

# **THE PERCEPTION OF BRANDS AND BRAND VALUE WITHIN THE DEVELOPING CULTURES**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The fundamental focus of this study is to discover the perception consumers of developing cultures have of brands and brand value. Markets are highly fragmented and is characterised by factors such as a diversity of cultures, traditions and beliefs on the one hand and historical imbalances in consumer purchasing power, illiteracy, and a wide variety of socio-economic challenges. Consumers are also increasingly experiencing what they perceive as an enhanced image from the consumption and possession of branded products. Brand Value, Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty have been an aggressively developed fundamental within the global marketplace. The value is a perception, the equity can be calculated (albeit subjectively) and loyalty can be measured. The validity of measuring instrument scores refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The questionnaire consists of a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (SD) to "strongly agree" (SA) to the interviewee's perception of branded consumer goods. Opinions of their choice to participate in branded goods or not are discussed where they indicate what qualities a brand delivers or fails to deliver. From the empirical research, two important conclusions are made:*

- Conclusion 1: The brand we present is all about us*
- Conclusion 2: Iconic brands are brands that have become cultural icons*

*These conclusions result in the recommendations regarding consumerism and branding, namely that marketers should:*

- take care in all that they do in launching products that have a global appeal;*
- Be primarily focused on the economic targets set before them but as this study reveals, great products have been distributed globally with different responses to the values expressed in them, but the same response to the economic contributions to the brand owners.*
- Perform a careful study of the intricacies of cultures and global markets the brand owner wants to penetrate in order to meet the people at their own point of reference.*
- Allow for cultural interpretations that will build a sustainable brand within the specific market.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	ii
<b>CHAPTER 1 NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	3
1.3 RESEARCH METHOD .....	6
1.3.1 The primary data .....	6
1.3.2 The secondary data .....	6
1.3.3 Method .....	7
1.4 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH .....	7
1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY .....	8
1.6 SUMMARY .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	10
2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
2.2.1 Defining branding .....	10
2.2.2 The development of branding .....	12
2.2.3 The components of a brand .....	13
2.2.3.1 Brand strategy .....	14
2.2.3.2 Brand positioning .....	14

2.2.3.3 Brand personality .....	15
<b>2.2.4 The concept of brand equity</b> .....	16
2.2.4.1 Definition of brand equity .....	16
2.2.4.2 Brand equity and quality .....	16
2.2.4.3 Performance .....	20
2.2.4.4 Brand loyalty .....	21
<b>2.2.5 A definition of culture</b> .....	25
2.2.5.1 Theory of cultural determinism .....	26
2.2.5.2 Cultural relativism .....	27
2.2.5.3 Cultural ethnocentrism .....	27
2.2.5.3.1 <i>Manifestations of culture</i> .....	28
2.2.5.3.2 <i>Layers of culture</i> .....	29
2.2.5.4 Reconciliation of cultural differences .....	31
2.2.5.4.1 Cultural awareness .....	31
2.2.5.4.2 Clustering cultures .....	31
2.2.5.4.3 Determining the extent of global involvement .....	32
2.2.5.4.4 Looking at culture in context .....	33
2.2.5.4.5 Cultural differences historically .....	34
<b>2.3 SUMMARY</b> .....	42

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS .. 43**

**3.1 INTRODUCTION .....43**

**3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....43**

**3.3 RESULTS .....44**

**3.4 SUMMARY .....49**

## **CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS..... 51**

**4.1 INTRODUCTION .....51**

**4.2 CONCLUSIONS .....51**

**4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS .....55**

**4.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....56**

**4.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED .....57**

**4.6 SUMMARY .....57**

**REFERENCES ..... 59**

**APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE ..... 63**

**APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ..... 71**

## **LIST OF TABLES**

2.1 POPULAR BRANDS AMONG TEENS.....	19
2.2 THE WORLD'S 45 LEADING BRANDS .....	21

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

2.1 MANIFESTATION OF CULTURE AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DEPTH .....	29
2.2 CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXTENT OF GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT.....	32
4.1 CULTURAL VALUE, ICONIC BRAND AND IDENTITY BRANDS .....	53

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The fundamental focus of this study is to discover the perception consumers of developing cultures have of brands and brand value. According to Sinclair and Barenblatt (1993:131), the South African market is highly fragmented and is characterized by factors such as a diversity of cultures, traditions and beliefs on the one hand and historical imbalances in consumer purchasing power, illiteracy, and a wide variety of socio-economic challenges on the other hand. Yet the lure of the popular brands cannot be denied by either group of consumers. Moreover, consumers are increasingly experiencing what they perceive as an enhanced image from the consumption and possession of branded products (Formby & Pile 2007:52-54).

These factors clearly translate into opportunities for marketers, especially if the needs and wants of an enterprise's target market are properly researched and appropriately addressed. Consequently, marketers need to plan and structure the various elements of the marketing mix in order to have the desired effect on their target audiences. The extent to which the optimum synergies accrue to the various chain stores will depend on their emphasis on one or more of the components of the marketing mix (Kotler 2008).

Traditionally, the strategies employed by most marketers have focused on competitive differentiation and the emotional attributes of a brand. Additionally, the contemporary business environment requires a strategic shift in the construction of brand plans as consumers become more discerning in terms of their needs and wants (Thompson & Arsel 2006). It is inevitable that a critical component of building brand equity is to ensure consistent quality products and services. Keller (1994:RC-4) makes the following

statement to illustrate this argument, *"Today, brands must learn to aspire to the consumer."*

The branding of fast-moving consumer goods has become an integral part of the lives of consumers, not just in South Africa but internationally as well. Consumers are literally confronted with hundreds of brands on a daily basis and are, therefore, spoilt for choice. From a business's perspective, Kotler (2008) and Doyle (2002) believe that brands are central to an entity's marketing and business strategy. Establishing a brand that has earned the respect and admiration of consumers is of fundamental importance in attempting to build market share and profitability, and challenging competitors for market dominance. The viewpoints presented by Kotler (2008) and Doyle (2002) are supported by Shiffman and Kanuk (2004), Barnard and Ehrenberg (1997:21), and Rabuck and Rosenberg (1997:17) who all maintain that popular brands that enjoy a great deal of consumer loyalty have a huge and very positive impact on the company's market share and profitability.

According to Erdem and Valenzuela (2006), the marketers of fast moving consumer goods collectively spend billions of rands on the marketing and development of new and existing products each year, and since the objective of most marketers of fast-moving consumer goods is to maximize the wealth of their shareholders by increasing turnover through innovative marketing campaigns, this study will investigate the extent to which the perceptions of South African marketers and consumers converge to promote brand equity in respect of consumer goods in retail stores. The role and impact of branding and its integral aspects of pricing, promotion and brand image will be interrogated to establish how these variables contribute towards this convergence of perceptions which determines the brand equity of consumer goods. Evidently, the turnover generated from the sales of fast moving consumer goods forms a significant portion of all sales generated by retail chain stores (Ratnatunga & Ewing 2005).

The results of this study will provide marketers with an outline of the factors that motivate consumers into making purchasing choices. The information gathered on the

branding of consumer goods will prove useful to retailers in terms of “pull” strategy, being the marketing tools employed to support the manufacturers “push” marketing.

## **1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The old paradigm of marketing evolved in a world where the purpose of marketing was to dictate messages to a mass market. One of the main questions then was to choose the correct channel to reach as many people as possible within a specific target group. Then the Internet became an integral part of society! One of the most revolutionizing innovations in communications creates hysteria during the 1990s, widely known as the dotcom era. The rest is history. It is not until today people see some of the true impact of this interconnected economy, and it is changing the way people think and perceive the world. The Internet has changed the way we do business, but just as important, it has changed the way people meet, talk and relate to one another. It is simply not more difficult to ask a friend on the other side of the world for advice, than it is to ask our next-door neighbour. New relationships are created across the world, crossing geographical borders, political differences and go beyond the limits of the old communications methods, as it doesn't cost you more to talk to someone on the other side of the world anymore.

This is forcing marketers to see the world in a new perspective, not bound by geographical borders, but truly global. Target groups may be local one day and spread across the world the other, depending on the offer. This is due to the fact that people from diverse countries may share the same traits, and they talk to each other. But does this mean people can ignore the geographical borders? Does this mean people can divide the world into the same kind of segments as they do within a nation? What part does the phenomenon “*culture*” play as the new world is forming before their eyes? Does this mean global cultures will be exchanged for national bound cultures? These questions are what captured curiosity and made people want to know more about what “cultures” really are and how they may come into play during the world's transition into

going global. As a new world is forming before their eyes, how do brand strategists adapt to these changes, and what is likely to stay more or less the same?

It used to be so much simpler. The choices were fewer, the demands on each and every one were lower and the pace of change was slower. In the ambition to create a global market there sure is going to be a price to pay, especially during the transition. Most of all people pay this toll in the form of time: the time it takes to choose, to learn new things, to find and negotiate with suppliers and customers. The transition costs are estimated to be closer to two thirds of the economy, and as that time does not produce any direct income, it is important to reduce it to as little as possible.

In the multi-cultural world the costs of dealing with it is going to force forward new ways of simplifying things. To adapt the features of simplicity, trust and a common view is crucial to reduce the costs and to grease the global multi-cultural machinery. These words are all three highly social parameters and this is why it is so important to understand cultures. Creating trust and a common view across cultural borders are necessary before people can even start simplifying processes and principles. It is only when people understand each other that they can start to build a mutual trust. This is true of people, companies and nations as well as for brands, if there is a difference.

People identify with brands as they relate to their values, behaviours and symbols. Interestingly, isn't that just how people relate to their cultures? The comparison is relevant since brands basically are most of all about human relationships and needs, just as cultures (Podder & Bergvall, 2004).

*Brand Value, Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty* have been an aggressively developed fundamental within the global marketplace. The value is a perception, the equity can be calculated (albeit subjectively) and loyalty can be measured. However, what is it that hold consumers, draw their attention and arrest their disposable income?

In today's global village of competitive performances by the great and mighty brands vs. the cheaper Chinese copies and substitutes, the global economic arena has changed dramatically. Technology has played a leading role in brand awareness – globally, making consumer goods accessible to a greater proportion of the population. A greater proportion of the world's population is literate, 82% (CIA - USA, 2008), has access to media efforts and branded consumer goods globally. The stresses of day-to-day life have alienated us from each other creating the equal and opposite desire to belong. This intrinsic human desire to belong is then translated into inanimate identification through branded consumer goods. Then the most recent and growing emerging social group which was once in the minority - bunny huggers and green peace fundamentalists - are making their mark by disassociating themselves with "belonging to a brand" and in so doing, creating their own reference group of "less is more" and environmental awareness. These shifts in the world's traditionally identified cultures have all but eliminated the traditional cultural and created in its wake a new world of "MacWorld" - Macintosh and McDonald's, for example.

In today's competitive business environment companies invest vast amounts of resources in building brand equity over a number of years with the objective of recouping this investment in future years through consumer brand loyalty (Erdem & Valenzuela 2006).

Dramatic changes have taken place in South Africa over the last 13 years. During this time the relationship between consumers and brands have become complicated and intricate and continues to evolve. Brands do not exist in isolation. As society changes so do people's perceptions of themselves and the world around them.

This leads the researcher to the primary problem statement, namely:

What is the extent to which the perceptions of consumers in their needs, and marketers in their marketing objectives, meet in cultural norms?
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In attempting to address the primary problem statement, it is necessary to investigate sub-problems as they impact on the overall debate.

- Clearly defining a brand and overall brand objectives;
- Clearly defining culture and aspects of culture that make them unique. To define a few cultures with special reference to, e.g. Muslim, Chinese, Australian, New Zealanders and South Africans.

The aspect of identification across cultures through branding requires examining the impact of consumerism through brand building on developing cultures in a global arena. Demographic variables such as age, gender, race group, level of education, work experience indicate to what extent branding has an influence on the results of the research.

### **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research methodology used in this study comprises of two separate, but complementary, sources of data, namely, primary and secondary.

