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Selling South Africa: The use of South Africa in commercial brands' marketing efforts, national pride and the nation brand: A case study

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates whether South African commercial brands, through their marketing efforts, contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand for South African citizens by building national pride. This paper explored the perceptions of viewers that viewed a selection of commercial brand television advertisements, to see if these in some way influence nation branding. Using a collective case study, the paper explored and analysed advertisements created by South African brands that use South African idiosyncrasies to promote a product or service. The country's citizens are seen as internal stakeholders as they live the brand, therefore, it was important to use citizens in focus groups to measure their perceptions.

To assist this research paper's findings, three television adverts were shown to three focus groups with participants aged 22–49 of diverse ethnicity and mixed genders. The case study followed a qualitative approach and data was analysed using a thematic analysis. The two main models used as benchmark tools were the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon, and the Domestic Perception Audit. The aim of this research was to investigate how the use of South African

idiosyncrasies in commercial brands' marketing efforts inadvertently contributes to strengthening South Africa as a national brand for its citizens. There is inadequate and limited information available to investigate the effects of these advertisements on national pride and nation branding. This case study assumed that South African commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa's national brand to South African citizens while promoting national pride.

This paper does not assess the impact of nation branding – although it is a possible area for future study, the nature and scope of this case study do not allow research into this field.

Keywords – nation branding, national pride, South African commercial brands, effectiveness, perception, South African idiosyncrasies, Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon, Domestic Perception Audit.

PROPOSED JOURNAL

It is proposed that this research paper be published in the *Acta Academica* journal. *Acta Academica* would suit the case study as the online journal publishes articles written by scholars that look at society and culture. This journal also looks at how people respond to the world we live in and the changes that are taking place (Sabinet Reference, 2015).

This research looked at perceptions and opinions that manifest when South Africa is presented in a light-hearted manner and South Africans are able to smile and laugh at themselves despite colour, culture or beliefs. The research looked at how society reacts to adverts that are intricately interwoven in their daily lives, exploring the effects of using South African idiosyncrasies to sell a brand and the effect that that has on the nation. The target audience for this journal publication is scholars.

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GLOSSARY

Commercial Brands

Commercial brands are businesses that need to make a profit, for this research paper they are South African brands that use South African idiosyncrasies, symbols and cultures in their adverts as an aid to sell their products or services, not to promote South Africa. A brand can be a combination of things, it can be a name, a product or a symbol, that distinguishes it from another rival brand (Roghayeh, Safari, Farid, Ghanbari, 2013).

Inward facing

Inward facing, in the context of this research paper, refers to local, South African citizens.

Idiosyncrasies

A mode of behaviour or way of thought peculiar to an individual (Dictionary.com, 2015). A characteristic, habit, mannerism, or the like, that is peculiar to an individual; a structural or behavioural characteristic peculiar to an individual or group (The Free Dictionary, 2015).

Interpretivist paradigm

A way of conducting a study that integrates individuals' perceptions, opinions and interests on a particular topic (Research Methodology, 2015).

Nation Branding

Nation branding looks at the reputation of a country, and how the country as an image is perceived through marketing communications (Anholt, 2011).

Outward facing

For the purpose of this paper, outward facing refers to how nation branding is marketed to external people, and not local citizens.

Ubuntu

Human virtues, compassion and humanity (Ubuntu, 2015).

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction to the research

The research paper investigated whether South African commercial brands' marketing and advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand. It also investigated whether these efforts build national pride by exploring South African citizens' perceptions of South Africa as used in a selection of television adverts. Using a collective case study, the paper explored and analysed adverts created by South African brands that used South African idiosyncrasies to promote a product or service.

In today's competitive world, countries need to distinguish themselves from others by highlighting what makes them different. South Africa's nation branding showcases the country as a tourist destination and as a place of commercial investment by highlighting the country's beauty and natural resources. However, South African commercial brands promote their brands by marketing South Africa's multiculturalism, lifestyles, daily struggles and customs (Brand South Africa, 2013).

The significance of this study is that there is limited literature that explores how the use of a country to advertise a product or brand affects the nation brand. According to International Marketing Council (IMC) CEO Miller Matola, "We are all South Africa ambassadors when promoting the country. A countries people and its ethos, as well as its economic stability, all come into effect when promoting the country" (Govender, 2011). The IMC, which is responsible for Brand South Africa, states that investments, tourism and consumers in the global environment determine a nation's brand. Matola is hoping to place South Africa in the top 20 nation brands by 2020. He believes that South Africans need to have positive rather than negative things to say about the country (Govender, 2011).

Well-known South African brands, such as Santam and Castle, sell their products and services by using everyday life experiences in South Africa, thus creating a sense of pride in South Africa (Ogilvy & Mather, 2015). This case study was spurred by recent South African television adverts that evoke emotional responses from the

consumers, such as the recent 'One-of-a-Kind' Santam advert (refer to page 26). These adverts highlight the everyday occurrences that South Africans face and allow many South Africans to smile and laugh at themselves. The question is: do these brands help promote South Africa as a nation and can they endorse South Africa as a country by instilling national pride? This study attempted to answer this question by looking at adverts that highlight South African idiosyncrasies, which include social divides, cross-cultural diversity, the lifestyles and economy of the country, and gain South African citizens' opinions on whether this instilled national pride.

According to Amalu (2013), nation branding is the image a country portrays to the world. In an article entitled 'Nation Branding Performance', Amalu (2013) discusses how each country has 'distinguishing' factors, which contribute to a country's brand impact on a nation's ability to export goods, promote tourism or attract investment. Brand South Africa has been promoting South Africa since 2002 (Brand South Africa, 2015a) and it was set up to encourage tourism and investment. The main focus of Brand South Africa is to promote South Africa in a positive light, hence their slogan, 'Official custodians of Brand South Africa' (Brand South Africa, 2015a).

Although Brand South Africa (2013) promotes all things South African, from sport, the arts, tourism, trade and industry, and events, it has not been established how effective their campaigns are due to inadequate and limited information available. Therefore, it is hard to evaluate the success of their campaigns and achievements. Traditionally, nation branding focuses on 'outward facing' aspects of a nation. For the purpose of this paper, outward facing refers to how nation branding is marketed to external people, not local citizens. According to Anholt (2011), assessing a country's position on nation branding is determined by international and local markets, which look at the government, economy, lifestyle and tourism.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this research paper was nation branding. The two main models referred to are the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit that pertain to national pride and domestic buy-in.

This research paper focused on South African citizens as they are seen as internal stakeholders who 'live' the brand. The paper concentrates on certain aspects of nation branding and looks at nation branding from an inward facing approach, concentrating on consumer buy-in from South African citizens who can be seen as internal stakeholders. Inward facing, in the context of this research paper, refers to local, South African citizens. Inward facing gives an accurate account of the social and economic lives of the people who live there. It is therefore important that there be domestic buy-in from local citizens to promote nation branding (Anholt, 2009). It should be noted that for the purpose of this study only certain aspects of each model were looked at. Referring to the Anholt-GfK Hexagon as a benchmark tool, the topics used included culture and heritage, people, immigration and investments. The Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon is a useful tool when looking and assessing a country's position in nation branding (Brand South Africa, 2013). The Domestic Perception Audit is another benchmark tool used by Brand South Africa, which allows them to evaluate South African citizens' perceptions on living and working in South Africa (Brand South Africa, 2013). Aspects of the Domestic Perception Audit were used to adapt the focus group questions to gain South African citizens' perceptions (refer to Appendix B).

1.3 Problem Statement

The problem statement is whether South African commercial brands using South African idiosyncrasies to advertise and sell their products and services, inadvertently instil national pride in South African citizens.

1.4 Research Question

The research questions for this case study are:

Primary research question:

Does the use of South Africa idiosyncrasies as an element in commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand to South African citizens?

Secondary research questions:

Are South African commercial brands effective in promoting South Africa through their advertisements?

Do South African commercial brands create an emotional impact on the South African citizens through their use of South Africa as a selling tool?

Do South African citizens who view these commercial advertisements feel that South African commercial brands create a positive perception of South Africa?

1.5 Aim

The aim of the study was to establish a greater understanding of how, if at all, South African commercial brands, through their marketing and advertising efforts, contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand to South African citizens.

1.6 Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Contextualise South African citizens as internal stakeholders.
- Conduct focus groups to gather people's perceptions and opinions of three advertisements that use South Africa to sell products or services.
- Use the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit as benchmark tools to frame the focus group questions.
- Explore the value of using South Africa as a selling tool to promote national pride and consequently and positively affect nation branding.

1.7 Rationale

The purpose of the research was to explore whether South African commercial brands help aid nation branding for South Africa. The research would be of interest to South African commercial brands to see the effectiveness of advertising products

when using South African idiosyncrasies to promote their brands more effectively to South African citizens.

This study is relevant and could be valuable for Brand South Africa to understand the effectiveness of advertisements when using South African idiosyncrasies to strengthen and build brands for South African citizens. The importance of this study is that the researcher looked at nation branding from an inward facing perspective, by looking at local citizens of the country. Inward facing makes use of local individuals, their perceptions, feelings, emotions and beliefs, these individuals can be seen as internal stakeholders of the country. Normally nation branding focuses on an outward facing perspective looking at external people and not local citizens.

1.8 Summary of Research Methodology

The research methodology consists of qualitative research and a case study design with information collected from three focus groups. These focus group discussions were structured using Anholts-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit to gauge if the adverts that the participants viewed instilled national pride and consequently, positively affected nation branding (Anholt, 2011). Qualitative research relies on people's emotions, experiences and views and thoughts, which generated data for this research paper. This research paper made use of three commercial adverts, which were shown to three focus groups. The focus group discussions allowed for the collection of rich data in personal perceptions, opinions and the success of these brands in building nation branding and identity. Focus group data has been analysed using a thematic analysis.

1.9 Delimiters and Limitations

The research was limited due to the fact that a large portion of the population was not involved. The inherent nature of focus groups means that not all the dynamics of the population are revealed (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest, Namey, 2005), therefore findings cannot be generalised. This study only selected four aspects of the

Anholts-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon model: culture and heritage, people, investments and immigration to guide the focus group questions.

The research paper does not assess the impact of any inadvertent benefits on nation branding, although it does recognise that it is a possibility for future study, the nature and scope of the research paper does not allow for venture into this field. Research concentrated on locally viewed South African adverts seen on local television. This research only concentrated on certain aspects of nation branding and looked at nation branding from an inward facing perspective, concentrating on consumer buy-in from South Africans who can be seen as internal stakeholders.

1.10 Assumptions

This research assumes that South African commercial brands inadvertently promote national pride and aid in nation branding.

It assumes that South African commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa's national brand for South African citizens while promoting national pride.

