

An investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate.

Final Research Report

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

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Mom, you are my role model. Thank you so much for all the support you have given me in writing this research paper. I really and truly could have never done it without you.

ABSTRACT

Sorbet's is a brand that is grounded in their 'higher purpose' of *serving and improving the lives of their staff and their customers* as opposed to making a profit (Fhur, 2016). However, over the past 2016-2017 period, various Hello Peter posts have stated that Sorbet has "rude and unfriendly staff," "bad client service," and has "under-delivered" (Hello Peter, 2017). A brand culture disconnect can be seen, causing a possible rift between Sorbet's brand identity and brand image (Nead, 2014). With the aforementioned real world problem in mind, this study's research problem aims to investigate if Sorbet's corporate culture, *The Sorbet Way*, has become enhanced or diluted by Sorbet's brand growth, and to what extent Sorbet's current corporate climate has had on Sorbet's brand image. The rationale behind the research problem is based on how great brands do not just 'exist' or 'happen', great brands are the product of its people, as a brand's employees are the ones that are able to bring the brand to life (Nead, 2014). The framework, which was used for this research paper, is the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment model proposed by Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schulz (2008). The methodology used for the study followed a constructivist research paradigm and was based on a qualitative case study research design that had a cross sectional time horizon. Key findings of the study showed that to a large extent, Sorbet is aligned to the VCI model. However, prominent factors, such as the reasoning as to why Sorbet was sold to Long4Life, may have caused gaps within the model.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION	6
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 Sorbet Background and Contextualisation	6
1.3 Rationale	7
1.4 Problem Statement	8
1.5 Research Purpose	8
1.6 Research Questions	9
1.6.1 Sub-Questions	9
1.7 Research Objectives	9
1.7.1 Sub-Objectives	9
1.8 Conceptualisation	9
1.8.1 Brand Strategy	9
1.8.2 Brand Identity	9
1.8.3 Brand Purpose	10
1.8.4 Corporate Culture	10
1.8.5 Corporate Climate	10
1.8.6 Brand Image	10
1.9 Conclusion	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Theoretical Framework	11
2.3 The Sorbet Way	12
2.4 Sorbet's Five Driving Principles	13
2.4.1 Passionate Service	13
2.4.2 Selfless Community	14
2.4.3 Servant Leadership	15
2.4.4 Unwavering Integrity	15
2.4.5 Individual Growth	15
2.5 Corporate Culture and Corporate Climate	16
2.6 Culture at Different stages of Growth within an Organisation	17
2.7 Culture and Franchisees	19
2.8 Brand Image and Sorbet's Total Guest Experience (TGE) Model	20
2.8.1 Systems- The Functional Keys	21
2.8.2 Service- The Human Keys	21
2.8.3 Setting- The Sensory Keys	21
2.9 Conclusion	21

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
3.1 Introduction	22
3.1 Research Design.....	22
3.1.1 Constructivism Research Paradigm.....	22
3.1.2 Cybernetics Communication Tradition	23
3.1.3 Inductive Approach	23
3.1.4 Exploratory Study.....	24
3.1.5 Case Study Research Strategy.....	24
3.1.6 Qualitative Orientation	25
3.1.7 Cross-Sectional Time Horizon	25
3.2 Population and Sample	26
3.2.1 Population	26
3.2.2 Sample.....	27
3.3 Data Collection Method	29
3.4 Data Analysis Method.....	31
3.5 Trustworthiness	33
3.5.1 Credibility	33
3.5.2 Transferability	34
3.5.3 Dependability	34
3.5.4 Confirmability	35
Conclusion	35
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION	36
4.1 Brand Identity.....	36
4.1.1 Theme 1: Brand Purpose.....	36
4.1.2 Theme 2: Brand Vision	37
4.1.3 Theme 3: Verbal Language	38
4.1.4 Interpretation.....	38
4.2 Corporate Climate.....	38
4.2.1 Theme 1: Passionate Service	39
4.2.2 Theme 2: Selfless Community	42
4.2.3 Theme 3: Servant Leadership.....	43
4.2.4 Theme 4: The Integrity Charter.....	45
4.2.5 Theme 5: Individual Growth	46
4.3 Customer's Brand Image	47
4.3.1 Theme 1: Customer Service	47
4.3.2 Interpretation.....	49
4.4 Brand Strategies to Manage Brand Growth	49
4.4.1 Theme 1:Franchisee Selection	50

4.4.2	Theme 2: Induction Training	51
4.4.3	Theme 3: Communication	52
4.4.4	Interpretation	52
4.5	Conclusion	52
CHAPTER 5:	CONCLUSION	53
5.1	Introduction	53
5.2	Research Questions	53
5.2.1	Sub-Question 1	53
5.2.2	Sub-Question 2	54
5.2.3	Sub-Question 3	55
5.2.4	Overall Research Question	55
5.3	Problem Statement	56
5.4	Recommendations	56
5.5	Ethical Considerations	57
5.5.1	Informed Consent	57
5.5.2	Trust and Confidentiality	58
5.5.3	Ethical Clearance	58
5.6	Limitations and Delimitations	59
5.6.1	Limitations	59
5.6.2	Delimitations	60
5.7	Conclusion	60
REFERENCE LIST		62
APPENDIX		70
Appendix A:	Final Interview Agendas	70
Appendix B:	Interview Agendas Prior to Pretest and Pilot Test	79
Appendix C:	Consent Form Example	82
Appendix D:	Permission Letters	83
Appendix E:	Ethical Clearance	89
Appendix E:	SAFE ASSIGN	90

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

The following chapter introduces the research topic of “an investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet’s purposeful corporate climate”. This will be done through giving the reader an understanding of Sorbet’s background, the context of the study and the rationale of why the study was conducted. This will demonstrate the research problem’s significance in the broader scope of brand building. In addition, the following section details the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions and objectives as well as highlights key concepts that are relevant to the study. The subsequent chapters that will follow include, chapter two which details the literature review, chapter three which details the research methodology, chapter four which details the findings and interpretations and lastly chapter five which details the study’s concluding thoughts.

1.2 Sorbet Background and Contextualisation

Sorbet has grown to become an iconic brand in the South African beauty industry, or rather, as how Sorbet puts it, in the ‘feel good’ industry (Fhur, 2014). The Sorbet brand, which was established by Ian Fhur in 2005, forms part of the larger Sorbet Group. The Sorbet Group currently is South Africa’s biggest beauty chain with over 200 stores nationwide and 4 stores based in the United Kingdom (Sorbet, 2017; Fhur, 2014). The Sorbet Group’s brand architecture consists of Sorbet Beauty Salons, Sorbet Nail Bars, Sorbet Dry Bars, Sorbet Man, Candi & Co, Sorbet Beauty products, Sorbet Empowering Women Academy (SEW), Amazi Beauty, The Sorbet Beauty Therapy Institute and lastly Sorbet UK (Sorbet 2017).

In order to contextualize this study, the reader needs to first understand that a brand is a social construct (Klopper & North, 2011) and is defined according to the American Marketing Association (AMA) as “a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers” (AMA, 2017). Additionally, the reader needs to understand that brand building strategies are not static, rather, brand-building strategies involve a constant, dynamic and conscious development of a unique and particular meaning that is able to hold value and connect with people (Bethien, 2015; Klopper & North, 2011). Building a strong brand and with it a strong brand equity has become a major priority for many organisations (Keller, n.d.).

Authentic and strong brands grow from within, making the topic of corporate culture and corporate climate important elements in brand building strategies as employees are one of the most important assets for a brand (Klopper & North, 2011; Nead, 2014). It is important to understand that great brands do not just ‘exist’ or ‘happen’, great brands are rather the product of its people -

as its people are the ones that are able to bring the brand to life (Nead, 2014). Peter Drucker coined the phrase “culture eats strategy for breakfast” (Rick, 2014). Referring to the direct correlation between a brand's bottom line and its corporate culture, and any disconnection between the two puts a brand's success at risk (Rick, 2014). According to Catherine Slade (2016), author of *Creating a Brand Identity*, employees have a direct influence as to how the brand is perceived. The more the employees have a sense of identity with their brand, the more they are able to spread the brand's vision and values and the stronger the brand equity becomes (Slade, 2016).

Relating the above discussion to the context of the Sorbet brand, founder Ian Fhur (2014) has attributed Sorbet's many successes and growth to Sorbet's brand purpose, community focused employees and meaningful people-centered corporate culture called *The Sorbet Way*. *The Sorbet Way* has become a fundamental building block in creating Sorbet's distinctive brand identity and ensuring that employees are able to live the Sorbet brand (Fhur, 2014). Fhur explained in a recent interview that although the brand's products and treatments are easy for their competitors to replicate, what is not easy to replicate is the Sorbet brand culture (Whitehead, 2017). Fhur further explained at the *Business of Design* seminar that Sorbet's corporate culture is the brand's competitive advantage (Tennant, 2016). Nonetheless, over the past 2016-2017 period, despite for having such a strong and meaningful people-centered corporate culture, various Hello Peter posts have stated that Sorbet has “rude and unfriendly staff,” “bad client service,” and has “under - delivered” (Hello Peter, 2017). A brand culture disconnect can be seen, causing a possible rift between Sorbet's brand identity and brand image (Nead, 2014). This gives rise to a view proposed by cultural theorist Ed Schein. Schein (2009) is of the opinion that the very culture that supports many start-up brands to grow become lost as the brand's size, technology and market conditions change.

1.3 Rationale

The rationale behind the choice of this research topic was based on the researcher's ambition to offer fresh perspectives on traditional brand management issues surrounding the notion of purposeful cultures and climates. The Sorbet brand has been chosen as it is a brand grounded in a ‘higher purpose’ of *serving and improving the lives of their staff and their customers* as opposed to making a profit (Fhur, 2016). Additionally, Sorbet has been chosen as one can simulate Sorbet's forward-thinking brand building philosophy with many iconic brands. An example is seen with Google's purpose, which is based on *immediately satisfying any curiosity*, Apple's purpose is based on *empowering creative exploration and self-expression* and lastly Dove's purpose is based on *celebrating every woman's unique beauty* (Dhatchani et al, 2013).

The research paper is of a major importance to the Sorbet brand, as it will help understand if a key step in Sorbet's culture brand building process has possibly been missed while the brand has

grown. This is of major importance to Sorbet, as the brand is expected to grow globally within the beauty space and in 2017, the brand was bought by *Long4Life*, a leisure investment company (Shevel, 2017).

Additionally, such topic has relevance for brand managers globally as there has been a global shift in business and brand strategies from being solely profit based towards being purpose based (Dhatchani et al, 2013). A simple Google search on the topic of “purposeful corporate culture” gives an understanding of the multitude of the different literature available detailing the importance of having a purposeful corporate culture and climate. However, despite such abundance of information, no literature seems to deal specifically with how a purposeful corporate culture survives and moves through the organisation as the brand grows and expands. This gives rise to a viewpoint of how important it is for brand managers to understand *how* to sustain purpose driven culture strategies within growing organisations.

Lastly, the research project is able to contribute to the development of the researcher’s professional development, as the researcher aspires to one day build her own purposeful brand. Therefore, having in-depth knowledge on how to manage a brand’s purpose and culture as the brand grows will be able to contribute to her chances of success in building a people-orientated purposeful brand that is able to add value to peoples lives.

1.4 Problem Statement

To investigate if Sorbet’s corporate culture, *The Sorbet Way*, has become enhanced or diluted by Sorbet’s brand growth, and to what extent Sorbet’s current corporate climate has had on Sorbet’s brand image.

1.5 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate if there is possibly a mismatch between Sorbet’s proposed corporate culture as detailed in *The Sorbet Way* and the corporate climate that is being projected, and the effect that this has on Sorbet’s brand image.

1.6 Research Questions

Has *The Sorbet Way* been sustained as the brand has grown and expanded into different regions and markets?

1.6.1 Sub-Questions

- To what extent are Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems in line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy?
- From an outside-in perspective, based on the viewpoint of Sorbet's clientele, what effect do Sorbet's employees have on Sorbet's brand image?
- Have the different strategies and initiatives that Sorbet's top management put in place been effective enough in order to sustain the *Sorbet Way* as the brand has grown?

1.7 Research Objectives

To determine if Sorbet's purposeful corporate culture, *The Sorbet Way*, has been sustained as the brand has grown by comparing the proposed culture projected by founder Ian Fhur in 2014 in his book *Get that Feeling* to the condition of the brand's corporate climate today.

1.7.1 Sub-Objectives

- To evaluate if Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems are in line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy.
- To gain an outside-in understanding from the perspective of Sorbet's clientele of the effect that Sorbet's employees have had on Sorbet's current brand image.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the different strategies and initiatives that Sorbet's top management has put in place to sustain the *Sorbet Way* as the brand has grown.

1.8 Conceptualisation

The following section identifies and defines key concepts that are relevant to this research study.

1.8.1 Brand Strategy

A brand strategy is able to plan a future image for the brand to aim for, therefore stipulating a plan of action and specific criteria against which to judge it (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2010).

1.8.2 Brand Identity

A brand identity is defined as a set of deep and rich brand associations that an organisation aspires to create and maintain (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009). A strong brand identity is able to represent what the organisation stands for and acts as a promise to the customers from the organisation (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009).

1.8.3 Brand Purpose

Brand purpose has been defined as a brand's "reason for being- the higher order benefit it brings to the world" (Dhatchani et al, 2013). A brand's purpose moves beyond profit and answers the question of *why* is the world better off with your brand in it? (Dhatchani et al, 2013).

1.8.4 Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is defined as " a system of shared meaning held by members, distinguishing the organisation from other organisations" whereby "this system of shared meaning is a set of key characteristics that the organisation values" (Robbins et al, 2013).

1.8.5 Corporate Climate

Corporate climate differs from corporate culture, as corporate climate refers to the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of organisational members (Furnham, 2012).

1.8.6 Brand Image

A brand image is referred to and defined as the perception of a brand in the consumer's mind (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

1.9 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter introduced the research topic of "an investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate". The next chapter details the literature review in order to investigate this study further.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review examines particular published information within a subject matter in order to develop an argument (Writing Center, 2017). The purpose of this literature review aims to understand how the study fits into a broader context of brand management. The following literature review highlights the theoretical framework used, being the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment model. In addition, the literature review looks at a compilation of specific subjects, which are aimed to help understand and investigate the research topic. Such subjects include, The Sorbet Way, Sorbet's Five Driving Principles, corporate culture and corporate climate, culture at different stages of growth within an organisation, culture and franchisees, and lastly, brand image and Sorbet's Total Guest Experience (TGE) model.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The framework, which was used for this research paper, is the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment model proposed by Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schulz (2008). The basic principles of the VCI Alignment model are that the greater the alignment and coherence of an organisation's vision, culture and image, the stronger the corporate brand is (Hatch & Schults, 2008). The VCI Alignment model explains how vision, culture and image should be looked at as an integrated whole as opposed to separate facets. These pieces, when aligned are able to build the brand's overall reputation though ensuring that organisational behavior supports the delivery of the brand promise to all stakeholders (Hatch & Schults, 2008). However, misalignment and gaps between the vision, culture and image indicates an underperforming brand, where these gaps have a serious effect on a brand's identity (Hatch & Schults, 2008).



Figure 2.1: Referring to the VCI Alignment model (Hatch & Schults, 2008).

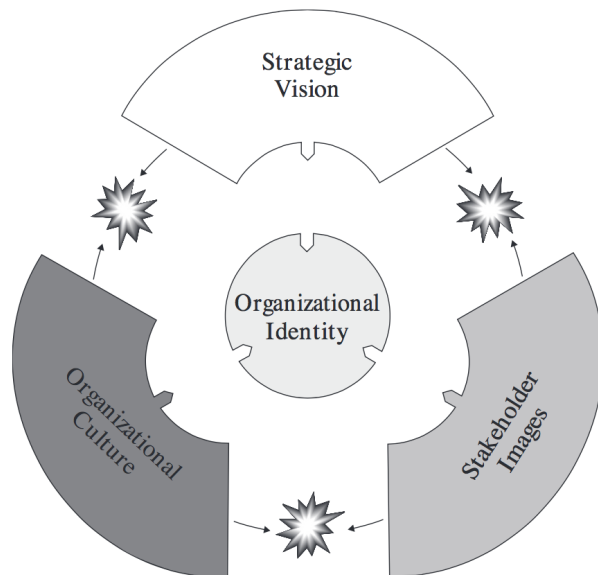


Figure 2.2: Referring to the misalignment between vision, culture and images, which cause gaps in an organisation's identity (Hatch & Schults, 2008).

2.3 The Sorbet Way

A brand identity refers to a set of deep and rich brand associations that an organisation aspires to create and maintain (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009). A brand identity is developed by the leadership of the brand in order to ensure that all strategic partners and employees are able to express the brand in daily decision-making and functions (Klopper & North, 2011). According to Carla Enslin's brand identity model, the properties of a brand identity include, a brand vision, purpose and positioning, personality, values, visual language and verbal language (Klopper & North, 2011).

Sorbet has a strong and meaningful *raison for being* or how HB Klopper and Ernest North (2011) put it, *raison d'être*. Sorbet's *raison d'être* is reflected by their corporate culture called *The Sorbet Way*. *The Sorbet Way* was created by Ian Fhur and has been developed into the brand's overarching philosophy, whereby this philosophy aims to ensure that every staff member can relate to and use when dealing with each other and customers (Fhur, 2014). *The Sorbet Way* aims to be a people centered culture that encourages every employee, regardless of their status in the Sorbet community, to make a difference in people's lives (Fhur, 2014). According to Sorbet's brand manager, Jade Kirkel, Sorbet's corporate culture is the soul and essence of the Sorbet brand (Tennant, 2017). In order to ensure this, Ian Fhur personally conducts all Sorbet induction trainings, in both South Africa and abroad, in order to teach the Sorbet community about Sorbet's brand identity (Fhur, 2016).

The fundamental underpinning of *The Sorbet Way* is based on Sorbet's higher purpose (Fhur, 2014). Christian Dhatchani, Al Makey and Nicole Velleman's (2013) article titled *Doing Business on Purpose* explains how brands that are able to connect with this universal human need for meaning through purpose, are able to transform how they operate and have an impact on the world (Dhatchani et al, 2013). Creating a strong, clear and credible purpose for an organisation is critical for an organisation's relevance and longevity (Business Strategy insider, 2016). Sorbet's higher purpose is based on *serving and improving the lives of their Guests (clientele) and Citizens (employees)*, as described by Fhur (2014). The Sorbet community's aim is to come together for this common purpose (Fhur, 2014). It is important to highlight that Sorbet's brand purpose isn't solely about their Guests as Sorbet's purpose also places a large emphasis on their Citizens. Sorbet believes that their Guests cannot be served well if Sorbet's Citizens' lives are not improved simultaneously (Fhur, 2014). It is important to understand that purpose driven brands ensure that employees are motivated to believe in the brand not because they have to, but rather because they want to (Enslin & De Beers, 2015). As the literature deals with brand growth, it is important to highlight Sorbet's vision as "the vision of a brand expresses its purpose for being in the form of an envisioned future" (Klopper & North, 2011). Although Sorbet doesn't have a specified vision, Ian Fhur in an interview explained how he has a "community vision" for Sorbet (Sorbet, 2017).