#### **1.3.1 The primary data**

The participants of the empirical research are made up of a cross section of cultures living in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The primary data research is based on a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is Internet based and the questions asked are to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the participants towards brands and branding. A discussion of the research methods is to be found in Chapter 3, which explains the research methodology and design.

### **1.3.2 The secondary data**

An extensive review of literature relevant to the branding of consumer goods in South Africa and internationally formed the basis of the secondary data collection. Information relevant to this study was sourced from textbooks, journal articles, trade magazines, newspapers and the Internet. The knowledge gained from these different sources of information provided a sound foundation with which to interrogate the issues related to the branding of consumer goods and the perceptions of the consumers. The findings of international and local researchers combined with the viewpoints of successful marketers of consumer goods globally, assisted greatly in establishing the factors that motivate consumers to purchase consumer products and also contributed to the development of the structured questionnaire employed in this study.

### **1.3.3 Method**

A literature review was conducted in assisting to determine the all-important constructs in the study. The literature review was then supplemented with the structured interviews through the aid of a questionnaire, which was used to assess the perceptions and opinions of the consumer.

## **1.4 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH**

In undertaking this research project, certain limitations became apparent. The study consisted of 50 participants, viz. Chinese, Muslim, White and Black selected randomly from Gauteng, South Africa and Auckland, New Zealand. The participants are of a cross section of age, gender, available disposable income and education. The consumer sample is too small to make any definitive opinions representative of each chosen culture participating in the study; it does however demonstrate the impact of brands and branding on culture as a whole.

The enormity of the topic researched made it difficult to clearly identify the literature to support the study. The evolution of culture alone is a topic to be studied on its own. The aspect of perceptions of how brands have contributed to the evolution is sometimes silent and undetected until a recognized norm takes its place in cultural behaviour.

The study all too often alludes to the psychology of change and the factors that trigger change as a human condition. The psychological aspects of perceptions are too broad to include in this study as a factor, but it is recognized that this is a dominant factor in the change process and in perceptions forming.

Leading global brands were chosen to illustrate their infiltration into the lives and culture of the cultural groups chosen for the study. The enormity of narrowly defining the brand value (that is adopted into cultural behaviour and the perceived value of these brands) are reflected in the lives of the participants. This is reflected in the opinion of the study, as only some brands could be selected to study. The brands chosen are Nike, Toyota, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Macintosh Electronics.

The number of questions included in the research is to demonstrate the perception of the impact of these brands on the cultures represented in this study. The questionnaire is not exhaustive but gleans the perceptions of the participants.

## **1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

The first chapter presents an overview of the research study, highlighting the relevance and importance of this study. The problem statement is explained along with the limitations of the study. Encapsulated in summary is the overall structure and objective of the study.

Chapter 2 provides adequate literature research in the field of brands and branding, expressed in the needs and desires of both consumers and marketers with special

reference to consumer and buyer behaviour. The global culture as a whole vs. the specific cultures will be examined and what different triggers prompt a consumer in the USA and Iran to purchase the same product. Cultural changes within the cultures are examined with reference to the secondary data sourced. Various frameworks and models on how to evaluate and identify triggers and changes in loyalty, trends and the global influences viz. wars (which influence the oil price which influences consumer prices). This aspect redefines the consumer groups as far as affordability is concerned. From a viewpoint of various global buying behavioural models, constructs are developed and formulated into a questionnaire that was used to measure the perception of the value of consumerism.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, findings and conclusion of the study. Together with a summary of the highlights, revelations of the perceptions are discovered through the research process. An empirical study, together with the analysis of the results of the study, is presented.

Chapter 4 presents the conclusion of the study. The chapter also makes recommendations, and highlights areas for future research. Suggestions of what emerging trends and global influences are developing are given. Concepts will be identified as how the person, the group, and the culture all interact in the global market that makes brand competitiveness a success or a failure.

## **1.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided an overview of the areas to be investigated, through the presentation of the problem statement, research methodology and limitation, and finally the structure of the study. The next chapter concentrates on the literature review in order to provide a solid foundation for the literature research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter a brand is clearly defined by discussing, *firstly*, the development of branding, *secondly*, the components of a brand, *thirdly*, the concept of brand equity and *finally*, brand loyalty. In the same way culture will be defined through traditional norms and values that define a culture and identifying what an emerging culture is. The perceptions of the chosen cultures will be demonstrated through their response to global brands and how the infiltration of international brands occurred and the impression they have made on the emerging cultures.

#### **2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

##### **2.2.1 Defining branding**

A striking phenomenon in the contemporary business environment is the magnitude and importance of brands in the minds of consumers as well as investors both locally and internationally. Branding had its roots in the fast-moving consumer goods segment through the innovative work of Messrs. Procter and Gamble and Lord Leverhulme. They continue and state that, in essence, a valued brand is indicative of trust and goodwill (Nilson 1998:4-5). Kotler (2008), Shiffman and Kanuk (2004), Nilson (1998:5) and Doyle (2002:157) agree that well-established and successful brands have the unique ability to enhance shareholder wealth not just by capturing new market share but also by retaining existing loyal customers. Successful brands, therefore, impact on an entity's fortunes in three ways, namely, by developing a healthy market share, by maintaining competitive price levels and by ensuring steady cash flows. In light of the views

presented by Kotler (2008), Shiffman and Kanuk (2004), Nilson (1998:5) and Doyle (2002) and with regard to the investigation being undertaken, the following definition of branding by De Chernatony and McDonald (2003:20) will be utilized:

*“A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs more closely. Furthermore, its successes result from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition”* (De Chernatony & McDonald 2003:20).

In 2005, the marketing directors of some of South Africa’s leading brands were asked to list the factors that were crucial to building a successful and cherished South African brand. The following aspects were listed as the main factors:

- Brands are about loyalty;
- The key to building a successful brand is to keep the brand message clear and simple;
- A brand is a perception in the consumer’s mind, created or implemented by experience and brand positioning;
  
- It is not what you promise, it’s what the customer actually experiences;
- Ensure that brands deliver value constantly over time; and
- Live the brand (Sunday Times 2005:38).

Evidently, branding is a dynamic and constantly evolving phenomenon that demands continuous assessment. A proper perspective of branding, therefore, needs an evaluation of its development in order to respond creatively and appropriately to its changing demands. It is, therefore, of benefit to consider the development of branding since the term originated.

### 2.2.2 The development of branding

Branding as a tool (this was used for the purposes of differentiating the product of one manufacturer from another), goes back to a time long before the birth of Jesus Christ. According to Nilson (1998:57), the first illustration of branding can be traced back to the production of oil lamps in the Greek islands. The term branding can quite accurately be translated to mean burning a name or symbol onto some physical object as was practiced many centuries ago on livestock. Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, branding was very simple in nature and served only as a guarantee and a technique to build a good reputation for one's products. However, the introduction of the railway lines and industrialization resulted in manufacturers being able to produce efficiently and in large quantities and, in turn, having to sell in large quantities across large geographic regions. Nilson (1998:57) goes on to suggest that these developments in manufacturing and distribution had the effect of widening the gap between the producer and the consumer. As a result, manufacturers were compelled to brand their products and communicate the unique benefits of their brands across different media vehicles to ensure that the brand in question retained its identity (Stammerjohan *et al.*, 2005).

International brands such as Coca-Cola, Sony and McDonald's have adopted the approach of investing hundreds of millions of dollars in their brands to enhance the goodwill and status associated with their respective brands (Kotler 2008). Macrae (1991) is of the opinion that while the geographic distances between manufacturers and consumers grow larger, brands, which enjoy consumer confidence and a rich history, are well positioned to enjoy support from one generation to the next as well as retain their own identity within the complex international mass media communications network. Rabuck and Rosenberg (1997:17) add to the argument proposed by Kotler (2008) and Macrae (1991) by alluding to the fact that companies that invest a great deal of resources in building and promoting their brands, benefit greatly from improved customer loyalty, higher profitability and significant market shares.

In light of the findings of the abovementioned researchers, and in order for a brand to continue growing in popularity, it is evident that the company concerned must invest resources to ensure that it enhances the image of the brand in the eyes of the target market and thereby protecting its future cash flows (Dewhirst & Davis 2005). Coca-Cola has adopted the approach of not just investing huge sums of money in marketing communications but also in community development projects and fund raising initiatives while upholding the brand name (Sunday Times,2005:2). For example, Coca-Cola's involvement in Nelson Mandela's 46664 campaign to raise funds enhanced the image of Coca-Cola as a top brand in the hearts and minds of all South Africans (Sunday Times 2005:2). Perhaps, the best way to take note of the role and importance which brands have taken on is to consider the following quotation by John Stuart (the former chairman of Quaker Oats Ltd):

*"If this business were to be split up, I would be glad to take the brands, trademarks and goodwill and you could have all the bricks and mortar – and I would fare better than you."* (De Chernatony 2001:3).

Having considered the development of branding as a function of the marketing discipline, it is useful to explore the three different components of a brand. These components of a brand should always be present in order to achieve long-term success and a unique character and presence in the mind of the consumer.

### **2.2.3 The components of a brand**

There are three basic components that constitute a brand, namely, brand strategy, brand positioning and brand personality (Doyle 2002).

#### 2.2.3.1 Brand strategy

The brand strategy originates from the position of the brand within the broader portfolio of the entity that has possession of the brand. A brand could be fighting for its survival in a high growth segment or perhaps be content with functioning within mature or declining segment (Doyle 2002). For example, internet search engine Google spent only 5 million dollars on marketing its brand in 2004, but has proven to be much more successful than many of its better established competitors who spent far more on their marketing campaigns. Evidence of this success is the fact that Google occupied the 20<sup>th</sup> position of the best known global brands in a survey conducted by Interbrand (2008).

#### 2.2.3.2 Brand positioning

Brand positioning focuses on the functional or physical aspects of the brand as well as the competition that confronts the brand on a daily basis. Some of the functional dimensions, according to which a brand can be positioned, include features like big/small, fast/slow, and male/female (Ratnatunga & Ewing 2005). In mature markets brands are likely to be positioned close to one another, while in a new and innovative market, there is likely to be a greater diversity in the features offered by the different brands (Doyle 2002). In attempting to evaluate the dynamics related to consumer purchasing patterns of fast moving consumer goods, Kotler (2008) and Keller (1994) maintain that well established brands enjoy a great deal of success because of their ability to consistently deliver reliability, dependability and time savings. If consumers were to consider switching brands, they would more than likely adopt two or three brands that offer similar benefits and then choose the one that might be on special offer at the time of purchase (Stammerjohan *et al.*, 2005).

### 2.2.3.3 Brand personality

The personality of a brand is really the perception which consumers have of the brand in question. There are three types of appeals, namely, sensual, rational and emotional that helps shape the personality of the brand. The sensual appeal of a brand revolves around the look, feel and sound of the product while the rational appeal is directed at the physical performance of the product and the emotional appeal is centred on the psychological benefits that the product is able to conjure in the mind of the consumer (Doyle 2002). The findings of research conducted by Keller, et al. (1998:53) indicate that making special reference to functional aspects, for example, ease of use, durability and performance can positively impact upon a consumer's perception of the product. Coca-Cola has elected to address the needs of their South African target audience in a number of different ways (Sunday Times 2005:3). Firstly, emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the product is always freely available to consumers wherever they might want to consume the product. Secondly, the product must always be served cold to the consumer. Coca-Cola have, over the years, invested heavily in providing refrigerators to shop-owners in black townships to achieve loyalty among their customers as well as to be in a position to serve the product cold (as it was intended) to the consumer for immediate enjoyment. Thirdly, the product is well-priced to ensure that the consumer receives excellent value for money. Fourthly, the product is attractively packaged to ensure that it is easily recognizable but also trendy enough to appeal to a younger audience. Finally, Coca-Cola has ensured that their marketing communication not only focuses on stimulating demand but also places emphasis on their projects designed for the upliftment of communities. For example, Coca-Cola gives R10 000 to a charity for every goal scored in the Coca-Cola Cup (Sunday Times 2005:3).