1.11 Chapter Outline

The following chapter outline sets out the research conducted for this case study:

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In chapter two, the literature review is formulated and looks at brands, nation branding, national pride and the efforts made by Brand South Africa to promote the nation. This chapter also looks at the South African commercial brands that use South African idiosyncrasies to promote and sell their brands. The idea of 'The Nation Citizens in Nation Branding' delves into the effects of branding a country and projecting a positive image. The final section looks at the benchmark tools used to

guide the research to formulate findings. The chapter ends with a short conclusion of the literature review used in this research paper.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3 encompasses the methodology, starting with an introduction to the chapter. Under the heading '3.2 Research Approach', the type of approach, i.e. qualitative approach, is explained while the section on research design advises how the research was collected. Data collection and analysis is discussed showing what methods were used to gather and analyse data collected from the focus groups. Reliability and validity principles will help to validate the trustworthiness, credibility and dependability of research data. Sampling of information was conducted through the use of three focus groups of volunteers whose ethics were secured by signing a confidentiality form. The chapter ends with a short conclusion of the methodology used in this research paper.

Chapter 4: Research Results

Chapter 4 starts with an introduction into how the data was collected for the research paper, which was done through three focus group discussions. The data collected was then analysed into themes and findings. Five main themes were highlighted from the data collection, which were discussed in-depth.

Chapter 5: Research Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter of this case study is an overview of the research findings and conclusions as well as recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter disseminates theories pertinent to the research question: does the use of South Africa in commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa's national brand for the South African citizen and to what extent does the use of South Africa in commercial adverts aid nation branding. This is followed by a conceptual framework, which will be studied in the next chapter. This research paper seeks to identify South Africans opinions on commercial brand advertisement and how they promote South Africa as a nation and a brand, and the relevance this has on South African brands branding themselves.

2.2 What is a Brand?

Dave Dolak (2008) writes: "If you ask ten different marketing people or brand managers, how they would define the word "brand", you would probably get ten different answers even though most answers received will have similar themes" (Dolak, 2008, p.1). According to the American Marketing Association (1960), brand refers to a logo, specific design, colour or a grouping of these symbols to set themselves apart from their competitors to gain a competitive advantage.

A brand is possibly the most valuable asset for corporate business. Brands conjure certain images, feelings and emotions that create a strong brand loyalty in consumers (Keller, 2009). Keller and Lehmann (2003) consider brand to be the most important asset of a business. Dolak (2008, p.1-5) states that brand refers to 'a company name, a product name, or a unique identifier such as a logo/symbol/sign/trademark'. Thebe Ikalafeng, Brand Finance Africa chairperson and Brand Leadership founder, insists that brands have become more than logos or slogans, they are seen as the most valuable assets organisations have (Gilbert, 2015).

2.3 Nation Branding

Anholt (2011) is a leading figure in nation branding and nation identity who was widely credited for the term 'nation brand' in 1966. Nation branding looks at the reputation of a country, and how the country as an image is perceived through marketing communications (Anholt, 2011). Anholt (2011) argues that branding does add value to countries, even if it is small scale from having a logo and corporate identity (Anholt, 2011). This could be seen in Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon where culture is made up of sport, cultural heritage and historical sites. With the emphasis on sport, promoting nation branding the logo of the springbok emblem evokes national pride. This helps a country create a positive brand identity and brand image. Anholt goes on to state that if a country is serious about being internationally renowned then they should work on 'product development and marketing' (Anholt, 2011, p.1-3).

There are informative contrasts that discuss the differences and similarities between commercial and nation branding. It is thought that there is a need to brand the reflection of the nation rather than branding a nation (Fan, 2010). As each nation differs from each other, people draw various conceptions of what the country represents. This perception is the brand that the country projects and these perceptions are what make investors invest in a country. Images of a country can be good or bad, antiquated, misconceptions or unclear (Fan, 2006). Ikalafeng (2006) states that South Africa has many recognised symbols, such as the flag, institutions, individuals (Nelson Mandela) and companies (Sappi, De Beers, SAB). All of these can be seen as important, but, according to Anholt, Nelson Mandela occupies 90% of the image of the country (Ikalafeng, 2006). HKLM, a strategic brand and communication consultancy, states that Nelson Mandela is still South Africa's most loved and well-known icon and is still a powerful symbol (Design Indaba, 2006).

In his 1998 paper, 'Nation-Brands of the Twenty-First Century', Anholt (1998) states that the way a country is perceived is based on the government, its citizens, its economy and that this image is built over a period of time. The Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon is a useful tool when looking at and assessing a country's position in terms of nation branding (Brand South Africa, 2013). In this model,

different segments are highlighted to evaluate a country's reputation. Nation branding involves the constant monitoring of both local and international markets through an integrated communication plan (Brand South Africa, 2013).

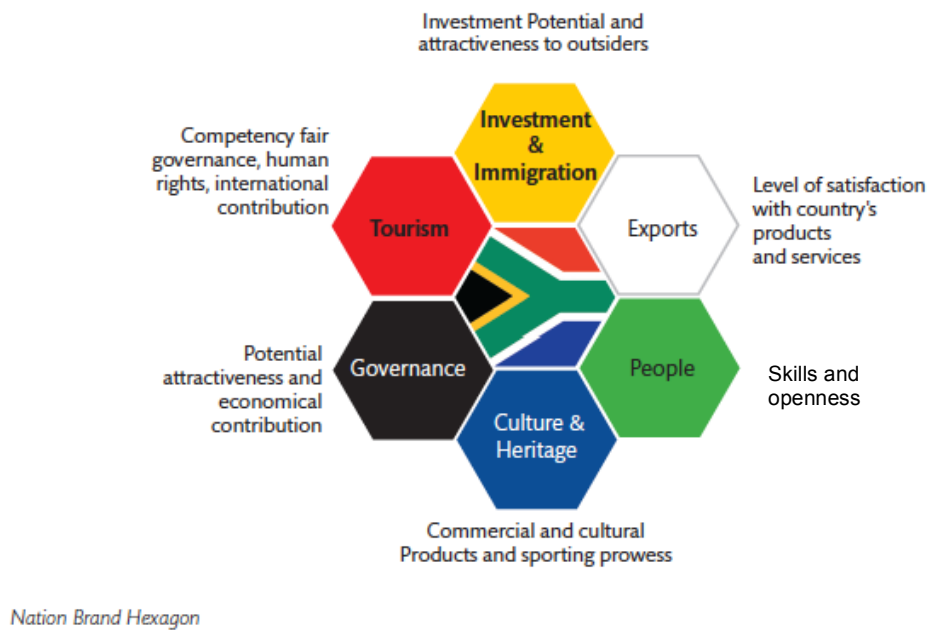


Figure 1: The Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013)

2.4 National Pride

National pride is when an individual or group of individuals feel positive about their country, its people, and its fauna and flora, it is when individuals are proud to be who they are and respect their country's diverse culture and traditions. Pride is not legislated, it is in-built feelings of belonging and satisfaction (Namibia Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, 2012).

National pride can create a strong sense of national identity, which is what makes South Africa unique (Department of Education, 2008). In 1994 a surge of national pride was felt by South Africans in the run-up to the elections and a new identity was adopted by South Africa as the nation was renamed the Rainbow Nation.

This was the first time that South Africans experienced pride in their nation (Moller, Dickow & Harris, 1999).

South African President Jacob Zuma said that national pride was at its highest during the hosting of the Fifa World Cup in 2010, with South Africans uniting (Bell, 2010). Data from the South African Social Attitudes Survey's (SASAS) Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) assessed the levels of national pride by sampling South Africans aged 16 years and older – the field of study ran from 2003 to 2013 (HSRC, 2013). The survey indicated that, overall, South Africans thought that South Africa is a better country to live in than most other countries, which was supported by 73–84% of the participants (Figure 2). A significant proportion of the interviewees thought that there were 'some things about South Africa that made them feel ashamed'. These negative aspects included economic inequalities, poor education standards, unemployment, and crime and corruption (HSRC, 2013). However, sport was mentioned as a source of national pride, with 83% of the sample saying that sport made them proud of their country (Figure 3). Overall, South Africans remain proud of their country in general and display levels of national pride alongside countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand (HSRC, 2013), with South Africa ranking fourth in the world for national pride (SAinfo reporter, 2007).

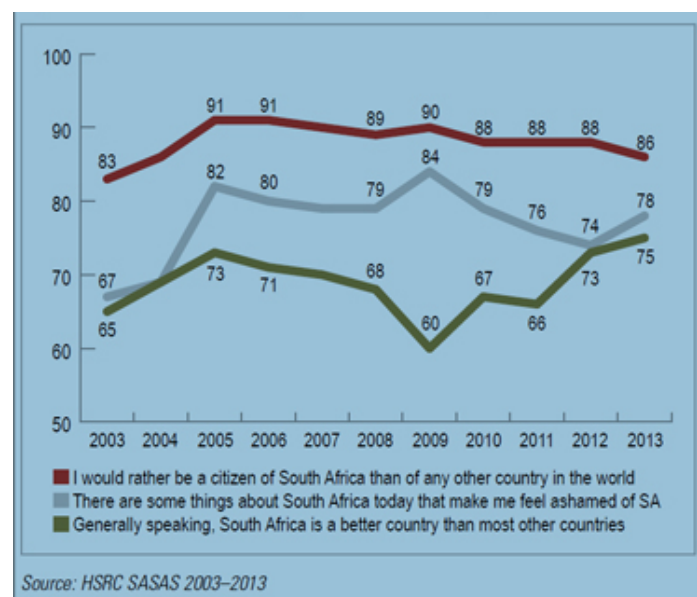


Figure 2: Trends in national pride in South Africa, 2003-2013.
(Source: HSRC, 2013).

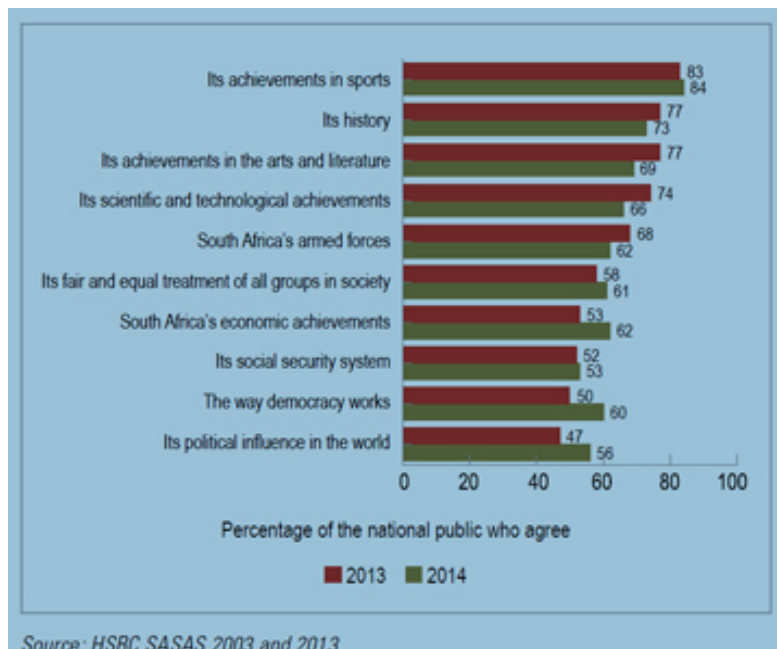


Figure 3: National pride dimensions, 2003 and 2013
(Ranked in descending order on 2013 results).
(Source: HSRC, 2013).

