

**THE EFFECTS OF INTERNAL BRAND PERCEPTIONS ON EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Princess FT Motsamai, declare that this dissertation which I hereby submit for the Degree of MA Communication at the North-West University is my own unaided work and has not been previously submitted by me at this or any other university. Any assistance that I have received and all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation.

The opinions and conclusions expressed in this study are those of the writer and must not be seen to represent the views, opinions or conclusions of the North-West University.

Princess FT Motsamai

08 December 2015

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Quite often, it is easy to get discouraged when things get tough. However, I never lost hope because God is at work in my life, even in the midst of storms. I have a lot of special people to be grateful for throughout the composition and development of this dissertation. God blessed me with patient, kind and understanding people (whom I can't mention all), that gave me support and encouragement.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Mrs Violet Leina Mokute. Her strength and faith, especially during the last year of her life gave me a new appreciation for the meaning and importance of motherhood and the value of a good education.

She lived her life well, acting upon her spiritual beliefs conscientiously by assisting us her children, friends and strangers in need. She faced her too early death bravely. During her terminal illness she managed to complete her studies and graduated.

Her great example kept me working when I wanted to give up. I'm grateful to God for blessing me with such a loving and dedicated mother.

May her soul continue to rest in perfect peace.

PREFACE

The researcher is currently responsible for client relations on the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University, including all stakeholders. She graduated with the BA and BA Hons in Communications at the University of North West in 2004. She is also an ordained Pastor. She completed Theology at the Rhema Bible College in 2005 and also at the Christ Embassy International School of Ministry in 2007.

She started her career in 2003 as a Marketing Officer at RB2 (Radio Botswana); then became a volunteer Events Coordinator at the Office of the Premier in Mafikeng, North West and proceeded with her career at Standard Chartered Bank in 2006. As a member of the Group Communications and Marketing department she had the first exposure to customer relations.

This exposure became the focal point of her professional and academic career. It became evident to the researcher that the interaction between 'engaged' contact staff and stakeholders determine not only the quality of the interaction, but the image and reputation of a particular organisation on a larger scale.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement amongst the management, academic and support staff of the North-West University on the Mafikeng Campus. It is clear in corporate communication practice and in the relevant literature that the disposition of staff, especially in contact positions and in service organisations, has an effect on the reputation of a particular organisation amongst all stakeholders.

Although the topics of internal branding and employee engagement have been investigated in big, large and mega-businesses, less research has been done on South African university campuses. A purposive sample of NWU-Mafikeng campus employees was used. Although participation in the research was by purposive sampling, participants had the choice not to participate. For this exploratory study the mixed methods approach was used with the focus on qualitative research as to determine what the feelings and opinions of the staff member used was. A quantitative approach was used to confirm measures of employee engagement.

This approach was used because the Gallup Q12, which is covered in the literature review, offered an existing valid measure of employee engagement (Stock, 2009). The concepts of internal branding and employee engagement were explored and interpreted.

The study found that the staff of the NWU Mafikeng Campus are engaged and informed about the NWU brand, the importance of being a brand ambassador and also the importance of customer service. However, the need for regular recognition, information and motivation sessions cannot be ignored. The main source of information to most of the staff is the NWU web page and the Intranet and not interpersonal communication. Recommendations were made to rectify the situation.

Key terms: brand, internal branding, employee engagement, service profit chain.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
DEDICATION	III
ABSTRACT	IV
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1-5
1.2 BACKGROUND	5-6
1.3 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS	6-8
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT	8
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	8
1.6 GENERAL RESEARCH AIM	9
1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	9
1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	9
1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN	10-11
1.9.1 Data Collection Procedures	11-12
1.9.2 Sampling Procedures	12
1.9.2a Purposive sampling	12-13
1.9.3 Data Analysis	13
1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	13
1.11 PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	14
1.12 CONCLUSION	14