Any successful brand must have all three of these appeals present to distinguish it from competitors that might be active in the marketplace. The components of a brand provide structure and purpose for the development of the future of the brand (Erdem & Ewing 2005). With this structure in place, it is then necessary to evaluate all facets of brand

equity to ensure that it is carefully monitored and used as a barometer to determine the overall success of the brand.

## **2.2.4 The concept of brand equity**

### **2.2.4.1 Definition of brand equity**

Etzel, et al. (2001:276) and Shiffman and Kanuk (2004:193) view brand equity simply as the value that a brand is able to add to the product it was meant to represent. After considering the definitions of a number of researchers, De Chernatony and McDonald (2003:397) define brand equity in the following manner, "Brand equity consists of the differential attributes underpinning a brand which give increased value to the firm's balance sheet." For example, Gillette has achieved phenomenal success with its range of shaving blades and the Gillette brand is recognized worldwide by consumers as the premier brand for shaving products. The value of the Gillette brand has assisted it to launch a range of new products including the battery powered Mach 3 Power razor that has helped the company produce record results (Business Week 2005:90).

### **2.2.4.2 Brand equity and quality**

An important consideration, according to Kotler (2008) and Etzel, *et al.*, (2001), when developing and sustaining brand equity, is to ensure that the product quality is always of a consistent level in line with consumer expectations. Mowen and Minor (2001:201) further expand upon the issue related to product quality by identifying seven dimensions of quality, namely:

- **Performance:**

This dimension focuses on the extent to which a product is able to satisfy the expectations of the consumer (Mowen & Minor 2001). For example, Kellogg's have built a reputation for consistent product quality and innovation in its range

of breakfast cereals. This reputation has resulted in it achieving excellent brand equity and international growth. The Kellogg's brand is worth 8 306 million US dollars (Business Week 2005:91). In a study conducted by Keller, et al. (1998:52), it was found that brands that have over a period of time taken ownership for a particular physical attribute, for example, strength and durability are instantly recognized by consumers for having this particular feature present in all of their products. Life Long Luggage is an example of a brand that has used durable construction as a distinguishing feature of its products. Keller, Heckler and Houston (1998:52) were able to establish that subjects were instantly able to associate the features of durable construction when exposed to the Life Long Luggage brand.

- **Employee interactions**

Consumers tend to value qualities in employees such as courtesy and empathy. Also valued by consumers is the overall knowledge and ability to assist with problem solving (Mowen & Minor 2001). South African Breweries (SAB) attributes a major portion of its success in South Africa to its ability to understand and proactively meet the needs of its target market. This ability has resulted in it conquering the beer market in South Africa. The marketing director of SAB makes the following statement when describing its marketing philosophy, *"As consumers' needs evolve, the challenge is to remain relevant to the consumer – and the ability of the organisation to meet those needs"* (Sunday Times 2005:2).

- **Reliability:**

Reliability refers to the ability of a product to consistently deliver good performance with little or no malfunction (Mowen & Minor 2001). Coca-Cola is a perfect example of a product that is able to consistently deliver excellent performance while retaining top-of-mind awareness, trust and confidence of consumers. Coca-Cola's ability to consistently deliver a good quality product has

enabled it to enjoy a market share in excess of 90% in the carbonated soft drinks market in South Africa (Sunday Times 2005:3).

- **Durability:**

The average life span and overall structure of the product are particularly important when the consumer is planning on using the product for a significant period of time (Mowen & Minor 2001). For example, Mr. Price has entrenched its brand of clothing in South Africa by focusing on price, quality and value for money and more recently the fashion conscious youth market. This focus has resulted in the brand becoming exceptionally popular with its target market (Sunday Times 2005:2).

- **Timeliness and Convenience:**

Consumers value timely, efficient and convenient service. These attributes extend to areas that include product delivery, payment terms and business hours (Mowen & Minor 2001). For example, many retail chain stores, especially those located in busy shopping malls, have extended their trading hours to provide consumers with a greater degree of convenience. The top retail outlets in South Africa were ranked in order of popularity among consumers in 2005, included Pick 'n Pay, Woolworths, Shoprite/Checkers, Spar, Clicks, and OK Bazaars (Sunday Times 2005:2).

- **Aesthetics:**

Consumers are quick to pick up on value-added benefits such as a very well designed and packaged product or a store that has undergone a major revamp to make it more contemporary or user-friendly. Marketers can use these tactics in attempting to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Mowen & Minor 2001). In a brand survey conducted by the Sunday Times (2005:6) among children in the 10 to 13 year age group, the most popular brands of sweets included Yougeta Pop, Jelly Tots, Jawbreakers, Sour Punks/Worms and Choclairs. Apart from the taste of these sweets, children also loved the

packaging of these products that were viewed as trendy and eye-catching (Sunday Times, 2005).

- **Brand Equity:**

Consumers may hold either a positive or negative view of the brand name which will, in turn, impact on their perceived quality of the brand (Mowen & Minor 2001). The teen market (children aged between 10 to 13 years) is responsible for purchases of consumer products worth R6-billion. In addition, they play an influential role in expenditure of an additional R20-billion of their parents' purchases. This sector of the market places emphasis on brand names of the products and often chooses a product purely on the value of the brand name (Sunday Times, 2005). In a national brand survey published in the Sunday Times (2005:1), the following were listed as the 10 most popular brands among children in this age group (See table 2.1).

**TABLE 2.1: POPULAR BRANDS AMONG TEENS**

Rating	Brand
1	Coca-Cola
2	Sony PlayStation
3	Nike
4	Cartoon Network
5	Billabong
6	Nokia
7	Vodacom
8	Kellogg's
9	BMW
10	Simba

#### 2.2.4.3 Benefits of brand equity

While it is time consuming and expensive to develop a high level of brand equity, several benefits can accrue to the entity in possession of the brand including achieving a differential advantage due to consumer perceptions, acting as a deterrent to other brands that want to enter the market, promoting international expansion and protecting the product from changes in consumer preferences and tastes (Kotler 2008). Shiffman and Kanuk (2004) expand on this line of thinking by also pointing out that brand equity encourages the acceptance of new products, the awarding of premium shelf space which, in turn, adds to the perceived value and quality of the product and also assists the company to earn good returns. Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, presents her views on the relationship between return on investment and the purpose of the brand in the following statement:

*“Profit is not the objective of my business. It is providing a product and a service that's good enough that people give you a profit for providing it” (De Chernatony 2001:95).*

Brand equity also encourages brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is imperative for an enterprise that wishes to expand its market share and earn optimum returns on its investment (Kotler 2008). A fundamental objective of any marketer is to convince the consumer that his/her product is the best, which, in turn, promotes repeat purchasing and loyalty to the brand name (Shiffman & Kanuk 2004). De Chernatony (2001:4) encapsulates the thinking of the above-mentioned authors very well by making the following statement about the importance of brands: “Brands are powerful entities because they blend functional, performance-based values which are rationally evaluated, with emotional values which are affectively evaluated” (De Chernatony 2001:4).

As can be seen from the discussion on brand equity, brands, which enjoy favourable equity, are able to earn good returns for the shareholders and promote brand loyalty among consumers. Brand loyalty is a concept that is of fundamental importance to all

stakeholders in the business entity and deserves a significant amount of resources to ensure future success (Dewhirst & Davis 2005).

#### 2.2.4.4 Brand loyalty

Researchers are divided in terms of how best to define brand loyalty, that is, should brand loyalty be defined in terms of consumer behaviour or in terms of consumer attitudes. Behavioural scientists are of the opinion that brand loyalty arises from an initial product trial that is reinforced through a satisfying experience and thus resulting in repeat purchasing (Thompson & Arsel 2006). However, cognitive researchers propose that consumers embark on a comprehensive problem-solving behaviour which involves brand and attribute comparisons and facilitates brand preference and encourages repeat purchasing (Shiffman & Kanuk 2004). The viewpoint of Shiffman and Kanuk (2004:190) is echoed by Hoyer and MacInnis (2001:259) who emphasize that a key feature of brand loyalty is the positive reinforcement of a performance-related choice tactic. These authors clearly drive home the point that brand loyalty is a crucial ingredient that is required to encourage consumers to purchase a company's brand on a consistent basis. Companies that build customer relationships through brand loyalty will be able to deal more effectively with increased competition in the marketplace.

There are many benefits that can accrue to a popular and well-trusted brand, namely, premium pricing, wide distribution, the guarantee of consistent sales and a good return on investment. This argument is supported by Kotler (2008) and Hoyer and MacInnis (2001:108) who point out that a brand loyal consumer market provides a steady base from which to build good profits. Kotler (2008) suggests that this attempt to generate better returns on investment is dependent on an entity being able to ensure that its target market maintains loyalty towards its brand or portfolio of brands.

Dewhirst and Davis (2005) expand on this line of thinking by pointing out that brands that are creatively developed and properly managed build good reputations and also improve and maintain the confidence which consumers have in these brands. In

addition, prestigious brands enhance one's quality of life and are able to make non-verbal statements about the type of person that one is or would like to be perceived as being. Mowen and Minor (2001) concur with the viewpoints of Dewhirst and Davis (2005), Jobber (2001:230) and De Chernatony (2001) by making the point that brand loyalty is crucial to the success of any business because it is between four to five times cheaper to retain an existing customer than it is to get a new customer. In addition, positive word-of-mouth communication is a powerful tool that can be used to ensure a continual flow of new customers from the referrals of existing customers (Mowen & Minor 2001).

Consumers are motivated by a variety of factors when contemplating a purchase decision. While there are consumers that might simply view price as the most important factor to consider when choosing between competing products or services, there are also consumers that view factors other than those related to pricing as being crucial to the purchase decision (Kotler 2008). Some factors as outlined by Etzel *et al.* (2001:326) which include quality and value will now be assessed:

- There appears to be a relationship between price and quality, that is, the higher the price of the product the better the perception of the consumer regarding the quality of the product. In addition to this, Etzel *et al.* (2001:326) also point out that consumer perception of the brand may also be influenced by the reputation of the retailer as well as the impact and innovativeness of advertising.
- A consumer will typically rate the value of a product by drawing a comparison between perceived benefits versus price but Etzel *et al.* (2001:326) also point out that a consumer might also bring into the equation issues relating to the actual purchase such as the time and effort involved in shopping for the product, and the cost of transport (Etzel *et al.*, 2001:326).

- Consumers are quite capable of engaging in spontaneous brand switching. This happens when consumers switch brands even though they have no reason to be unhappy with their existing brand (Kotler 2008). Mowen and Minor (2001:45) believe that this type of behaviour is most common with low involvement products. In an attempt to combat this problem, companies often modify or add minor improvements to keep their products looking fresh and appealing. However, marketers should be cautious not to render their products so complex that consumers find them too cumbersome to use. The viewpoint presented by Mowen and Minor (2001:45) was also earlier supported by Langer (1994:RC-2), who believes that contemporary consumers are under immense pressure with regard to their recreational time. As a result, products that are not cumbersome to operate and offer a greater degree of convenience will always be popular with consumers.

Interbrand conducted a study in 2007, in which the leading global brands were rated on factors such as leadership, stability and geographic coverage (brand strength score). In addition, the value of each brand was derived from the brand strength score, financial forecasts, reports of financial analysts and annual reports (Interbrand 2008). The results of this investigation are illustrated in Table 2.2.

