmore, 2010, South Africa
And Beyond South Africa (Pty) Ltd. Reg. No: 1991/000918/07

www.andBeyond.com DIRECTORS: HJA Kent, H Coetzee, AC Adams, N Robinson, BR Powell, R Beunse, KJ Pretorius, AC Retalack, WDL Nuyen, L Ring, BJC Gouws, MN Wheeler (Non-Executive)
COMPANY SECRETARY: JP De Villiers

9.2 Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am an Honours students at Vega School of Brand Leadership and in order to complete my honours degree I am required to collect research. This assignment will be looking at how andBeyond's brand equity is linked to their corporate social investment.

I am required to collect data for this assignment, I am thus reaching out to you for your support in participating.

Please note, that your participation throughout is voluntary and you have the right to anonymity, the research collected will be used for academic purposes.

I greatly appreciate the time you have taken to share your insights and information with me.

Thank you for your participation!

Dominique Geyser

1. I would recommend andBeyond as I completely trust the quality of service and product that they provide.
2. andBeyond products and services are of a high standard.
3. andBeyond is value for money.
4. Although other brands offer good quality, I prefer andBeyond amongst its competitors as andBeyond is my preferred brand.

Brand awareness is the extent to which a brand is known and recognised among the public.

1. When thinking of andBeyond experiences, it is easy to recall the specific characteristics of travelling with andBeyond.
2. Characteristics of traveling with andBeyond easily come to mind.
3. I easily recognise andBeyond amongst competitors.
4. When thinking about andBeyond the brand ethos and core values easily come to mind.
5. If someone asks about safari companies, andBeyond easily comes to mind.
6. I recognise the logo of andBeyond.

Brand associations are the attributes of brand which come into consumers mind when the brand is talked about.

1. The andBeyond brand image and personality is unique and easy to distinguish amongst those of competitors.
2. When thinking of andBeyond I associate it with a positive feeling.
3. The culture of andBeyond is one that I can associate with.

4. Do you believe that andBeyond lives its brand vision of leaving the world a better place?
5. Do you see the values of Care of the Land, Wildlife and People being impacted through andBeyond?
6. I have good memories of travelling with andBeyond.

Brand loyalty

1. I consider myself to be loyal to andBeyond.
2. I would continue to travel with andBeyond even if their rates are more than their competitors
3. I would recommend andBeyond to friends.
4. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Thank you for your participation