Ipsos, the second largest global survey-based market research company, released poll results for 2012 revealing that four out of five South Africans are proud to be South African, accounting for 80% of the population (Ipsos, 2012). The survey found that the younger generation demonstrated lower levels of pride than older generations – 78% of participants aged between 15–34 years old are proud to be South African compared to 81% of 34–39 years old, and this grew to 83% in the 50 years and older age group (Ipsos, 2012).

2.5 The Nation's Citizens in Nation Branding

The role of the public is very important in projecting the brand of a country (Anholt, 2002). The country's citizens can be treated as internal stakeholders as they live the brand and their contribution and participation in the process of brand implementation is vital. Therefore, citizens are custodians of a country's brand. They can also be seen as external stakeholders, e.g. domestic travel, local holidays and consumers (Ruzzier, Petek & Konecnik, s.a.).

Countries' potential to use their culture and heritage to attract foreign visitors can also result in selling national pride and identity to its citizens, which in turn makes use of citizens as brand ambassadors (Ikalafeng, 2006). In the article 'Why Brand a Nation?' Onlins states, "Understanding that your country is your people. You need the support of the people as nation brand champions, and key input by the media" (Ikalafeng, 2006). According to Onlins, South Africa is battling with its core identity, to make a global impression it would need to know and understand how it's being perceived (Ikalafeng, 2006), which is why this case study highlighted South African citizens as internal stakeholders by gaining these individuals' perceptions in the focus groups.

If one looks at Brand America and perceptions of America, that is, living the American dream, freedom and opportunity, one must admire its commercial success with brands such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's (Ikalafeng, 2006). Anholt suggests "A country's present and future are more interesting than the past. It's all a matter of how interesting people find what you do". It is important that other aspects of the country, such as corporate companies, tourism, people, sport and culture, be showcased as this will help to increase recognition and perception of South Africa (Ikalafeng, 2006).

2.6 South African Nation Branding Efforts

In 2002, Brand South Africa was founded to promote South Africa's image as a brand. One of the advantages of having a unique brand image is the reward that is obtained through investment and tourism (SAinfo report, 2014a). International Marketing Council (IMC) chairperson Anitha Soni describes South Africa's brand image as multi-divergent, empowering and enriching (Soni, 2011). The main objective of South Africa's IMC is to grow the marketing and business opportunities available in South Africa, thereby growing the economy. IMC align their marketing framework from the State of the Nation Address by the president (Soni, 2011).

HKLM, a strategic brand and communication consultancy, identified four brand drivers that would enhance and showcase South Africa as a brand: diverse culture

and natural heritage, natural resources, the people, and social and economic development (Design Indaba, 2006). These drivers coincide with both the benchmark tools used in this case study, that is, the Anholt-GfK Nation Brand Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit.

In recent years South Africa has been placed on the map in a positive light with the most memorable moments being when South Africa became a democracy and the Fifa World Cup 2010 (Bell, 2010). Being part of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) has helped catapult South Africa onto the global stage showing the world that South Africa as a nation is open for business (Brand South Africa, 2013). Part of branding South Africa is to ensure that it projects a competitive and viable proposition globally for investors and stakeholders (Brand South Africa, 2013). Media Tenor, a marketing consulting company, recently conducted research for Brand South Africa and found that South African corporate companies are creating a positive perception of the country both in local and global media. Not surprisingly these were companies that have established themselves internationally these include media, mining, retail, banking, insurance and healthcare. The performance of these corporates contributes to putting a positive perception on South Africa. Kingsley Makhubela CEO of Brand South Africa agrees, stating that South African corporate brands are a 'critical pillar' of the nation brand, as they help build perceptions about South Africa which impact on the national reputation, apart from creating jobs and helping to grow the economy (Brand South Africa, 2015b).

The Anholt-GfK Nation Brand Hexagon rates countries according to the following criteria: immigration and investment, tourism, people, culture, governance and export. Out of the 50 countries analysed, South Africa ranked 36. This was a welcomed result as South Africa has recently suffered political disruptions and labour unrest in the mining field (Phakathi, 2013). In 2013, Anholt-GfK Nation Brand Hexagon established that South Africa was streaks ahead of other nations in Africa and in the Middle Eastern countries regarding reputation. This yearly study comprises 50 countries from developed to developing countries that occupy 'important and diverse roles in international relations, trade and the flow of business, cultural and tourism activities' (Phakathi, 2013).

Proudly South African is a brand leader in promoting South Africa as a brand. Its primary goal is to promote all things local and to encourage South African citizens to buy locally produced goods and services. Proudly South African is at the forefront of empowering people and promoting good labour practices and standards (Bathembu, 2013).

Brand South Africa recently launched a campaign celebrating 20 years of democracy. The advert celebrated achievements such as industrial development, the building of houses, rural voters and a growing economy. The advert showed everyday South Africans depicting their lives, celebrating the journey over the past 20 years with pride. Local music was used, giving the advert a vibrant rhythm and beat. The advert is full of uplifting images of the country's successes (SAinfo reporter, 2014a). Brand South Africa initially depicted an image of South Africa to aspire to, now with this new campaign, Brand South Africa is showcasing the country's achievements and capabilities, and the country's ability to exceed its potential (SAinfo reporter, 2014a).

2.7 South African Commercial Brands Branding Efforts

South Africa has many well-known, established international brands. These brands help promote South Africa and increase visibility and awareness for South Africa as a whole. Millions of rands are spent annually to promote these brands to gain international identification, which indirectly places South Africa on the world market. These top brands have helped establish themselves on the global stage and have highlighted South Africa to a worldwide market (Gilbert, 2015). MTN and Vodacom (telecommunications) have saturated the communications market and have a huge footprint on the South African market (Gilbert, 2015). The top ten brands in South Africa 2015 are: MTN (telecommunications), Vodacom (telecommunications), Sasol (oil and gas), Standard Bank (banks), FNB (banks), Woolworths (retail), Nedbank (banks), Absa (banks), Investec (diversified financial services), and Mediclinic (healthcare services) (Gilbert, 2015). According to Brand South Africa CEO Kingsley Makhubela, these established corporate brands contribute to the strength and the positive reputation of the South African nation brand (Gilbert, 2015).

Makhubela further mentions that growing and strengthening a nation's brand is multi-layered and that there are a variety of factors that help position a nation positively (Gilbert, 2015). The factors, according to Makhubela, can assist the nation brand through hard times posed by political and economic environments, with one of the main factors being national corporate entities (Gilbert, 2015). These top brand companies indirectly promote South Africa as a nation and country, to South African citizens and beyond its borders (Gilbert, 2015).

There is no scale or value that commercial brands contribute towards branding South Africa to the consumer either socially or economically (Preston, 2012). There is a good variety of well managed brands in South Africa that have achieved great success not just locally but internationally, which help to generate wealth and South African recognition (Preston, 2012).

South Africa's 2012 top ten brands reflected a strong South African identity through their marketing and advertising campaigns (Brand South Africa, 2012).

Strong business practices lead to strong brands and this makes the country's brands invaluable. The success of multi-national companies, such as Woolworths, Standard Bank, MTN, Sasol and Investec, shows the diversity, talent and intellectual property siding brand South Africa in promoting pride, patriotism and social cohesion in the country (Brand South Africa, 2012).

Successful commercial brands that depict a close link to the communities it serves have injuring values and leave the audiences with a sense of positivity and pride in nation building (MTN, 2012). Below follows a discussion on South African commercial brand advertisements, which used South African idiosyncrasies to sell a product or services.

Castle Lager (Alcoholic Beverage)

Advert: Superfan analysis.

This advert looks at four Superfans going on a journey to watch Bafana Bafana (South Africa's soccer team) when their car breaks down in the middle of the Karoo. What transpires is an adventure that sees these four Superfans trying to make their way to the game and ending with them entering the stadium by skydiving onto the

pitch in front of all the fans and players, with the whole stadium erupting into cheers (Media Update, 2015). This advert made use of South Africans' love of sport and showed that South Africans support their national teams. Alastair Hewitt, the general manager at Castle Lager, stated that the campaign demonstrated the lengths South Africans will go to, to support their national teams on the field (Media Update, 2015). Neo Mashigo, the co-executive creative director at Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg, said that the advert depicted national pride and friendship, and that the reactions from South African audiences were great (Media Update, 2015). The advert tells a story of how South Africans are all Superfans when it comes to national teams and that at sporting events they unite to support the team on the field, with the tagline, 'Here's to a nation of Superfans. It all comes together with a Castle' (Media Update, 2015). YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdjdfZsDLOk>

The following adverts have been chosen for the focus groups discussions.

All three of these adverts use South African idiosyncrasies to promote a product or service and depict daily life in South Africa.

South African commercial brand advertisements discussed in the focus groups:

Santam (Insurance)

Advert: 'One-of-a-Kind'.

The advert depicts daily life in South Africa – things that South Africans perhaps no longer notice, such as car guards, traffic signs and braais, along with more serious matters like load shedding and high walls for security. A group of foreigners talk about their experiences while visiting South Africa and the things they found different from their own countries, things that amazed and amused them, which South African citizens perhaps no longer notice. It shows the uniqueness of South Africa, the way South Africans live, the challenges they face and the ability they have to smile at themselves (Santam, 2015).

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViorVDgiiOg>

Standard Bank (Banking)

Advert: 'They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.'

The advert shows the rich resources that Africa as a continent has to offer, for example, diamonds, oil as well as Africa's potential in technology and manufacturing.

The advert shows Africa as a dynamic continent, full of possibilities.

(Standard Bank Group, 2013).

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhWogEAb4D4>

Absa Bank (Banking)

Advert: 'Team of Millions'

The advert depicts 'a day in the life of' South Africa, starting with the sunrise and the Springbok team waking up, until the Springboks finally stand on the field, proudly singing the national anthem, all the while following the lives of ordinary South Africans getting ready for match day. This advert shows that no matter the individual, each South African has his/her own distinctive match day rituals, but it's their passion that unites them and inspires the Springboks. (Absa, 2012).

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v-E5_5CDCw

2.8 Do South African Commercials Aid Nation Branding Efforts and Successfully Instil National Pride?

South Africa as a brand certainly benefits when South African brands are successful and profitable, as not only do they increase foreign investment and create employment, but they also increase global identification and recognition (Gilbert, 2015). Credit is not only given to the South African company but to South Africa as a nation/place to do business in or to visit (Brand South Africa, 2014).