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION	15-17
2.1.1 Origins of brands	17-19
2.1.2 Branding	19-21
2.2 THE SHIFT FROM PRODUCT BRANDING TO CORPORATE BRANDING	21-22
2.2.1 Product branding	23
2.2.2 Corporate branding	23-30
2.2.3 The difference between product branding and corporate branding	30-32
2.2.4 A framework for corporate branding	32-33
2.3 HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES	33-34
2.3.1 Characteristics of organisational cultures	34-35
2.3.2 Factors influencing organisational culture	36-38
2.3.3 The importance of organisational cultures	38-39
2.3.4 Strategic vision and organisational culture	39-40
2.3.5 Organisational culture and corporate images	41
2.3.6 Corporate images and strategic vision	41-42
2.4 INTERNAL BRANDING	42-45
2.5 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	45-46
2.5.1 Definitions of Employee Engagement	46-48
2.5.2 Levels of Employee Engagement	48-49
2.5.3 Complexity of Employee Engagement	49-50
2.5.4 The evolution of the concept of Employee Engagement	51-53
2.5.4a Job satisfaction	54

2.5.4b Organisational commitment	54-55
2.5.4c Organisational citizenship behaviour	55-56
2.5.5 The perspective	56-57
2.6 THE SERVICE PROFIT CHAIN	58-59
2.6.1 Customer satisfaction drives customer loyalty	60
2.6.2 Value	60-61
2.6.3 Employee productivity drives value	61
2.7 CONCLUSION	62-65

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION	66
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	66-67
3.2.1 Significance of mixed methods	67-68
3.2.2 Qualitative research method	68-69
3.2.2 Quantitative research method	69-71
3.3 CASE STUDY	71-73
3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE	73-74
3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	75-76
3.5.1 Questionnaires	76
3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews	76-78
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS	78-79
3.6.1 Content analysis	79-80
3.6.1a Advantages of content analysis	80

3.6.1b Purpose of content analysis	80-81
3.7 PILOT STUDY	81
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	82
3.9 CONCLUSION	82-83

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION	84
4.2 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	84
4.2.1 Demographic data analysis	85-87
4.2.2 Organisational culture	88-89
4.2.3 Employee engagement	89-92
4.2.4 Chi-square test independence	93-97
4.2.5 Qualitative data analysis	97-111
4.2.6 Correlation between quantitative and qualitative analysis	111
4.3 CONCLUSION	112

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION	113
5.2 RE-STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	113-114
5.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	114-115
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	115-117

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH	117
5.6 LIMITATIONS	118-119
5.7 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	119
5.8 FINAL CONCLUSION	119-121
REFERENCE	122-134
APPENDIXES	135-150

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	NAMES	PAGES
Figure 2.1	The relationship between internal brand resources and brand performance	29
Figure 2.2	Successful corporate brands tap the attractive force that draws stakeholders to the organisation	32
Figure 2.3	Successful corporate branding rests on a foundation of interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate image	40
Figure 2.4	The links in the Service Profit Chain	60
Figure 4.1	Demographic details	85
Figure 4.2	Age category	85
Figure 4.3	Race	86
Figure 4.4	Position	86
Figure 4.5	Years of service in NWU	87
Figure 4.6	Cultural differences contribute to conflicts in my organisation	94
Figure 4.7	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	95

Figure 4.8	Do you have a best friend at work?	96
Figure 4.9	I frequently take sick-leave	97
Figure 4.10	Brand awareness	98
Figure 4.11	Views on NWU as an employer	100
Figure 4.12	Organisational knowledge	101
Figure 4.13	Personal success linked with organisational success	102
Figure 4.14	Living the brand	104
Figure 4.15	Brand ambassador	105
Figure 4.16	Celebration of customer service	106
Figure 4.17	Treatment of employees	107
Figure 4.18	Understanding importance of team work	109
Figure 4.19	Customer service training	110

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES	NAMES	PAGES
Table 2.1	The differences between corporate branding and product branding	31
Table 3.1	The difference between quantitative and qualitative research methodology	70
Table 3.2	The strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews	77-78
Table 4.1	Organisational culture	88

Table 4.2	Employee engagement	89
Table 4.3	Cross-tabulation of perceptions (opinions) of respondents about cultural differences by gender	93
Table 5.1	Summary of the percentages of the positive and negative responses by the staff to each question	114-115

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research problem is presented, briefly contextualised by giving essential background information, the aims of the study are identified, the research design is outlined and the structure of this study is indicated, namely: *The effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement* - of academic, and support staff, at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University.