As mentioned, properties of a brand identity system include the brand's verbal language. A brand's verbal language details how the brand expresses itself in verbal terms (Klopper & North, 2011). *The Sorbet Way's* language shows how Sorbet is referred to as a *community* instead of a company, employees are referred to as *Citizens*, new employees are referred to as *Sorbabies*, cleaners are referred to as *Salon Assistants*, managers are referred to as *Leaders* and clientele are referred to as *Guests* (Fhur, 2014).

2.4 Sorbet's Five Driving Principles

Sorbet supports their brand purpose with Five Driving Principles. Sorbet's Five Driving Principles consist of passionate service, selfless community, servant leadership, unwavering integrity and individual growth.

2.4.1 Passionate Service

Sorbet's belief is that the purpose of work is to serve and not just to make money. Money is the reward for good service and not the purpose and sole driver of work (Fhur, 2014). This way of thinking is similar to *How Healthy is Your Brand*, written by Cook et al (2010) who explain that in order to be a healthy brand, profit is not a driver but rather a consequence of having a strong identity, being transparent and adding value to people's lives. Sorbet explains how their passionate service is built on giving more than you take, as if one takes more than they give, the results are

always negative (Fhur, 2014). Again this is similar to Cook et al's (2010) viewpoint in terms of a healthy brand builds sustainable relationships by never taking more than it gives.

Tactical strategies have been put in place in order to ensure that Sorbet's employees deliver passionate service. Such strategies include Sorbet's complaint policy and money back guarantee (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet's complaint policy, called *Win Back*, involves three steps, Apologize, Fix It and Sweeten It. First a Citizen apologizes, then the Citizen does whatever it takes to fix the situation and sweetens it by offering Guests a free treatment (Fhur, 2014). Barlow and Moller (1996) explain the importance of teaching employees to be effective 'complaint handlers'. Additionally, Sorbet's money back guarantee, which is openly displayed in every beauty salon pronounces, "If you are not totally satisfied with your treatment then you don't have to pay" (Fhur, 2014). With regards to products, Sorbet's return policy refunds guests no matter what the circumstances. Sorbet's money-back guarantee and return policy are the backbone of Sorbet's service policy (Fhur, 2014).

Sorbet's passionate service philosophy is aimed to achieve Guest loyalty not just Guest satisfaction. Guest loyalty means that the Guest becomes loyal to the Sorbet brand and not to an individual therapist (Fhur, 2014). Brand loyalty according to David Aaker & Erich Joachimsthaler (2009) is a key component in terms of building strong brand equity and is said to be at the heart of any brands value.

2.4.2 Selfless Community

There are two types of citizens in a community according to Fhur: *Solid Citizens* and "*I*" *Specialists*. *Solid Citizens* accept the beliefs and values of the community and are committed to the higher purpose. They are tolerant, trustworthy, respectful and sharing. However, "*I*" *Specialists* are focused on the self, where they always ask, *what is in it for me?* These "*I*" *Specialists* are committed to protection as opposed to sharing and are extremely selfish (Fhur, 2014). The Sorbet community never allows the individual to be more important than the community (Fhur, 2014).

The Ten Pillars of the Sorbet Community Value System, which enable a comfortable working environment include (Fhur, 2014):

1. Service: the guest experience which is the thread that holds everything together
2. Open and honest communication: saying what you feel and think
3. Support: helping each other through personal assistance and training
4. Caring: concern for fellow human beings and humaneness
5. Trust: how you become trustworthy through your interactions and actions
6. Respect: something you earn as it cannot be demanded
7. Tolerance: respect and value the differences between different individuals
8. Integrity: never steal, cheat or lie

9. Sharing: the essence of the community based reward system
10. Learning: the never ending quest for more skills and knowledge

2.4.3 Servant Leadership

The phrase servant leadership was coined by Robert K Greenleaf in the 1970's, whereby Greenleaf explained how "the servant leader is a servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" (Greenleaf, 2017). The concept of servant leadership has been implemented throughout the Sorbet brand, whereby Sorbet's leaders aim to serve their employees first in order to help their employees reach their potential (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet's leaders aim to provide support, fair treatment, friendship, training and development and effective mentorship to Sorbet citizens (Fhur, 2014). According to Larry Spears, the CEO of the *Spears Centre for Servant Leadership*, servant leadership offers a new era for the creation of better and more caring organisations (Greenleaf, 2017). Additionally, servant leadership is a holistic approach to leading which is able to promote a sense of community (Ferch et al, 2015).

2.4.4 Unwavering Integrity

The *Integrity Charter* aims to combat the lack of integrity in the beauty industry ranging from manipulating schedules, soliciting guests, stealing and lying to name a few (Fhur, 2014). The Integrity Charter outlines the key behaviors expected from Sorbet citizens.

The Sorbet Integrity Charter (Fhur, 2014):

1. Total dedication to the higher purpose
2. To always be positive about the community and to show pride in the Sorbet brand
3. To never lie, cheat or steal
4. To never complain to Guests about anything to do with our work, community or leadership
5. To be punctual and display professionalism at all times
6. To respect community property
7. To never do anything that will undermine a fellow Citizen or the community at large
8. To display zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind
9. To never manipulate the appointment book or abuse the shift system
10. To realize that individual citizens do not 'own Guests' as they are Sorbet's Guests first

2.4.5 Individual Growth

Sorbet believes that their higher purpose can only be achieved through having a total dedication to the individual growth and development of Sorbet Citizens. Sorbet explains how training and development is fundamental in order to maintain a consistent and high quality service. Sorbet creates the environment that encourages learning through providing opportunities for citizens to attend skill-based and educational programs (Fhur, 2014).

2.5 Corporate Culture and Corporate Climate

Sorbet's corporate culture seen from Ian Fhur's book, *Get that feeling* "checks all the right boxes" as it covers important topics of brand purpose, servant leadership and creating an environment for employees to grow. However, complaints on websites such as *Hello Peter* and the *Complaints Board* over the 2016-2017 periods indicate how Sorbet's corporate culture in practice is not completely aligning with Sorbet's corporate culture in theory (Hello Peter, 2017; Sewpaul, 2017). This gives rise to a need for further investigation. Therefore, a deeper understanding of corporate culture is needed. The reason for this is because research shows that corporate culture is not static, as detailed from the description above of *The Sorbet Way*, but rather it is a multifaceted and complex system (Schein, 2009).

Corporate culture is defined as "a system of shared meaning held by members, distinguishing the organisation from other organisations" whereby "this system of shared meaning is a set of key characteristics that the organisation values" (Robbins et al, 2013). The culture of an organisation is said to be ingrained into the behaviours of an organisation's members (Mc Laughlin, 2017). Corporate culture is recognized as one of the most influential concepts in organisational management, research and practice. The concept of corporate culture first arose during the 1970's and 1980's seen with the highly recognized work of Geert Hofstede, Howard Schwartz and Stanley Davis (Griffiths & Linnenluecke, 2010).

A brief overview of such important writings includes Hofstede explanation as to how corporate culture is able to determine the identity of an organisation in the same way in which a personality determines an identity of an individual (Hofstede, 1981). Howard Schwartz and Stanley Davis add to this concept through identifying how well run companies have distinctive corporate cultures that help create, implement and maintain their global leadership positions (Schwartz & Davis, 1981). Similarly, a more recent approach to culture, details how a strong corporate culture is able to animate a brand's image (Daley, 2016). One can see how the case for creating an effective corporate culture is still as strong in 2017 as it was during the 1970's and 1980's. The premise still remains that no matter the size of the brand, its corporate culture has a direct influence on the brands success (Entrepreneur, 2017; Fortune, 2016; Rick, 2014; Schein, 2009).

According to Ed Schein (2009), author of *Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, many organisations have a simplified understanding of what corporate culture is. Many believe that culture is just the way they do things, the reward system, or the rituals and basic values of the organisation. Schein (2009) suggests that culture ought to be thought of as existing on different levels within an organisation. These levels include artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions. *Artifacts* refer to the visible organisational structures and processes, ranging from the architecture, décor and the climate of how people behave (Schein, 2009). This would typically include Sorbet's

beauty treatment processes and how employees act towards each other and to customers. Sorbet's store design is also included in this level, which has a strong retail focus with bright colours creating a climate that is professional, upbeat and trendy. This level of culture is the easiest level to observe, however it is very difficult to understand *why* people do what they do, henceforth a second level is required to further understand an organisations culture (Schein, 2009).

The second level of culture is *espoused values*, which refer to the organisation's prescribed values that are aimed to create an image for the organisation. This would typically include, the strategies, goals and philosophies of the organisation (Schein, 2009). In Sorbet's case, this relates to the culture and values propagated by *The Sorbet Way*, which aims to create a community of service and willingness to improve peoples lives internally and externally (Fhur, 2014). An important aspect of the second level of culture is to understand if there are inconsistencies with the *espoused values* and visible behavior (Schein, 2014). Sorbet is seen to have experienced these inconsistencies, seen as *Hello Peter* posts over the 2016-2017 period detail how users have commented that they have had "disgusting service from staff and management" and one user explained how her "complaint was not even acknowledged" (Hello Peter, 2017). This is in complete contrast to Sorbet's *Win Back* strategy detailed by Fhur in *Get that feeling*. These inconsistencies give rise to how a possible deeper level is driving employees behaviors, giving rise to the third level of culture (Schein, 2009).

The third level being the *shared tactic assumptions* is the ultimate source of values and actions (Schein, 2009). These underlying assumptions refer to the unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, feelings, perceptions and thoughts within an organisation and are able to drive daily behavior as opposed to the first two levels (Schein, 2009). It is very difficult to determine Sorbet's third level of culture; therefore the researcher has rather focused on understanding Sorbet's corporate climate, as corporate climate is much easier to experience and therefore evaluate (Mc Laughlin, 2017; Schein, 2009). With that being said, corporate climate is defined as "how members of an organisation experience the culture of an organisation" (Mc Laughlin, 2017). It is important to understand that the culture of the organisation is referred to as the "personality of the organisation" while the climate of an organisation is referred to as "the mood of the organisation" (Mc Laughlin, 2017). There are many ways in order to measure corporate climate, such as "the dimensional method" which classifies the organisation against pre-established dimensions, which are thought to fully describe the organisational culture (Furnham, 2012).

2.6 Culture at Different stages of Growth within an Organisation

Larry Greiner (1998) identified how certain management practices and strategies that work well in one phase of an organisation, might not work as well in another phase. It is important to

understand that culture is also different in different stages of an organisational evolution (Schein, 2009). Therefore, in the same way in which business strategies are reviewed, so to should corporate culture strategies be reviewed, as corporate culture as mentioned, is not static but rather evolves and grows over time (Rick, 2014).

Organisational life cycle researchers, Danny Miller & Peter Frierson (1984), Daniel Katz & Robert Kahn (1996) as well as Larry Griener (1998) propose that an organisation goes through different stages or life cycles. The general consensus amongst the aforementioned researchers is that organisations are established, grow, mature and then decline. The argument as to how many and what the exact life stages are, differ according to the theorist. However, the most common models are comprised of five organisational life-cycle stages (Duobiene, 2013). Larry Greiner's *Five Phases of Growth* model consists of creativity, direction, delegation, coordination and collaboration (See Figure 2.3).

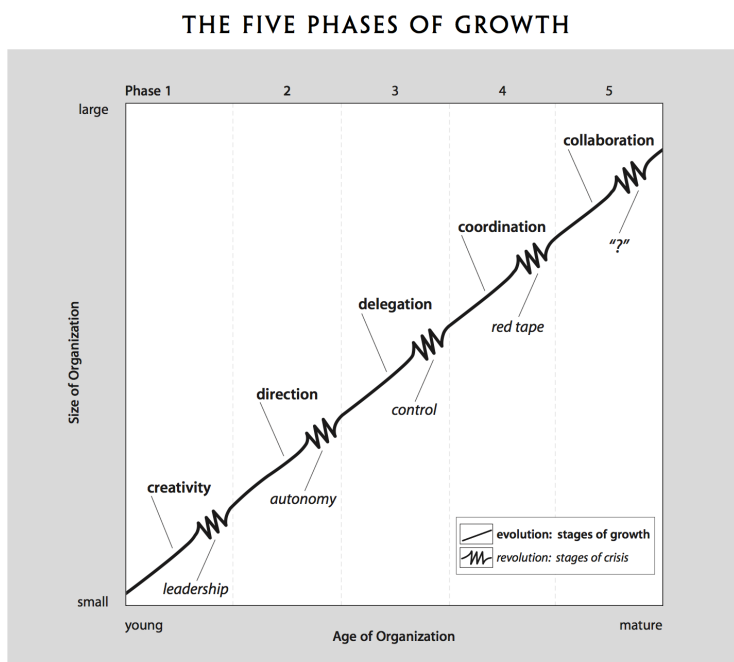


Figure 2.3: Larry Greiner's Model of The Five Phases of Growth (Greiner, 1998).

The viewpoint is that Sorbet has passed the first two periods of *creativity* and *direction*. Sorbet can be said to be in the *delegation* phase as in 2009 Sorbet moved into a franchise business model as opposed to company owned stores (Fhur, 2014). The delegation phase in more detail refers to the decentralized organisational structure (Greiner, 1998). The delegation phase includes greater responsibilities given to the managers of different market regions, which would also include Sorbet's franchisees and top level executives being based at the brand's headquarters (Greiner, 1998). The shift towards the next phase, being the coordination phase, occurs when an organisation goes through a revolution of a "crisis of control". Referring to when management feels that they are losing control over the lower tiers of management (Greiner, 1998). The question

arises, has Sorbet reached the “crisis of control” revolution of Larry Greiner’s *Five Phases of Growth* model?

Schein (2009) explains how the characteristics and different management techniques of corporate culture are dependent on whether the organisation is in its founding, growth, mid-life, mature or declining stage. The most prominent characteristics of young organisations are that they are the creation of their founders. The founder’s leadership style has a major effect on building the foundations for the emerging culture of the organisation (Schein, 2009). In Sorbet’s start-up phase, Ian Fhur had a great role in creating the organisation’s culture through personally imposing assumptions, beliefs and values continuously upon all employees (Fhur, 2014; Schein, 2009).

An organisation’s culture during its mid-life stage is dramatically different from its founding and early growth stage. With respect to Sorbet, Sorbet’s business model changed when the Sorbet brand launched their first franchise model in 2009. Sorbet went from managing their own stores to supporting franchisees in different regions (Fhur, 2014). Thus, the responsibilities of upholding the Sorbet corporate culture have fallen onto the franchisees and Citizens as opposed to the Sorbet’s management team (Fhur, 2014). Therefore, leaders at every level, and not just at the CEO and top management level have a role in evolving, managing and creating the culture and climate in the different parts of the organisation (Schein, 2009).

2.7 Culture and Franchisees

Fhur cites in his book, *Get that Feeling* which was written in 2014 that the challenge from changing the Sorbet business model to a franchise model has been ensuring that *The Sorbet Way* corporate culture has been carried forward by the franchisees in order to ensure that the brand does not become diluted (Fhur, 2014). This gives rise to how the franchisor must select the franchisee that is the right person for the business (Bannister, 2017). Moreover, creating the right culture, implementing it and maintaining it throughout every segment of the organisation is able to make the difference between a franchise system that will continue to grow and one that will stop growing (Daley, 2016). With that being said, it is important to understand that different franchisors look for different qualities and attitudes when selecting their franchisees (Bannister, 2017). This is important as a below par performance by *one* franchisee can damage the entire brand image (Rose, 2012). A recent interview in 2017 with Sorbet’s brand manager, Jade Kinkel, explains that Sorbet’s biggest brand challenges are still consistency and growth (Tennant, 2017). Kinkel highlights that as Sorbet grows, it is very difficult to ensure that everyone in the company is living and believing in the *Sorbet Way* (Tennant, 2017).

Various procedures and systems have been created such as the *Sorbet Franchise Model* in order to prevent brand dilution. The *Sorbet Franchise Model* has different layers highlighting the key

building blocks of Sorbet's franchises, where *The Sorbet Way* culture is the foundation on which the entire pyramid is built upon (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet's franchise promise is to put the franchisees at the center of the Group's success and focus, in order to create a supportive and sincere Franchisor-Franchisee relationship (Sorbet, 2017). Sorbet takes a "critical care approach", whereby the Sorbet Group offers assurance on support, comprehensive training for staff and franchisees, and assistance with staff selection and recruitment, to name a few (Sorbet, 2017).

It is important to note that many franchised brands face similar brand challenges in terms of defining and maintaining a strong corporate culture and climate. Almost every franchise system has started with a clear vision, however franchisees often get caught up in the day-to-day operations of a business and the proposed culture becomes diluted at a certain size (Daley, 2016). *The question arises is, has this happened to the Sorbet brand?*

2.8 Brand Image and Sorbet's Total Guest Experience (TGE) Model

A brand image refers to how a brand wishes to be seen and takes an outside-in approach to brand building (Klopper & North, 2011). A brand's image must not be confused with a brand's identity as a brand's identity refers to how the brand sees itself and takes an inside-out approach to brand building (Aaker, & Joachimsthaler, 2009; Klopper & North, 2011). Brand building efforts are said to be successful if there is alignment between a brand's image and a brand's identity (Klopper & North, 2011). Sorbet's brand manager, Jade Kinkel explains how the success of the Sorbet brand is dependent on having a strong brand voice, one that understands and is clear in terms of what it stands for that is consistent with its words and actions (Tennant, 2017). Every aspect of the Sorbet brand, from engaging with citizens to administrative processes is rooted in *The Sorbet Way* (Fhur, 2014). In order to build Sorbet's brand image, Sorbet has created the concept of having a *Total Guest Experience* (TGE) model, which looks at the hundreds of little things that Guests experienced during her/his interaction with the brand (Fhur, 2014).

These interactions are called 'Experience Keys', which have led to highlighting three main Keys (Fhur, 2014). The following most important Experience Keys, in which Sorbet has highlighted are: Systems, the Functional Keys; Service, the Human Keys and lastly Setting, the Sensory Keys (Fhur, 2014). It is important to note how Sorbet's *Total Guest Experience* is very similar to Carla Enslin's Brand Contact Planning. Brand Contact Planning according to Carla Enslin (2006) helps achieve an integrated state of brand identity between points of contact between a brand and its target audience. Brand Contact Planning helps create a strong brand image (Enslin, 2006).