A perception of South Africa being a crime hotspot is not the image the country wants to portray (Staff Writer, 2015). This is where South African brands contribute greatly to South Africa's credibility as a nation, allowing people to ascribe to the brand with positivity and credibility (Gilbert, 2015). The Santam 'One-of-a-Kind' advert highlights what makes South Africa unique while focusing on more serious issues and making them light-hearted. Although South Africans face daily struggles,

such as crime and load shedding, they still have the ability to smile at themselves, make light of situations and carry on (Santam, 2015).

This is relevant in the case study's focus groups, as South African citizens will be used to explore their perceptions on whether South African adverts aid nation branding efforts and successfully instil national pride.

Leslie Sedibe, CEO of Proudly South African, encourages all South Africans 'to be a marketing agency for the country'. He believes that South Africans need to reinforce a positive attitude towards South Africa and to take pride in the country (Bathembu, 2013).

2.9 Brand Equity

Brand equity describes brands that have a value, that are readily recognisable and that tend to be of good quality and dependable (Investopedia, 2015). Good marketing campaigns can help create brand equity through brand awareness (Investopedia, 2015). Looking at Keller's customer-based brand equity model looks at a pyramid formation that highlights certain strengths as to how customers perceive the brand. There are four steps to gauge the brand effectiveness, these are brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses and brand relationships (Keller, 2001).

Advertising is used to achieve an increase in sales and people's opinions on the brand. To see the effectiveness of an advert, one is able to measure people's subjective opinions and perceptions of the brand by evaluating people's impressions of the brand through brand equity, which is done through brand equity surveys filled out by people before and after watching an advertisement (Survey Monkey, 2015). Using a brand equity survey allows researchers to see people's perceptions after having viewed the advert – was it memorable, realistic, humorous? Brand equity measures the impact of the brand, by looking at brand awareness, brand relevance, differentiation and knowledge (Survey Monkey, 2015).

Marketing the brand is paramount in building the brand (Lake, 2015). Having an effective advert can help build the popularity of the brand if the advert is appealing to

its target audience and influences them to purchase a product or service (Bahram, Abdollahi & Khorsandnejad, 2011). You need to acknowledge and measure the effectiveness of the advert to achieve your objective or increase in sales, this is why adverts are useful in building brand equity. If people like the advert, they are more likely to have a positive reaction towards the brand (Bahram *et al*, 2011).

2.10 Benchmark Tools

To investigate the perceptions of South African commercial brand adverts, the research paper used the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon model and the Domestic Perception Audit (Brand South Africa, 2013).

The Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon model is made up of categories that make up nation branding. These categories include tourism, governance, culture and heritage, people, exports, and investment and immigration (Brand South Africa, 2012; 2013). This research paper focused on the categories of immigration and investment, people (South African citizens) as well as culture and heritage. Immigration and investment looks at the country's appeal as a place to live, work, invest or study in and reveals how people perceive a country's economic and social position. The people category was selected in the focus group as it looks at ordinary South Africans, their friendliness, emotions and their perceptions on South Africa as the public determines nation branding. According to Anholt (2006), 'Nations don't brand themselves, it's public opinion that brands nations.' The culture and heritage category measures the country's excellence in sport and a country's cultural heritage and historical sites (Anholt, 2009). Looking at the National Brand Reputation that summarises South Africa's brand performance, South Africa ranks 34th globally in tourism and 16th in sporting excellence, however, it is lesser known for its historic culture (Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013). Therefore, the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon model and the Domestic Perception Audit are ideal benchmark tools for this research paper.

The Domestic Perception Audit was also used as a benchmark tool. Annually an audit is conducted to measure how happy people are in South Africa, for example, to

see whether they are proud to be South African, whether the country embodies the spirit of Ubuntu, whether it is a good place to live and work in, and whether it is a good tourist destination (Brand South Africa, 2013). The Domestic Perception Audit was used to adapt the focus group questions to gain South African citizens' perceptions (refer to Appendix B).

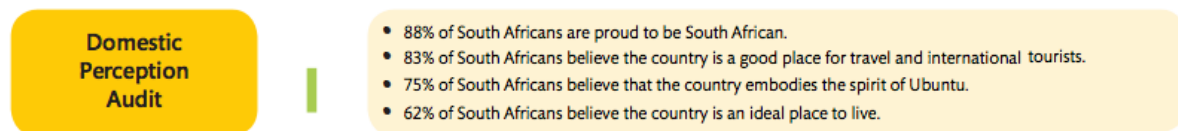
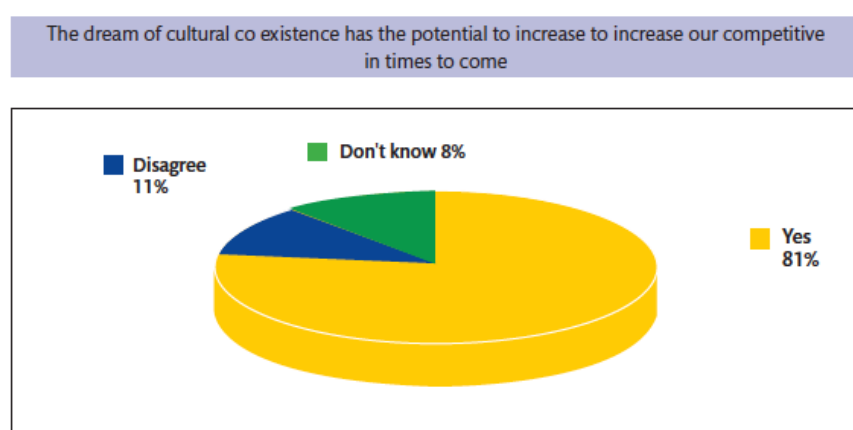


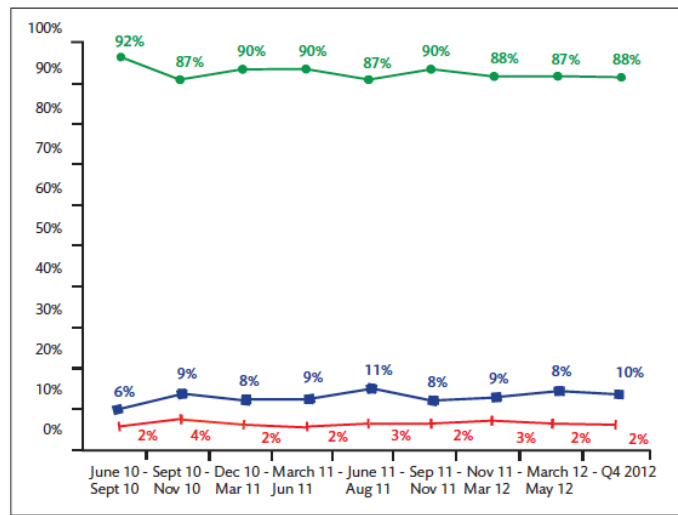
Figure 4: The Domestic Perception Audit
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013)

In Brand South Africa's Annual Report 2013, statistics showed that 81% of South Africans agree that they need to work and stand together despite cultural differences and that they need to share in the unity of Ubuntu (refer to Figure 5; Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013). The annual report looked at what the South African population thought about the country as a place to live, 68% of South Africans or two-thirds of the population, thought that South Africa was an ideal country to live in (refer to Figure 6). Further findings show that the majority of South Africans are proud to be South African – these findings were positive across all race groups (refer to Figure 7; Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013).



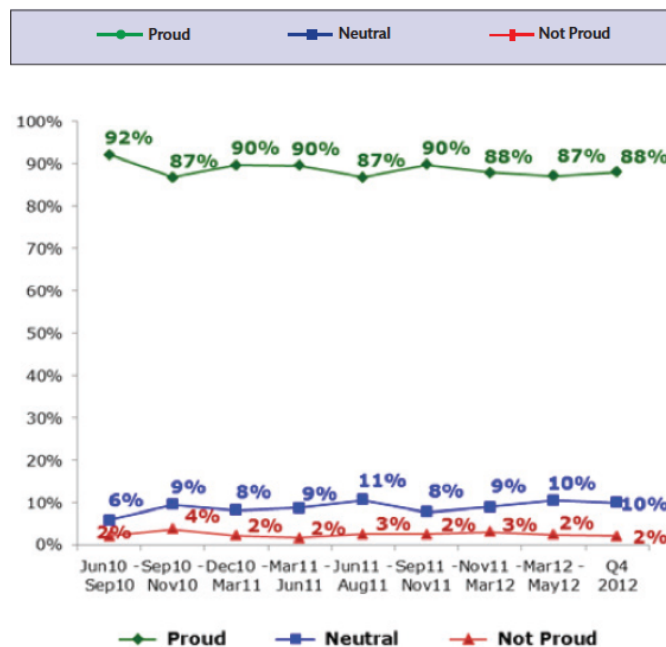
Source: National Perceptions ordered 2012/13

Figure 5: Cultural Coexistence.
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, p.33, 2013).



Source: GCIS Domestic Tracker

Figure 6: South Africa is an ideal country to live in.
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, p34, 2013).

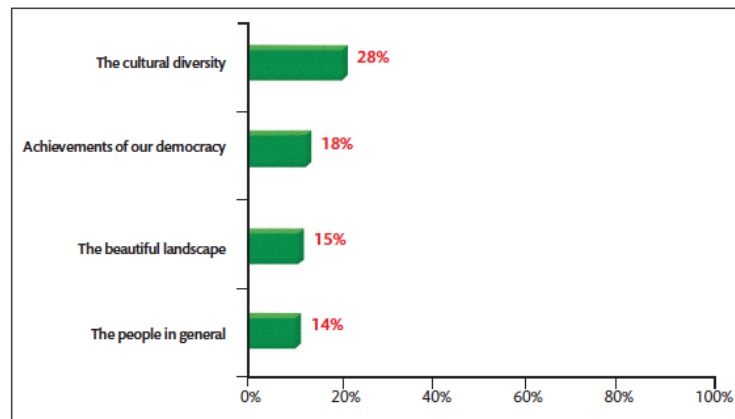


Source: GCIS Domestic Tracker

Figure 7: Pride levels.
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, p.34, 2013).