Since the 1990s, there has been a revolution in both how universities are managed and how they think of themselves. The harsh economic reality affecting universities has brought about the realisation that they are competing against each other in an environment where the playing field is not level. This has led to universities marketing themselves to increase student recruitment and also increase third-stream investment. Additionally, universities have repositioned themselves as brands modelled along corporate establishments to increase customer recognition and enhance customer (and stakeholder) support.

According to de Jager (2008: slide 22) a brand is a corporate visual system with a character or a personality. *The American Marketing Association* defines a brand as a name, term, symbol, or design, (or a combination of these elements) intended to identify the products and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition (*The American Marketing Association* in de Jager, 2008: slide 22).

This means that all the stakeholders of an organisation – the customers or in the case of a university the government, donors, alumni, students, parents of students and all the management, academic and support staff of a university – must have associations with and perceptions of an organisation that characterize and personify the brand (de Jager, 2008: slide 23 to 25).

The available literature on brands and branding makes it clear that brand success is dependent on full employee identification with and involvement in a brand. This is true for academic institutions in a broader sense and the North-West University is no exception. Therefore, the involvement of employees in a university as a brand is vital to customer satisfaction and a university's financial success.

Employees' involvement in a brand and how they are taken care of by an organisation, determines the degree to which the employees will embrace that brand and how they will take care of that organisation's customers (Witteke-Kothe, 2001). This implies that the way university employees internalise the desired brand image can affect their engagement levels in that particular university.

Generally, internal branding refers to "organisational alignment effort designed to make sure an organisation, can and will effectively deliver on its brand promise to customers" (Tosti & Stots, 2002:4), while branding refers to "a perception or emotion, maintained by a buyer, describing the experience related to doing business with an organisation or consuming its products or services" (McNally & Speak, 2002:4).

Therefore, for the purpose of this study internal branding refers to the characteristics and personality that the stakeholders of the university associate with the brand – e.g. sympathetic and knowledgeable staff, fairness, expertise, high academic standards and academic excellence. These expectations tie in with the Vision, Mission and Strategic Intent of the NWU Mafikeng Campus.

The study of internal branding was introduced to make certain that employees are ready in their attitude or conduct to represent the brand and convey its promise to the customers (Witteke-Kothe 2001 & Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Vallaster (2004:100) states that "internal branding is not only a means to create powerful corporate brands, but it also allows an organisation to align its internal processes and corporate culture with those of the brand". This view is supported by Tosti and Stots (2002) who argue that, internal branding transforms the corporate brand into internal conduct and structures

that support people in converting the brand promise into actuality of customer experience.

Mosley (2007:128) indicates that “in the last ten years, there has been a shift in emphasis from internal marketing to internal branding”. This shift reflects more of an inside-out, value-based approach. Jacobs (2003) adds that internal branding translate to better company loyalty (i.e. commitment that is established on trust and positive rewards) and job longevity (i.e. an employee who has been in one or more positions within an organisation than other employees) and it also empowers employees to give improved service to customers as they are aware of the brand promise. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) assert that in order for employees to consistently transfer the brand’s values to the company’s stakeholders, they need develop a mutual understanding of what the brand stands.

Furthermore, internal branding inspires employees to have confidence in the brand, be engaged, work harder and better. However, research has been scarcely carried out on the procedure required to boost brand-supporting behaviours (Witteke-Kothe, 2001). Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by investigating the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement in order to comprehend the internal branding practice from the employees’ point of view.

According to Jacobs (2003), the fundamental objective of internal branding is the accomplishment of competitive advantage not through effortlessly replicated core business practices and policies. This objective is more relevant if one considers the current trend of growing organisations through mergers and acquisitions. In these types of situations, speaking with one voice proves to be challenging, especially in multi-cultural organisations (Einwiller & Will, 2002). Vallaster (2004) expands on Einwiller and Will’s (2002) argument that cultural patterns are habitually too different in multicultural organisations. By this, they mean that the manner in which people think, interpret their environment, how they feel and communicate with each other may hinder the smooth progress of a mutual understanding of a brand. Einwiller and Will (2002) reiterate the

views expressed by Vallaster (2004) by pointing out that the signals that diverse corporate divisions sent out to the stakeholders are often hindered by diverse aspects such as historic turf wars between divisions, cultural and language variances, poor management structures and vague responsibilities.