2.8.1 Systems- The Functional Keys

The Functional Keys are made up of the policies, processes and procedures that are used to deliver on a service (Fhur, 2014). These keys are made up of trading hours, Guest bookings, therapist scheduling, cash and credit card transactions, the software system, maintenance and stock to name a few (Fhur, 2014). Without these, the Sorbet brand cannot function (Fhur, 2014).

2.8.2 Service- The Human Keys

The Human Keys relate to all the human interactions between the Guests and the Citizens (Fhur, 2014). This refers to the way in which the Guest perceives attitude, enthusiasm, body language, gestures and empathy of Citizens, to name a few (Fhur, 2014). The attitudes of Sorbet's Citizens are crucial in order to provide a Total Guest Experience (Fhur, 2014). With that being said, numerous articles have been written about the effect that employees have on a brand's image, with a general consensus that employees are the most powerful representation of a brand (Nagel, 2013). Employees are the mechanisms that deliver both directly and indirectly on a brand's promise and purpose at major points of contact that stakeholders have with a brand (Klopper & North, 2011). A brand's employees are thus the "ultimate guardians" of a brand's image (Nead, 2014). According to Sorbet's brand manager, Jade Kinkel, the fundamental key to managing the Sorbet brand is "realising that every person in the company is essentially a brand manager and has a fundamentally important role and responsibility in embodying the Sorbet brand at all times" (Tennant, 2017). However, according to many complaint websites, many Sorbet customers have experienced a customer service that is not brand aligned with *The Sorbet Way* corporate culture.

2.8.3 Setting- The Sensory Keys

The Sensory Keys relate to the five key senses in terms of sight, smell, touch and taste (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet uses bright colours, hygiene, an open store layout and fully stocked shelves (Fhur, 2014).

2.9 Conclusion

From the literature, it is evident that Sorbet has an extremely strong foundation in terms of their brand identity and corporate culture, seen from a breakdown of *The Sorbet Way*. However, after delving into the concepts of corporate culture and climate and organisational life cycles, one can see a possible gap between Sorbet's vision, culture and image. Whereby top management no longer has a direct involvement in employees' actions on a day-to-day basis, rather, the Sorbet's actions lie in the hands of the franchisees and employees. Moving forward, the next chapter aims to investigate the research methodology used in order to determine how aligned Sorbet's brand is with the VCI model.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A methodology is referred to as the “theory of how research should be undertaken” (Saunders et al, 2009). In order to understand the research methodology process, it is important to have an understanding of what research is. Research is expressed as a process of gathering, analyzing and understanding information in order to answer questions concerned with generating knowledge through rediscovering the known and discovering the unknown (Singh & Sahu, n.d.). Research methodology is thus a method used by a researcher to systematically solve the research problem and it is ultimately the way in which the researcher conducts research (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). The following methodology aims to discuss the study’s research design, population and sample, data collection method, data analysis method, and trustworthiness.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is described as a ‘mapping strategy’ (Singh & Sahu, n.d.). This research design was used to explain how the researcher found answers to the research problem (Kumar, 2011). It is important to understand that the strength of *what* was found by the researcher is largely dependent on *how* it was found, thus the researcher aimed to create a meticulous and detailed research design in order to arrive at valid findings and insights (Kumar, 2011). The following research design followed a constructivist research paradigm, a cybernetics communication tradition, was inductive in its approach, was exploratory in nature and followed a case study based research design that was qualitatively based with a cross sectional time horizon.

3.1.1 *Constructivism Research Paradigm*

A paradigm is a set of assumptions, beliefs, ideas, theories and abstractions about fundamental aspects of reality, giving rise to a particular worldview (Khun, 1996; Maree, 2015). A paradigm is described as a method of studying social phenomena where particular understandings and attempted explanations are gained (Saunders et al, 2009). It is important to understand that a paradigm had an influence on the way in which the research was conducted as it serves as the lens through which the researcher interpreted reality (Morehouse, 2012).

There are different types of paradigms ranging from positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, and critical stances (Maree, 2015). Based on the research topic, the researcher found that there were two possible paradigm choices that could have been used for the research topic, being the constructivism paradigm and the interpretivism paradigm. The constructivism paradigm follows a relativistic-based ontology with the belief that reality is socially and experientially based and follows an epistemology where knowledge comprises of relative consensus of mental constructions (Klenke, 2016). The interpretive paradigm follows an ontology where reality is inseparable from the

researcher and an epistemology where knowledge is constituted through a person's lived experiences and is based on abstract descriptions of meanings (Klenke, 2016).

Although both research paradigms were compatible with the research topic, particularly because both paradigms are suited for case studies, the constructivism paradigm was chosen as the most appropriate choice for this study (Klenke, 2016). The reason behind the choice for using the constructivist paradigm was based on the constructivism paradigm's ability to piece different viewpoints together in order to build a sophisticated joint "construction" (Guba & Lincoln, 1984). This constructivism paradigm is distinguished from other paradigms due to the paradigm's emphasis on the holistic treatment of phenomena, where the world is seen as an interconnected and complex system (Klenke, 2016). This paradigm compliments the theoretical framework used, being the VCI alignment model, as the VCI alignment model looks holistically at how an organisation's vision, culture and image needs to be aligned in order to create a strong organisational identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2008). A constructivism worldview allowed for the researcher to organize knowledge and make sense out of the knowledge in order to turn different types of knowledge into a larger conceptual structure (Guba & Lincoln, 2013). The constructivism paradigm additionally allowed for the researcher to visualize Sorbet's corporate culture from multiple perspectives, this allowed the researcher to gain different viewpoints of Sorbet's culture from many participants ranging from Sorbet's top management, franchisees, employees, and clientele (Dills & Romiszowski, 1997). Lastly, the constructivism paradigm allowed for the researcher to be a "passionate participant" throughout the entire research process, as the constructed reality that the constructivism paradigm proposes is largely depended on the interactions between what was being researched and the researcher (Klenke, 2016; Guba & Lincoln, 1984).

3.1.2 *Cybernetics Communication Tradition*

When communicating the results of the study, the study used the cybernetics communication tradition. The cybernetics communication tradition is based on how complex systems have interacting components which all have an effect on one another (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The following study took a systemic and systems view when looking at interlinking concepts. This was because the VCI Alignment model, explained how a brand's vision, culture and image should be looked at as an integrated whole as opposed to separate facets (Hatch & Schultz, 2008).

3.1.3 *Inductive Approach*

There are two main approaches when conducting research, being inductive and deductive research (O'Reilly, 2009). A deductive approach is one that derives a hypothesis from existing theory and only then is the empirical world able to be explored (O'Reilly, 2009). With a deductive

approach a research strategy is designed and developed to test a hypothesis (Saunders et al, 2009). An inductive approach allows for the theory to 'emerge' from the data and a theory is rather developed as a product of the data analysis (O'Reilly, 2009; Saunders et al, 2009). An inductive approach was used for this research topic. The reason as to why was because the constructivism paradigm is based on analytical generalization, which therefore lends itself to theory building (Klenke, 2016). In addition, the inductive approach allowed for the researcher to be part of the research process, which helped the researcher in gaining an understanding of the meanings that the participants attached to their Sorbet experiences (Saunders et al, 2009). It was also ultimately a more flexible approach to investigate the research problem (Saunders et al, 2009). Lastly, the inductive approach complimented the study's collection of qualitative data with a small sample of participants (Saunders et al, 2009).

3.1.4 Exploratory Study

The following study took on an exploratory study. An exploratory design is used when there are no earlier or very few studies to refer to (Lynn University, 2017). Additionally, the exploratory design was used because it allowed for the study to gain a well-developed picture of the situation (Lynn University, 2017). An advantage that the researcher found when conducting explorative research was that it was adaptable to change and it was flexible, which greatly benefited the researcher in the creation of the questions for the semi-structured interviews (Saunders et al, 2009).

3.1.5 Case Study Research Strategy

This research strategy was based on using Sorbet as a case study. Case study research is defined as a strategy for doing research that includes an "empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon set within its "real world" context (Yin, 2009). There are a variety of different types of case studies, ranging from explanatory case studies, exploratory case studies, descriptive case studies and multiple case studies (Maree, 2015). As mentioned, the nature of this study was explanatory, thus an exploratory case study was used as it allowed for the researcher to focus and explore Sorbet's corporate culture (Yin, 1984). Additionally, a single case study was used, as opposed to utilizing a multiple case study strategy, the reason as to why was because a single case study provided more focus to the researcher in order to analyze the phenomenon regarding purposeful corporate climates (Saunders et al, 2009). The researcher found that an advantage of designing the research around a case study was that it prevented the researcher from becoming unfocused (Maree, 2015). However, despite such advantage, the researcher found that a disadvantage of using a case study design was that it had a major dependency on a single case, therefore making it difficult to reach a universal conclusion for all brands facing the same issue (Tellis, 1997).

3.1.6 Qualitative Orientation

There are two types of research design orientations being quantitative and qualitative design approaches. A brief overview of the two approaches will be given as a reason as to why the researcher used a qualitative orientation.

An overview of quantitative research shows that quantitative research is “a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected sub-group of a universe to generalize the findings to the universe being studied” (Maree, 2015). Quantitative advantages includes findings to being credible due to the large sample size used and as well as being less time consuming than qualitative approaches (Carr, 1994; Connolly, 2007). However, disadvantages include it to fail in discovering deeper underlying explanations and meanings (Rahman, 2016). Based on such disadvantages of quantitative research and based on the research objectives, a qualitative data approach was rather chosen as the research orientation.

A qualitative paradigm allowed for the study to develop meaning-based research (Maree, 2015). Qualitative research is defined as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions that explore a social or human problem” (Crewell, 1994). A qualitative research design relies on linguistic data (words) as opposed to statistical forms of data analysis and concerns itself with ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions (Polkinghorne, 1989; Ritchie et al, 2014). Qualitative research was ideal for this study as it helped the researcher deal with (1) building generalizations; (2) finding fresh and creative approaches when looking at over-familiar problems; and (3) understanding how participants perceive their tasks or roles within Sorbet (Merriam, 1995). Advantages of qualitative methods and approaches that the researcher found, was that it helped the researcher in producing detailed descriptions of participants’ experiences, feelings and opinions, therefore allowing for the researcher to interpret meaning from the participant’s actions (Denzin, 1989). It is also important to highlight the disadvantages of qualitative methods that the researcher found, which was that qualitative methods are time consuming as well as have low credibility due to generalizing the small sample size (Rahman, 2016).

3.1.7 Cross-Sectional Time Horizon

An important element when the researcher planned the research design was deciding whether the research would be *cross-sectional* research referring to a “snapshot” of a specific time frame or *longitudinal* research referring to research that takes the form of a series of “snapshots” and represents data over a given time period (Saunders et al, 2009). Although a longitudinal study would have given the researcher powerful insights of Sorbet’s purposeful climate over a period of time, the research design used was a cross-sectional study of Sorbet’s purposeful corporate climate at one specific time (i.e. from the 02 August 2017 till the 18 September 2017) (Saunders et al, 2009). The reason as to why a cross-sectional study was chosen was due to the Bcom Honors

in Strategic Brand Management course being a year long, thus creating time constraints for the study as the academic calendar did not allow for a longitudinal study (Saunders et al, 2009).

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Population

The total group to be researched is called the universe or population (Guthrie, 2010). A population thus refers to all items (being people or things) in the field of inquiry that possesses characteristics or attributes that the researcher is interested in (Kumar, 2008; Davis, 2014; Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). The population for this study has included Sorbet's top management, franchisees, employees, as well as Sorbet's clientele. The table below provides the reader with detailed information regarding the key characteristics and parameters regarding the stipulated population.

Population	Key Characteristics and Parameters
Sorbet management	Individuals who form part of Sorbet's top management and are key decision makers.
Sorbet franchisees	From all four different types of Sorbet salons, being: Sorbet Beauty Salons, Sorbet Nail Bars, Sorbet Dry Bars and Sorbet Man.
Sorbet employees	From all four different types of Sorbet salons, being: Sorbet Beauty Salons, Sorbet Nail Bars, Sorbet Dry Bars and Sorbet Man.
Sorbet clientele	These participants were chosen through a criterion of having visited Sorbet in the last 5 months. In combination with the aforementioned prerequisite, additional characteristics and parameters were set. Such included that participants fulfilled Sorbet's target market classification categories as cited by Ian Fhur's book <i>Get That Feeling</i> (2014). This allowed for the researcher to highlight Sorbet's most important target markets. According to Fhur (2014) Sorbet's ideal customers are categorized into three categories being: (1) Social Sitters: 18-25 year olds (tech savvy; limited disposable income), (2) Yummy Mummies: 26-34 year olds (time starved; building families and careers; working moms; looks for value for money and convenience; looks for 'me time'), (3) The Wonder Women: 35-45 year olds (powerful established women; have high disposable income; driven by convenience and value; aims to prevent visible signs of aging) (Fhur, 2014). Fhur did not classify any male clientele due to having been written before Sorbet Man was fully established; therefore the characteristics and parameters for Sorbet's male clientele were that they were male who had visited Sorbet Man in the last 5 months.

Table 3.1: Referring to a breakdown of the population used for this study.

3.2.2 Sample

It was uneconomical and somewhat impossible for the researcher to examine the entire population mentioned with the given budget and time frame (Kumar, 2008; Guthrie, 2010). Therefore the researcher selected a sub-set of the population (Kumar, 2008; Guthrie, 2010). With that said, sampling is able to provide a high degree of probability for the proposed study as the premise of sampling relies on how a relatively small number of units are able to genuinely represent the study population (Kumar, 2008; Kumar, 2011).

There are two different types of sample designs being (1) probability sampling and (2) non-probability sampling (Kumar, 2008). Probability sampling is based on the concept of random selection where every participant in the population will have an equal chance of being selected (Kumar, 2008; Explorable, 2017). Non-probability sampling on the other hand is based on how participants in the population do not have an equal chance of being selected and are rather chosen based on factors such as ease or common sense (Explorable, 2017; Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). The non-probability sampling design was used for this sample, as non-probability was best suited for this type of qualitative case study research (Kumar, 2008). Additionally, based on the limited resources of the researcher, the non-probability sampling design was best suited for this study as it was cheaper and more time efficient (Kumar, 2008; Pascoe 2014).

An important consideration when using the sampling technique was the size of the sample (Maree, 2015). Based on the breakdown of the population, the sample size included a total of 19 participants. Broken down into 1 member from Sorbet's top management, being Sorbet's current brand manager, Jade Kinkel. A total of 5 Sorbet franchisees, which were further broken down into 2 franchisees from a Sorbet Beauty Salon, 1 franchisee from a Sorbet Nail Bar, 1 franchisee from a Sorbet Dry Bar and lastly 1 franchisee from a Sorbet Man salon (please note the one franchisee from the Sorbet Beauty Salon was used as a pre-test). A total of 7 Sorbet employees were interviewed, which were further broken down into 1 beauty technician from a Sorbet Beauty Salon, 2 nail technicians and 1 Salon Assistant from a Sorbet Nail Bar, 1 beauty technician from a Sorbet Dry Bar, 2 barbers from Sorbet Man salons (please note the one employee from the Sorbet Nail bar was used as a pre-test). And lastly, a total of 6 Sorbet clientele were chosen, which included, 2 Social Sitters, 1 Yummy Mummy, 2 Wonder Women and lastly 1 Sorbet Man client (please note the one client from the Social Sitter category was used as a pre-test). This specific sample allowed for the researcher to gain a realistic and overall picture of Sorbet's corporate climate across the different types of Sorbet brand extensions and target markets.

There are different ways in which the researcher reached the required sample. The researcher had taken into consideration the different types of non-probability sampling techniques, ranging from quota sampling, purposeful sampling, snowball sampling, self selection sampling and convenience

sampling (Saunders et al, 2009). For the purpose of this study only purposeful sampling, convenience sampling and self-selection sampling were used. In more detail, purposeful sampling has specific perspectives in mind and then locates research participants who are able to meet those perspectives (Maree, 2015). Convenience sampling refers to reaching participants in which the researcher is able to gain easy access to (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). Self selection sampling refers to when the researcher uses the participants desire to take part in the study (Saunders et al, 2009).

In order to reach Sorbet's brand manager, purposeful sampling was used. On the basis of purposeful sampling, the researcher had specifically chosen Sorbet's brand manager, Jade Kinkel, in order to take part in this study due to her unique knowledge of Sorbet's brand identity and corporate culture strategies. In order to recruit Jade Kinkel, an email request was sent and an appointment was made to meet at Sorbet's Head office in Rivonia. When approaching Sorbet's franchisees, purposeful sampling was also used. The researcher chose specific franchisees from the four different types of Sorbet salons. These franchisees were based in the Bedfordview, Greenstone and Melrose Arch areas (due to the ease of access for the researcher). In order to recruit the different franchisees, the researcher phoned the different branches, requested to speak to the franchisee and then made an appointment with the franchisee to meet in their store. When the researcher approached Sorbet employees, convenience sampling was used because when the researcher went to interview the franchisee, the researcher gained permission from Sorbet's franchisees to interview their employees, and whoever was available at that time was interviewed. When reaching Sorbet's clientele, the researcher used self-selection sampling. Based on the premise of self-selection sampling, Sorbet's clientele were recruited by the researcher posting the requirements needed on Facebook, where it was up to the individual to decide whether they wanted to take part in the study (Saunders et al, 2009). The individuals who did want to take part in the study then direct messaged the researcher on Facebook and an appointment was then arranged at a variety of locations within the Norwood, Senderwood and Linksfield areas.

The unit of analysis refers to the subject (being the 'what' or 'who') about which a researcher may generalize (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004). Based on the theoretical framework, being the VCI model, the researcher had grouped the unit of analysis into different themes. The sample was purposefully chosen in order to evaluate the aforementioned themes. Sorbet's brand manager, Jade Kinkel, gave insight into Sorbet's strategic vision and brand identity. Sorbet's employees and franchisees gave insight into Sorbet's corporate climate and lastly Sorbet's clientele gave insight into Sorbet's brand image.

Sample	Size	Sampling Method	Recruitment Method	Location	Unit of Analysis
Jade Kinkel	1	Purposeful sampling	Email	Sorbet's Head Office in Rivonia	Strategic vision & brand identity
Sorbet franchisees	5	Purposeful sampling	Phone call	Bedfordview, Greenstone & Melrose-Arch Sorbet Stores	Corporate climate
Sorbet employees	7	Purposeful & convenience sampling	In-store visit	Bedfordview, Greenstone & Melrose-Arch Sorbet Stores	Corporate climate
Sorbet clientele	6	Self selection Sampling	Facebook	Norwood, Linksfield and Senderwood	Brand image

Table 3.2: Referring to a summary of the sample used for this study.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Data collection refers to the process of describing the researcher's specific course for obtaining the data from the study participants (Harris & Tyner-Mullings, 2017). The objective of data collection is to create a comprehensive and inclusive record of the participants' actions and words (Willig, 2013). The most widely used primary data collection methods include observations, interviews and focus groups (Willig, 2013; Maree, 2015).