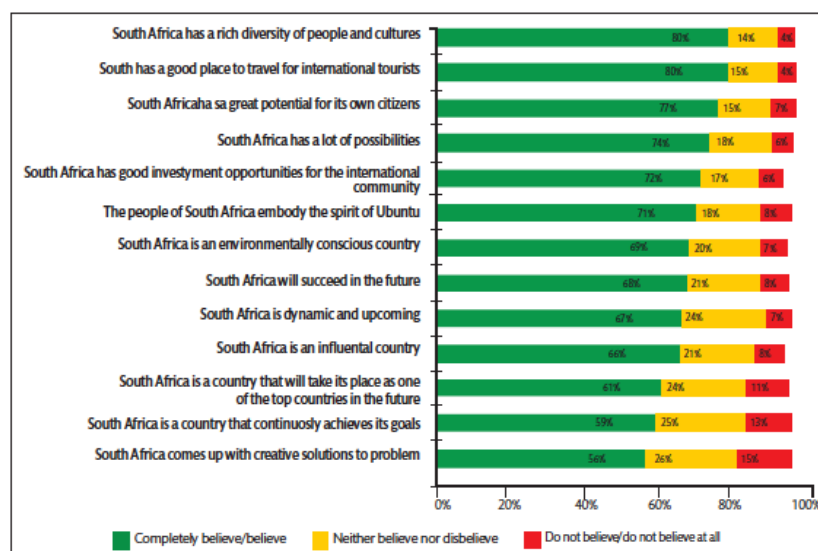
The annual report listed the main reasons to be proudly South African and what enhanced national pride as being cultural diversity (28%), the democracy (18%), the scenery (15%) and the people of the country (14%); refer to Figure 8; (Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013). Brand South Africa's top three factors that contributed to a positive brand to the country were cultural diversity, travel destination for

tourists, and South African citizens (refer to Figure 9; Brand South Africa, Annual Report, 2013).



Source: GCIS Domestic Tracker

Figure 8: Reasons to be proudly South African.
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, p.34–35, 2013).



Source: GCIS Domestic Tracker

Figure 9: Attributes associated with South Africa.
(Source: Brand South Africa, Annual Report, p.35, 2013).

2.11 Conclusion

In the literature review, relevant literature related to the topic has been discussed to create a better understanding of the nature of the research topic. The literature review highlighted the aspects of nation branding and understanding how national pride is defined, how South Africa brands itself and whether commercial brands build their brands uniquely using idiosyncrasies by promoting pride, patriotism and social cohesion. It also showed that local citizens play an important role in being the driving force of nation branding.

Anholt-GfK Nation Brand Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit were the models used as benchmark tools to explore people's perceptions. It was established that local citizens are seen as an important part of a nation when building national pride, they are seen as local stakeholders and play a vital role in nation branding, national identity and national pride.

When conducting research on nation branding, there was limited literature available on commercial brands promoting national pride through advertising. There was also inadequate and limited literature available where commercial brands are used as tools to aid nation branding.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the qualitative research methods, the collection of data and the analysis and information gathered from the focus groups. Overall the research relied on qualitative research, with a case study design that made use of focus groups for primary data collection. According to Wyse (2011) qualitative research relies on people's emotions, experiences, views and thoughts rather than proving theories. The aim of the primary research was to establish people's reactions and opinions regarding the effectiveness of selected South African television adverts in terms of creating a sense of pride and building nation branding regarding the country.

3.2 Research Approach

The research followed a qualitative approach, which develops an initial understanding of an issue or a problem relating to the questions posed. Qualitative is 'any type of research that produces findings not arrived by statistical procedures or other means of qualification' (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p.11). Qualitative research is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Wyse, 2011). Therefore, the qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because the study aims to generate a better understanding of how the South African citizens perceive South African commercial brand adverts.

This study was structured within an interpretivist paradigm, which is a way of conducting a study that integrates individuals' perceptions, opinions and interests on a particular topic (Bryman *et al*, 2014). Therefore, interpretivist paradigm was chosen to conduct this study as the study gathered people's attitudes, opinions and perceptions on South African commercial brands advertising efforts.

3.3 Research Design

A 'collective case study design' was used which allowed for numerous case studies to be conducted for the comparison and contrast of the findings from each individual case (Bryman *et al*, 2014, p.113).

Compiling a case study research allows for a comprehensive study of one individual or several criteria in its existing framework. This research of collective design highlighted what is unique and what is common between various cases and revealed the findings of each theory (Bryman *et al*, 2014, p.113).

The purpose of using a collective case study was to gather South African citizens' perspectives on three South African commercial brands to determine whether these brands that use South African idiosyncrasies to sell commercial products and services inadvertently impact South African citizens.

3.4 Sampling

The sampling method used was purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling that is also known as judgemental, subjective or selective sampling, and is used to identify participants (Laerd Dissertation, 2012). The sampling consisted of South African individuals aged 22–49.

Snowball sampling relies on a small group of individuals appropriate to the research case study and then uses these individuals to contact others to partake in the study (Bryman *et al*, 2014). A purposive, snowball sampling technique was used to obtain the participants' for this study. Focus groups were made up of individuals that were referred to via family and friends.

In finding participants for the focus groups, participants' willingness to participate and availability was crucial. The focus groups consisted of volunteers and each participant signed an informed consent form where their identities remained confidential (refer to Appendix A). The participants were assured that discussions in

the focus groups would remain confidential and that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The focus groups highlighted different demographics of the population. Two groups had selected participants aged 22–26, who were young, qualified individuals with the option of emigrate or to stay in South Africa. These research groups were relevant because it comprised of young, professional people who are in a position to leave South Africa should they choose due to them having fewer responsibilities than the older focus group making it easier for them to leave. Their opinions matter, as they are influential in casting a positive or negative light on South Africa due to their professional standing in the communities.

The third focus group's participants were aged 29–49 and had valuable input into the case study, as they represented the working class. Their views, opinions and feelings towards these commercial adverts helped provide insight into the case study as the individuals have lived and worked in South Africa for a longer period, from the participants in the other two focus groups. These individuals are important as they fall in the age range when people consider immigrating to other countries, the so-called 'brain drain', where skilled professional people leave South Africa for better work and lifestyle opportunities (SAinfo reporter, 2014b).

The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an organisation that collects statistics on South African emigration, reported that in 2012, 588 388 South Africans had emigrated or were living overseas – a considerably large number, of which 18% were managers and professionals, and 12% were graduates (SAinfo reporter, 2014b).

3.5 Data Collection

Initially, a literature review was conducted to establish the current ways that South African commercial brands advertise their products and services. This case study was aided by qualitative research that uncovered underlying motivations and factors that influence decision-making and opinions. Focus group questions posed looked at

a range of perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards South African commercial brands. These questions allowed for the gathering of in-depth information on South African citizens' perceptions on national pride and whether South African commercial brand advertisements, selling products or services are effectively promoting South Africa. This research approach is effective in obtaining culturally specific information on the values, opinions, behaviours and social context (Bryman *et al*, 2014).

The Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon model and the Domestic Perception Audit were used as benchmark tools to filter the questions asked in the focus groups. The focus groups were run in a closed environment where individuals viewed three adverts and discussed various questions posed to them. The data for each focus group was collected via handwritten notes and focus group discussions were recorded. All handwritten notes have been filed and the recorded data has been backed up and kept safe.

The case study relied on the concepts and perceptions of South Africans citizens to investigate if these commercials played on their emotions and sense of patriotism.

This collective case study made use of the following television advertisements:

Santam	'One-of-a-Kind' (refer to page 26)
Standard Bank	'They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.' (refer to page 26)
Absa Bank	'Team of Millions' (refer to page 27)

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis allows the collection of data to form an explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations that have been investigated. Through qualitative data and thematic analysis, themes will start to appear which will formulate through coding (Lewins, 2005). Using an inductive data analysis approach, relevant data is collected in relation to the research topic. Once data has been collected and analysed, themes and patterns will start to formulate. Through this inductive approach, one is able to identify a series of observations thereby making sense of the captured data (Blackstone, 2012).

Coding allows you to organise your data by labelling, grouping, comparing and gathering data on similar or related topics/themes, allowing for easier analysis (UC Davis: University of California, [s.a.]). Having various categories and concepts forms the basis of the analysis. If there is a common idea that people mention in the focus groups, this will form a theme or a common topic or thread that runs throughout each discussion (Biddix, 2009). Being able to find a theme in the coding allows for easy access to certain information. It also allows for quick identification to associated themes, and comparisons can be made to different cases (Lewins, 2005). Through the use of axial coding, one is able to use concepts and categories, which allows for an accurate representation of the focus groups' responses to the questions, and an understanding of how they relate to each other. By examining the questions, the causes and influences that affect these outcomes may be evaluated (Biddix, 2009). For the purpose of this research paper, the Anfholt-GfK Nation Brand Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit were used, the following categories were evaluated to guide and formulate focus group questions: immigration and investment, people (i.e. South African citizens), as well as culture and heritage (Anholt, 2013).

By labelling and interpreting the data, a clear picture of different concepts was developed. One of the benefits of using the open coding concept is to be able to group and categorise all the research information. The strength of this information lies in that the data collected came straight from the participants through three focus group discussions. Although open coding can be tiresome, collecting data is a significant and imperative tool for qualitative data analysis (Khandkar, 2015).

3.7 Reliability and Validity

The research study was designed to ensure that the greatest reliability and validity possible was attained.

The four elements of trustworthiness, according to Lincoln and Guba (2008), include:

Credibility – trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, two of these techniques include peer debriefing and member checking.

Dependability – this shows findings are consistent.

Transferability – showing findings have applicability in other contexts.

Confirmability – techniques for establishing confirmability, includes reflexivity.

Validity is a measurement that allows a set of indicators to be analysed to gauge the concept that it is being measured. There are various ways to establish validity, face validity, concurrent, predictive, constructive and convergent validity.

For this research paper, the use of face validity was used as a measuring tool as this allowed for the content of the concept in question to be measured. The use of small focus groups allowed for the observation of whether or not the measure captured the concept that was the focus of this case study (Bryman *et al*, 2014). To ensure the credibility of this research paper, focus groups were conducted according to the principles of good practice. Dependability involves the trustworthiness of the research permitting accessibility to interviews, data analysis and assessment of material allowing for peers to audit all research obtained during this case study (Bryman *et al*, 2014).

For the purpose of this research paper, the focus was on trustworthiness, looking at peer debriefing, member checking and reflexivity.

Peer briefing is opening up to a peer who has no gain or favour in the outcome of the research paper who looks at aspects of the research that could otherwise remain unconsidered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research focus group questions were evaluated by an external individual to the study to ensure that the questions were not biased or misleading.

Member checking involves checking data, interpretations and conclusions with members of the focus group for whom the data was originally obtained. Member checking acts as a technique to establish the validity of the research, which is crucial for establishing credibility. This technique allows for the assessment and understanding of each individual response; it allows for interactive responses

between individuals to challenge and discuss answers as well as putting on record how individuals responded and what was discussed; and it also offers the opportunity for the summarisation of preliminary findings, allowing individuals who took part in the research to view the data. All focus groups were recorded allowing for the participants to check their answers or to amend them if they so wish. During the focus groups, participants were asked if there was any further information they wished to contribute.

Reflexivity is the hands-on approach, which was invested in systematically constructing the research process. This hands-on approach allows for the decision of which methods would most adequately suit the investigation, which data is considered most appropriate, the framing and the conclusion (Malterud, 2001,).

3.8 Ethics

Voluntary participants in the three focus groups were provided with consent forms which they had to read and sign to partake in the study. All participants were reassured that their identities would remain confidential. Moral values were honoured if participants did not want to answer all of the questions posed (see Appendix A). Permission to record the discussions was obtained from each of the focus group's participants. Participants were informed that they were free to request a copy of this research paper and to change or withdraw any of the comments that they had made during the focus group discussions.