The case study is one example of a merger that incorporated multiple cultures. North-West University (NWU) is a product of a merger where three universities; the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE) and the University of North West (UNW) and the Sebokeng Campus of the Vista University (VU). These universities contributed different histories, personalities and cultures to the merger. As a result, the merger has not been smooth because of the diverse cultural and historical backgrounds.

Hence, when establishments re-organise their different business portfolios into a 'synergised enterprise' (Irvin, Pedro & Gennaro, 2003), internal branding plays a crucial function. Jacobs (2003) and Irvin, Pedro and Gennaro (2003) concede that as worldwide organisations gradually hire a multicultural personnel, "internal brand building process becomes more complex" (Vallaster, 2004:100).

Research conducted by Nelson (2005) demonstrates that the attainment of an internal branding plan is regularly measured on the performance of, among others, brand culture and employee engagement. An internal brand culture, in his opinion, is a method that generates an environment that is advantageous for employees to follow brand practices and values. This is known as 'living the brand'. Mühlbacher and Vallaster (2002) support Nelson's (2005) suppositions by stating that culture assists people to make sense of their environment, as a result inducing their cognitive, emotional and communicative behaviours. Mühlbacher and Vallaster (2002) also point out that multicultural groups are likely to increase productivity than homogeneous groups. However, these multicultural groups bear the possibility of bigger losses due to flawed processes in individual's awareness of reality (i.e. cognition) and how emotional consequences and communication behaviour are taken into consideration (Vallaster,

2004). As the concepts of employee engagement and brand culture are closely interrelated, brand culture provides an environment that promotes better employee engagement.

Therefore, employee engagement is pertinent for employees' well-being and work behaviour and is also advantageous to the organisation as it is an important predictor of employee's plan to depart from their organisation (Saks, 2006). Buckingham (2008) concurs with the views presented above and adds that engaged employees are concerned about the brand and they aspire to add to a brand they can be proud of.

1.2 THE BACKGROUND

As indicated above, the North-West University (NWU) officially came into existence in January 2004 as part of the South African government's plan to transform higher education. The PU for CHE, also known as PUKKE, a historically white university merged with a predominantly black campus of Vista university in Sebokeng and included in the merger is UNW formerly UNIBO. As a result of the merger, the new university has three campuses Vaal Triangle, Potchefstroom and Mafikeng The amalgamation into one university (NWU) symbolised an act of reconciliation and nation building (North-West University, 2007).

In their strive to make the merger work NWU management came up with a new pay-off line, vision, mission and a strategic intent that suit their core business and spell out their future plans and aims as an academic institution. The pay-off line of NWU, *It all starts here*, suggests that dreams begin at this university. In other words, it is a place where people can envision their goals and prospect successes. The pay-off line centres on the stakeholders of the university and what the university means to them rather than focus on the university as an institution (North-West University, 2007).

The presentation of the university's brand is vital as it is a representation of what NWU is and what it stands for. The representation has a direct effect on the internal and external awareness of the brand and the reputation of NWU as an institution (North-

West University, 2007). In essence, the NWU brand projects the institution's personality and aspirations to the world in its vision, mission and strategic intents, as explained by North-West University (2007) below:

Vision: To be a pre-eminent University in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation.

Mission: The NWU's mission is to become a balanced teaching-learning and research university and to implement its expertise in an innovative way. The institution will achieve this as it lives its values, strives for sound management and pursues transformation, while being locally engaged, nationally relevant and internationally recognised.

Strategic Intent: The NWU strategy in support of its mission is to increase quality and quantity of research through focus in terms of campus niches, appropriate incentives and capacity building and development, while strengthening the quality of teaching and learning by improved client focus, e-learning, innovation and diversity (North-West University, 2007).