Led by the research question, the data collection method took the form of an interview. An interview is defined as a "two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviors of the participants" (Maree, 2015). The reason behind the choice of such a data collection method was based on the benefits of the interview data collection technique. Such benefits included how an interview (1) allowed for the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participant, (2) allowed for the researcher to gain an understanding of the participants point of view and (3) helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon at hand (Maree, 2015; School of Computing, n.d; Gil et al, 2008).

There are three different types of interviews; being structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews (Alston & Bowles, 2003; Maree, 2015). The main differences amongst the different approaches refer to the degree to which the researcher and participants have control over the content and processes of the interview (ResearchHolic, 2017). Out of the three different interview types mentioned, the data collection method that was chosen took the form of the semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview is one that combines a pre-

determined set of open-ended questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore specific responses and particular themes further (Pritchard, 2017).

The motivation behind the choice of the semi-structured interview was because the semi-structured interview falls in between in-depth and structured interviews (Alston & Bowles, 2003). Thus, a semi-structured interview was able to provide the researcher with an opportunity to hear the participants talk about their different experiences in a controlled setting (Willig, 2013). A semi-structured interview had its advantages in terms of (1) it allowed the researcher to prep questions in advance, (2) it allowed for the participants to express their own viewpoints, (3) and it allowed for participants to raise issues that were not considered by the researcher (Prichard, 2017; Qualres, 2017). Nonetheless, despite such advantages, the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews included the semi-structured interviews to be time consuming (Prichard, 2017).

An interview agenda was created before the interview took place; the interview agenda consisted of a small number of questions that were covered during the conversation (Willig, 2013). The questions allowed for the researcher to use the research questions to drive and steer the interview (Willig, 2013). In order to generate relevant insights, four different semi structured interview agendas were created (please see Appendix A for finalized interview agendas). The reason for this was because Sorbet's brand manager, franchisees, employees and clientele all had different points of views and experiences with the Sorbet brand. This was seen as Sorbet's brand manager, franchisees and employees perspectives were of an inside-out viewpoint and Sorbet's clientele perspectives were of an outside-in viewpoint. The questions asked by the researcher acted as 'triggers' in order to encourage the participant to engage in the interview, giving room for the researcher to ask additional questions to points that might come up during the interview process (Willig, 2013). It is important to highlight that the questions in the interview agendas had been planned in a particular order, in order to start off with more general questions and then move onto more personal matters once a rapport has been clearly established (Willig, 2013).

The interview locations differed, whereby Jade Kinkel's interview took place in Sorbet's Head Office in Rivonia, Sorbet's franchisees and employees were interviewed in store (the location of the Store will not be given due to the consent agreement). Sorbet's clientele were interviewed in a variety of locations including a variety of coffee stores in the Norwood, Linksfield and Senderwood areas such as Loof and the Thrupps Garage. Each interview was recorded and timed as well as the researcher took additional notes during the interview process. The times for each interview ranged, Sorbet's brand manager took 45 minutes, Sorbet's franchisees averaged 30 minutes, Sorbet's employees averaged 15 minutes and Sorbet's clientele averaged 10 minutes. However, it is important to note that each interview had a time limit of 45 minutes.

3.4 Data Analysis Method

Qualitative data analysis is aimed at allowing for the researcher to analyze participants' attitudes, knowledge, understanding, perceptions, feelings and experiences in order to approximate their construction of the phenomenon at hand (Maree, 2015). Thematic content analysis using the Huberman and Miles Framework For Qualitative Data Analysis was applied for this research paper. Before The Huberman and Miles Framework For Qualitative Data Analysis will be discussed, the way in which the data was prepared will be looked at.

An important step according to Maree (2015) is the preparation of data for the analysis process. The data needs to be both organized and systematic so the researcher can easily and clearly trace the information in the data set (Maree, 2015). Four steps were followed when the researcher prepared the data for analysis. Firstly, the researcher described the sample and the context in which the study was performed, i.e. in a coffee shop or in a Sorbet store (please note, these descriptions are available on the individual transcripts which are available on the memory stick given) (Maree, 2015). It is important to note that extra care was taken in this step, in order to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity of the relevant participants were protected and all ethical aspects were adhered to, this was especially relevant when the researcher dealt with Sorbet franchisees and employees (Maree, 2015). The second step was where the researcher organized the data by giving each participant (except for Sorbet's brand manager) an identification number, where participants were numbered in a numerical fashion (Maree, 2015). Sorbet's franchisees were numbered from 1-5, Sorbet's employees were numbered from 6-12 and lastly Sorbet's clientele were numbered from 13-18 (please see Table 3.3).

Participant Group	Identification Numbers
Jade Kinkel	N/A
Franchisees	1-5
Employees	6-12
Clientele	13-18

Table 3.3: Reflecting how each participant group was numbered.

The third step included transcribing the data collected from digital means, where the data was transcribed verbatim; in other words, the data was transcribed word for word in order to reduce any bias of the researcher (please refer to memory stick) (Maree, 2015). Lastly, the researcher became familiar with the data through a process of reading and re-reading the text in order to ensure that the data was well understood (Maree, 2015).

The data was then analyzed according to the Huberman and Miles Framework For Qualitative Data Analysis. Huberman and Miles define analysis as "consisting of three concurrent flows of

activity being; data reduction, data display and, conclusion and verification drawing” (Huberman and Miles, 1994). Data reduction refers to the process where the researcher transformed, simplified and abstracted the data that appeared in the transcription (Huberman and Miles, 1994). The researcher highlighted and colour-coded common trends and feelings in the transcription (please see Table 3.4). Data display, which is the second concurrent flow within the Huberman and Miles Framework, referred to when the researcher organized, assembled and compressed the information found (Huberman and Miles, 1994). It is important to understand that the first two flows mentioned of the Huberman and Miles Framework rested on the operations of coding (Huberman and Miles, 1994).

The coding process allowed for the researcher to retrieve and collect the data with a thematic process (Maree, 2015). It is important to differentiate between priori coding and emergent coding (Hud, 2017). Priori coding refers to how themes were established prior to the data analysis and were identified in advance, while emergent coding refers to how themes were identified following a preliminary examination of the data (Maree, 2015). For the purpose of this research paper, the priori codes have been based on the theoretical framework being the VCI model and other additional research highlighted in the literature review that is related to the VCI model. The following priori codes that were identified were, strategic vision, brand image, brand identity, Sorbet’s Five Driving Principles (corporate climate), brand purpose, brand strategy, servant leadership, brand growth, franchisees and Sorbet’s customer service. It is important to understand that the researcher allowed for emergent coding to occur in order to reduce bias. Such emergent codes included, Ian Fhur, external forces that may prohibit employees from delivering “passionate service” and Sorbet’s higher management (please see Table 3.4).

Priori Codes	Emergent Codes
Strategic Vision	Ian Fhur
Brand Image	External Forces
Brand Identity	Sorbet Higher Management
Sorbet’s Five Driving Principles (corporate climate)	
Brand Purpose	
Brand Strategy	
Servant Leadership	
Brand Growth	
Franchisees	
Customer Service	

Table 3.4: Reflecting how the priori and emergent codes were colour coded.

The last flow of the Huberman and Miles Framework refers to conclusion and verification drawing (Huberman and Miles, 1994). At this stage the researcher drew final conclusions from the data, where the data was read and analyzed according to the theoretical framework. And identification was drawn to see if there was a misalignment between Sorbet's vision, culture and image. The data was then crafted in the form of propositions (Huberman and Miles, 1994).

3.5 Trustworthiness

It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the study is trustworthy and credible (Pitney & Parker, 2009). Trustworthiness, according to Lincon and Guba (1985) answers the question of: How can a researcher persuade his/her audience that the findings of an inquiry are worth taking account of and paying attention to? According to Maree (2015) trustworthiness is the 'acid test' of a research paper's data analysis, findings and conclusions. Guba (1981) has proposed four criteria that are able to gage a research paper's level of trustworthiness. These four criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981). These concepts closely parallel the quantitative process of validity and reliability (Pitney & Parker, 2009). For the purpose of this qualitative research study, the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability will be explored in more detail in order to ensure that this study is trustworthy.

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is viewed as a parallel measurement to internal validity (by many qualitative researchers) (Pitney & Parker, 2009). According to the *Sage Encyclopedia of Research Methods*, credibility is defined as "the methodological procedures and sources used to establish a high level of harmony between the participants' expressions and the researchers interpretations of them" (Given, 2008). Credibility refers to how congruent the research findings are with reality and the plausibility of the research paper's findings (Maree, 2015; Pitney & Parker, 2009). Additionally, it refers to how it was up to the researcher to ensure a high level of consistency throughout the entire research paper (Given, 2008).

There are a number of strategies that were used throughout this research paper in order to ensure credible research findings. Such strategies included (1) the researcher adopting well-established and detailed research methods, for example the Huberman and Miles Framework For Qualitative Data Analysis; (2) a research design that fitted the proposed research question – being a quantitative, explorative, inductive case study that is based on the constructivist paradigm; (3) a theoretical framework which is aligned to the research question and methodology -being the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment model; (4) as well as the researcher ensured frequent debriefing sessions between the researcher and her supervisor, Nicole Mason (Maree, 2015). Credibility according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) can also be enhanced by prolonged engagement

with the research topic before the research is conducted, this has been achieved as the researcher has (1) been a client of Sorbet since 2013; (2) attended a Sorbet induction program on the 13th of March 2017 (please see memory stick for confirmation of attendance); and (3) has read Ian Fhur's book, *Get That Feeling*. Thus one can see that the researcher had invested a sufficient amount of time in being orientated about the Sorbet brand and culture.

3.5.2 Transferability

Similar to the concept of external validity, refers to the concept of transferability (Pitney & Parker, 2009). Transferability is defined as the extent to which the findings of a group are applicable or confirmed in different settings or to a different group from where the data was collected (Lincon & Guba, 1985). Transferability therefore refers to the extent to which findings can be applied with other contexts and with other participants (Bitsch, 2005). According to Bitsch (2005) the researcher was able to facilitate transferability through two methods being: purposeful sampling and by using thick descriptions (Bitsch, 2005). Thus, the researcher ensured a well defined and purposeful sample in order to ensure that the most appropriate and information rich participants were chosen for this research topic. The researcher also made use of thick descriptions throughout the research paper - especially when transcribing the semi-structured interviews in order to ensure that the researcher gained comprehensive data that was made up of dense and rich detail (please refer to memory stick) (Maree, 2015; Birsch, 2005).

3.5.3 Dependability

Many researchers parallel the concept of dependability to reliability (Birsch, 2005; Maree, 2015; Pitney & Parker, 2009). The reason for this is because dependability refers to the stability of the findings over time (Birsch, 2005). Additionally, dependability ensures that the researcher's results will be similar or the same if the study was to be replicated in a similar context with the same or similar participants (Birsch, 2005). The following documents, being the raw data in the form of audio recordings and transcripts were kept for cross checking (please refer to memory stick) (Lincon & Guba; 1985; Maree, 2015). This data trail will help others in understanding the researcher's reasoning (Lincon & Guba; 1985; Maree, 2015). Additionally, the researcher conducted four different pre-tests regarding the four different interviews with the researchers supervisor and three pilot studies- one pilot study with Sorbet's franchisees, one pilot study with Sorbet's employees and one pilot study with Sorbet's clientele. The pre-test and pilot studies ensured that no double barrel questions were asked and ensured the questions generated accurate findings. It is important to note that the pre-test and pilot studies resulted in a change to several questions. For example with regards to Sorbet's employees interview agenda, the original question was "how would you describe Sorbet's higher brand purpose?", however during the pre-test it was found that this was a very complicated brand orientated question, therefore the question

was simplified to “Why do you believe that the world is a better place with the Sorbet brand in it?” (Please see Appendix B for interview agendas prior to the pre-test and pilot study).

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is paralleled to objectivity as it looks at the prejudices and bias of the researcher (Birsch, 2005). Confirmability is described as the degree of neutrality of the findings or the extent to which the findings are shaped by the participants, instead of the researchers own interest, motivation or bias (Lincon & Guba; 1985; Maree, 2015). Confirmability was ensured through reducing the effect of the researcher’s bias; this was done by the researcher admitting her own predispositions (Maree, 2015). Such predispositions are that the researcher favors the Sorbet brand having being a loyal client of the brand since 2014.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter highlighted the methodology used, which consisted of a discussion regarding the study’s choice of research design, population and sample, data collection method, data analysis method, and trustworthiness. Moving forward, the next chapter looks at the study’s findings and interpretations gained from the raw data.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

In the following chapter the researcher considers the outcomes of the research, which was conducted through the use of thematic coding. Using the theoretical framework, the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment model as a lens, the following four main categories were identified being, brand identity, corporate climate, the customer's brand image, and brand strategies to manage brand growth.

4.1 Brand Identity

A brand identity refers to a set of deep and rich brand associations that an organisation aspires to create and maintain and represents what the organisation wants the brand to stand for (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009). A brand's identity is key when looking at the theoretical framework, being the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model. According to Carla Enslin's brand identity model, the properties of a brand identity system include, a brand vision, purpose and positioning, personality, values and visual and verbal language (Klopper & North, 2011). In order to understand Sorbet's brand identity, the following brand themes have been identified, namely Sorbet's brand purpose, brand vision and verbal language.

Theme	Definition	Verbatim Quote
Brand Purpose	A brand's "reason for being- the higher order benefit it brings to the world" (Dhatchani et al, 2013).	Sorbet's brand purpose is aimed at "improving the lives of our Guests and Citizens" (Participant 1, 2017)
Brand Vision	"The vision of a brand expresses its purpose for being in the form of an envisioned future" (Klopper & North, 2011).	To "become the biggest beauty silo in the country" (Kirkel, 2017).
Verbal Language	Details how the brand expresses itself in verbal terms (Klopper & North, 2011).	"We don't call our staff, 'staff', we call them our Citizens because we form part of a community and we don't call our clients, 'clients' we call them Guests because they are Guests in our store" (Participant 3, 2017).

Table 4.1: Brand identity category.

4.1.1 Theme 1: Brand Purpose

Brands are able to connect with the universal human need for meaning through purpose (Dhatchani et al, 2013). The fundamental underpinning of *The Sorbet Way*, which is Sorbet's corporate culture, is based on Sorbet's higher purpose (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet's higher purpose is based on serving and improving the lives of their Guests and Citizens (Fhur, 2014). It is important to highlight that Sorbet's brand purpose isn't solely about their Guests, but also places a large emphasis on their Citizens (Fhur, 2014).

Research conducted has found that Sorbet's brand purpose is key to managing the Sorbet brand (Kirkel, 2017). Sorbet's purpose and what it stands for is crucial to everything that the brand does and talks about (Kirkel, 2017). According to Sorbet's brand manager, "passion cannot drive purpose, purpose needs to drive passion" (Kirkel, 2017). Sorbet's brand manager explained how, "you have to have a strong brand purpose, communicate that brand purpose and be accountable to it as well" (Kirkel, 2017). An interesting point raised was that Sorbet's brand manager explained how the challenge is to ensure that everyone in the brand knows about Sorbet's purpose (Kirkel, 2017). With that being said, a common thread was identified as all Sorbet's franchisees interviewed had a clear and almost word-for-word understanding of the Sorbet's purpose. One franchisee explained that Sorbet's purpose was aimed at "improving the lives of their Guests and Citizens" (Participant 3, 2017). Looking at Sorbet's Citizens, although many did not have a word-for-word definition, many Citizens did have a clear understanding of Sorbet's brand purpose. One Citizen explained how Sorbet "makes a big difference in a lot of peoples lives" (Participant 7, 2017). Another Citizen explained that Sorbet's purpose is "to make people feel good about themselves" and to "change peoples lives" (Participant 8, 2017).

Linking the research findings back to the literature, it has been found that Sorbet's brand purpose has been communicated and practiced throughout the organisation. In addition, both franchisees and Citizens have an understanding that Sorbet's brand purpose isn't solely about their Guests, but also about their Citizens.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Brand Vision

A brand vision refers to a brand's purpose in an envisioned future (Klopper & North, 2011). The role of a vision is to act as a unifying source of inspiration (Klopper & North, 2011). Although the brand does not have a specified vision, Ian Fhur has a "community vision" for Sorbet (Sorbet, 2017).

From the research conducted, Sorbet's brand manager explained how being bought over by Long4Life was a strategic move in order to build the Sorbet brand, to ensure that Sorbet becomes "the biggest beauty silo in the country" (Kirkel, 2017).

Linking the research findings back to the literature, findings have identified that Fhur's "community vision" is in contrast to the reason for being sold to Long4Life. The vision to be the "biggest beauty silo" in the country seems to show a possible future disconnect within Sorbet's identity.

4.1.3 Theme 3: Verbal Language

A brand's verbal language refers to how the brand is to express itself in verbal terms in order to ensure that the brand behaves coherently (Klopper & North, 2011). With regards to Sorbet, Sorbet is referred to as a *community* instead of a company, employees are referred to as *Citizens*, Cleaners are referred to as *Salon Assistants*, managers are referred to as *Leaders*, customers are referred to as *Guests* and new employees are referred to as *Sorbabies* (Fhur, 2014).

From the research, it was uncovered that *all* participants interviewed being the brand manager, franchisees, Citizens (including barbers, nail technicians, therapists and cleaning staff) referenced the above terms of "community", "Citizens", "Guests" "Salon Assistants" and "Sorbabies". One franchisee explained how "Sorbet has a different culture and a different lingo" (Participant 3, 2017).

Linking the aforementioned findings to the literature, the literature explained how a fundamental element of Sorbet's corporate culture strategy is the element of differentiation (Fhur, 2014). Findings showed that Sorbet's language is being practiced; therefore this element of differentiation is being created. This strengthens the brand's identity.

4.1.4 Interpretation

Bringing the category to conclusion, it was found that Sorbet's purpose and verbal language is operational throughout the organisation. However, findings did uncover a possible disconnect between the vision stipulated by Fhur and the reason behind the strategic move to be bought over by Long4Life. This gives insight into how currently Sorbet's brand manager, franchisees and Citizens are aligned to the brand's identity, however, the possibility of being bought over by Long4Life may change this alignment in future. This gives reason for concern, as this misalignment can cause a rift in the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model.