3.9 Limitations

Focus groups were limited to one hour due to participants' time constraints, this included watching all three advertisements and then having an open discussion. The small sample groups meant that the researcher could not measure the actual impact that these findings may have on South Africa as a national brand. Therefore the findings cannot be generalized for the South African population.

3.10 Conclusion

This research methodology, which consists of research approach, research design, data collection, sampling, ethics, data analysis, limitations and delimitation of study helped gather data and laid out the steps needed to capture the relevant information to allow for the analysis and decoding. This research paper gained information by gathering qualitative data through a collective case study and made use of non-probability sampling. Three focus groups were used consisting of individual South Africans aged 22-49. Using open coding, rich data could be collected and analysed, this data could then be structured into various themes and categories. For the purpose of this research paper, the focus was on trustworthiness, looking at peer debriefing, member checking and reflexivity.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the qualitative data collected from the individuals who participated in the three focus groups. This data relates to the theoretical framework discussed in chapter one and will be explored using a thematic analysis. The aim of the study was to establish a greater understanding of how, if at all, South African commercial brands, through their marketing and advertising efforts, contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand to South African citizens.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Contextualise South African citizens as internal stakeholders.
- Conduct focus groups to gather people's perceptions and opinions of three advertisements that use South Africa to sell product or services.
- Use the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit as benchmark tools to frame the focus group questions.
- Explore the value of using South Africa as a selling tool to promote national pride and consequently and positively affect nation branding.

The research case study design followed a qualitative approach, which allowed for personal communication with individuals involved in the focus groups. A purposive, snowball sampling technique was used to obtain the participants' perceptions on South African commercial advertisements. The theoretical framework used in this research paper was nation branding using the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit as benchmark tools to explore perceptions.

4.2 Focus Groups

Qualitative data was collected from three focus groups. The sample consisted of South African individuals, aged 22–49, of mixed gender and diverse ethnicity. Two focus groups included participants' aged 22–26, while the third focus group's participants were aged 29–49. Focus group participants watched three South African commercial brand advertisements and gave feedback on what they viewed and felt.

The focus groups explored the participants' perceptions of the adverts, their thoughts, emotions and overall sense of pride. They were asked to give an overall opinion of all three adverts with regard to whether these adverts help build nation branding and national pride.

The focus groups started with participants watching three South African commercial brand adverts. After the advertisements had been played, participants were asked questions pertaining to the adverts on nation branding and national pride, which allowed for open discussions among participants, discussing both negative and positive aspects of the adverts. There was good interaction between participants who openly offered their perceptions and opinions.

The data was collected and analysed through thematic analysis from which certain themes arose. These will be discussed below.

4.3 Themes and Findings

All three focus groups contained 11 identical questions. The focus group discussions were conducted in a manner that allowed open discussion. Topics such as job creation, currency devaluations and government policies, which were not covered, were also freely discussed. The reaction to the three South African commercial brand adverts was mostly positive, with the majority of the participants finding them entertaining and memorable.

The dominant themes that arose were:

- 4.3.1 Uniquely South African
- 4.3.2 South Africa: reality vs. fiction
- 4.3.3 Changing perceptions of South African citizens
- 4.3.4 Feel-good factor
- 4.3.5 Sport unifies the nation

4.3.1 Uniquely South African

A common link between all three focus group discussions was the uniqueness of South Africa – the culture, music, lifestyle and scenery. When showing the participants the adverts, one participant explained that all three adverts had a common theme. The participant noted:

‘Very pro South African, uniquely South African as it depicts things that happen on a daily basis and showcases the Bokke and the resources of Africa.’

The music was the aspect that all participants enjoyed in Absa’s ‘Team of Millions’ advertisement. The music is Afrocentric and resonated with the participants, who felt that the music brought the country together, unifying them as one team. The majority of the participants felt national pride when viewing the advert. It made them feel good and proud to be South African. Focus group participants commented:

‘It was the happiest and I liked the music, it showed the most variety of people.’

‘The music, that African beat that resonates and just seeing everyone doing something that’s similar – either putting on the jersey or holding a flag, doing the national anthem – that’s awesome.’

In the Santam ‘One-of-a-Kind’ advert, all of the participants liked the fact that the advert depicted what makes South Africa unique and different (scenery, wildlife) even though some of the aspects shown were negative (load shedding, crime). Participants in two focus groups aged 22–26, explained that even if they had to emigrate overseas and they saw the Santam ‘One-of-a-Kind’ advert, they would feel a sense of pride as they would have an affiliation with the advert and all the aspects it depicted, which creates a sense of unity and brings everyone together. According to the Department of Education (2008), national pride can create a strong sense of national identity, bringing out what makes South Africa unique. One of the participants who liked the Santam ‘One-of-a-Kind’ advert as it showed what makes South Africa unique, commented:

‘[It] shows that Africa is different to the world as well, [it] pointed out things that are different in this country, that makes us different.’

Anholt advises that the potential for countries to use their culture and heritage to attract foreign visitors can also result in selling national pride and identity to its citizens, thereby using citizens as brand ambassadors (Ikalafeng, 2006).

Some advantages to having a unique brand image are the reward that is obtained through investment and tourism (SAinfo report, 2014). All three commercial adverts showcase South Africa as a multi-divergent, enriching and empowering nation (Soni, 2011). The advertisements shown to the focus groups highlighted the uniqueness of South Africa by showing the diverse culture, natural resources, people, and social and economic development.

This shows that when commercial brands advertise what makes South Africa unique, it inadvertently builds national pride.

4.3.2 South Africa: Reality vs. Fiction

When participants in the focus groups were asked whether the advertisements accurately depict South Africa, the majority of the participants agreed, but once they started to discuss the adverts they stated that some of the adverts showed a false depiction of South Africa. All three focus groups said that the Absa 'Team of Millions' advert represented South Africa accurately. According to Fan (2006), as each nation differs from the other, people draw various conceptions of what the country represents. The images of a country could be good or bad, antiquated ideas, misconceptions or unclear (Fan, 2006).

The Santam 'One-of-a-Kind' advert depicts everyday life in South Africa, the everyday hardships (crime, load shedding) and the environment (car guards, beautiful scenery). Although most participants agreed that this was how South Africans lived, it was thought that Santam took negative factors and turned them into humorous comments by foreigners who had visited South Africa. The overarching response was that sadly, South Africans live with these conditions daily, it has become part of daily life, as one participant commented:

‘You kind of see it as funny, but then you also see the point of its highlighting the negative and even though you are trying to make light of it, there’s actually a serious underlying factor as to why we have those things: high fences, security guards.’

A majority of the participants felt that the Santam ‘One-of-a-Kind’ advert was relevant and familiar to their own life, having personally experienced the reality of living and working in South Africa. The initial reactions to this advert were, that the advert was humorous, but the more the focus groups discussed the advert, the more the conversation turned to reality versus fiction. Although the participants enjoyed the local content of the advertisement, there was a sad reality that this is how South Africans live on a daily basis. One participant pointed out:

‘...[T]he Santam advert was positive, but I would say that its saying negative stuff in a nice way.’

The Santam ‘One-of-a-Kind’ advert was seen as an accurate portrayal of South African daily living, participants agreed that there is a fine line when trying to highlight negatives and turn them into positives or into humorous situations. Santam agrees that the ‘One-of-a-Kind’ advert highlights what makes South Africa unique while focusing on more serious issues and making them light-hearted (Santam, 2015).

In his 1998 paper, ‘Nation Brands of the Twenty-First Century’, Anholt expresses that the way a country is perceived is based on the government, its citizens, its economy and that this image is built over a period of time. This observation links in with Standard Bank’s ‘They Call it Africa. We Call it Home’ advert, which highlights Africa’s potential and possibilities as a whole and proved popular with the older focus group aged 29–49. Participants felt that it was a positive and accurate depiction of South Africa and Africa as a whole. It was based on reality, facts and figures that show what makes this continent great.

‘Standard Bank’s advert was positive as it shows how young the country is and what potential it has. It’s not just about a birth of a baby every minute, but about the future and the resources that we have and what we give to the rest of the world. So I think that to me, was a very positive message.’

An interesting finding was that the two focus groups aged 22–26, disliked the Standard Bank ‘They Call it Africa. We Call it Home’ advert and were very negative about it. Citing that the advert was unrealistic as there are few job opportunities and negative growth in South Africa economically and limited future prospect. This confirms data from HSRC that these negative aspects include economic inequalities, poor education standards, unemployment and crime and corruption (HSRC,2013). An example of this is provided by one of the younger focus group participants:

‘...[T]he Standard Bank one makes it look like it’s a whole lot better than it actually is.’

This links back to a survey conducted by Ipsos, which found that the younger generation demonstrated lower levels of pride than older generations (Ipsos, 2012).

It should be noticed that when individuals have first-hand experience of an event, such as load shedding or rugby games, they have a much deeper affiliation and opinion on the subject. This shows the vital role that South Africans play in the image of the country, as nations do not brand themselves, but public opinion that brand nations (Ikalafeng, 2006).

4.3.3 Changing perceptions of South African citizens

As South Africans are seen as internal stakeholders, it is important that they are custodians of brand South Africa. During the focus group discussions, it was highlighted that it is hard to change South African citizens’ perceptions on national pride. This is because these individuals live and work in South Africa and are aware of the everyday hardships that face many South Africans. Changing perceptions on national pride has more to do with the individual, which was reflected in the focus groups, with individuals mentioning their own personal experiences and this had an underlying bearing on their feeling towards national pride. Individuals said that they would appreciate the advertisements for a few minutes, but that they would not have a long-term effect on them as, according to the participants, things in South Africa are not going to change in the future.

‘[The] Standard Bank advert could motivate. South Africa has a lot to offer, it has tons of resources and tons of everything, it’s just not being managed correctly.
[The] Absa advert would be reminding, [a] reminder of how we can and what it feels like to be united.’

‘I think it has an effect on me for like ten minutes and then I’m over it again.’

All three advertisements resonated with certain focus group participants in relation to their personal experiences. The Standard Bank ‘They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.’ advert, which the younger focus groups (22–26) felt disillusioned due to job prospects, the economy and where South Africa was heading on a global stage, while the older focus group (29–49) seemed more sympathetic about the hardships South Africans go through but still thought that South Africa was a good place to live and work in. One of the participants in the older focus group aged (29–49) said that:

‘We do try make light heart of it, make it a bit more fun to say, okay, well you know what? And we always do, South Africans are so resilient.’