**TABLE 2.2: THE WORLD'S 45 LEADING BRANDS**

RATING	BRAND NAME	2007 BRAND VALUE (US\$ - MILLIONS)	2008 BRAND VALUE (US\$ - MILLIONS)
1	COCA-COLA	65 324	67 284
2	MICROSOFT	58 709	56 948
3	IBM	57 091	55 949
4	GENERAL ELECTRIC	51 569	48 991
5	NOKIA	33 696	29 653
6	TOYOTA	32 070	27 260
7	INTEL	30 954	32 192
8	McDonald's	29 398	27 340

9	DISNEY	29 210	27 750
10	MERCEDES-BENZ	23 568	21 683
11	CITI	23 443	21 333
12	HEWLETT-PACKARD	22 197	20 199
13	BMW	21 612	19 451
14	MARLBORO	21 283	21 283
15	AMERICAN EXPRESS	20 827	19 577
16	GILLETTE	20 415	19 598
17	LOUIS VUITTON	20 321	17 273
18	CISCO	19 099	17 380
19	HONDA	17 998	16 918
20	GOOGLE	17 837	9 989
21	SAMSUNG	16 853	16 179
22	MERILL LYNCH	14 343	12 909
23	HSBC	13 563	11 257
24	NESCAFE	12 950	12 432
25	SONY	12 907	11 616
26	PEPSI	12 888	12 630
27	ORACLE	12 448	11 328
28	UPS	12 013	10 571
29	NIKE	12 004	10 804
30	BUDWEISER	11 652	11 652
31	DELL	11 554	12 247
32	JP MORGAN	11 433	10 061
33	APPLE	11 037	8 719
34	SAP	10 850	9 982
35	GOLDMAN SACHS	10 663	9 490

36	CANON	10 581	9 946
37	MORGAN STANLEY	10 340	9 720
38	IKEA	10 087	8 574
39	UBS	9 838	8 559
40	KELLOGGS	9 341	8 781
41	FORD	8 982	10 689
42	PHILIPS	7 741	6 580
43	SIEMENS	7 737	7 814
44	NINTENDO	7 730	6 339
45	HARLEY DAVIDSON	7 718	7 718

**Source:** Interbrand (2008)

Brand loyalty is a level of consumer trust that virtually all entities would like to aspire to in order to ensure the long-term growth and stability of their respective brands. In attempting to encourage and maintain brand loyalty among one's target market, a distinction should be drawn among the different types of brands, namely, generic brands, manufacturer brands and house brands (Kotler 2008).

### 2.2.5 A definition of culture

Culture is a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behaviour - an abstract "*mental blueprint*" or "*mental code*". Various definitions of culture exist, and a few are listed below:

- Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.
- Culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.

- Culture is communication; communication is culture.
- Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behaviour; that is the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behaviour through social learning.
- A culture is a way of life of a group of people - the behaviours, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.
- Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.
- Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action; on the other hand, as conditioning influences upon further action.
- Culture is the sum total of the learned behaviour of a group of people that are generally considered to be the tradition of that people and are transmitted from generation to generation.
- Culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

#### 2.2.5.1 Theory of cultural determinism

The position that the ideas, meanings, beliefs and values people learn as members of society determines human nature. People are what they learn. The optimistic version of cultural determinism places no limits on the abilities of human beings to do or to be whatever they want. Some anthropologists suggest that there is no universal "right way" of being human. "*Right way*" is almost always "*our way*"; that "*our way*" in one society

almost never corresponds to "our way" in any other society. Proper attitude of informed human beings could only be that of tolerance. The optimistic version of this theory postulates that human nature being infinitely malleable, human beings can choose the ways of life they prefer. The pessimistic version maintains that people are what they are conditioned to be; this is something over which they have no control. Human beings are passive creatures and do whatever their culture tells them to do. This explanation leads to behaviourism that locates the causes of human behaviour in a realm that is totally beyond human control.

#### 2.2.5.2 Cultural relativism

Different cultural groups think, feel, and act differently. There are no scientific standards for considering one group as intrinsically superior or inferior to another. Studying differences in culture among groups and societies presupposes a position of cultural relativism. It does not imply normalcy for oneself, neither for one's society. It, however, calls for judgment when dealing with groups or societies different from one's own. Information about the nature of cultural differences between societies, their roots, and their consequences should precede judgement and action. Negotiation is more likely to succeed when the parties concerned understand the reasons for the differences in viewpoints.

#### 2.2.5.3 Cultural ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is superior to that of other cultures. It is a form of reductionism that reduces the "other way" of life to a distorted version of one's own. This is particularly important in cases of global dealings when a company or an individual is imbued with the idea that methods, materials, or ideas that worked in the home country will also work abroad. Environmental differences are, therefore, ignored. Ethnocentrism, in relation to global dealings, can be categorized as follows:

#### 2.2.5.3.1 *Manifestations of culture*

Cultural differences manifest themselves in different ways and differing levels of depth. Symbols represent the most superficial and value the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals in between.

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share a particular culture. New symbols easily develop, old ones disappear. Symbols from one particular group are regularly copied by others. This is why symbols represent the outermost layer of a culture.

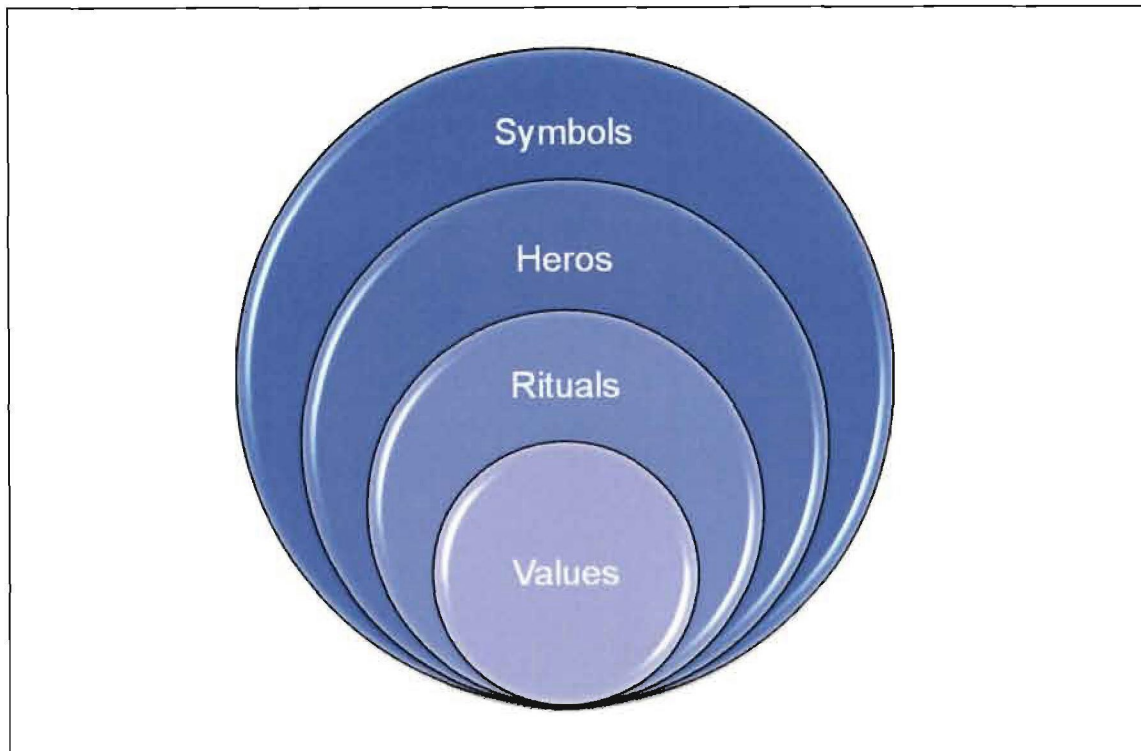
Heroes are persons, past or present, real or fictitious, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture. They also serve as models for behaviour.

Rituals are collective activities, sometimes superfluous in reaching desired objectives, but are considered as socially essential. They are therefore carried out most of the times for their own sake (for example: ways of greetings, paying respect to others, religious and social ceremonies).

The core of a culture is formed by values. They are broad tendencies for preferences of a certain state of affairs to others (good-evil, right-wrong, natural-unnatural). Many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore they often cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by others. Values can only be inferred from the way people act under different circumstances.

Symbols, heroes, and rituals are the tangible or visual aspects of the practices of a culture. The true cultural meaning of the practices is intangible; this is revealed only when the practices are interpreted by the insiders.

**FIGURE 2.1: MANIFESTATION OF CULTURE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DEPTH**



#### *2.2.5.3.2 Layers of culture*

People even within the same culture carry several layers of mental programming within themselves. Different layers of culture exist at the following levels:

- The national level: Associated with the nation as a whole.
- The regional level: Associated with ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences that exist within a nation.
- The gender level: Associated with gender differences (female vs. male)
- The generation level: Associated with the differences between grandparents and parents, parents and children.

- The social class level: Associated with educational opportunities and differences in occupation.
- The corporate level: Associated with the particular culture of an organisation. This is applicable to those who are employed.

#### 2.2.5.3.3 *Measuring cultural differences*

A variable can be operationalised either by single- or composite-measure techniques. A single-measure technique means the use of one indicator to measure the domain of a concept; the composite-measure technique means the use of several indicators to construct an index for the concept after the domain of the concept has been empirically sampled. Hofstede (1997) has devised a composite-measure technique to measure cultural differences among different societies:

- *Power distance index*: The index measures the degree of inequality that exists in a society.
- *Uncertainty avoidance index*: The index measures the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain or ambiguous situations.
- *Individualism index*: The index measures the extent to which a society is individualistic. Individualism refers to a loosely knit social framework in a society in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. The other end of the spectrum would be collectivism that occurs when there is a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-groups (relatives, clans, organisations) to look after them in exchange for absolute loyalty.
- *Masculinity index (Achievement vs. Relationship)*: The index measures the extent to which the dominant values are assertiveness, money and things

(achievement), not caring for others or for quality of life. The other end of the spectrum would be femininity (relationship).

#### 2.2.5.4 Reconciliation of cultural differences

##### 2.2.5.4.1 *Cultural awareness*

Before venturing on a global assignment, it is probably necessary to identify the cultural differences that may exist between one's home country and the country of business operation. Where the differences exist, one must decide whether and to what extent the home-country practices may be adapted to the foreign environment. Most of the time the differences are not very apparent or tangible. Certain aspects of a culture may be learned consciously (for example, methods of greeting people), some other differences are learned subconsciously (for example, methods of problem solving). The building of cultural awareness may not be an easy task, but once accomplished, it definitely helps a job done efficiently in a foreign environment.

Discussions and reading about other cultures definitely helps build cultural awareness, but opinions presented must be carefully measured. Sometimes they may represent unwarranted stereotypes, an assessment of only a subgroup of a particular group of people, or a situation that has since undergone drastic changes. It is always a good idea to get varied viewpoints about the same culture.

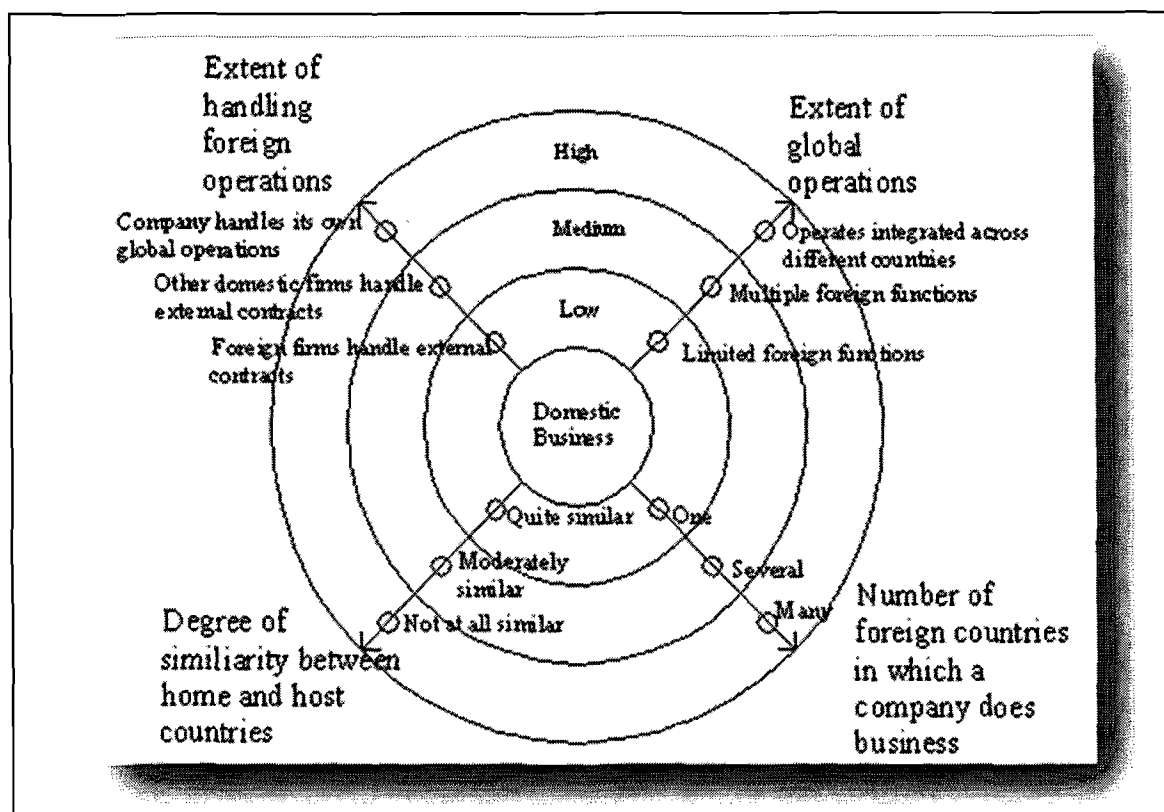
##### 2.2.5.4.2 *Clustering cultures*

Some countries may share many attributes that help mould their cultures (the modifiers may be language, religion, geographical location, and so forth). Based on this data obtained from past cross-cultural studies, countries may be grouped by similarities in values and attitudes. Fewer differences may be expected when moving within a cluster than when moving from one cluster to another.