4.2 Corporate Climate

A major part of the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment model is an organisations culture, however organisational culture is difficult to measure, therefore the researcher has rather focused on understanding Sorbet's corporate climate, as a corporate climate is much easier to experience and thus evaluate (Mc Laughlin, 2017). Corporate climate is defined as "how members of an organisation experience the culture of an organisation" (Mc Laughlin, 2017). As per the literature, Sorbet's corporate culture is called *The Sorbet Way*. *The Sorbet Way* is the brand's overarching philosophy (Fhur, 2014). *The Sorbet Way* includes Sorbet's brand purpose (which has been discussed in the category above) and this purpose is supported by Sorbet's Five Driving Principles (Fhur, 2014). There are many ways in order to measure corporate climate, such as "the dimensional method" which classifies the organisation against pre-established dimensions that are

thought to fully describe the organisational culture (Fhurnham, 2012). In order to understand Sorbet's corporate climate, Sorbet's Five Driving Principles will be analysed. The table below reflects Sorbet's Five Driving Principles, which consist of passionate service, selfless community, servant leadership, unwavering integrity and individual growth (Fhur, 2014).

Theme	Definition	Verbatim Quote
Passionate service	Sorbet's belief is that the purpose of work is to serve and not just to make money. Money is the reward for good service and not the purpose and sole driver of work (Fhur, 2014).	"We put people before profits and we talk about how we can help people, and build people and serve people. And if you can do that, the profits will follow" (Kirkel, 2017).
Selfless community	The Sorbet community never allows the individual to be more important than the community (Fhur, 2014).	"We need to work as a team amongst the Citizens, we need to make sure that we back each other up, that we help each other, and that we don't sabotage each other and compete against each other. We need to compliment each other" (Participant, 11, 2017).
Servant leadership	"The servant leader is a servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" (Greenleaf, 2017).	"Our culture is one of serving. If I can put that in one word, it is what we have got to do, we have got to serve" (Participant 3, 2017).
Unwavering integrity	The Integrity Charter outlines the key behaviors expected from Sorbet Citizens.	"People do steal, you cannot avoid it, but a strong culture will certainly create a barrier as much as it possibly can to those things" (Kirkel, 2017).
Individual growth	Sorbet believes that their higher purpose can only be achieved through having a total dedication to the individual growth and development of Sorbet Citizens (Fhur, 2014).	"School alone won't teach you the things and the values that you are taught by the Sorbet brand" (Participant 10, 2017).

Table 4.2: Corporate climate category.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Passionate Service

Sorbet's belief is that the purpose of work is to serve and not just to make money. Money is the reward for good service and not the purpose and sole driver of work (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet explains how their passionate service is built on giving more than you take, and if one takes more than they give, the results are always negative (Fhur, 2014). This outlook is held by many brand experts and is alluded to in the article titled *How Healthy is Your Brand* written by Cook et al (2010). Tactical strategies have been put in place in order to ensure that Sorbet's employees deliver passionate service. Such strategies include Sorbet's complaint policy and money back guarantee (Fhur,

2014). Sorbet's complaint policy, called *Win Back*, involves three steps, Apologize, Fix It and Sweeten It.

The research findings revealed that the element of delivering "passionate service" has been ingrained into the philosophy of Sorbet's top management. Jade Kinkel, Sorbet's brand manager, explained how "we put people before profits and we talk about how we can help people, and build people and serve people. And if you can do that, the profits will follow" (Kinkel, 2017). Looking how this passionate service has filtered down to the franchisee level, the interviews conducted showed how *all* franchisee are of the opinion that a willingness to serve drives the Sorbet brand, and this willingness in turn drives profits (Participant 1, 2017; Participant 2, 2017; Participant 3, 2017; Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017). A franchisee demonstrated this point by commenting how Sorbet's culture "is and should be, people before profit" (Participant 2, 2017). Furthermore, another franchisee discussed how Sorbet "wants to empower women" where the brand is "not just here to make money out of them" (Participant 5, 2017). However, on a contrasting note many franchisees felt as though their Citizens were driven by profit i.e. relating to their commission, as opposed to a willingness to serve (Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017). These franchisees were of the opinion that this shift towards profit is "human nature" as many Citizens have prominent external concerns outside of the Sorbet environment, such as to provide for their family (Participant 1, 2017; Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017).

In speaking directly to the Citizens, it was found however that there was only one Citizen who felt driven by profit as opposed to a willingness to serve. This Citizen commented, "we are all out there for the money" (Participant 6, 2017). However, the rest of the Citizens interviewed believed that the purpose of work is based on a willingness to serve (Participant 7, 2017; Participant 8, 2017; Participant 9, 2017; Participant 10, 2017; Participant 11, 2017). One Citizen even mentioned how "if you put your mind towards the money part of things, then you wont survive at Sorbet" (Participant 10, 2017). One of the most fascinating findings that the researcher found was that this "passionate service culture" had been instilled right down to the Salon Assistant (the cleaner). She remarked how "Guests come first and money comes after" (Participant 12, 2017).

Looking at the tactical strategies that have been put in place in order to ensure that Sorbet's employees deliver passionate service, research had found that top management fully encourages the complaint policy and money back guarantee - to such an extent whereby Fhur is notified on every single complaint (Kinkel, 2017). Kinkel explains how Sorbet has a completely open policy with complaints, where every complaint is logged, analyzed and dealt with (Kinkel, 2017). Sorbet's management believes that "if it is a treatment complaint, that's the nature of the game" but if it is an attitude complaint, that is what distresses Sorbet's management, making it Sorbet's management's goal to, "manage treatment complaints, but eliminate the attitude complaints" (Kinkel, 2017). Kinkel explains how Sorbet's complaint policy is instilled into their franchisees (Kinkel, 2017). According to

Sorbet's franchisees, all interviewed believe in Sorbet's complaint policy. One franchisee remarked how "I have seen a customer become a customer for life, just because of the way we have handled complaints, we apologized, we fixed it and we sweetened it (Participant 2, 2017). In addition, all Sorbet Citizens interviewed believed in Sorbet's complaint policy as one Citizen remarked how one Guest was so angry, however the store "offered for him to come back and have a free haircut, and now he is here once every two weeks" (Participant 7, 2017).

In terms of brand growth, Kinkel (2017) highlighted how the brand has a lot of franchisees that open a kilometer across the road from each other; however, both stores are able to grow at the same pace. The reason as to why is because each Sorbet store, according to top management has a "ten minute market", which means that people will go to the store that they are ten minutes away from (Kinkel, 2017). In terms of overlapping stores, Kinkel explains how the Guest will choose the Sorbet store based on their service level (Kinkel, 2017). It is for that reason as to why Sorbet's top management reminds their franchisees to continuously drive service in their store (Kinkel, 2017). One franchisee remarked how despite the many Sorbet's in the area, the franchisee explains how if you give your best service, the Guest will always come back to you (Participant 3, 2017). Additionally, one Citizen remarked how despite the fact that there is a Sorbet down the road, the reason as to why their store has their specific Guests and the reason why they keep on coming back is because of their service (Participant 10, 2017).

An important point was raised as Kinkel (2017) explained, how the brand has never focused on profits, and rather focused on building the brand. However, now that the brand has been bought over by Long4Life, and Long4Life, has a more "corporate" outlook than the Sorbet brand, the brand will need to start focusing on profits (Kinkel, 2017). Kinkel (2017) explained how the brand had reached a tipping point, therefore in order to continue to build the brand, Kinkel explained how Sorbet would have to start focusing on profits and implementing methods that will drive profits and sales (Kinkel, 2017). Nonetheless, Kinkel is of the opinion that the brand has built a strong enough culture in order to start looking at profits and acquisitions.

Relating these findings back to the literature, it is evident that this passionate culture of "people before profits" has been filtered throughout the organisation. However, what was found is that Sorbet's franchisees, who work with the Citizens on a daily basis, did not see this passionate service filtered down to *all* Citizens. Another disconnect was found as by being sold to Long4Life may cause a conflict with Sorbet practicing their "people before profits philosophy". This is important because if Sorbet does not fully embrace their passionate service philosophy, it will have a major effect with regards to sustaining *The Sorbet Way* as the brand grows.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Selfless Community

The Sorbet community never allows the individual to be more important than the community (Fhur, 2014). There are two types of Citizens in a community, *Solid Citizens* and *“I” Specialists*. *Solid Citizens* accept the beliefs and values of the community and are committed to the higher purpose. However, *“I” Specialists* are extremely selfish (Fhur, 2014). *The Ten Pillars of the Sorbet Community Value System*, which enables a comfortable working environment include, service, open and honest communication, support, caring, trust, respect, tolerance, integrity, sharing and learning (Fhur, 2014).

Research revealed that there is “buy in” to the concept of a “selfless community” by both the franchisees and the Citizens. As one Citizen so aptly explained, “if you are part of the Sorbet brand, you are part of the Sorbet community” (Participant 10, 2017). With regards to Sorbet’s franchisees, Sorbet’s franchisees believe that they are part of a bigger community as all franchisees work together (Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017). Additionally, these franchisees do not view other Sorbet stores as “competition”, but rather they see each other as colleagues and hence assist each other where they can (Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017). One franchisee explained how they borrow stock from each other and will refer Guests to other salons if they are unable to accommodate them (Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017). However, it is important to note that one franchisee explained how before being bought over by Long4Life, Sorbet was “more like a family business” however Sorbet’s growth has changed this family dynamic (Participant 5, 2017). However, this franchisee did explain that Sorbet is still a close brand (Participant 5, 2017). When asked Sorbet’s franchisees about the sense of a selfless community in their store, a common trend was found as one franchisee explained how there are 90% good Citizens, whereby 10% are problematic for the community (Participant 4, 2017). This trend is seen again as another franchisee remarked how in her one store there is a “really good group of Citizens”, however, at her other store there is “one bad apple” that affects everyone in the group (Participant 1, 2017).

When Sorbet Citizens were asked if they felt as though they were part of a community, *all* Citizens interviewed felt that they were. Many Citizens’ explain how they love coming to work because of this community (Participant 8, 2017; Participant 9, 2017; Participant 12, 2017). Many Citizens described the community as one that is filled with teamwork, family, support, helpfulness, respect, constructive criticism and gives them the ability to be themselves (Participant 6, 2017; Participant 7, 2017; Participant 8, 2017; Participant 9, 2017; Participant 10, 2017; Participant 11, 2017, Participant 12, 2017). Citizens recognize never to think that they are better than someone else as “that person is able to teach you stuff you don’t know and you will teach him stuff that he doesn’t know” (Participant 7, 2017). An illustration of this “selfless community” dynamic is seen where if one of the barbers is busy or running late, another Citizen will help, even though the Citizen will not get the commission on the treatment (Participant 2, 2017). Nonetheless, one Citizen did mention that

she had found that some franchisees and Citizens don't feel the sense of this community as everyone has "got their own agenda" (Participant 10, 2017). This Citizen is of the opinion that one cannot provide a good service when your community has not properly bonded (Participant 10, 2017).

Relating the findings back to the literature, findings indicated that Sorbet has to a large extent achieved a sense of a "selfless community". The attributes used to describe the Sorbet community are clearly linked to *The Ten Pillars of the Sorbet Community Value System*. Nonetheless, research did uncover that Sorbet does have "I Specialists" in their community, but they are the minority. The researcher additionally found that Sorbet's brand growth might alter Sorbet's "family culture".

4.2.3 Theme 3: Servant Leadership

"The servant leader is a servant first" (Greenleaf, 2017). Servant leadership offers a new era for the creation of better and more caring organisations (Greenleaf, 2017). This concept of servant leadership aims to be implemented throughout the Sorbet brand, whereby Sorbet's leaders aim to serve their Citizens first in order to help their Citizens reach their full potential (Fhur, 2014). Larry Greiner's *Five Phases of Growth* model consists of creativity, direction, delegation, coordination and collaboration. Sorbet can be said to be in the *delegation* phase as in 2009 Sorbet moved into a franchise business model as opposed to company owned stores (Fhur, 2014). The shift towards the next phase, being the coordination phase, occurs when an organisation goes through a revolution of a "crisis of control". Referring to when management feels that they are losing control over the lower tiers of management (Greiner, 1998). The question arose in the literature review regarding, had Sorbet reached the "crisis of control" revolution of Larry Greiner's *Five Phases of Growth* model? The challenge from changing the Sorbet business model to a franchise model was ensuring that *The Sorbet Way* is carried forward by the franchisees in order to ensure that the brand does not become diluted (Fhur, 2014). However, the literature uncovered, that almost every franchise system had started with a clear vision, however, franchisees get caught up in the day-to-day operations of a business and the proposed culture becomes diluted at a certain size (Daley, 2016).

Research conducted found that Fhur's concept of servant leadership, as one franchisee puts it, "drives the brand" (Participant 3, 2017). According to Sorbet's brand manager, it is the franchisee's responsibility to support her staff while it is Head Office's responsibility to support the franchisee (Kirkel, 2017). She went on to explain how top management serves their franchisees in terms of providing marketing, employment contracts and training (Kirkel, 2017). One franchisee commented how Sorbet has one of the best franchise models, in terms of providing support to their franchisees (Participant, 3, 2017). This was reiterated by another franchisee who again noted the constant

support received from the Sorbet Head Office (Participant 4, 2017). On the other hand, an alternative view was identified as one franchisee remarked that her relationship with higher management is “not as close as one would imagine” (Participant 2, 2017). This was attributed to Sorbet Man not having their own General Manager in the beginning stages of the brand being launched (Participant 2, 2017).

The challenge that Sorbet faces according to Kinkel (2017) is that Sorbet has a group of independent business owners who run their own stores. Both franchisees and Citizens explain how the Sorbet Way culture is dependent on the franchisee, making it important for the franchisee to believe in this culture (Participant 3, 2017; Participant 4, 2017; Participant 7, 2017; Participant 8, 2017; Participant 10, 2017; Participant 11, 2017). The research conducted revealed that *all* the franchisees believed in serving their Citizens. One franchisee explained how her role is “to support these 65 people and their 65 families” (Participant 4, 2017). Another franchisee explained how her role is to ensure that their Citizens have everything that they need (Participant 4, 2017). Furthermore, another franchisee explained how she puts all the tools in place in order to ensure that her Citizens can do their jobs, whether this means making sure there are groceries for the staff, to ensuring there is enough stock on hand (Participant 5, 2017). In addition, Sorbet’s franchisees have created an open door policy where they are always available (Participant 1, 2017; Participant 5, 2017).

An interesting point was raised as one franchisee explained “you have to be available in store in order to maintain the culture” (Participant 1, 2017). Another franchisee agreed, explaining how you have to be “hands on” and “in store every single day” (Participant 3, 2017). However, it was found that many franchisees have more than one store, making it difficult for them to be in one store for the entire day (Participant 1, 2017; Participant 3, 2017; Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017). One Guest even complained to a franchisee in terms of how the store operates differently when the franchisee is not present (Participant 3, 2017). In addition, according to one franchisee it is difficult for her to be a mentor to her Citizens as “when you need to split yourself between 40 people it is tough” (Participant 3, 2017). Another franchisee explained how the franchisees have many additional operational stresses, which makes it difficult to act as a Leader (Participant 5, 2017).

From the Citizen’s perspective, it is clear that servant leadership is a both familiar and practiced concept. One Citizen mentioned, she doesn’t feel “micro-managed” and explained that “according to Sorbet’s anarchy, we are at the top of the list and our bosses are at the bottom of the list” (Participant 10, 2017). It was found that the majority of Citizens are of the opinion that Sorbet’s higher management and their franchisees makes it easier for them to do their job (Participant 6, 2017; Participant 7, 2017; Participant 8, 2017, Participant 10, 2017, Participant 12, 2017). One

Citizen explained how the franchisee provides the right products, equipment and the overall environment to make their jobs easier (Participant 7, 2017). Another Citizen additionally remarked how Sorbet “gives you every single tool that you need to deliver great service” (Participant 7, 2017). When one Citizen was asked about the challenges regarding delivering this passionate service, he commented how, Sorbet management “makes it so easy for you to deliver great service”(Participant 7, 2017).

Linking the findings to the literature, it has been found that there is recognition regarding the importance of *The Sorbet Way* corporate culture being carried forward by the franchisees in order to ensure that the brand does not become diluted. It is evident that on a whole, servant leadership is not merely a leadership ideal but it is something that is practiced actively in the Sorbet organisation. A vast majority of franchisees felt supported by Head Office, and the majority of Citizens felt supported in turn by their franchisees. Moving forward, it had been found that just like the literature explained, like many other franchised businesses, Sorbet is no exception, as Sorbet’s franchisees also often get caught up in the day-to-day operations (Daley, 2016). Indicating how Sorbet is in fact moving towards the “crisis of control” revolution on Larry Greiner’s *Five Phases of Growth*. The reason why is because it was found that by having more than one store prevents the franchisees from focusing on each store individually.

4.2.4 Theme 4: The Integrity Charter

The Integrity Charter outlines the 10 behaviors expected from Sorbet Citizens. The *Integrity Charter* aims to combat the lack of integrity in the beauty industry (Fhur, 2014). Such include (to name a few), having a total dedication to the higher purpose, to never lie, cheat or steal and to respect community property (Fhur, 2014).

Research revealed that according to Sorbet’s brand manager, “people do steal, you cannot avoid it, but a strong culture will certainly create a barrier as much as it possibly can to those things” (Kirkel, 2017). One franchisee explained how Sorbet does have their problems as the brand is “living in the real world” (Participant 4, 2017). With that being said, it was found that there are Citizens who steal – and this has an effect on the brand’s climate as when a Citizen is dismissed, a core part of the store is lost (Participant 3, 2017). Another franchisee highlighted how her Citizens’ were sneaking into the back room to do their nails, and that her Citizens were stealing small things from milk to toilet paper (Participant 5, 2017).

Although these actions were done by the minority of Citizens, the actions mentioned are in contrast to the literature, as the Integrity Charter stipulates how a Sorbet Citizen must “never lie, cheat or steal” as well as a Sorbet Citizen must “respect community property” (Fhur, 2014).

4.2.5 Theme 5: Individual Growth

Sorbet believes that their higher purpose can only be achieved through having a total dedication to the individual growth and development of Sorbet Citizens (Fhur, 2014). Sorbet aims to create an environment that encourages learning through providing opportunities for Citizens to attend skill-based and educational programs (Fhur, 2014).