In a survey relating to the national pride levels in countries, South Africa ranked fourth in the world for national pride (SAinfo Reporter, 2007). This shows that South African citizens are proudly South African, which reinstates that you need to have an effective advert to increase brand equity – if people like your advert, they are more likely to have a positive reaction to your brand (Bahram, *et al*, 2011). In the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon looks at ordinary South Africans, their emotions and perceptions of South Africa as the public determines nation branding. Anholt says, ‘Nations don’t brand themselves, it’s public opinion that brands a nation’ (Ikalafeng, 2006). This theme highlights the importance of connecting with a country’s citizens to instil national pride.

4.3.4 Feel-good factor

The older focus group (29–49) stated that they felt positive and uplifted when watching the Standard Bank ‘They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.’ advertisement. They felt that it showed that there was a bright future, positivity, a feel-good factor that resonated through the advertisement, which made them proud to be South

African when the advert mentioned all that Africa offers the world, such as natural resources (diamonds and oil), manufacturing and technology.

This concept came through with the younger focus groups (22–26) through the Absa 'Team of Millions' advert, with most of them agreeing that the advert made them feel good about being South African. All three focus groups believe that sport brings the country together, creating a sense of unity when all South Africans support the national teams. The Santam 'One-of-a-Kind' advert made some of the focus group participants feel good about being South African. Instead of focusing on the negatives that the advert highlighted, some focus group members preferred to look at the positive, being able to laugh at themselves, to see the humour in the negatives, and to be able to see the uniqueness that makes South Africa and that gives you that feel-good factor to say you are proudly South African.

The music in the Absa advert gave certain participants a feel-good factor. The majority of the participants enjoyed the local soundtrack with its African beat. Seeing people from all races wearing the green and gold jersey and carrying the flag gave participants a feel-good factor too. One participant expressed:

'I don't think you can change your perception but it definitely, makes you feel a bit nicer about your country.'

The feel-good factor also promotes Ubuntu, which is the humanity of people we encounter in our daily lives, showing dignity, understanding and respect. Showing Ubuntu to each other allows for that feel-good factor. It was Ubuntu that saw the country through reconciliation, the first democratic elections, the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 Fifa World Cup (Bell, 2010).

The focus groups mentioned that these advertisements have a feel-good aspect, but that it is only a temporary effect and that it would not change their feelings of pride towards South Africa.

4.3.5 Sport unifies the nation

A dominant and recurring theme among the vast majority of the focus group participants was that sport unites the country. Sport brings people together, helps to identify them as a country, and is an integral part of being South African, all of which was witnessed in the 1995 Rugby World Cup and, more recently, in the 2010 Fifa World Cup. President Zuma stated that national pride was at an all-time high during the Fifa World Cup in 2010, with all South Africans coming together in unity (Bell, 2010). Sport has the ability to unite the multicultural Rainbow Nation. According to the focus groups, the Absa advertisement was the one they thought to be most realistic and the one that they could identify with the most. Anholt (2011) states that the emphasis on sport, promoting nation branding such as the logo of the Springbok evokes national pride, which helps a country create a positive brand identity and brand image (Anholt, 2011).

‘Absa bringing everyone together definitely as a sporting event building national pride and brings us together as a nation.’

The Absa advert certainly instilled the idea of ‘one team, one nation’ united by the flag. This advert made the majority of the participants proud to be South African. A point that arose from the focus groups was that sport (in Absa’s case, rugby) accurately depicts everyone coming together and for a few moments forgetting the country’s negatives.

‘Proud of South Africa, you’re proud to be South African, proud to wear your Bokke jersey. You’re green and gold, stand up and sing the anthem.’

‘Seeing everyone together and it’s in that moment, it’s not about race, culture, ethnicity, sex, nothing like that. It’s all about the country and united underneath the flag. When we sing the national anthem, it gets louder as you go along with it. The stadium as a whole joins in together as a unit, unity of an event like that is heart-warming.’

‘But overall if you want people to unify, it’s over sports, it’s reminding people of how you did feel connected when there was an event or if we were playing a game everyone no matter if you were on the street or in a corporate building all feeling this

energy, which is important to remind people of, which those type of brands tend to do as you forget it. Look at the whole hype around the soccer world cup.’

The Absa advert was well received by all participants, who felt that it was heart-warming and made them proud to be South African. In a survey conducted by the HSRC, sport is always mentioned as a source of national pride, with participants saying that sport made them proud of their country (HSRC, 2013).

Focus group participants felt a close connection to the Absa advert. It made them proud to be South African as they felt that it accurately depicted how sport unites a country and helps build national pride. Sport thus plays a fundamental role in building national pride in South Africa.

4.4 Conclusion

The focus group discussions were conducted from 17 July to 14 September 2015. Discussions in the focus groups differed as advertisements were interpreted differently. The focus groups were interactive and allowed for free flow of responses and opinions. The feedback was predominantly positive towards all three advertisements shown.

Overall, the focus groups allowed for unique insight into the perceptions and opinions of ordinary South African citizens on their feelings towards South Africa.

Participants in the focus groups were informed that they were free to request a copy of this research paper and to change or withdraw any of the comments that they had made during the focus group discussions. From the research findings, conclusions were reached regarding the use of South Africa in the adverts for commercial brands that inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand for the South African citizens.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Although advertisements have generally been used to sell products or services, there have been limited studies that look at commercial brand advertisements selling or promoting national pride. Anholt suggests that, 'It is important that other aspects of the country are showcased, such as: corporate companies, tourism, people, sport and culture, this will help to increase recognition and perception of South Africa' (Ikalafeng, 2006). It is also important to make corporate brands, South African ambassadors, as they contribute to the strength and positive reputation of the South African nation brand (Gilbert, 2015).

This research aimed to establish a greater understanding of how, if at all, South African commercial brands, through their marketing and advertising efforts, contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand for South African citizens. Four objectives were set to meet the aim of the research study, all of which were discussed in earlier chapters. The objectives were:

- To contextualise South African citizens as internal stakeholders.
- To conduct focus groups to gather people's perceptions and opinions of three advertisements that use South Africa to sell product or services.
- To use the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon and the Domestic Perception Audit as benchmark tools to frame the focus group questions.
- To explore the value of using South Africa as a selling tool to promote national pride and consequently and positively affect nation branding.

The following South African commercial brand advertisements were analysed in the focus groups: Santam's 'One-of-a-Kind', Absa's 'Team of Millions', and Standard Bank's 'They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.' These were analysed to see South African's perceptions of the advertisements and whether the advertisements were able to build nation branding and inadvertently instil national pride.

The primary research conducted for this paper was completed in the form of a qualitative, collective case study design in order to compare and contrast the findings from each individual case (Bryman *et al*, 2014). A purposive, snowball sampling technique was used to obtain the participants for the focus groups, which were made up of individuals who were referred via family and friends. The focus groups highlighted different demographics of the population with two groups consisting of selected participants aged 22 to 26 years old and the third focus group's participants was aged 29 to 49 years old. The focus group discussions were conducted between 17 July and 14 September 2015. Each focus group had six individuals in each group for the data collection in this study.

Data collected from these focus groups were analysed using voice recordings and handwritten notes from each session, using an inductive data analysis approach. Thematic analysis was used to identify certain main themes from the data. By labelling and interpreting the data the researcher developed a clear picture of different concepts.

5.2 Research Findings

Chapter four discusses the research findings from the three focus groups, where qualitative data was collected, interpreted and analysed using a thematic analysis. Several main themes were identified and are discussed as follows:

5.2.1 Uniquely South African

The feeling of being “uniquely South African” was a common theme among all three focus groups. All the participants agreed that South Africa is unique in culture, lifestyle, music and scenery. Local music resonated with participants as they felt that it brought people together as one, it made them proud to be South African, and they experienced a feel-good sensation after watching the three advertisements. All of the focus groups' participants agreed that South Africa is multi-divergent and rich in culture. This ‘feel good’ feeling could be a factor that influences the building of national pride.

The majority of the participants felt that the Absa 'Team of Millions' advertisement brought about a feeling/sense of national pride. The advert made them feel positive and proud to be South African.

5.2.2 South Africa: reality vs. fiction

The theme of reality vs. fiction arose with the two younger focus groups differing considerably from the older focus group. The data showed that age had a bearing on what participants considered 'reality' and what was considered 'fiction' in the representation of South Africa in these advertisements. What was seen as humorous initially turned to negativity during discussions.

The majority of the participants felt that the Santam 'One of a Kind' advertisement was relevant and familiar to their own life, having personally experienced the reality of living and working in South Africa. Although participants enjoyed the local content of the Santam 'One of a Kind' advertisement, there was a sad reality that it reflects the way in which South Africans live, these were load shedding, crime and the economy.

This linked in with the Standard Bank 'They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.' advert which highlights Africa's potentials and possibilities. The advert was popular with the older focus group participants, who felt that it was a positive and accurate definition of South Africa and Africa as a whole. It was based on reality, facts and figures that show what makes the continent great. However, the younger focus group members felt that the advert was fiction. They cited the lack of job opportunities as a major problem and flaw in this advert, the negative growth economically, inequalities, crime and corruption and limited future prospects. The 22–26 age groups felt that this advertisement was false and represented an unrealistic view of South Africa and Africa.

All three focus groups said that the Absa 'Team of Millions' advert represented South Africa accurately. It was viewed as the most realistic advertisement as in their opinion sport unifies a country and makes people patriotic. It was noticed in the focus groups that when individuals have first-hand experience of an event, such as load

shedding or rugby games, they have a deeper affiliation with an opinion on the subject. It goes to show the vital role that South Africans play in the image of the country, as 'Nations don't brand themselves, it's public opinion that brands nations' (Ikalafeng, 2006).

5.2.3 Changing perceptions of South African citizens

It was noted through the focus groups that it is hard to change people's perceptions on national pride, particularly when they live and work in South Africa and have to deal with daily problems such as load shedding, corruption and limited job prospects. The data indicated that South African's need to buy-in to creating national pride, as they are internal stakeholders and custodians of brand South Africa. Changing perceptions has more to do with the individuals himself or herself, which was evident in all three focus groups. When the participants of the focus groups reflected on their own experiences, it had a direct effect on their feelings towards national pride. Once again, there was a marked difference in how different age groups perceived South Africa.

5.2.4 Feel-good factor

The theme of a "feel good factor" came through with the younger members of the focus groups (22 to 26 years) with reference to the Absa 'Team of Millions' advertisement. The majority of participants in this group agreed that this advert made them 'feel good' to be South African. The advert created a sense of unity and of coming together as one team. The 29 to 49-year-old focus group felt uplifted and positive towards the Standard Bank advertisement 'They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.', saying that it made them feel positive and that there was a bright future ahead for South Africa. The Santam 'One-of-a-Kind' advertisement made some focus group participants 'feel good' about being South African, they liked the light-hearted, humorous side of the advert when looking at negative points, which make South Africa unique. South Africans experienced this feel-good factor or Ubuntu when South Africa won the 1995 Rugby World Cup and again when South Africa hosted the 2010 Fifa World Cup (Bell, 2010).