#### 2.2.5.4.3 Determining the extent of global involvement

All enterprises operating globally need not have the same degree of cultural awareness. Figure 2.3 illustrates the extent to which a company needs to understand global cultures at different levels of involvement. The further a company moves out from the sole role of doing domestic business, the more it needs to understand cultural differences. Moving outward on more than one axis simultaneously makes the need for building cultural awareness even more essential.

**FIGURE 2.2: CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXTENT OF GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT**



**Source:** Hofstede (1997)

#### 2.2.5.4.4 Looking at culture in context

What is culture anyway? There are probably a bunch of images popping up in your head when considering the word. One might think of exotic dancers from some distant country, or maybe you think of high culture, opera and intellectual discussions while drinking red wine?

When you read up a little about what anthropologists and psychologists say about cultures they seem to have slightly separate opinions, but the common definition as stated before is this:

*“A culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learnings.”* (Bates, 1990).

One single sentence, and yet it is so incredibly complex. But if one takes the sentence above and analyse it, one keyword is *“learning”*. This means culture isn't something a person is born with, it is taught and involves learning behaviour. In addition, there are values and beliefs, which is what is going on in people's hearts and minds. Values are ideas about what's important in life. But also customs and behaviours (norms), which are the ways one is expected to act and behave towards one another within a certain culture.

With such a definition it is easy to realize that it is difficult to perceive the culture people are actually living in: such large parts of it are unconscious to them. No wonder there are so many misunderstandings between cultures when such large proportions of their view of the world is formed by the cultures they live in, and those are not even clear to them.

Why do people develop cultures then in the first place? The definition above suggests that cultures are a way for people to cope with their world and with one another. The human being is a social creature and needs rules for interaction with one another. Normative conformity is a socio-psychological term, which explains how people create norms for themselves within a social group and those rules they are not likely to break since they don't want to be excluded from the group. Many brands feed on this normative conformity. Brands that tell one that through buying them one is granted a belonging to a specific social group. Yet sometimes one really does feel the need to break with the norms, which is the case with many other brands trying to make people want to break away from the ordinary and listen to their own hearts.

A beautiful definition of culture however is this one: *"Culture is the sum of all the forms of art, of love and of thought, which, in the course of centuries, have enabled man to be less enslaved"* (The French author: André Malraux).

#### 2.2.5.4.5 Cultural differences historically

The modern notion of philanthropy that spurred organisations like Greenpeace, World Wildlife Foundation, and so forth was a reactionary measure to the industrial revolution. Sudden economic transformations have a way of doing that. Today, people are facing another one of these transformations. A globally connected society is emerging from unprecedented advances in communication technologies, the tipping point of which could be attributed to the Internet. The question may be not so much to examine how people have been different historically, but what created those differences in the first place? It's a matter of seeing the forest through the trees, as people examine the roles of economic and communication systems that may have played a formative role in the ways have traditionally differed culturally.

A core element is founded within the underlying economic system as this forms a base whereby the way certain groups have managed to sustain themselves in a hostile geographic and ecological environment. Tracing back to the origins of any of the

currently established cultural norms in the world, it is clear that they have been rooted in their particular means of deriving sustenance. Cultures have evolved from nomads who had to move from location to location to survive, to hunters and gatherers who eventually progressed into self-sustainable agricultural communities. There have also been opportunists who survived by taking from others. Looking at the recent geopolitical landscape there are still remnants of that kind of thinking which forged today's modern civilizations.

An interesting phenomenon present in the evolution of all of these types of societies is the presence of the catalyst of communication and transportation. In the ancient world, the invention of the written word created kingdoms that could pass down the law by writing them down. Prior to that, egalitarian societies evolved by passing down stories, albeit a similar yet primitive method by comparison. The fuel that propagates communication has always been the mode of transportation. Having limited transportation bound people to geography far closer than when the wheel was introduced, did it not? It seems that the propagation of information, and the resulting progress is limited by two factors. The first being the method of communication, i.e. reading, writing and so on, and the second being the efficiency of getting that communication from point A to point B.

Today, it is no surprise that people are indeed in the middle of another sudden economic transformation. This particular one differs from previous ones mainly because it has laid down the foundation for a different kind of communication and transportation - the kind that's potentially all-inclusive and instant!

- ***How different are we?***

The research on the hierarchy of needs by Maslow shows that two types of needs exist, namely basic needs and higher order needs. (Maslow, 1970):

1. Physiological needs such as: hunger, thirst and bodily comforts.
2. Feeling Safe, feeling secure and being out of danger.
3. Belonging and love, affiliating with others and being accepted.

4. Esteem, achievement, being competent, gaining approval and recognition.
5. Self-actualisation

The physiological needs are the same for all human beings, so the issues that separate one should be of social character. In other words: the values within a culture which enables one to belong and be loved. One needs to follow the norms and conform to them in order to affiliate with others and become accepted. The ideas within a culture, of what is important in life, is something one needs to know about in order to gain self esteem and gain approval and recognition. Those needs should be very important to brands too.

This research took into account the differences between individualistic versus collectivistic cultures. The finding was that “the adoption of avoidance relative to approach goals varies as a function of individualism-collectivism. Asian Americans adopted more avoidance goals than non-Asian Americans, and persons from South Korea and Russia adopted more avoidance goals than those in the United States. Interesting, however, is that avoidance personal goals are a negative predictor of an individual’s wellbeing in individualistic cultures, but not in collectivistic cultures.”

- ***A globally unified culture***

Does unification mean homogenization, or the assimilation of an even more complex society? For example, especially since the industrial revolution, the world at large has adopted ideals of the West because the West has symbolized power and economic strength. But going into the next waves of change, will we adopt other influences like spirituality, spicy food, and Bollywood dance moves? Will a unified culture be richer or simpler?

As communication bridges the gaps of geographic distances, will it not also make people want to hold on to their traditions even more? Isn't it a question of our

identities we need to preserve in an increasingly transitory world? Will we accept our identities as fluid, or will we stick to tried and true ideals of our geographic ancestors?

The democratic government in the USA was made possible largely due to the invention of the printing press. The more citizens who could know about the issues, the more they were equipped to make critical decisions about their government. The railroads in the USA started the formation of Wall Street and eventually the NYSE to fund the development of the infrastructure, and with the advancement of that system came the need for a managed industrialized workforce that have defined the previous century.

Today, with information flowing and conversations buzzing through Global Media, Mobile Communications and the Internet we are again seeing some very interesting changes. But still foreign companies instil their versions of reward systems in new environments, and local people either adopt it or reject it. Such as an USA based company trying to instil an "Employee of the Month" programme in China. Such a culture like the Chinese that is based on harmony and shunning individual attention rejects the proposition and declines. But when the same U.S. based company allows teams instead of hierarchies, their concept of seniority rule is challenged and put to rest for favour of better working environment, and the Chinese values of productivity, and "harmony".

These days, adaptive strategies dealing with uncertainty seem to be the buzz for business to reach customers, but does that work the same way with the attitudes of people? In other words, do people generally welcome change or resist it? That's a big question without any clear answers, but one way to initiate that research may be to look at it from a cultural perspective.

One perspective is that cultures emerge out of economic necessity. If an economy is based on localized production, such as in agricultural communities,

the culture that follows is one of maintaining that system at its most efficient peak. A simplified and crude example may be that a farming community requiring physically strong farmhands to produce optimal output, inevitably evolving into a generally patriarchal society. Historically, cultural difference remained to preserve economies, the systems of survival. Diversity is the lifeblood of adaptation; and adaptation is how the human race survive as a species. When a company based in California sets up stores in Arizona do they think that they are trading between two jurisdictions, or merely shifting resources in an open marketplace?

Another perspective may be that cultures are independent of economics, and they are formed by genetic and geographic and political parameters. For example, wars killed off most of the able men hunter gathers to produce a culture of women Amazon warriors in ancient Greece. A matriarchal society was possible there, because the women there were smarter, more adaptive and better nurturers than their male counterparts.

Today, our commercial landscape is a significant factor in the appearance of a globally unified culture. It seems that corporations have offered us similar branded choices in entertainment, food, and communication so that when we make a reference to MTV or Levis, our counterpart in the opposite corner of the world knows exactly what we mean. Does that mean people have similar cultural interests? Maybe, but most likely not, partly because people grew up in households with different priorities, influenced by different politics, and observed different customs.

- **Just as communication brings change, change inevitably brings resistance.**

In a world of dissipating borders, terrorism is still rampant and not dying off anytime soon. Fundamentalism and racism are better organised and just as

world, Mickey may as well be an infidel, and FedEx represents a loss of control over government regulation.

- ***Are cultural differences a problem?***

How about the next generation growing up in an interconnected world? When they grow up seeing the same media, relate to the same businesses like FedEx, and talk the same language over Instant Messenger, how are their cultural biases formed? Is it any wonder why most of the young people in the English speaking world seem to talk like kids from Southern California? We now have universal movements like Hip Hop crossing the borders from inner cities of the U.S. to Gangster Rap in Paris, but does that phenomena encompass their attitudes in total about the majority of common issues? Do they think the same way about tradition, politics or the environment? It would be easy to say yes or no because there are enough examples to back up either point of view, but most of us know that it's not all that simple. Being globally communicative may mean exposure to global issues at large, but reaction to them is still deeply seated in local biases. At least for the time being.

Just think about it, what if people really become all the same? All people would look more or less the same, have exactly the same values and aim for similar things in life. The differences are beautiful and they make the Earth a wonderful place to live on. It's when we get indifferent and intolerant to the differences that things start to get disturbing.

But then again, is that what a new global culture is all about - sameness? Well, it certainly would be a lot easier from a brand's perspective, with just one single big consumer segment having the same values and striving for similar things in life. Everyone watching the same TV shows, reading the same magazines and newspapers, attracted to the same community waterholes on the Internet. This

scenario sure would make brand planning and media selections a lot easier, and we wouldn't have to spend as much time writing marketing plans. From this perspective, cultural differences might be argued to be more of a problem and should be eliminated as much as possible. Since the goal of branding is to create monopolies, one brand becoming the soul supplier for as many people as possible, less cultural differences would make that process easier.

On the other hand, the diversity of information sources, billions of websites on the Internet and hundreds of TV-channels, creates its own little peculiar problem. It has been suggested that this causes people to become more isolated than before, as one could argue that the hyper-personalisation of the Internet is making people less informed. It could even be a threat to democracy if people only chose to expose themselves to information which is in line with their personal interests, which would make people more ignorant of other things going on in the world.