The core of this brand according to North-West University (2007) is that NWU is a sustainable teaching-learning and research university that promotes diversity and strives for innovation to make a significant impact in South Africa and the world.

1.3 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In marketing and branding there is always a possibility of terms being misinterpreted or used interchangeably. Therefore, the terms described below are defined for the purposes of this research and they will be frequently referred to. This definition of terms is necessary to enhance the accessibility and clarity of this work to its potential readers.

A brand is defined as “a perception or emotion, maintained by a buyer, describing the experience related to doing business with an organisation or consuming its products or services” (McNally & Speak, 2002:4).

Corporate brand is defined by The Conference Board (2002:3) as “a brand that establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, systems, policies and behaviours toward the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”.

Branding “signifies a set of associations that we, as customers and employees make, linked to a set of communicated promises,” (Buckingham, 2008:12).

Internal branding refers to “organisational alignment effort designed to make sure an organisation, can and will effectively deliver on its brand promise to customers” (Tosti & Stots, 2002:4).

Brand Reputation is described as a “collective representation of a brand’s past actions and results that describe the brand’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders,” (Einwiller & Will, 2002:101).

Brand Engagement is the “relationship between the promises made by an organisation and the extent to which they connect with the needs-driven free will of individuals; it could be employees or customers,” (Buckingham, 2008:12).

Engagement is “the harnessing of organisational members’ selves to their work role by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance” Saks (2006:601).

Employee Engagement is “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that researchers suggest is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption in work activities,” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004:295).

The Service-Profit Chain is “a chain of relationships involving customer loyalty; customer satisfaction; the value of goods and services delivered; the quality of the process; and employee loyalty, satisfaction, productivity and support,” (Scheffer, 2005:58).

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the literature review, there is some sort of relationship between internal branding and employee engagement, though it is not very clear as to what extent employees' internal brand perceptions affect the way employees get engaged at work and the way they provide service to the clients. Therefore, the researcher is hoping to bring these issues out in this study. In essence, the problem to be investigated is to find out whether the way employees see the internal brand through their own eyes and how they formulate it in their minds has any effect on their engagement levels as defined by the vision, mission and objectives of the North-West University.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE

Although a Nexus search shows that some studies have been conducted on internal branding and employee engagement, very little has been done on internal brand perceptions, especially in academic institutions. Therefore, this study is significant because it addresses the internal brand perceptions of the newly formed university, NWU. Research has proven that organisations that communicate their brand efficiently to their employees generate an environment where employees seem to trust in the organisation's goals and objectives and as a result show more effort all through their day-to-day activities.

This study is necessary as it aims to provide fresh insights in analysing the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement. This will add immensely to the academic body of knowledge and also help the case study institution.

1.6 RESEARCH AIM

The aims of the study are:

- To define and investigate the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement in order to understand the internal branding process from the employees' perspective.
- To ascertain whether the way employees internalise the desired brand image influences their engagement levels in the work place.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section presents the research objectives that emanated from the general research aims of this study. The objectives are as follows:

- To measure the extent to which internal brand perceptions can influence employee engagement in the NWU Mafikeng Campus.
- To determine the connection between employees and their day-to-day activities towards the success of NWU Mafikeng Campus.
- To assess the effect that employees have on NWU Mafikeng Campus' performance and managements' visualisation of leadership.
- To evaluate the function of University employee engagement in establishing and maintaining the expected reputation of NWU Mafikeng Campus.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.8.1 Main Research Question

The aims of this study lead to the main research question, which is:

- What is the intensity of employees' understanding of internal branding on the NWU Mafikeng Campus?

1.8.2 Sub Questions

In the context of the study, the following sub- questions were formulated in order to understand the main research question better and also to understand the perceptions of NWU employees with regards to internal branding:

- What are the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement on the NWU Mafikeng Campus?
- How do employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus relate to the purpose, vision and mission in order to preserve the corporate culture of the institution?
- What is the role of employee engagement at NWU Mafikeng Campus?
- What is the level of engagement on employees with regards to the day-to-day activities and their commitment towards the success of NWU Mafikeng Campus?