It has been found that individual growth for the Citizens is prominent throughout the organisation. One way in which the *Sorbet Way* is maintained is through giving the Citizens an opportunity to upgrade their skills through training (Participant 3, 2017; Participant 4, 2017; Participant 5, 2017; Participant 6, 2017; Participant 11, 2017). One Citizen explained how “thanks to Sorbet I know how to cut hair” (Participant 7, 2017). Another Citizen explained how “I had no idea how to shave...they were new to me, and now I can master them like nobody’s business” (Participant 8, 2017). This growth is again seen as many Salon Assistants have become nail technicians because of Sorbet’s franchisees sending them on training (Participant 1, 2017; Participant 4, 2017; Participant 12, 2017). One Citizen commented how “Sorbet gives you the chance to work for yourself” because of the commission based structure (Participant 9, 2017). In terms of personal growth, Citizens have remarked how the Sorbet brand has given them a life lesson in: service before self, self-confidence, learning from your mistakes and people skills (Participant 7, 2017; Participant 8, 2017; Participant 10, 2017). It has been found that these types of growth opportunities that Sorbet has provided has instilled a sense of pride amongst Citizens in working for the Sorbet brand (Participant 6, 2017; Participant 7, 2017; Participant 8, 2017; Participant 10, 2017; Participant 11, 2017; Participant 12, 2017).

Correlating to the literature, overall it has been found that Sorbet’s top management and franchisees are dedicated to the individual growth and development of their Citizens. Which in turn creates pride amongst Citizens in terms of working for the Sorbet brand.

4.2.6 Interpretation

Bringing this category to conclusion, it has been found that on the whole, Sorbet’s corporate climate is driven by Sorbet’s Five Driving Principles. This is evident, as Sorbet’s Five Driving Principles has filtered down from top management all the way down to the Salon Assistant. Sorbet has created a belief system, which is not only believed in, but also practiced throughout the organization and lived through their Citizens, this gives insight into how meaningful and human-centric Sorbet’s Five Driving Principles are. However, what has been identified is that there are a few Citizens within Sorbet’s community who are not fully committed to Sorbet’s Five Driving Principles, and although these are the minority, they have an affect on the entire Group. An important theme which was raised with regards to the franchisees, is that the franchisees are

identified as the most important drivers for ensuring Sorbet actualizes its purpose. However, a possible challenge in which *The Sorbet Way* may face is that these franchisees are under a lot of pressure and this pressure may have the possibility to restrict Sorbet's purpose being delivered on a consistent basis. Another challenge is that Sorbet's brand growth may have an effect on the "family feel" of the *Sorbet Way*. Another element that may have an effect on the *Sorbet Way* is the Long4Life deal, as Long4Life deal may shift Sorbet to start to be more profit driven. Nonetheless, on the whole it can be said that Sorbet's current corporate climate shows alignment with regards to the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model.

4.3 Customer's Brand Image

A brand image refers to how a brand wishes to be seen and takes an outside-in approach to brand building (Klopper & North, 2011). An organisation typically has a multitude of images (Lievens, 2017). Sorbet's brand image is a major part in the alignment of the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model. It is important to understand that customers respond and select brands on the basis of a brand's image (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). This category unpacks the main theme that was uncovered during the research process, being Sorbet's customer service.

Theme	Definition	Verbatim Quote
Customer Service	"The act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing and delivering helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during and after the customers requirements are met" (McKinney, 2017).	"They are very good at what they do. And if you ask for anything they are willing to go the extra mile" (Participant 18, 2017).

Table 4.3: Customer brand image category.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Customer Service

Customer service refers to meeting customers' desires and needs (McKinney, 2017). A brand's employees are referred to as the "ultimate guardians" of a brand's image (Nead, 2014). Fhur has attributed Sorbet's growth and success to the Sorbet Citizens (Whitehead, 2017). With that being said, Sorbet's *Total Guest Experience* (TGE) exposes the different interactions that Guests experience with the Sorbet brand (Fhur, 2014). These interactions are called 'experience keys' and are grouped into Functional Keys, Human Keys and Sensory Keys (Fhur, 2014). With specific attention given to the Human Keys, the Human Keys relate to all the human interactions between the Guests and the Citizens (Fhur, 2014).

Many Guests had described the Sorbet brand as "professional", "knowledgeable about what they do" and "friendly" (Participant 15, 2017; Participant 18, 2017). A key brand image in which Sorbet's

Guests identified was Sorbet's good customer service (Participant 13, 2017; Participant 14, 2017; Participant 15, 2017). Guests ranked Sorbet's customer service levels very highly, seen as a large majority of Guests interviewed, gave Sorbet a score of 8/10 (Participant 13, 2017; Participant 16, 2017; Participant 18, 2017). One Guest commented how Sorbet's customer service has made it very much like "we need you" and "you don't need us" where they "make you feel so welcome" (Participant 14, 2017). Other Guests commented how Sorbet's Citizens are "very friendly" and are always available to help and give advice (Participant 16, 2017; Participant 13, 2017). Many Guests additionally remarked how Sorbet's Citizens always remember their name and remember their last conversation - even if you haven't visited in a long time (Participant 13, 2017; Participant 14, 2017; Participant 15, 2017). Guests explained how Sorbet's Citizens "go the extra mile" and if your nail is chipped they would redo it for free (Participant 18, 2017). Another Guest explained how Sorbet "will always make a time for you" and make you feel as though "you are the most important person to them" (Participant 14, 2017). This Guest commented how Sorbet's customer service had allowed for Sorbet to charge a premium (Participant 14, 2017).

Kirkel explained how the TGE model identifies how every single "moment of truth" i.e. every interaction that the brand has with its Guests, is managed by a different person (Kirkel, 2017). Sorbet's brand manager explains how Sorbet does a lot of training in terms of "owning moments of truth and really being accountable" (Kirkel, 2017). This aims to ensure that every single person working at Sorbet needs to act as a brand manager (Kirkel, 2017). Every individual member has the sole responsibility to uphold the brand (Kirkel, 2017). This TGE concept had been applied, as one Citizen explained how you feel as though you are a "clog in a clock", so whether you are a Salon Assistant who brings a Guest coffee or a barber giving a haircut, you keep that clock turning, whereby it is "everyone's responsibility to keep up that presence that Sorbet has" (Participant 7, 2017). One Guest explained that of the things she loves about Sorbet is "the actual energy that the company portrays, from the women who answers the telephone, to the person who offers you something to drink, to the actual consultant" (Participant 16, 2017).

In terms of consistency, a common theme was uncovered, whereby Guests commented that in general, Sorbet's customer service was consistent, however in some places it was more consistent than others (Participant 13, 2017; Participant 14, 2017; Participant 15, 2017). Another Guest explained how the Sorbet that she visits in Johannesburg is "helpful" however, the Sorbet she visited in Cape Town was "snooty" and there was a "difference in their willingness to help" (Participant 17, 2017). Another Guest explained how the service for her actually "depends on the different therapist" (Participant 16, 2017). With regards to the different therapists, one Guest mentioned how you do get the "grumpy" employee where when you do try and talk to them they are "abrupt and rude" (Participant 13, 2017). This viewpoint was similarly shared as another Guest explained that there was one therapist who was "quite sarcastic in her ways" and "was so

condescending” which made the Guest never wanting to visit that Sorbet store again (Participant 16, 2017). With the aforementioned statements in mind, Sorbet’s brand manager explains how if one person is not responsible for their moment of truth, there is a break in the TGE cycle and everyone else’s hard work “falls away” (Kirkel, 2017).

Linking the aforementioned findings back to the literature, with regards to Sorbet’s brand image, in terms of the Human Keys the majority of Guests found that Sorbet’s Citizens actions supported Sorbet in providing this *Total Guest Experience*. However, it was mentioned how Sorbet’s good customer service is not consistent, whereby a minority of Citizens are able to decay Sorbet’s brand image of a “passionate service” through their actions.

4.3.2 Interpretation

Research indicated that Sorbet has a very high level of customer service experienced by the majority of the Guests. This has resulted in a positive brand image for Sorbet, which has been a direct result from their Citizens interactions with Guests. However, there are a handful of Citizens who cause a break in the TGE cycle, which has an effect on Sorbet’s entire brand image. This shows that to a large extent, Sorbet’s brand image is on the whole aligned to the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model.

4.4 Brand Strategies to Manage Brand Growth

The brand strategy is able to plan a future image for the brand to aim for, therefore stipulating a plan of action and specific criteria against which to judge it (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2010). With regards to the Sorbet brand, Sorbet’s brand manager explained how it is difficult for Sorbet to implement and maintain Sorbet’s corporate culture as the brand grows (Kirkel, 2017). Explaining how when the brand was smaller, the brand was easier to maintain, however “the bigger it gets the harder it is” (Kirkel, 2017). The following category aims to unpack the different brand strategy approaches uncovered from the semi-structured interview with Sorbet’s brand manager regarding the ways in which Sorbet’s management aims to manage Sorbet’s growth. This will aim to give an understanding if the strategies ensure that the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model is intact. The following themes will be discussed being, Sorbet’s franchisee selection, induction training and Communication.

Theme	Definition	Verbatim Quote
Franchisee Selection	The criteria by which franchisees are selected (Bannister, 2017).	“When you select franchisee, you have to ask a number of questions, like for example, what would you do if someone came to return an empty product to you. If the person says I want a slip and your mothers ID and a blood sample, and everything else that people ask for, then you know there is no culture fit. If they say they would return the product no problem, there is a culture fit” (Kirkel, 2017).
Induction Training	“A familiarizing process with the total work environment” (Evans, 2004).	“It is such an informative and such an amazing day, because you walk out of there so motivated and inspired” (Participant 3, 2017).
Communication	The exchange of information (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017).	“Every Monday we send out Soul of Sorbet communication” (Kirkel, 2017).

Table 4.4: Brand strategies to manage brand growth.

4.4.1 Theme 1:Franchisee Selection

The franchisor must select the franchisee that is the right person for the business (Bannister, 2017). With that being said, it is important to understand that different franchisors look for different qualities and attitudes when selecting their franchisees (Bannister, 2017). This is important as a below par performance by *one* franchisee can damage the entire brand image (Rose, 2012).

Looking at the research, Kirkel explains how a method to ensure that Sorbet’s franchisees and Citizens uphold Sorbet’s culture begins with the franchisee selection process in order to make good choices in franchisees (Kirkel, 2017). This process involves Sorbet’s top management thoroughly screening each franchisee (Kirkel, 2017). During this screening process, Sorbet’s brand manager explained how when selecting franchisees, the brand looks for a “culture fit” (Kirkel, 2017). One franchisee remarked how Sorbet “scans you properly before they approve you” Participant 5, 2017).

Linking Sorbet’s franchisee selection process back to the literature, it can be said that Sorbet’s top management understands the importance of creating a proper franchisee selection process. It has been found that by selecting franchisees who have qualities that are in-line with Sorbet’s existing culture makes it easier for Sorbet’s franchisees to not only accept, but to also understand how to implement *The Sorbet Way*.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Induction Training

Induction refers to the procedure whereby a newcomer is familiarized with his/her job (Evans, 2004). Ian Fhur personally conducts all Sorbet induction trainings, in both South Africa and abroad (Fhur, 2016).

According to research conducted, Sorbet's brand manager explained that a key strategy that has been put in place in order to ensure that both franchisees and Citizens are upholding *The Sorbet Way*, is through the brand's induction program (Kirkel, 2017). Fhur believes that in order to uphold the culture, Fhur needs to "personally send that message across" (to every staff member) in order to ensure that all Citizens are able understand the *Soul of Sorbet* (Kirkel, 2017). Many franchisees highlight how Sorbet's passionate service is attributed to Ian Fhur, as one franchisee expressed how Fhur "has got a completely different mindset and he is on a completely different planet in terms of how culture works" (Participant 3, 2017; Participant 4, 2017).

It was found that every member from the Sorbet Group is required to attend the induction, where they can go on induction training more than once (Participant 3, 2017). When investigating the effectiveness of the induction program with regards to managing brand growth, it was found that many franchisees were of the opinion that Fhur's induction program is key in turns of motivating passionate service throughout the Group (Participant 1, 2017; Participant 2, 2017; Participant 3, 2017). Findings showed that the induction program is inspirational and stimulating, but not just on a surface level, but also on a deeper level (Participant 3, 2017). This is evident as one Citizen explained how the induction program is able to "change your mind completely" regarding serving as opposed to only focusing on making money (Participant 9, 2017). Many Citizen's also mentioned how initially before going on induction training with Fhur, they believed in profit, but after induction they believed that their passion is able to create profit (Participant 7, Participant 9, Participant 10, 2017).

One franchisee explained how "you send them (Guests) on Ian's training and they come back as a new person, even if it is just for a few months" (Participant 5, 2017). This makes it important to note how some Participants were of the opinion that the induction does wear off after a while (Participant 5, 2017). One Citizen explained how every single person needs to go on induction again as you "come back to work with so much more gas in the tank" (Participant 7, 2017).

Linking Sorbet's induction back to the literature, Sorbet's induction training has created many advantages for the brand. In addition, the induction program has been successful in terms of teaching Citizens about Sorbet's overall purpose. However, although Fhur's induction training is beneficial, the researcher believes that there are some uncertainties. The reason as to why is because the positive effects gained from the induction programs wears off.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Communication

Communication is defined as the exchange of information (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). With that being said, the literature uncovered that as Sorbet grows the brand manager found that it is very difficult to ensure that everyone in the company is living and believing in the *Sorbet Way* (Tennant, 2017).

The research uncovered how a method to ensure that Sorbet's culture is "lived" is through the brand's constant communication regarding the "Soul of Sorbet" (Kirke, 2017). Sorbet drives the brand's purpose at any opportunity, seen as every Monday Sorbet sends "Soul of Sorbet" email communication, and the brand's purpose is emphasized at every training session and every time Fhur lectures (Kirkel, 2017).

Linking the findings to the literature, it is evident that Sorbet is making an effort to ensure that everyone is abiding to the "Soul of Sorbet" culture of "touching peoples lives" in order to ensure everyone is living and believing in *The Sorbet Way*.

4.4.4 Interpretation

In bringing the category to a close, it is clear that Sorbet has made a strong effort with regards to strategies in order to ensure that all abide by *The Sorbet Way*, from Sorbet's franchisee selection process to Sorbet's induction to Sorbet's constant communication. However, it has come to the attention regarding the sustainability of the strategies as the brand grows, where for example the effects from Sorbet's induction trainings, as many have commented, wear off after a while.

4.5 Conclusion

To conclude the findings and interpretations chapter, after delving into each category, it was uncovered that the categories indicated that Sorbet's brand identity, corporate climate and the customer brand image showed to a large extent an alignment with regards to the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model. However, there were prominent factors, which have caused gaps within the model. This is evident from Sorbet's reasoning for being sold to Long4Life (which is in contrast to the brand's vision and people before profit mindset), and Sorbet's franchisees feeling pressure due to having more than one store, which limits their ability to demonstrate servant leadership. Nonetheless, the brand does have brand strategies in place that aim to manage Sorbet's brand identity and growth, which have been successful to some extent thus far. However, the researcher has concerns regarding the sustainability of such strategies going forward. With that being said, the next chapter brings the study to its conclusion.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter details the last section in the research paper. This section aims to answer the research questions, meet the research objectives and ultimately solve the research problem. In addition, this chapter gives recommendations based on the insights found from the study as well as the study's ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations.

5.2 Research Questions

The overarching research question for the study was, *has The Sorbet Way been sustained as the brand has grown and expanded into different regions and markets?* In order to answer the aforementioned research question, three sub-questions were created being: (1) to what extent are Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems in line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy? (2) From an outside-in perspective, based on the viewpoint of Sorbet's clientele, what effect do Sorbet's employees have on Sorbet's brand image? And (3) have the different strategies and initiatives that Sorbet's top management put in place been effective enough in order to sustain the *Sorbet Way* as the brand has grown? The following section first answers the sub-questions in order to fully answer the main question.

5.2.1 Sub-Question 1

To what extent are Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems in line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy?

To a large extent it is concluded that Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems are currently in line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy. Sorbet's brand purpose has been communicated and practiced throughout the organisation. In addition, both franchisees and Citizens have an understanding that Sorbet's brand purpose isn't solely about their Guests, but also about their Citizens. A fundamental element of Sorbet's corporate culture strategy is the element of differentiation. Findings showed that Sorbet's language is being practiced; therefore this element of differentiation is being created. Looking at Sorbet's Five Driving Principles, it is evident that this passionate culture of "people before profits" has been filtered throughout the organisation. Sorbet has to a large extent achieved a sense of a "selfless community". It is evident that on a whole, servant leadership is not merely a leadership ideal but it is something that is practiced actively in the Sorbet organisation. This is clearly demonstrated as the majority of franchisees felt supported by Head Office, and the majority of Citizens felt supported in turn by their franchisees. And it has also been found that Sorbet's top management and franchisees are dedicated to the individual growth and development of their Citizens. Which in turn creates pride amongst Citizens in terms of working for the Sorbet brand.

However, on the other hand, what was found by the researcher is that by Sorbet being sold to Long4Life, this change in Sorbet's brand architecture may in the future cause conflict with Sorbet practicing their "people before profits philosophy". In addition, what was found is that Sorbet's franchisees did not see this passionate service filtered down to *all* Citizens. This is important because if Sorbet does not fully embrace their passionate service philosophy, it can have a major effect with regards to sustaining *The Sorbet Way* as the brand grows. Moreover, research did uncover that Sorbet does have "I Specialists" in their community, but research found that they are the minority. Moving forward, one of the most noteworthy findings were that Sorbet's franchisees get caught up in the day-to-day operations where having more than one store prevents the franchisees from focusing on each store individually and therefore makes it difficult for franchisees to practice servant leadership.

Overall, the researcher is of the opinion that no corporate climate can be "perfect". Thus, the researcher believes that on the whole Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems are in line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy. However, as corporate climate is not static, the researcher has her apprehension. This apprehension is due to the brand's growth in terms of franchisees owning more than one store, and Sorbet being sold to Long4Life. The researcher is of the opinion that the aforementioned occurrences may have an on effect for *The Sorbet Way* in the future.

5.2.2 Sub-Question 2

From an outside-in perspective, based on the viewpoint of Sorbet's clientele, what effect do Sorbet's employees have on Sorbet's brand image?

The researcher is of the opinion that Sorbet's Citizens have to a large extent a positive effect on the Sorbet brand image. Sorbet Guests described the Sorbet brand as professional, friendly, and as a brand that has high levels of expertise. In addition, what was uncovered is that Sorbet has a very high level of customer service experienced by the majority of the Guests. These factors in turn have resulted in a positive brand image for Sorbet, where the researcher is of the opinion that this has been a direct result from their Citizens interactions with Guests. However, there are a handful of Citizens who cause a break in Sorbet's Total Guest Experience cycle, and a small break in the cycle at one store is seen to have a ripple effect on Sorbet's *entire* brand image.

5.2.3 Sub-Question 3

Have the different strategies and initiatives that Sorbet's top management put in place been effective enough in order to sustain the *Sorbet Way* as the brand has grown?