This suggests that we might get to see a world of both hyper-socialisation, with a new global culture, as well as hyper-personalisation where more people tend to shut the world out, in fear and fatigue. So not only should brands cater cultural differences in order to stay relevant, but brands in and of themselves ARE cultural differences, socially as well as psychologically.

- ***Is it possible to generalize about cultures?***

The fact is that cultural differences exist. It may not be totally fair to say that people from a particular country or origin have these or those characteristics, someone living there might even say he or she isn't like that at all. But to generalize about cultures isn't as much a question of labelling people, but a will to understand why others don't act and think like I do. Hence the most difficult task is to understand what kind of cultural prefixes I carry around and how those

colours the way I look upon the world around me. If you can't understand yourself, you're not likely to understand others (Podder & Bergvall, 2004).

## **2.3 SUMMARY**

Global marketers have spent billions of dollars on creating and exposing brands to arrest the attention of consumers' interest and disposable income. As the globe became a village with the entrance of technology in the form of the Internet, improved transportation and accessibility to any one of the many corners of the world, so the brands travelled and grew too. The brands themselves took on characteristics of the cultures they now entered and participated in, leaving brand values and brand identity indelibly a part of the culture where they now have a permanent home.

The next chapter examines the research methodology and results achieved.

prolific as the idea of a globally unified free society. Billions of people still go hungry each and every day and couldn't care less about having the latest MMS handset. For them, cultural biases are beyond product or service preferences; they choose brands of ideology against those who they think are responsible for their predicament. In times of need ideologies seem to be the only solace, and tradition becomes the only stability. Even for the other side of the economic divide, it is not so clear, how these institutions of long-standing change affect cultures. Western religion for example, often seems to deny change as in the case of women's and gay rights within the church. However, at the same time, religion is often an instrument of change as churches in the USA have a positive impact on the environment by organised tree planting excursions within their congregations. We have scientists who teach evolution and believe in creationism.

People adopt cultural changes or anything else for that matter which meets them at the path of least resistance. It's easy to say if something is more convenient, or tastes better and doesn't interfere with my belief system. They will adopt it, but is that really true? It may be but when identities and belief systems are more fluid and predictions of what people will like is based more on variables than absolutes. What will the culturally sensitive global brands of the future be like? Will they come from the extensions of centralized brands or decentralized cultural hives? Only time will tell.

Global commerce may have enabled us to transcend borders and select everything from products to even governance relative to us, but how we make those choices are of historic and cultural significance that still play a major role. For example, we choose the Disney channel instead of our governments to buy into the censorship for our children we are comfortable with, and FedEx instead of the local mail service when we want to ensure safe delivery, but those choices are largely still predicated on long standing cultural biases. In another part of the

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

*“Brands are structures and processes serving as messengers for contents and context within a constantly changing cultural environment. On their way from culture to culture, they are transformed. Upon entering other cultures, they are reworked, changed by and themselves changing cultures” (Gagliardi 2001a:4).*

Chapter 3, as suggested by Gagliardi above, aims to present the empirical findings on culture and branding. The chapter sets off by explaining the data collection of the empirical research, reports on validity and then continues to discuss the results obtained from the analysis. The results are compiled by means of descriptive statistics.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The quantitative research method was used in this study where data has been collected and expressed in numbers. The sub-section of the quantitative research method employed is the descriptive research method whereby attempts are made to describe the demographic characteristics of the users of a given subject being brands and branded articles in the clothing and food categories. These characteristics are further demonstrated by analyzing the age, culture, education and gender of the participants.

Statistical methods are employed versus the case study method as it examines a few variables in a number of cases (participants). This method is less likely to distort the

finds as is often the case in case studies. A better overall picture is obtained and so more defined conclusions can be drawn from the results.

The validity of measuring instrument scores refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The validity of the test scores in this study is limited to a range of answers on a 5-point scale ranging from “*strongly disagree*” (SD) to “*strongly agree*” (SA) to the interviewee’s perception of branded consumer goods. Opinions of their choice to participate in branded goods or not are discussed where they indicate what qualities a brand delivers or fails to deliver. Also those who choose not to participate in branded goods demonstrate their opinions and decision-making processes. (The questionnaire appears as Appendix A.)

The types of validity of instrument scores are important to understand to demonstrate the validity of the sample being tested. Two types of validity were considered, namely:

- Face validity refers to whether the items of the test appear to measure what the test claims to measure. If they don’t then the question may be raised as to the purpose of the questionnaire.
- Content validity reflects the theoretical domain of the construct being measured. In this study we are measuring brand value in the eyes of the participants and the value it brings to them as individuals with reference to their cultural history. The factors of brand value need therefore to be tested.

### **3.3 RESULTS**

Although the sample size is not a definitive representation of any particular cultural community interviewed, it does however give some indication of where the South Africa, Australian and New Zealand disposable income is appropriated.

The questions posed in the structured interviews attempted to provide an understanding of where the cultures have developed from and how participants view the branded

environment people live in today. Linear calculations were made to arrive at results expressed in percentages of participation in branded products.

The tabulation of results appears in *Appendix B: Descriptive statistics*.

The participants' ages (for example, see Table 1 in *Appendix B*) are evenly distributed over 20 to 60 years of age: 34% males and 66% females, who also represent a cross section of educational disciplines. The participants predominantly speak English as their home language, in spite of their cultures. Their occupations rang from directors to home executives, and they play a significant role in deciding how the disposable income of their households is appropriated. The study may have indicated a different result if all participants were of a similar educational stature and occupational position. The opinions of brands and branding however are consistent with their upbringing, reference groups and availability to money to fund their purchasing choices, irrespective of their current social status. The spread across the age of the participants gives an interesting insight into those who have grown up with brands and branding as simply an accepted way of life. Those who have been introduced to brands and the power of branding have adopted the promises the brands offer: others acknowledge brands but choose not to participate.

Disposable income is defined as that percentage of money available to spend after monthly debts have been settled. Disposable income is that portion of cash spent on groceries, clothing and luxury items. The percentage of disposable income spent on consumer goods by the participants of this study is spread over the bottom three quartiles. A total of 30% of the participants spend 0-10% of their disposable income on branded consumer goods, 22% spend between 11-20% and 26% appropriate 21-30% of their available cash.

A total of 50% of the participants agree that their purchasing intention is influenced by the product being on sale. These consumers, on the one hand, choose branded products without hesitation, 32%, while 26% do not. However when they are in doubt,

58% are more likely to choose a well-branded product as opposed to an unfamiliar brand.

Interestingly the amount of promotion put behind a brand is responded to by 22% of the participants; 30% don't care about promotional activity. A total of 26% of the consumers in this study do not make a decision to purchase a branded product as a result of the promotional activity. The response to in-store promoters and their perceived value added to the product, the product's benefits and features are for the most part disregarded where 30% of shoppers appreciate their input. The advertising however has a far more favourable result where 46% respond to the call to action made in television, radio and print advertisements, and only 16% still don't care and 22% consistently still do not respond to advertising either. This result indicates that there could be a shift from those holding outlying opinions and some of those neutral consumers are motivated into purchasing the advertised product. Advertising traditionally heralds new products, in a branded range, new features and even special offers. These messages generally carry a promise of particular delivery of results, enhanced or altered image for those who participate in the product and ultimately in the brand.

- **Quality of branded products**

The perception held by 44% of the participants is that branded products are of a better quality than non-branded products and 22% are mute on this point. Price plays a defining role when purchasing decisions are being made. So people are emotionally drawn to brands due to their image, the values they demonstrate in their quality and endorsements made by the brand positioning.

- **Making a decision on purchasing a product they have not previously bought**

When consumers are faced with making a decision on purchasing a product they have not previously bought, 62% will choose a branded product because they believe it to carry the attributes of quality and value established in the brand.

House brands have not established a reputation of quality and most of all, house brands carry their own image of being cheaper and poorer quality. Quality is a major driving force in purchasing decisions. Consumers are prepared to invest more in their choices if this choice delivers the promise of quality. Quality is also defined in longevity, image, health features, and so forth. Consumers are ambivalent regarding the attributes of a branded product emanating those of their own defined image.

- **Image of brand/product**

When asked if they purchase products that carry an image they can relate to, 32% agree and 32% are mute while 22% disagree. This result demonstrates that brand image is important but not an overriding and defining attribute. This suggests that these powerful brands have become so much a part of our lives and culture and that people would only miss them when they are not there anymore?

In an informal focus group, where a cross section of black and Indian (Muslim) participants were encouraged to discuss this topic, it was also established that the attitude of making a purchase of a branded product or not has two distinct halves:

- One, when purchasing an expensive item like a motor vehicle, a TV or camera, the brand of the product is absolutely vital; where on the other side of the coin,
- consumer goods like sugar, bread and everyday items, brands are not critical to the decision-making process; they have an influence, but are not an overriding factor.

- **Why do you wear branded clothing?**

The answers came out in statements of belonging to a peer group for those who are of the younger generation. The older participants expressed an extension of this opinion whereby their status is seen by their external expression of

recognized brands. Pringle, for example, is an old Scottish clothing company that stands for superior quality with a timeless style often worn by business executives and aspiring executives. Nike and Adidas also express the superior sporty image with an extrinsic value of the healthy wealthy set. Those who do not participate in brands of this nature simply claim they are overpriced and the reference group they belong to, cannot afford these labels although they recognize what they stand for. These people belong and are comfortable within their no name brands as there is comfort in not competing in a group where they will not be recognized, be it from a status or a station in life. They would stand out in their comfort group if they were able to participate in these expensive branded items.

The exception is where the exclusive group recognizes brands and their value but deliberately choose not to participate because they earn belongingness as a result of other criteria. They, for example, live in suburbs or estates where their status is not needed to be authenticated by clothing, rather by the assets they own. Another aspect to their non-participation is that they would rather stay abreast of fast-changing fashion items rather than timeless quality. Another interesting opinion that emerged from the interviews is that although all have grown up in an economic environment where brands were not as powerful as they are today, choose to perpetuate their upbringing and family values of budget rather than fit, as the marketers are attempting to encourage.

- **Branding and food-products**

Food, however, carries a different slant where those who prefer branded food stores and restaurants recognize the health aspects to quality food and no price is too high for this reward. Again, the less financially equipped maintain their purchasing choices according to their budget even though they also recognize the value in quality food. Woolworths is out of reach for the Checkers budget that caters for the lower LSM groups. A clear distinction between shopping rituals of those with cultural restraints like the Muslim group where only Halaal

food is allowed but this group has departed from their clothing culture in favour of fitting into the current trends of the day. Here we can clearly see the influence of the Western world on their culture.

### 3.4 SUMMARY

Through the process of structured interviews and the literature review there is one overriding conclusion that can be arrived at, and that is if anyone has enough financial ability they could participate in the global branded village. The interesting point is some choose to and some choose not to. Ring-fencing that section of the global population that is able to utilize their disposable income on branded products, we discover that their purchasing behaviour lies deeper than the size of their wallet. They are looking for intrinsic and extrinsic values to add to their own wellbeing. These values find their roots in their psychological perception of themselves, hence the reflection of the perceptions of branded items. These perceptions need to match to create a coherent self-image and projected image to the purchaser and the reference group they participate in.

The Muslim community participating in this study unanimously said that their clothes differentiate them from a poorer less fortunate section of their cultural group. It is important to understand that their culture (not exclusively and not exhaustively) stems from their occupation of traditionally traders. They have access to, and sell high quality fabrics, clothing and other commercial wears. Through this trading they have become aware of the value and quality of the items they choose to trade, which knowledge of course is passed on to their own reference group. This mentality subscribes to the old adage "*the feathers make the fowl*".

The black community traditionally has been on the lower end of the scale as far as commercial products are concerned. The country's politics of the day have previously excluded them from education which facilitates job opportunities and the resultant commensurate income. Since the ground-breaking elections of 1994, an emerging

black market strives for a better quality of life in every aspect. The influx of imported cars and well-dressed occupants bears testimony to this fact. More and more black citizens of South Africa understand the value of education and the opportunities a skill and qualification can offer them. The new generation, known as the knowledge generation sees not colour distinction - only a united education system with members of each population group being educated side by side.