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research methods for this study will be explored fully in chapter 3 therefore; the methods in this chapter are just a brief introduction for the reader to understand what type of research design is used for this study, how the data is collected, sampling procedure and how the data is analysed.

The study is exploratory in nature, and employs a mixed method approach. A mixed method research design is a process of collecting, analysing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in one study in order to understand a research problem (Mahmood 2003 & Cresswell, 2012). According to Mahmood (2013:4) a qualitative research is concerned with “exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”, whereas, a quantitative research deals with “testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables”.

In this study a qualitative research technique is used to describe and explain internal branding and employee engagement and interpret and explore the effect that internal

brand perceptions have on employee engagement. Therefore, the researcher uses this type of method to get the views, feelings and emotions of the respondents which give a picture of how the respondents perceive the internal brand of the NWU Mafikeng Campus and also to measure if those perceptions have anything to do with the way employees get engaged at work. And a quantitative research technique is used to authenticate measures of employee engagement. In this case, the Gallup Q12 survey tool (which are 12 questions) is used which offers an existing valid measure of employee engagement (Stock 2009). It is important to note that Gallup Q12, which will be explored in detail in the literature review in chapter 2, is also known as the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA); however, in this study, it will only be referred to as the Gallup Q12.

According to Stock (2009:1) Gallup Q12 is “an integrated system of evidence-based measurement, education, action planning and consulting that is proved to improve key clinical, operational and financial outcomes”. Topics covered by the Gallup Q12 survey incorporate workplace expectations, supervisory associations, and also working with a best friend. Reliability and validity of the Gallup Q12 has been tested on more than 30 years of prior psychological studies as well as realistic discussions regarding its usefulness for managers in creating transformation in the workplace (Harter, Schmidt, Killham & Asplund, 2006).

A case study methodology is used in this study since it allows for “specific explorations of individuals, on groups, cohorts, cultures, organisations, communities or programs,” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008:96), and the data acquired from this kind of process is more often than not in depth, diverse and extensive. Moreover, the case study has the benefit of flexibility and provides the accessibility needed to respond to evaluative questions about internal branding perceptions and employee engagement.

1.9.1 Data collection procedures

Data gathering is an essential phase of any type of study. This is reiterated by Bernard (2002 in Mmutle 2014:67) when he stated that data collecting is critical in research, as

the data is intended to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. Erroneous data collection can have an effect on the results of a study and eventually jeopardise the research results. Data collection techniques enable the researcher to methodically collect evidence about subjects of study (persons, objects, phenomena) and about the settings in which they occur (Cresswell, 2012). In this study was collected through questionnaires and semi-interviews which will be explored in chapter 3. Using both techniques ensured validation of the data through cross verification from these sources.

1.9.2 Sampling procedure

As already mentioned in the introduction, the research context for this case study is North-West University (NWU) Mafikeng Campus. The focus of this study is on internal brand perceptions and how they affect to employee engagement levels at NWU Mafikeng Campus. A purposive sample of employees was used however; the respondents' involvement in the research was voluntary. A purposive sample was also used in order to give a chance for all the departments (i.e. all academic departments and all support departments) the campus to be represented in the study.

1.9.2a Purposive sampling

The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. The researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Bernard (2002) is pertinent because it does not represent the general population, but rather a specific portion thereof.

The reasons for choosing the NWU Mafikeng Campus as a sample were that the campus has gone through a merger and is multi-lingual and multi-cultural, it is perceived as a 'door to Africa', with students from 28 countries represented on campus, the campus is perceived as relatively safe-in comparison to city-based campuses and sympathetic to conservative morals and values and perceived as not having fully utilised

its potential as an institution of higher learning. Determining the internal brand perceptions – which will contribute to the external perceptions of the campus – will clarify one or more of the above perceptions.

1.9.3 Data Analysis

Elements of qualitative content analysis will be used to analyse data obtained from the interviews conducted. The content analysis will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. The results of this analysis will be compared with the quantitative results obtained through the questionnaire and the Gallup Q12 survey in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the level of employee engagement and the internal brand perceptions held by employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus.