The researcher is of the opinion that currently the different strategies and initiatives that Sorbet's top management has put in place has been effective to a large degree in order to sustain the *Sorbet Way* as the brand has grown. It is clear that Sorbet's top management has made a strong effort with regards to their strategies in order to ensure that all abide by *The Sorbet Way*. This is evident from Sorbet's franchisee selection process to Sorbet's induction conducted by Fhur to Sorbet's constant communication. However, the researcher believes that these strategies and initiatives are only successful to some degree, seen as the positive effects from Sorbet's induction trainings wear off after a while.

5.2.4 Overall Research Question

Has *The Sorbet Way* been sustained as the brand has grown and expanded into different regions and markets?

Overall, the researcher is of the opinion that *The Sorbet Way* has to a large extent been sustained as the brand has grown and expanded into different regions and markets. This is seen as Sorbet's representatives' actions and belief systems to a large extent are line with Sorbet's proposed brand culture strategy, Sorbet's Citizens have to a large extent had a positive effect on the Sorbet brand image, and the different strategies and initiatives that Sorbet's top management put in place have been effective to a large extent in order to sustain the *Sorbet Way* as the brand has grown. However, the researcher is questionable with regards to how *The Sorbet Way* will be sustained in the future. This is because the brand is seen to be showing small signs of possibly shifting from *The Sorbet Way*. Long4Life's acquisition of Sorbet could possibly alter the brand's philosophy whereby there could possibly be a shift from being people before profits, to a more profit-based organisation.

5.3 Problem Statement

To investigate if Sorbet's corporate culture, *The Sorbet Way*, has become enhanced or diluted by Sorbet's brand growth, and to what extent Sorbet's current corporate climate has had on Sorbet's brand image.

With the aforementioned questions and sub-questions answered, the researcher is of the opinion that she can now fully answer the research paper's research problem. The researcher is of the opinion that *The Sorbet Way* is openly practiced by many new and existing franchisees and Citizens and therefore has become enhanced (to some extent) as the brand has grown. This is because the more people who practice *The Sorbet Way*, the more this purposeful climate is able to spread and grow. This has ultimately resulted in the brand's corporate climate having a positive effect on Sorbet's brand image. However, the researcher is of the opinion that Sorbet's future brand growth may threaten *The Sorbet Way* if (1) future brand building decisions are not in-line with Sorbet's ultimate brand purpose of *Serving the Lives of their Guests and Citizens*, (2) if Sorbet's franchisees can not fulfill their servant leadership role or (3) if brand building strategies to retain Sorbet's culture become ineffective.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the insights found from the study, the researcher has suggested the following recommendations for the Sorbet Group in order to assist the brand in ensuring that *The Sorbet Way* continues to be sustained in the future.

- With regards to Sorbet being sold to Long4Life, it is recommended that Sorbet continuously abide by their brand's higher purpose of *serving and improving the lives of their Guests and Citizens* (Fhur, 2014). And continue to focus on people before profits; because if Sorbet's top management begins to focus on profits, this attitude has the power to filter through to the entire organisation.
- It is recommended that Sorbet create a limit with regards to how many stores Sorbet's franchisees can own (the researcher recommends two). As well as it is recommended that Sorbet's franchisees go for training with regards to accounting and human relation and management skills as this may reduce the pressure that Sorbet's franchisees face. Therefore, these tactics may give Sorbet's franchisees the space to act as a servant leader.
- It is recommended that the current brand strategy regarding implementing *The Sorbet Way* is revised and updated. The researcher is of the belief that although these strategies have been effective in the past, they seem to "wear off". A recommendation to combat this problem is by having team-building events amongst the different franchise stores. These events could teach The Five Sorbet Driving Principles in an interactive way. In addition these team-building events will be able to create a greater sense of community amongst stores in different regions.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refer to concerns of the morality of human behavior (Miller et al, 2012). In relation to social research, ethics refer to the researcher's moral deliberation and accountability throughout the entire research process (Miller et al, 2012). There are a number of ethical considerations that the researcher took into account as the researcher was ethically responsible for informed consent, trust and protecting the participants' privacy in the form of confidentiality throughout all stages of the research process (Miller et al, 2012; Silverman, n.d.).

5.5.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to: (1) how participants have the right to know that they are being researched, (2) how participants have the right to be informed about the nature of the research and what is expected of them and (3) how participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time (Louw, 2014; Silverman, n.d.). The researcher ensured that all participants who took part in this study gave informed consent. The researcher required all participants of the study to sign a consent form (please see Appendix C for an example of the consent form).

It is important to understand that the researcher had an ethical responsibility to highlight the nature of the study to Sorbet's top management, franchisees and employees in order to ensure that Sorbet's management, franchisees and employees fully understood the research topic at hand, especially because it might shed a negative light on the Sorbet brand. It is important that the researcher went through the correct and ethical channels in order to contact Sorbet's franchisees and employees. The first level of permission and consent that the researcher went through was to gain consent from Sorbet's brand manager, Jade Kinkel (please see Appendix D for permission form). Once Kinkel has signed the consent form, the researcher could interview the franchisees, the next step was for the researcher to gain consent from the individual franchisees in order to ask their permission to interview their employees (please see Appendix D for permission forms). Once the franchisor had signed the permission form, only then were the employees ethically cleared in order to be asked to participate in the study and then they needed to sign a consent form prior to the interview process.

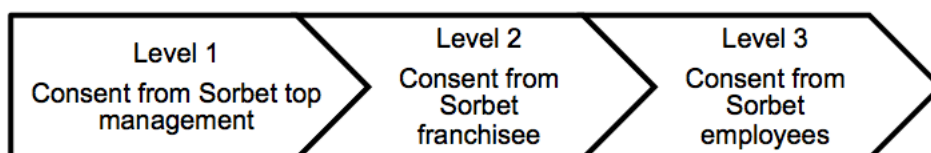


Figure 5.1: Referring to the number of different levels of permission and consent the researcher went through in order to contact Sorbet's franchisees and employees in an ethical manner (Source; Own Adaption).

5.5.2 Trust and Confidentiality

Trust is an ethical concern which relates to the relationship between the participants and the researcher and relates to the researcher's ethical responsibility not to 'spoil' and ruin the research field for others (Silverman, n.d.). Therefore the researcher ensured that the psychological and physical comfort of the participants was taken into consideration (Louw, 2014). The researcher ensured that the (1) participants time was not wasted, the researcher arrived early to the designated interview site and the researcher ensured that the interview only lasted the agreed upon 45 minutes; the (2) researcher avoided any questions that could make participants feel uncomfortable; (3) the researcher did not ask any questions that would turn the participants against the Sorbet brand or cast any doubt on Sorbet as an employer in any way; (4) no bonuses or incentives were offered to participants; (5) the researcher ensured that participants had knowledge and understood that the researcher was not being funded by any person/organisation to do this study, being either the Sorbet brand or Sorbet's competitor; and (6) personal information was kept confidential (Louw, 2014). Confidentiality means that the researcher was obliged to protect the identity of each participant (Silverman, n.d.). Although confidentiality was not required for Sorbet's brand manager, confidentiality is of major importance for Sorbet franchisees, employees and customers. The reason why is because employees might feel that what they said could have an impact on their jobs and customers might feel that what they say could have an impact on the personal relationship in which they have developed with the Sorbet brand and it's employees.

5.5.3 Ethical Clearance

It is important to note that the researcher did not carry out the semi-structured interviews until the researcher had obtained a formal letter of ethical clearance. Therefore, only once a formal letter of ethical clearance was obtained from the Vega School of Brand Leadership did the researcher begin the research process (please see Appendix E for ethical clearance).

5.6 Limitations and Delimitations

5.6.1 Limitations

Limitations of a study refer to the systematic bias that the researcher could not control which affected the research results in an unfortunate manner (Price & Murnan, 2004). Additionally, limitations refer to the potential weaknesses of the study (Korrapati, 2016). The knowledge of such weaknesses is helpful as they help recognize possible difficulties and errors when the researcher deduced the research results (Korrapati, 2016).

Below lists the potential limitations that the researcher believed that this study faced.

1. The sample was not a full representative of all of Sorbet's franchisees, employees and clientele as only a handful of 19 participants took part in the study.
2. The researcher believed that time was a research limitation as if the researcher had more time, the researcher would have been able to interview more participants, and therefore would be able to gain deeper and more accurate insights into the topic at hand.
3. The researcher faced geographical constraints as Sorbet has over 200 stores across South Africa and with 4 stores based in the UK, thus resource and time constraints allowed for only Sorbet franchisees, employees and clientele based in the Gauteng area to be interviewed, particularly focused in the Bedfordview, Eastgate, Senderood, Greenstone and Melrose Arch areas.
4. Employees may have felt that what they say could have an impact on their jobs and thus did not give truthful and accurate answers.
5. Clientele might have felt that what they said could have an impact on their personal relationship in which they have developed with the Sorbet brand and Sorbet employees. And thus did not give truthful and accurate answers.
6. There is only one researcher, thus the nature of self-reporting and self-analyzing could possibly have led to biased findings.
7. Ian Fhur's book, *Get That Feeling*, had been used as a main source for this research project in terms of comparing Sorbet's proposed corporate culture and how the corporate climate is today. However, the book was published in 2014 and strategic elements of Sorbet's culture could have possibly changed from there. This is seen for example that the target markets in Fhur's book did not include Sorbet Man clientele.
8. Non-probable sampling had been used due to time and resource constraints; therefore participants did not have an equal chance of being selected. Generalizing the results found needs to be taken with caution as the participants were selected by methods of convenience sampling, purposeful sampling and self-selection sampling.
9. The researcher's inexperience and lack of training to conducting research was a limitation for the study, especially with regards to conducting the semi-structured interviews.

5.6.2 Delimitations

In contrast to limitations, a researcher has a control over the delimitation, seen as delimitations refers to the systematic bias that was intentionally introduced by the researcher into the study (Price & Murnan, 2004). Delimitations are characteristics that are able to define the boundaries and limit the scope of the proposed study (Korrapati, 2016).

Below lists the delimitations in which the researcher had put in place.

1. The study has been based on using Sorbet as a case study, therefore making the research less likely to be validated for other brands.
2. The study is based on the theoretical framework being the VCI Alignment model. Therefore, concepts that do not relate to an organisation's vision, culture and image were not given prominent attention to in the study.
3. Sorbet has many different types of stakeholders, however the population defined for this study only contained Sorbet's brand manager, franchisees, barbers, nail technicians, beauty therapists, Salon Assistants and specifically identified target markets as identified from Ian Fhur's book, *Get That Feeling*. The study's population therefore left out important stakeholders for example, suppliers, the area manager, and other types of employees working at Sorbet as well as the customers who do not fit into the target markets projected by Fhur (excluding the male clientele in which the study did include as the book was written prior to the launch of Sorbet Man).

5.7 Conclusion

Chapter 1 introduced the research topic of "an investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate". Chapter 2 included the literature review, which investigated the study further. From the literature, it was evident that Sorbet has an extremely strong foundation in terms of their brand identity and corporate culture, seen from a breakdown of *The Sorbet Way*. However, after delving into the concepts of corporate culture and climate and organisational life cycles, there may be a possible gap between Sorbet's vision, culture and image. Chapter 3 gave rise to the research methodology used in order to determine how aligned Sorbet's brand is with the VCI model. This chapter highlighted the study's choice of research design, population and sample, data collection method, data analysis method, and trustworthiness. Chapter 4 looked at the study's findings and interpretations gained from the raw data. The findings and interpretations uncovered various categories, and showed to a large extent an alignment with regards to the Vision-Culture-Image Alignment model. However, there were prominent factors, which have caused gaps within the model. This was evident from Sorbet's reasoning for being sold to Long4Life (which is in contrast to the brand's people before profit mindset), and Sorbet's franchisees feeling pressure due to having more than one store, which limits their ability to demonstrate servant leadership. Lastly, findings also uncovered concerns

regarding the sustainability of Sorbet's brand strategies that have been put in place in order to manage Sorbet's brand identity as the brand grows.

Finally, Chapter 5 answered the research questions and the research paper's problem statement, where it was found that *The Sorbet Way* is openly practiced by many new and existing franchisees and Citizens and therefore has become enhanced (to some extent) as the brand has grown. However, the researcher is of the opinion that Sorbet's future brand growth may threaten *The Sorbet Way* if (1) future brand building decisions are not in-line with Sorbet's ultimate brand identity (2) if Sorbet's franchisees can not fulfill their servant leadership role or (3) if brand-building strategies to retain Sorbet's culture become ineffective. Thus, the researcher suggested recommendations for the Sorbet Group in order to assist the brand in ensuring that *The Sorbet Way* continues to be sustained in the future. Lastly, the study's ethical implications were looked at and how these ethical implications were addressed as well as the study's limitations and delimitations were looked at.

The researcher is of the opinion that the study has been successful as it gave the researcher an understanding of how a brand with a strong purpose is able to truly connect with people and make a difference in people's lives. However, the study revealed that corporate climate is not static, and as a brand grows, a brand's purpose becomes more difficult to sustain. Therefore, in order to ensure that a brand's purpose continues to grow, the researcher believes that various brand strategies need to be put in place and need to be continuously updated. Moving forward, it is recommended for future researchers, if wanting to conduct a similar study, to conduct the study over a longer time frame as well as possibly compare different purposeful cultures. This will allow future researchers to truly investigate how a brand's purpose can be managed (from the inside-out) as the brand grows.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Final Interview Agendas

The following section details the interview agendas used when conducting the semi-structured interviews for Sorbet's brand manager, franchisees, employees and clientele.

Interview agenda for Sorbet's brand manager		
No	Questions	Question aims and linking the questions back to the literature review
1	<i>How important and what are the benefits of Sorbet's brand purpose and corporate culture in terms of managing the Sorbet brand?</i>	The aim of this question is to generate a general rapport between the interviewer and Sorbet's brand manager. As well as to gain an understanding if the current brand manager has the same way of thinking about brand purpose and corporate culture as founder, Ian Fhur, as stipulated in his book <i>Get That Feeling</i> .
2	<i>What current strategies has Sorbet's management team put in place in order to ensure that Sorbet's franchisees and citizens are upholding Sorbet's corporate culture?</i>	The Sorbet business model changed when the Sorbet brand launched their first franchise model in 2009. According to Jade Kinkel, the responsibilities of upholding Sorbet's corporate culture have fallen onto their franchisees and citizens as opposed to the Sorbet's management team (Tennant, 2017). This question aims to understand the current strategies that are used in 2017 that Sorbet's management team has put in place in order to support the franchisees responsibilities of upholding Sorbet's corporate culture.
3	<i>Do you find it difficult as a brand manager to implement and maintain Sorbet's corporate culture as the brand grows?</i>	Creating the right culture, implementing it and maintaining it throughout every segment of the organisation makes the difference between a franchise system that will continue to grow and one that will stop growing (Daley, 2016). The following question aims to understand if Sorbet is implementing and maintaining their corporate culture in order to ensure that the brand grows in an organic and sustainable manner.
4.1	<i>What have been the major challenges for Sorbet when delegating major brand building responsibilities to franchisees?</i>	The general consensus amongst theorists is that organisations go through an organisational lifecycle where they are established, grow, mature and then decline. As mentioned in the literature review the Sorbet brand has been placed in the <i>delegation</i> phase of Larry Greiner's <i>Five Phases of Growth</i> model. The shift

4.2	<i>What have been the major opportunities for Sorbet when delegating major brand building responsibilities to franchisees?</i>	towards the next phase being the coordination phase occurs when an organisation goes through a crisis of control, referring to when management feels that they are loosing control over the lower tiers of management (Greiner, 1998). This aims to uncover if Sorbet reached the crisis of control element of Larry Greiner's <i>Five Phases of Growth</i> model or are they still in the delegation phase?
5	<i>How and when does Sorbet review and evaluate their corporate culture strategies? If so, can you please give me an example and if not, why not?</i>	Brand building strategies involve a constant, dynamic and conscious development of a unique and particular meaning that is able to hold value and connect with people (Bethien, 2015; Klopper & North, 2011). This question aims to understand how and if Sorbet's corporate culture strategies are reviewed in order to adapt to employees needs (as corporate culture is not static but rather evolves and grows over time).
6	<i>Many Hello Peter posts have commented that Sorbet has "rude and unfriendly staff," "bad client service," and has "under delivered." These comments are in direct opposition to Sorbet's corporate culture and brand purpose. How does Sorbet's management team respond to these damaging brand image comments both online and what is done regarding the comments offline?</i>	This question aims to understand Sorbet's complaint policy. According to Fhur (2014) Sorbet's complaint policy is a major driver of Sorbet's passionate service. Sorbet's current complaint policy is called <i>Win Back</i> and involves three steps, Apologize, Fix it and Sweeten it.
7	<i>The Sorbet brand has grown tremendously since its launch in 2005, seen with the multitude of different stores and employees as well as new brand extensions across South Africa and the UK. As Sorbet's brand manager, how do you ensure that Sorbet will avoid the brand's culture being</i>	Fhur cites in his book, <i>Get that Feeling</i> which was written in 2014 that the challenge from changing the Sorbet business model to a franchise model has been ensuring that <i>The Sorbet Way</i> corporate culture has been carried forward by the franchisees in order to ensure that the brand does not become diluted (Fhur, 2014). The following question aims to understand what strategies Sorbet has put in place in order to ensure that with Sorbet's new brand ventures, the Sorbet Way is still

	<i>misrepresented and thus causing brand dilution?</i>	being carried forward by the franchisees.
9	<i>There are rumors that Sorbet is being bought over by Long4Life, a leisure investment company.</i> <i>What impact do you think that this acquisition may have on the franchisees and employees in terms of maintaining the brand's core purpose and corporate culture?</i>	This question aims to gain an understanding of where the Sorbet brand will be in the future in order to better analyze the brand's corporate culture in a forward thinking manner.