The next chapter is the final chapter of the study. It draws conclusions and makes recommendations. The chapter also provides closure to the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The definition of a brand, brand equity and brand loyalty, what culture means, how it was born and evolved through learnt behaviour and traditions being fulfilled with new ones being developed out of the changing circumstances, was investigated. It also showed how cultures are exposed to as the world as a whole evolves. This evolution is largely due to the globe becoming a village facilitated by extraordinary growth and explosion of the communications providers in the form of the internet and satellite technology. We have described how relationships have been forged across the globe and neighbours have remained strangers. It is this phenomenon and the cross-cultural identification cultures have merged and formed new cultures with brands and brand values at the epicentre.

### **4.2 CONCLUSIONS**

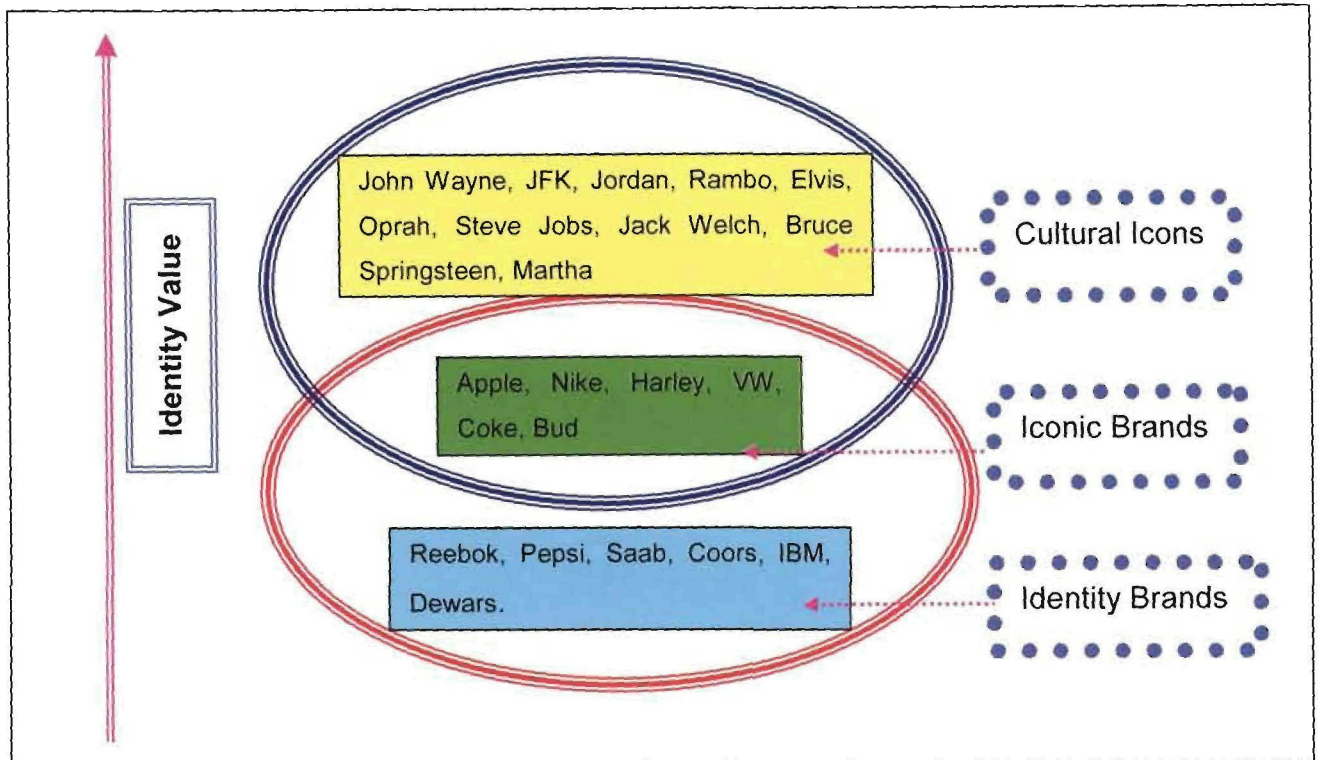
From the research the following conclusions are made:

#### **Conclusion 1: The brand we present is all about us**

Current discussions about making brands work in other cultures assume a range of taken-for granted assumptions: that a brand will work anywhere if it is sufficiently adapted and stays sufficiently unique and that this job is the exclusive province of the brand creators and the designers. This approach largely ignores the fact that a brand is a genre - that it reflects the values and beliefs of the brand originator, who is rooted in a

particular culture. When we present a brand, that presentation is all about *us* - about what cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu calls our *habitus* - a set of values and attitudes determined by our own culture, which influences our practices. It exposes not only what we say, but also what we *want* the story to say. Brands are not isolated from other communication genres - we employ our knowledge of other forms of communication to make sense of brands. Thus brands may also expose what we want them to hide - remember the flap over Nike's Third World labour policies and the furore over Shell Oil's attempt to sink its Brent Spar drill platform? Communication always draws upon previously learned meanings and contexts, which are different from culture to culture. Consumers in other cultures are quite creative in re-contextualising brands and products in meaning and use. For instance, McDonald's hamburgers are a hip "prestige" food in Russia. TV sets are a prestige item in large parts of India, though they're widely used as a babysitting device in northern Europe. In another example, Electrolux found out that its prototype of an "Internet refrigerator" was used as a central point for the family to exchange messages—not as a device for ordering food or looking up recipes, which was the original concept behind that product. This kind of creativity does not lie in creating something entirely new, but in altering what already exists to fit it into cultural and functional frames of reference. Creativity is therefore not a protected domain for professional designers; it is a human factor shared by all cultures.

**FIGURE 4.1: CULTURAL VALUE, ICONIC BRANDS AND IDENTITY BRANDS**



Source: Holt (2004:4)

**Conclusion 2: Iconic brands are brands that have become cultural icons**

Customers value some products as much for what they symbolize as for what they do. Brands like Coke, Nike and Jack Daniel's are valued for their brand stories and more importantly for their identity value. These brands behave as vessels of self-expression; the brands are embodied with stories, values and identities that consumers find valuable in constructing their own self-images. Consumers flock to brands that assist them to express who they really want to be. The most successful brands therefore become *iconic brands*. Combining with the pantheon of cultural icons, they become consensus expressions of particular values held dear by some members of a society. (Refer to Figure 4.1 above.)

Identity value usually matters less for brands in low-involvement, business-to-business, critical service delivery, and highly technical categories. Although even in these cases, identity value can play a crucial role in the brand's success, as Ogilvy & Mather's global advertising campaign for IBM and Richard Branson's public relations efforts for Virgin Airways have demonstrated.

Conventional branding models largely ignore how brands buttress consumer identities. Managers typically view identity value superficially as badging, that is, the idea that consumers use brands as status symbols to earn the admiration of their peers. And consultants and academics routinely invoke one-size-fits-all models that lump together all types of brands into a single framework. These analysts group brands like Levi's and Chanel, which are driven by identity value, with brands like Clorox and Southwest Airlines, which consumers value for entirely different reasons (such as perceived quality and reliability). This lack of specification is a mistake. Identity brands create customer value differently than do other types of brands, so they must be managed differently as well.

This blatant neglect of identity brands directly results from the dominating influence of psychology and economics, which have shaped our basic assumptions regarding how brands work. Iconic brands become immensely valuable because they function much like cultural icons (Holt 2004: 4).

Brands are structures and processes serving as messengers for contents and context within a constantly changing cultural environment. On their way from culture to culture, they are transformed. Upon entering other cultures, they are reworked, changed by and themselves changing cultures.

The process by which traits of one culture spread to another, cultural diffusion is central to the understanding for how brands and products are accepted by other cultures. Cultural elements undergo changes when they are diffused from one culture to another, different culture traits are received and interpreted differently. Technical and aesthetic

patterns are adopted easier, while customs and moral concepts, including concepts of what constitutes norms and values, are more resistant to be accepted.

Cultures are complex and often contradictory. Other cultures can embrace or refuse the product which sells well at home; consumers in different cultures might use a product in different ways and different contexts. Notions change over time, and trends are different in different cultures: The meaning of a “*good household*” was quite different in the fifties, and today it invokes quite different notions in Japan and Europe. Attaching tune-up accessories to midsize cars is definitely “out” in Western Europe, but is still very “in” in Russia.

#### **4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has examined the participants of brands within a few cultural groups, but the recommendations are aimed at the marketers of the brands that have made such a profound impact on the world as one now knows it. In every marketing textbook after every chapter and topic that is taught, you will find a lengthy piece on ethics and how the particular discipline under discussion should be executed with responsibility to the consumer, the environment, to the stakeholders and the government of the day. As the global population slowly merge and become one global village, so too do their purchasing choices. Cross-cultural messages are an important vehicle for educating and uplifting the global community, adding value to their lives through quality products and all that they stand for. Therefore, marketers should take care in all that they do in launching products that have a global appeal, they change lives.

Marketers will always be primarily focused on the economic targets set before them but as this study reveals, great products have been distributed globally with different responses to the values expressed in them, but the same response to the economic contributions to the brand owners. Again, this comes down to a careful study of the intricacies of cultures and global markets the brand owner wants to penetrate in order to

meet the people at their own point of reference. Allow for cultural interpretations that will build a sustainable brand within the specific market.

In the ideal organisation, every part should reflect the whole, while the whole should be more than the sum of the parts. A learning organisation is constantly seeking to self-improve by learning, and learning how to learn. For internationally operating organisations, a part of this learning process must be the learning of cultural literacy. When everybody involved in the branding and product development process has a basic understanding of the cultures the company deals with, cultural literacy will influence every important decision concerning markets in other cultures. Cultural literacy could be defined as being able to see through somebody's eyes or to stand in his shoes, what ethnography calls the "*emic*" viewpoint.

Cultural literacy is an important part of investing into relationships with stakeholders. For marketers and designers, it means to engage in an ongoing conversation with stakeholders in different cultures; in different cultures, it means to listen and understand, not simply to repeat what customers utter and forming that into products. It is about ideas, research and cultural sensitivity, involving the disciplines of management, design, marketing, sociology, ethnography and anthropology. When it comes to create these intelligent answers, it is about enriching culture, not about reducing it with stereotypes. It needs culturally literate designers, marketers and CEOs with a holistic viewpoint that understands other cultures and is knowledgeable of other involved disciplines.

#### **4.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are many interesting elements that could be added to this study to better understand how consumer and buyer behaviour has evolved through consumerism, cross-cultural interaction and the growth and development of global brands. One element that plays a role is how traditional cultures have moved away from their natural home and country to a more prosperous country. Many Chinese have moved into Australia and New Zealand, where education is incentivized to attract learners with the

objective of retaining the skills. Through this process cultures are merged into one adopting each other's traits and norms.

It would be interesting to define a set of traditional cultures and follow them through three or more generations to establish the evolution experienced through globalisation and the effect brands have had on cultures.

#### **4.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

The subject is an interesting one and the more research entered into, reveals even more aspects of influence brands and branding has had on the world as a whole. Access to a representative group of cultures was difficult and limited. In addition, due to the vastness of the topic, it was challenging in deciding on what to include in the literature study and what to exclude. Relevance was the primary filter to include the referenced literature.

The goal of helping brands and products to succeed in other cultures has to be cultural fit. This works on several levels, all of which are interconnected and have to be weighted differently for different generations, consumer types and environments within one culture. Cultural fitness could be explained better by an example. Consider the following scenario:

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

This research study has been focused on providing both marketers and academics with an insight into the perceptions of consumers of different cultural backgrounds about global brands. It is evident that brands and branding have made an impact on traditional cultures through consumers adopting the brand image and brand values into their own lives, consequently altering traditional norms and values. Through the success of many global brands, their strength and visibility in the world has transformed the way

people live and play. The Internet is one of the largest catalysts in establishing the positioning and residency of global brands.

Chapter 1 provided an overview over the entire study while Chapter 2 focused on the branding, defining culture and demonstrating the results of the merging of these two elements. Chapter 3 explored the perceptions of interviewed participants. Chapter 4 presented the conclusions drawn, recommendations, opportunities for future study and the limitations encountered.