The Gallup Q12 Survey instrument will be used to gather employee engagement data through the survey method. These Q12 survey questions will be answered by NWU Mafikeng Campus employees so as to measure their engagement, relationships and how they are treated in the company. The reliability and validity of the Gallup Q12 has been extensively researched (Stock, 2009:1).

1.10 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It is important to note that the researcher's main focus was exclusively on the effects of internal brand perceptions on the University employee engagement on the Mafikeng Campus of NWU. The focus was not on external factors that affect the institution or external brand perceptions that also contribute significantly to the daily activities of the University. The study covered a single establishment as a tactic to focus on NWU Mafikeng Campus as an institution and the way its employees see the brand in their own minds and how that influences their engagement levels in the work place.

1.11 PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF STUDY

Chapter One: Orientation and background

The first chapter provides an introduction to the problem that the study investigated. It also provides an overview of the research aim and objectives, and a conceptual framework underlying the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter outlines the scholarly literature on internal branding and employee engagement reviewed by the researcher in a quest to solve the research problem of this study. It also elaborates on the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Three: Research methods

The chapter deals with the research methods of this study, presents the research design, explain the qualitative and quantitative approaches and how they differ, data collection procedures, sampling and the data analysis.

Chapter Four: Research findings

This chapter presents the findings and interpretation of results.

Chapter Five: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

This final chapter assesses the contribution of the study and considers its limitations as well as presenting assertions for further research.

1.12 CONCLUSION

The preceding chapter has introduced the topic, provided the background to the study, stated the research problem and objectives, and outlined the research methodology. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on the literature reviewed by the researcher in his quest to solve the research problem of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a background to the research problem of this study and outlined the theoretical framework selected by the researcher. This chapter discusses the literature reviewed by the researcher and the main theories through which the research problem was investigated.

Schroeder and Salser-Mörlling (2006:82) presume that “there has been a growing managerial and academic interest in brands and the process of branding”. According to Ying (2005:342) branding is a social and also an economic construct. He/she defends that “brands have been studied as an economic construct, from both marketing and financial perspectives”. However, due to the scarcity of academic research, brands have not yet been completely understood as social constructs Ying (2005:342). Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2007:533) posits that the concept of brand has its roots in the consumer goods’ field and it is often defined from a customer’s perspective, as a collection of associations that are connected to a brand name or a symbol in the mind of a customer.

Kotler (2000:404) presents a similar view to Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2007:532) by defining a brand as “...a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those competitors”. The focus of this definition is on the use of brand names, signs and symbols to distinguish a product from its competitors.

However, Fastyn (2004:24) is of a different opinion and he/she advocate that a brand is not a statement but a relationship. Therefore, it is not limited to an image, a symbol, packaging or slogans, which can be used to hide the true nature of what is within a brand. Fastyn (2004:31) further indicates that names and logos are the most frequently seen and heard facets of a brand and they have a powerful influence on how a brand is

viewed by its users and prospects. They are part of the mortar that bonds together the bricks of a brand identity.

A brand identity is the configuration of words, images, ideas and associations that form a consumer's aggregate perception of a brand (Fastyn, 2004:30). In essence, an identity is not what a marketer creates but it is what the consumers perceive has been created. McNally and Speak (2002:4) concur with Fastyn's statements by defining a brand as "a perception or emotion, maintained by a buyer, describing the experience related to doing business with an organisation or consuming its products or services". Thus, a brand is the embodiment of what businesses and their customers' value, the means through which businesses get credit for the quality they represent and deliver. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, McNally and Speak's (2002:4) definition is adopted.

Grace and King's (2007:360) propose that from an external market perspective, branding involves the creation of mental structures that help the target audience to organise their knowledge with respect to that particular product or organisation. This results in the target audience being able to rationalise its decision-making with respect to a product or an organisation. In turn, this process affords value to an organisation through improved customer buying habits. However, branding is not only an opportunity to shape customers' perceptions with respect to the organisation but also an opportunity to shape employee perceptions as well (Grace and King, 2007).