Interview agenda for Sorbet's franchisees		
No	Questions	Question aims and linking the questions back to the literature review
1.1	<i>How many franchise stores do you own and long have you been a franchisee owner of your Sorbet store?</i>	The aim of this question is to generate a general rapport between the interviewer and the franchisee owner as well as to generate a profile of the participant. Franchise owners that have been with Sorbet for a long period of time might have a different perspective of Sorbet's corporate culture as opposed to the franchise owner who has recently joined the Sorbet group. Both experienced and inexperienced franchise owners are equally important for this research, as they are able to give unique insight into the corporate climate at the different stages of growth within the Sorbet brand.
1.2	<i>Why did you choose to become a franchise owner of the Sorbet brand?</i>	
2	<i>As a Sorbet franchisee owner, how would you describe Sorbet's brand purpose? In other words why do you believe that the world is a better place with the Sorbet brand in it?</i>	The aim of this question is to understand if Sorbet's franchisees know and understand Sorbet's brand purpose. This question will hopefully give an indication, why or why not Sorbet's brand identity matches with the brand's proposed brand image. In addition, Fhur cites in his book, <i>Get that Feeling</i> which was written in 2014 that the challenge from changing the Sorbet business model to a franchise model has been ensuring that <i>The Sorbet Way</i> corporate culture has been carried forward by the franchisees in order to ensure that the brand does not become diluted (Fhur, 2014).
3.1	<i>How would you describe Sorbet's corporate culture?</i>	The aim of these questions is to gain an understanding of how Sorbet's franchisees perceive Sorbet's corporate culture and brand image.
3.2	<i>What sort of image does Sorbet want you to project?</i>	
4	<i>As a leader at Sorbet, do you believe that you are part of a bigger community?</i>	According to Fhur (2014), a major element of Sorbet's corporate culture refers to the Sorbet brand being part of a larger community.
5	<i>What do you think drives the Sorbet brand?</i>	Sorbet's belief is that the purpose of work is to serve and not just to make money. Money is the reward for good

	<i>*Prompt: profit vs. willingness to serve</i>	service and not the purpose and sole driver of work (Fhur, 2014). Thus, the following question aims to assess if Sorbet's franchisees perceive the brand as a brand being driven by profit, as if they do, then it could cause a major culture and brand identity disconnect.
6	<i>What is your relationship like with higher management?</i>	The aim of the following question aims to test Sorbet's <i>Driving Principle 3: Servant leadership</i> (Fhur, 2014).
7	<i>How do you understand the win back system?</i>	The aim of this question is to grasp if Sorbet's franchisees implement and use corporate culture strategies taught in the induction programs such as the 'win back' strategy. This question aims identify if such strategies are as relevant and effective in reality as they are in theory (Daley, 2016).
8	<i>As a franchisee owner, what are your biggest challenges in terms of delivering great service?</i>	The aim of this question is to understand the possible hidden challenges in which Sorbet's franchisees face in order to deliver great service.
9	<i>How do you personally maintain the Sorbet Way, in your store?</i>	The aim of this question is to understand how Sorbet's culture has been maintained throughout every segment of the organisation.
10	<i>How do you feel about Sorbet's expansion?</i>	The aim of this question aims to gain a direct answer from Sorbet's franchisee owners to understand if they find that the brand's growth is diluting or growing Sorbet's corporate climate.

Interview agenda for Sorbet's employees (Citizens)		
No	Questions	Question aims and linking the questions back to the literature review
1	<i>What is your position at Sorbet and how long have you worked at Sorbet?</i>	The aim of this question is to generate a general rapport between the interviewer and Sorbet's employees as well as to generate a profile of the participant. As employees that has been with Sorbet for longer might have a different perspective of Sorbet's corporate culture as opposed to employees that has recently joined the Sorbet group. Both types beauty therapists are equally important for this research, as they are able to give unique insight into the corporate culture at different stages of growth within the Sorbet brand.
2	<i>As a Sorbet citizen, why the world is a better place with the Sorbet brand in it?</i>	The aim of this question is to understand if Sorbet's employees know and understand Sorbet's brand purpose.
3.1	<i>How would you describe Sorbet's community?</i>	The aim of this question is to gain an understanding of how Sorbet's employees understand and perceive Sorbet's corporate culture.
3.2	<i>What types of feelings are evoked when you tell people that you work for the Sorbet brand?</i>	
4.1	<i>As a citizen of Sorbet, do you believe that you are part of a bigger community?</i>	According to Fhur (2014), a major element of Sorbet's corporate culture refers to the Sorbet brand being part of a larger community
4.2	<i>Would you say your relationship with your fellow citizens differs from the traditional employee-employee relationship? How would you describe your relationship with your fellow citizens?</i>	
5	<i>Do you believe that the Sorbet brand and the people working for Sorbet are driven by profit or are</i>	Sorbet's belief is that the purpose of work is to serve and not just to make money. Money is the reward for good service and not the purpose and sole driver of work

	<i>they rather driven by a willingness to serve?</i>	(Fhur, 2014). The following question aims to assess if Sorbet staff perceive the brand as a brand being driven by profit, as if they do, then it could cause a major culture and brand identity disconnect.
6.1	<i>Do higher management make your job easier?</i>	The aim of the following question aims to test Sorbet's <i>Driving Principle 3: Servant leadership</i> .
7	<i>Do you believe that the Sorbet's brand and Sorbet management team have given you support and opportunities in your career and personal growth?</i>	This question aims to test if Sorbet's management is fulfilling Sorbet's Driving Principle 5, being Individual growth.
8	<i>Can you explain Sorbet's Win back and Complaint policy to me?</i>	The aim of this question is to grasp if Sorbet's employees implement and use corporate culture strategies taught in the induction programs such as the 'win back' strategy.
8	<i>What are your biggest challenges in terms of delivering great service?</i>	The aim of this question is to understand the challenges in which Sorbet's citizens might face that are not explicit but rather hidden challenges that face their ability to deliver great service.
9	<i>Do you feel that the al franchise stores gives the same level of customer service?</i>	The aim of this question aims to gain a direct answer from Sorbet's employees to understand if they find that the brand's growth is diluting or growing Sorbet's corporate culture.
10	<i>What did you learn from the induction program?</i>	This question aims to understand how Sorbet's employees respond to Sorbet's induction programs. This is important, as Sorbet's induction programs are currently a major strategy put in place by top management in order to teach the employees about the brand.

Interview agenda for Sorbet's cliental (Guests)		
No	Questions	Question aims and linking the questions back to the literature review
1	<i>How often do you visit Sorbet?</i>	The aim of the question is to generate a general rapport between the interviewer and Sorbet's customer as well as to establish the loyalty level that the participant has with the Sorbet brand. It is important to note here that a customer who frequents Sorbet regularly has the ability to give more all-inclusive answers.
2	<i>What are your immediate thoughts when you think of the Sorbet brand?</i>	This question aims to establish a general overview of the participant's perception of Sorbet's entire brand image. Please note, this question is including and not including Sorbet's corporate culture.
3	<i>What are your immediate thoughts when you think of Sorbet's employees?</i>	The following question aims to test if Sorbet's employees are acting as the "ultimate guardians" of the brand's image. Please note, this question focuses on Sorbet's employees building Sorbet's brand image as opposed to the question above, which focuses on Sorbet's brand image in general.
4.1	<i>Why do you choose Sorbet as your beauty salon brand of choice-</i> <i>*Prompt: Do the employees and service levels influence this choice at all?</i>	Flur explained in an interview that although the brand's products and treatments are easy for their competitors to replicate, what is not easy to replicate is the Sorbet's brand culture (Whitehead, 2017). The following question aims to investigate if Sorbet's employees and corporate culture are a main point of difference from competitors.
5.1	<i>In terms of Sorbet's customer service, how would you rank the Sorbet brand, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest? Why the choice of ranking?</i>	The aim of these questions is to gain an understanding of if Sorbet is able to retain their level of customer service as the brand has grown.
5.2	<i>Is Sorbet's customer service consistent?</i> <i>*Prompt: Do you find it differs per salon or per beautician?</i>	

5.3	Can you recall either a particularly bad or a particularly good customer service experience that you have had with the Sorbet brand?	
6	How loyal would you say you are to the Sorbet brand on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest?	Sorbet's passionate service philosophy is aimed to achieve guest loyalty not just guest satisfaction. The following question aims to understand how or if Sorbet's "passionate service philosophy" is able to generate brand loyalty.

Appendix B: Interview Agendas Prior to Pretest and Pilot Test

Interview agenda for Sorbet's brand manager	
No	Questions
1	How important and what are the benefits of Sorbet's brand purpose and corporate culture in terms of managing the Sorbet brand?
2	What current strategies has Sorbet's management team put in place in order to ensure that Sorbet's franchisees and citizens are upholding Sorbet's corporate culture?
3	Do you find it difficult as a brand manager to implement and maintain Sorbet's corporate culture as the brand grows?
4	What have been the major challenges for Sorbet when delegating major brand building responsibilities to franchisees?
5	How and when does Sorbet review and evaluate their corporate culture strategies? If so, can you please give me an example and if not, why not?
6	Many Hello Peter posts have commented that Sorbet has "rude and unfriendly staff," "bad client service," and has "under delivered." These comments are in direct opposition to Sorbet's corporate culture and brand purpose. How does Sorbet's management team respond to these damaging brand image comments both online and what is done regarding the comments offline?
7	The Sorbet brand has grown tremendously since its launch in 2005, seen with the multitude of different stores and employees as well as new brand extensions across South Africa and the UK. As Sorbet's brand manager, how do you ensure that Sorbet will avoid the brand's culture being misrepresented and thus causing brand dilution?
9	There are rumors that Sorbet is being bought over by <i>Long4Life</i> , a leisure investment company (Shevel, 2017). What impact do you think that this acquisition may have on the franchisees and employees in terms of maintaining the brand's core purpose and corporate culture?

Interview agenda for Sorbet's franchisees	
No	Questions
1.1	How many franchise stores do you own and long have you been a franchisee owner of your Sorbet store?
1.2	Why did you choose to become a franchise owner of the Sorbet brand?
2	As a Sorbet franchisee owner, how would you describe Sorbet's brand purpose?
3	How would you describe Sorbet's corporate culture?
4	As a leader at Sorbet, do you believe that you are part of a bigger community? If so, in what way? And if not, why not?

5	Do you believe that the Sorbet brand and the people working for Sorbet are driven by profit or are they rather driven by a willingness to serve?
6	What is your relationship like with higher management; is it one where they serve you and is involved or rather is it one where you feel that you serve them?
7	Sorbet's has a unique complaint system called 'win back' which involves three steps, Apologize, Fix it and Sweeten it. Have you heard of such system and do you practice it? Or have you never heard of it or find that it is rather unrealistic to practice?
8	As a franchisee owner, what are your biggest challenges in terms of delivering great service?
9	How do you personally maintain the <i>Sorbet Way</i> , in your store?
10	Do you feel that the Sorbet brand is growing too big and the Sorbet's brand culture is being lost and diluted as not as much attention is given to each store or do you feel that Sorbet's culture is spreading with each new franchise opened?

Interview agenda for Sorbet's employees	
No	Questions
1	What is your position at Sorbet and how long have you worked at Sorbet?
2	As a Sorbet Citizen, how would you describe Sorbet's higher brand purpose?
3	How would you describe Sorbet's corporate culture?
4	Would you say your relationship with your fellow citizens differs from the traditional employee-employee relationship?
5	Do you believe that the Sorbet brand and the people working for Sorbet are driven by profit or are they rather driven by a willingness to serve? Please would you elaborate on your answer?
6	What is your relationship like with higher management, is it one where they serve you, and is involved or rather is it one where you feel that you serve them and is more of an autocratic style?
7	Sorbet's has a unique complaint system called 'win back' which involves three steps, Apologize, Fix it and Sweeten it. Have you heard of such system and do you practice it? Or have you never heard of it or find that it is rather unrealistic to practice?
8	What are your biggest challenges in terms of delivering great service? It could be something as simple as lack of transport, the stores culture etc.
9	Do you feel that the Sorbet brand is growing too big and the Sorbet's brand culture is being lost and diluted as not as much attention is given to each store or do you feel that Sorbet's culture is spreading with each new franchise opened?
10	On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, do you believe that

	Sorbet's induction platforms are beneficial in order to teach citizens about Sorbet's corporate culture? What do you find are the most important and/ or least important elements of the induction programs in terms of spreading Sorbet's corporate culture? and lastly do you have any other suggestions in order to spread Sorbet's corporate culture in an effective manner?
--	--

Interview agenda for Sorbet's cliental	
No	Questions
1	How often do you visit Sorbet?
2	What are your immediate thoughts when you think of the Sorbet brand? Are they positive, negative or both and can you please substantiate your answer?
3	What are your immediate thoughts when you think of Sorbet's employees? Can you please substantiate your answer?
4	Why do you choose Sorbet as your beauty salon brand of choice?
5	In terms of Sorbet's customer service, how would you rank the Sorbet brand, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest? Why the choice of ranking?
6	How loyal would you say you are to the Sorbet brand on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest? Why the choice of loyalty?

Appendix C: Consent Form Example

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Thank you for participating in this Vega Honours Research study. The research study focuses on: *An investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate.*

Some important information regarding this study;

- Please note that your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without negative consequences.
- I can assure you that all information will be treated as confidential; and that the data would be destroyed should you decide to withdraw.
- This interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes complete.
- Your identity will remain confidential.
- All information provided during this study will be used for academic purposes only, and remains the intellectual property of the IIE.
- In addition, I require permission to record and transcribe the interview, for analysis purposes.

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Thank you once again for giving up your time for free to contribute to this study.

Should you wish to contact the interviewer or supervisors of this study, please find their details below:

Interviewer's Details:

Cindy Ashira Gottschalk

Contact number: 082 334 7193

Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

Supervisor's Details:

Nicole Mason

Contact number: 083 339 9138

Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

Research Anchor's Details:

Dayle Raaff

Contact number: 084 652 8518

Email address: dayleraaff@gmail.com

Appendix D: Permission Letters

CONSENT FOR FRANCHISEES AND EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this Vega Honours Research study. The research focuses on: *An investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate.*

Some important information regarding this study;

- Please note that your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without negative consequences.
- I can assure you that all information will be treated as confidential; and that the data would be destroyed should you decide to withdraw.
- The interview will take approximately 45 minutes complete.
- Franchisee and employees identities will remain confidential
- All information provided during this study will be used for academic purposes only, and remains the intellectual property of the IIE.
- In addition, I require permission to record and transcribe the interviews, for analysis purposes.

Sorbet Brand Manager: Jade Kirkel

Date: 02/08/2017

Place: Rivonia

Signature: G. Guller

Should you wish to contact the interviewer or supervisors of this study, please find their details below:

Interviewer's Details:

Cindy Ashira Gottschalk

Contact number: 082 334 7193

Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

Supervisor's Details:

Nicole Mason

Contact number: 083 339 9138

Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

Research Anchor's Details:

Dayle Raaff

Contact number: 084 652 8518

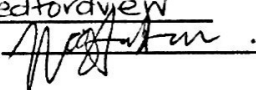
Email address: dayleraaff@gmail.com

CONSENT FOR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Thank you for allowing for your employees to participate in this Vega Honours Research study. The research focuses on: *An investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate.*

Some important information regarding this study;

- Please note that your employee's participation is voluntary, and your employee may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without negative consequences.
- I can assure you that all information will be treated as confidential; and that the data would be destroyed should you decide to withdraw.
- This interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes complete.
- Your employee's identity will remain confidential.
- All information provided during this study will be used for academic purposes only, and remains the intellectual property of the IIE.
- In addition, I require permission to record and transcribe the interview, for analysis purposes.

Name of Franchisee: Nici Constantinou
Date: 12.09.2017
Place: Sorbet Bedfordview
Signature of Franchisee: 

Thank you once again for giving up your employees time for free to contribute to this study.

Should you wish to contact the interviewer or supervisors of this study, please find their details below:

Interviewer's Details:

Cindy Ashira Gottschalk

Contact number: 082 334 7193

Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

Supervisor's Details:

Nicole Mason

Contact number: 083 339 9138

Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

Research Anchor's Details:

Dayle Raaff

Contact number: 084 652 8518

Email address: dayleraaff@gmail.com

CONSENT FOR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Thank you for allowing for your employees to participate in this Vega Honours Research study. The research focuses on: *An investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate.*

Some important information regarding this study;

- Please note that your employee's participation is voluntary, and your employee may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without negative consequences.
- I can assure you that all information will be treated as confidential; and that the data would be destroyed should you decide to withdraw.
- This interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes complete.
- Your employee's identity will remain confidential.
- All information provided during this study will be used for academic purposes only, and remains the intellectual property of the IIE.
- In addition, I require permission to record and transcribe the interview, for analysis purposes.

Name of Franchisee: Charlie Kainaud's
Date: 13 Sept 2017
Place: Sorbet Man Village Urew
Signature of Franchisee: [Signature]

Thank you once again for giving up your employees time for free to contribute to this study.

Should you wish to contact the interviewer or supervisors of this study, please find their details below:

Interviewer's Details:

Cindy Ashira Gottschalk

Contact number: 082 334 7193

Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

Supervisor's Details:

Nicole Mason

Contact number: 083 339 9138

Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

Research Anchor's Details:

Dayle Raaff

Contact number: 084 652 8518

Email address: dayleraaff@gmail.com

Interview Guide

CONSENT FOR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Thank you for allowing for your employees to participate in this Vega Honours Research study. The research focuses on: *An investigation into the role that brand growth has played in either enhancing or diluting Sorbet's purposeful corporate climate.*

Some important information regarding this study;

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Name of Franchisee: LYNN MARITZ
Date: 14/9/2007
Place: GREENSTONE
Signature of Franchisee: [Signature]

Thank you once again for giving up your employees time for free to contribute to this study.

Should you wish to contact the interviewer or supervisors of this study, please find their details below:

Interviewer's Details:

Cindy Ashira Gottschalk
Contact number: 082 334 7193
Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

Supervisor's Details:

Nicole Mason
Contact number: 083 339 9138
Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

Research Anchor's Details:

Dayle Raaff
Contact number: 084 652 8518
Email address: dayleraaff@gmail.com
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Name of Franchisee: Nici Constantinou
Date: 12.09.2017
Place: Sorbet Bedfordview
Signature of Franchisee: [Signature]

Thank you once again for giving up your employees time for free to contribute to this study.

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Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

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Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

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- In addition, I require permission to record and transcribe the interview, for analysis purposes.

Name of Franchisee: Samantha McIntosh
Date: 15-09-2017
Place: McLise
Signature of Franchisee: [Signature]

Thank you once again for giving up your employees time for free to contribute to this study.

Should you wish to contact the interviewer or supervisors of this study, please find their details below:

Interviewer's Details:

Cindy Ashira Gottschalk
Contact number: 082 334 7193
Email address: cindyashiragott@gmail.com

Supervisor's Details:

Nicole Mason
Contact number: 083 339 9138
Email address: nm.nicolemason@gmail.com

Research Anchor's Details:

Dayle Raaff
Contact number: 084 652 8518
Email address: dayleraaff@gmail.com

Interview Guide

Appendix E: Ethical Clearance



Date: _____

Dear Cindy

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and ethical considerations were reviewed by your supervisor and moderated by the campus research panel.

- ☒ Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns. We hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your research methodology.
- OR
- ☐ Your research proposal posed the following minor concern:
- ☐ Please mention how your research design will address this issue:

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

We wish you all the best with your research!

Supervisor Name: Nicole Mason

Supervisor Signature: Mason

Campus Anchor Name: _____

Campus Anchor Signature: Dooff

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Company Secretary: S Saunders

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Appendix E: SAFE ASSIGN