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## APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

This questionnaire is being executed in fulfilment of the MBA degree at the North West University – Potchefstroom. The objective of this questionnaire is to determine the perceptions of brands and branding, various members of emerging cultures hold.

For the purposes of this research, brands and branding are defined as follows:

*“A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs more closely. Furthermore, its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition” (De Chernatony and McDonald 1998:20).*

*also*

*Please consider that branded products referred to in the questionnaire below can be categorized as the guideline below:*

<b><i>Technology</i></b>	<b><i>Nokia, Sony, Macintosh’s iPod’s vs. MP3 players Hewlett Packard etc. (across the technology range).</i></b>
<b><i>Clothing</i></b>	<b><i>Nike, Addidas, Pringle, Polo, etc vs. Woolworths house brands</i></b>
<b><i>Vehicles</i></b>	<b><i>Mercedes, BMW, Jaguar, Toyota, etc.</i></b>

**Food**

***Woolworth's fruit & veg. vs. independent greengrocer;  
McDonald's / Dulce vs. corner café,***

This interview will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. It would therefore be greatly appreciated if you would answer all questions in a fair and open manner. The information gathered from this questionnaire will be used purely for research purposes. Thank you for taking the time and effort to complete this questionnaire. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the survey at any stage.

**Student:** Jane Barclay

**Supervisor:** Prof. C.A. Bisschoff

Phone: +00 64 9 533 6985

Phone: +00 27 18 299 1411

**Head of School:** Prof. Tommy du Plessis

**Declaration form from the Respondent/ Interviewee:**

**By completing this questionnaire and submitting it, I confirm that I understand the contents and nature of the document and consent to participate in the study.**

**Signature of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Please include your name and signature)

# **BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Please place a cross (X) in the block that applies to you.

## **1. AGE**

Under 20	
21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51-60	
61 & Above	

## **2. GENDER**

Male	
Female	

## **3. HOME LANGUAGE**

English	
Afrikaans	
Chinese	

**4. RACE**

African Black	
White	
Asian	
Chinese	

**5. HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL**

Matric	
Diploma	
Degree	
Post-Graduate Qualification	
Other (Specify)	

**6. PERCENTAGE OF MONTHLY DISPOSABLE INCOME SPENT ON BRANDED CONSUMER GOODS**

0 – 10%	
11 – 20%	
21 – 30%	
31 – 40%	
41 – 50%	
51 – 60%	
More than 60%	

7. **PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERENCE BY MARKING WITH A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK PROVIDED.**

1	Strongly Disagree	SD
2	Disagree	D
3	Neutral	N
4	Agree	A
5	Strongly Agree	SA

8. **MY INTENTION TO PURCHASE A PRODUCT IS DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY THE BRAND BEING ON SALE.**

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

9. **WHEN WALKING THROUGH A STORE, I SELECT BRANDED PRODUCTS WITHOUT ANY HESITATION.**

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

10. **WHEN IN DOUBT, I AM MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A WELL-BRANDED PRODUCT AS OPPOSED TO A BRAND THAT I DO NOT RECOGNIZE.**

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

11. I PURCHASE BRANDED PRODUCTS AS A RESULT OF THE AMOUNT OF PROMOTION THAT IS DIRECTED TOWARDS THESE BRANDS.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

12. THE AMOUNT OF ADVERTISING DIRECTED AT BRANDED PRODUCTS ON TELEVISION, RADIO, AND NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES HELPS ME TO RECOGNIZE THESE BRANDS IN STORES AND THIS INFLUENCES MY DECISION TO PURCHASE THESE BRANDS.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

13. IN-STORE PROMOTERS WHO PROMOTE MANUFACTURER BRANDS PROVIDE VALUABLE INFORMATION AND THIS HELPS TO INFLUENCE MY DECISIONS AS TO WHICH PRODUCT TO PURCHASE.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

14. I PREFER TO SELECT MANUFACTURER BRANDED PRODUCTS DUE TO MY BELIEF THAT THESE BRANDS ARE OF A BETTER QUALITY THAN HOUSE BRANDS OR LESSER KNOWN PRODUCTS.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

15. I ALWAYS CONSIDER THE PRICE OF THE PRODUCT BEFORE THE BRAND.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

16. IF I HAVE NOT PURCHASED A PRODUCT PREVIOUSLY AND I AM UNSURE AS TO WHICH BRAND TO CHOOSE, I AM MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A MANUFACTURER BRAND DUE TO THE BELIEF THAT THIS BRAND IS OF A BETTER QUALITY THAN THE HOUSE BRAND.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

17. I AM SURE THAT AN IMPORTANT MOTIVATING FACTOR AMONG CONSUMERS IS THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I AM MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A MANUFACTURER BRAND.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

18. I CONSIDER THE QUALITY OF HOUSE BRANDS TO BE EQUIVALENT TO BRANDED PRODUCTS.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

19. THE QUANTITY OF ADVERTISING FOCUSED ON MANUFACTURER  
BRANDED PRODUCTS INFLUENCES ME TO PURCHASE THESE  
PRODUCTS.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

20. I AM MOTIVATED TO PURCHASE A BRANDED PRODUCT BECAUSE OF  
THE IMAGE THAT PRODUCT CARRIES.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

21. I BELIEVE THAT BRANDED PRODUCTS CARRY AN IMAGE I CAN RELATE  
TO.

SD	D	N	A	SA
----	---	---	---	----

***“Thank you for taking the time and  
participation.”***

## APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

# RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

### 1. AGE

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
21-30	10	20%	20%	20%
31-40	11	22%	22%	42%
41-50	14	28%	28%	70%
51-60	11	22%	22%	92%
61 & above	4	8%	8%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

### 2. GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	17	34%	34%	34%
Female	33	66%	66%	100%
Total	100	100%	100%	

### 3. LANUGAGE

Language	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
English	46	92%	92%	92%
Afrikaans	2	4%	4%	96%
German	1	2%	2%	98%
Chinese	1	2%	2%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

#### 4. RACE

Race	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	40	80%	80%	80%
Asian	5	10%	10%	90%
Other	5	10%	10%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

#### 5. EDUCATION

Education	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Matric	4	8%	8%	8%
Diploma	23	46%	46%	54%
Degree	15	30%	30%	84%
PG Qualification	8	16%	16%	100%
Other	0	0%	0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

#### 6. KEY

Key	Degrees of agreement	Abrv.
1	Strongly Disagree	SD
2	Disagree	D
3	Neutral	N
4	Agree	A
5	Strongly Agree	SA

**7. PERCENTAGE OF MONTHLY DISPOSABLE INCOME SPENT ON BRANDED CONSUMER GOODS**

No. 7	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-10	15	30%	30%	30%
11-20	11	22%	22%	52%
21-30	13	26%	26%	78%
31-40	6	12%	12%	90%
41-50	2	4%	4%	94%
51-60	0	0%	0%	94%
more than 60	3	6%	6%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

**8. MY INTENTION TO PURCHASE A PRODUCT IS DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY THE BRAND BEING ON SALE.**

No. 8	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	10	20%	20%	20%
D	3	6%	6%	26%
N	8	16%	16%	42%
A	25	50%	50%	92%
SA	4	8%	8%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

**9. WHEN WALKING THROUGH A STORE, I SELECT BRANDED PRODUCTS WITHOUT ANY HESITATION.**

No. 9	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	7	14%	14%	14%
D	13	26%	26%	40%
N	9	18%	18%	58%
A	16	32%	32%	90%
SA	5	10%	10%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

10. WHEN IN DOUBT, I AM MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A WELL-BRANDED PRODUCT AS OPPOSED TO A BRAND THAT I DO NOT RECOGNIZE.

No. 10	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	1	2%	2%	2%
D	1	2%	2%	4%
N	4	8%	8%	12%
A	29	58%	58%	70%
SA	15	30%	30%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

11. I PURCHASE BRANDED PRODUCTS AS A RESULT OF THE AMOUNT OF PROMOTION THAT IS DIRECTED TOWARDS THESE BRANDS.

No. 11	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	7	14%	14%	14%
D	13	26%	26%	40%
N	15	30%	30%	70%
A	11	22%	22%	92%
SA	4	8%	8%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

12. THE AMOUNT OF ADVERTISING DIRECTED AT BRANDED PRODUCT ON TELEVISION, RADIO, AND NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES HELPS ME TO RECOGNIZE THESE BRANDS IN STORES AND THIS INFLUENCES MY DECISION TO PURCHASE THESE BRANDS.

No. 12	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	2	4%	4%	4%
D	11	22%	22%	26%
N	8	16%	16%	42%
A	23	46%	46%	88%
SA	6	12%	12%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

13. IN-STORE PROMOTERS WHO PROMOTE MANUFACTURER BRANDS PROVIDE VALUABLE INFORMATION AND THIS HELPS TO INFLUENCE MY DECISIONS AS TO WHICH PRODUCT TO PURCHASE.

No. 13	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	8	16%	16%	16%
D	18	36%	36%	52%
N	8	16%	16%	68%
A	15	30%	30%	98%
SA	1	2%	2%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

14. I PREFER TO SELECT MANUFACTURER BRANDED PRODUCTS DUE TO MY BELIEF THAT THESE BRANDS ARE OF A BETTER QUALITY THAN HOUSE BRANDS OR LESSER KNOWN PRODUCTS.

No. 14	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	4	8%	8%	8%
D	10	20%	20%	28%
N	11	22%	22%	50%
A	22	44%	44%	94%
SA	3	6%	6%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

15. I ALWAYS CONSIDER THE PRICE OF THE PRODUCT BEFORE THE BRAND.

No. 15	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	2	4%	4%	4%
D	12	24%	24%	28%
N	10	20%	20%	48%
A	10	20%	20%	68%
SA	16	32%	32%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

16. IF I HAVE NOT PURCHASED A PRODUCT PREVIOUSLY AND I AM UNSURE AS TO WHICH BRAND TO CHOOSE, I AM MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A MANUFACTURER BRAND DUE TO THE BELIEF THAT THIS BRAND IS OF A BETTER QUALITY THAN THE HOUSE BRAND.

No. 16	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	3	6%	6%	6%
D	5	10%	10%	16%
N	9	18%	18%	34%
A	31	62%	62%	96%
SA	2	4%	4%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

17. I AM SURE THAT AN IMPORTANT MOTIVATING FACTOR AMONG CONSUMERS IS THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I AM MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A MANUFACTURER BRAND.

No. 17	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	3	6%	6%	6%
D	5	10%	10%	16%
N	6	12%	12%	28%
A	30	60%	60%	88%
SA	6	12%	12%	100%
Total	50	100%	100%	

**18. I CONSIDER THE QUALITY OF HOUSE BRANDS TO BE EQUIVALENT TO  
BRANDED PRODUCTS.**

No. 18	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	2	4%	4%	4%
D	19	38%	38%	42%
N	16	32%	32%	74%
A	10	20%	20%	94%
SA	3	6%	6%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**19. THE QUANTITY OF ADVERTISING FOCUSED ON MANUFACTURER  
BRANDED PRODUCTS INFLUENCES ME TO PURCHASE THESE  
PRODUCTS.**

No. 19	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	3	6%	6%	6%
D	15	30%	30%	36%
N	12	24%	24%	60%
A	19	38%	38%	98%
SA	1	2%	2%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

20. I AM MOTIVATED TO PURCHASE A BRANDED PRODUCT BECAUSE OF THE IMAGE THAT PRODUCT CARRIES.

No. 20	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	10	20%	20%	20%
D	12	24%	24%	44%
N	11	22%	22%	66%
A	16	32%	32%	98%
SA	1	2%	2%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

21. I BELIEVE THAT BRANDED PRODUCTS CARRY AN IMAGE I CAN RELATE TO.

No. 21	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	7	14%	14%	14%
D	11	22%	22%	36%
N	16	32%	32%	68%
A	16	32%	32%	100%
SA	0	0%	0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	