5.2.5 Sport unifies the nation

The most dominant theme was that sport unites the nation. Participants were of the opinion that it brings everyone together regardless of race, gender or age. South Africans are united and come together as one when sport is being played. Anholt (2011) states that with the emphasis on sport, the logo of the Springbok evokes national pride, which helps a country create a positive brand identity and brand image.

Sport has the ability to unite the Rainbow Nation as one team, one nation under one flag. In a survey conducted by HSRC, data confirms that sport is always mentioned as a source of national pride, saying that sport made individuals proud of their country (HSRC, 2013). Sport thus plays a fundamental role in building national pride in South Africa.

5.3 Research Findings Conclusion

After conducting the three focus groups, it was clear that using South Africa in commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contributed to strengthening South Africa as a national brand to South African citizens. The three adverts made the majority of the participants feel a sense of national pride towards South Africa. The participants mentioned that these adverts depicted the daily life in South Africa, creating a strong personal connection with the participants as they can relate to the adverts. The Absa 'Team of Millions' advert facilitated a sense of pride and a shared sense of unity that surrounds South African sporting events. Sport was the most dominant theme that came out of all three focus groups. The participants stated that it is in these moments (the sporting events) that the nation comes together for one shared goal, irrespective of race, religion or gender, and that no matter all the hardships that South Africans go through, they will always unite to support their national teams in sporting events. Therefore, the Absa advert allowed the participants to feel a sense of pride they could relate to, as South Africans all have their own unique match day preparations. It should be noted, however, that although the advertisements were enjoyed by the participants with majority of the focus groups stating that there was a general sense of national pride in all three advertisements, some individual focus group participants advised that these

advertisements had a temporary effect on national pride as the message and feeling associated with the adverts were short lived and after the adverts had finished they had a short-term impact on the participants.

When looking at the Standard Bank 'They Call it Africa. We Call it Home.' advert, the younger focus group participants did not feel uplifted or inspired and felt that it showed a false sense of hope, while the older focus group felt it was a realistic view of South Africa and Africa and that it was positive, inspiring and looked to the future. All the adverts highlighted some aspect of what makes South Africa unique, be it positive (culture, music, scenery, lifestyle) or negative (load shedding, crime).

Based on the findings obtained from the three focus groups, it can be proposed that the use of South Africa in commercial brands' advertising efforts does inadvertently contributes to strengthening South Africa as a national brand to South Africans citizens, albeit temporary in some cases. This may indicate that these advertisements could potentially be harnessed and used as a tool to help promote nation branding in South Africa.

5.4 Recommendations

Although the three focus groups comprised of a small diverse group of individuals, it should be noted that this case study had a small-scale reach. The case study did not generalise findings to the broader population. From the findings gathered, that is, that the use of South Africa in commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contributes to strengthening South Africa as a national brand for its citizens, further investigation within the South African context must be merited.

According to Brand South Africa CEO Makhubela, these established corporate brands contribute to the strength and positive reputation of the South African nation brand (Gilbert, 2015). Therefore, it is important for South African commercial brands and South African individuals to be treated as internal stakeholders as it is this group of individuals who live the brand. The potential for countries to use their culture and heritage to attract foreign visitors can also result in selling national pride and identity

to its citizens, therefore using citizens as brand ambassadors (Ikalafeng, 2006). In the article 'Why Brand a Nation?', Onlins states, 'Understanding that your country is your people. You need the support of the people as nation brand champions, and key input by the media' (Ikalafeng, 2006).

These advertisements create positive perceptions, which are vital in portraying a country's image in a positive light. South African commercial brands' advertisements warrant more attention as a tool to build nation branding in South Africa. It is proposed that South African nation branding companies, such as Brand South Africa and Proudly South Africa that promote the image of brand South Africa, consider implementing these unique themes found in the research findings and incorporating these into their advertising campaign tactics. By considering a more open, realistic approach and making use of the uniqueness of South Africa, its sport, culture, idiosyncrasies and music, to help build nation branding and spread the message of Ubuntu.

The recommendation would be to expand this research to a larger sample group and a possible future case study could be conducted to compare South African nation branding advertising effects versus South African commercial brand adverts that use South African idiosyncrasies to sell a product or service, to determine which one is more effective in selling South Africa.

5.5 Conclusion

This research paper made use of a small selection of the South African population and therefore cannot be generalised for the whole population of South Africa. The few selected participants for the focus groups were diverse in age, demographics, gender and race, which allowed for a wide range of opinions, thoughts and perceptions on South African commercial brand advertisements. It is believed that these advertisements have a positive effect on South Africans. The advertisements instilled a sense of national pride, of everyone coming together as a nation and creating a sense of Ubuntu.

For a country to build national pride, all stakeholders need to play an important role in contributing to the country's image. Therefore, it is vital that South African commercial brands and South African citizens become brand ambassadors. It is imperative that all South Africans (brands, corporates and citizens) buy-in to building South Africa's national brand. This research study has highlighted the effectiveness of South African commercial brands that use South African idiosyncrasies to sell their products and services, by doing this they have inadvertently contributed to strengthening South Africa as a national brand.

ACTIVATION

Introduction

The aim of this activation was to discover South African citizens' perceptions and opinions about South Africa and whether they had a strong sense of national pride. This relates to the research paper that highlighted local citizens as important brand ambassadors to help build a nation. The research paper looked at South African citizens' opinions and perceptions to determine how effective commercial brand advertisements were in achieving national pride and nation branding. The research question asked: Does the use of South Africa as an element in commercial brands' advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa as a national brand to South African citizens?

Core Insight

The core insight gained from conducting and analysing the research data showed that in nation branding citizens' play an important role. They need to be seen as internal-stakeholders and custodians of the national brand. The research paper's theoretical framework consisted of Nation Branding and The Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon Model and the Domestic Perception Audit as a benchmark tool (Brand South Africa, 2013). These models explore national pride and domestic buy in. The research paper focused on the Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon Model in the following categories 'Immigration and Investment' and 'People' – South African citizens as well as 'Culture'. The 'People' category looks at ordinary South Africans, their friendliness, emotions and their perceptions about South Africa. 'Culture' measures the history, sports and cultural heritage. Immigration and investments look at the country's appeal as a place to live, work, invest or study and reveals how people perceive a country's economic and social position (Ikalafeng, 2006). The Domestic Perception Audit is conducted annually to measure how happy people are in South Africa e.g. are you proud to be South African, does the country embody the spirit of Ubuntu, is it a good place to live etc. (Brand South Africa, 2013). These models highlighted the importance of a nation's citizens in nation branding. The country's citizens can be treated as internal stakeholders as it is this group of

individuals that 'live the brand'. Their contribution and participation in the process of brand implementation is vital. Therefore the citizens are custodians of a countries brand (Ruzzier, M, Petek, N, Konecnik, n.d.).

There is therefore, potential for countries to use their culture and heritage to attract foreign visitors can also result in national pride and identity to its citizens there by using citizens as brand ambassadors. In the article *Why Brand a Nation?* Onlins states, "Understanding that your country is your people, you need the support of the citizens as nation brand champions" (Ikalafeng, 2006). According to Onlins, South Africa is battling with its core identity. To make a global impression it would need to know and understand how it's being perceived. This insight into my research lead to my core insight which shows the importance and value that citizens have on nation branding.

Message and Audience

The message being conveyed is to show the importance that local citizens play in building national pride and nation branding. The message offered insight into how South African citizens perceive the country. This allows the nation to understand its core identity, as it will know and understand how it's being perceived. Onlins states, that citizens are brand ambassadors and internal stakeholders in nation branding (Ikalafeng, 2006). This message relied on South African citizens to give their opinions on the country and allowed them the opportunity to state their perceptions on their country. To engage with the target audience which were internal stakeholder (local citizens) by allowing them to actively participate in giving their perceptions about living and working in South Africa. The audience were from 22 - 49 years of age, mixed sexes, races and backgrounds. This audience was considered due to their eligibility of living and immigrating elsewhere as they professional people that are in a position to leave South Africa should they choose.

Concept

The concept that was explored was what makes South Africa 'one of kind'? This will allow participants that are South African citizens to explore their perceptions, opinions and feelings about South Africa. This makes my activation interactive as the participant actively engaged with the activation and shared their personal views about South Africa. Which creates a sounding board of thoughts, feeling, attitudes, opinions and views.

The concept translates into a clear, simple message to ordinary South African citizens to highlight their thoughts both good and bad about the place they call home.

Execution

A large chalkboard was used to activate and execute the concept. At the top of the board was the heading in the form of the question, "What makes South Africa 'one of a kind'?" The medium chosen although simple allowed people to interact and write down what they thought what personally makes South Africa 'one of a kind'. This allowed participants that were South African citizens to engage and interact with the chalkboard. This chalkboard was at each focus group and people's reactions and comments were documented. The chalkboard activation was simple and unassuming and allowed for direct comments from the audience. This media platform motivated the audience into participating, as it was interactive and creative.



Figure 10: Participants thoughts and opinions of South Africa.
(Source: Rodrigues, S. 2015, Nikon D50)



Figure 11: Participants writing on the chalkboard.
(Source: Rodrigues, S. 2015, Nikon D50)

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Consent Form

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Shannon Rodrigues for a research paper for an honours degree at Vega School of Branding, Pretoria.

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Selling South Africa

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: Does the use of South Africa in commercial brands advertising efforts inadvertently contribute to strengthening South Africa's national brand for South African citizens?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH: To explore and explain public perceptions of South African commercial brands that use South Africa to sell their products and services. To make recommendations in terms of perception and opinions towards marketing efforts.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in the research is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study and you can withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not you want to participate in this study will have no negative consequences or influence on your present or future. Your identity and any information provided will be kept remain confidential.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we ask you to answer 11 questions pertaining to three adverts that use South Africa to sell a product or service.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

None.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You may not directly benefit from the study. The focus group is to assist with research, which may help the student with the research paper.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive payment or gifts for participating.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [name of the participant]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Start focus group with an explanation of the purpose of the group and the research. Explain how I will run the session. Show three adverts. Questions follow.

Focus Group Questions:

1. What do you think of these advertisements?
2. Do you feel that the advertisements depict South Africa accurately?
3. Do you feel positive or negative towards South Africa after watching these advertisements?
4. Do these advertisements change your perception of South Africa, or of being South African?
5. Do you feel like these advertisements promote a sense of pride in South Africa?
(Do the advertisements at all affect whether you are proud to be a South African, or not?)
6. Do these advertisements make you feel happy to live and work in South Africa?
7. Do you think these advertisements have a positive effect on building unity or ubuntu in South Africa?
8. Which was your favourite advert, and why?
9. What effect, in your opinion, could these adverts have on people's perceptions/national pride of South Africa?
10. What makes you as an individual proud to be South African?
11. Do you think these advertisements are doing more to promote South Africa than Proudly South Africa or South African Tourism do? And are they doing a good job?

Thank you for participating, I really appreciate it. If any of you would like to view the findings or view the research paper, please contact me as you are more than welcome to.