Research conducted by Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) indicates that in order for organisations to be recognised as high-performing rather than mediocre, they have to understand and orchestrate their employees. And since the focus of this study is the internal customer, who is the employee, the researcher agrees with Punjaisri and Wilson's (2007) theories. The customers are not just buying products or service but they are attaching emotions to the whole process and the kind of customer service they are being offered determines if they stay or leave. Therefore, internal branding has emerged as a key process to align the behaviours of employees with the brand values (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

Punjaisri and Wilson (2007:58) reiterates statements made by Schroeder and Salser-Mörling (2006:82) by hinting that, although there is a growing interest in internal branding, there has been limited research conducted on the processes required to encourage brand-supporting behaviour. Mahnert and Torres (2007:54), expands on Punjaisri and Wilson's (2007:58) statements through the indication that much of the literature on internal branding to date has been incongruent and lacking in focus and definition. Moreover, contrary to the need to understand employees, the existing insights have generally stemmed from research with management, brand practitioners' and even customers' perspectives (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

In the context of pure services, it is the actual experience with the brand that dominates the customer brand perceptions, of which employees play a major role. As such, regardless of how well the brand is represented, nothing will salvage a weak brand experience (King & Grace, 2008:360). Similarly, in relation to marketing of physical goods, it is the employees who must understand what the brand means and how it provides value to consumers, in order for its tangible and intangible components to be established and conveyed accordingly.

Therefore, based on the above indications, for the purpose of the study, it is crucial to explain origins of brands, define branding as a concept, describe the shift from product branding to corporate branding and how they differ from each other, explain how organisational culture is important to the over-all performance of the organisation and with that understanding explore the concept of internal branding.

2.1.1 Origins of brands

Brands are basically used in every sphere of human life; whether its production, consumption, food, clothing, personality, lifestyle or even politics (Ying 2005:341). Mahlatji (2007:13) highlights that "brands or trademarks can be traced back to ancient pottery and stonemason's marks, which were applied to handcrafted goods to identify their source". Mahlatji (2007:13) further asserts that even though at times pottery and clay lamps were sold far from the shops where they were originally made, buyers scouted for the stamps of dependable potters as a guide to quality. And "marks were

found on early Chinese porcelain, on pottery jars from ancient Greece and Rome and goods from India dating back to about 1300 BC,” (Mahlatji 2007:13).

According to Mahlatji (2007:13), an English law which was passed in 1266, obligated bakers to put their mark or label on each loaf of bread that was sold, so that if any bread was lower than a certain weight, it may be easy to know who is at fault. Goldsmiths and silversmiths were also required to mark their goods, both with their signatures or personal symbols and a sign of the quality of the metal. However, in the United States of America, branding was introduced by Europeans when they initially settled in North America. They brought the principle and practice of branding with them.

Tobacco manufacturers as well as producers of patent medicines were initiators of brands in the United States. Since patent medicines were not seen as a need, they were put in small bottles and promoted vigorously (Mahlatji 2007:13). On the other hand, tobacco producers have been exporting their harvest ever since the early 1600s. By the early 1800s the producers sold packed bales of tobacco under labels such as Smith’s Plug. Mahlatji (2007:14) further states that during the 1850s many tobacco producers recognised that more innovative names, such as Cantaloupe, were useful in trading their tobacco products. Also seen as essential were attractive packages. Consequently, picture labels, adornment and symbols were designed (Mahlatji, 2007:14).

Researchers such as Ying (2005:341), Schroeder and Salser-Mörliing’s (2006:82) agree that brands have been in existence for well over a 1000 years but no society has witnessed the power of branding as much as it is seen in recent times. Schroeder and Salser-Mörliing (2006:82) point out that for the past 15 years or so, marketers and financial stakeholders have been increasingly focused on the value of brands.

Based on the discussion on the origins of brands by researchers such as (Mahlatji, 2007:13); Schroeder and Salser-Mörliing (2006:82), Ying (2005:341) concludes that branding is not just about adding value to a product anymore. Brands represent and

uphold lifestyles and have developed into some sort of culture. Ying (2005:342) further adds that “brands are now gunning for a share of consumers’ inner lives, their values, their beliefs and even their politics”.

2.1.2 Branding

Yu Xie and Boggs (2006:347) assert that branding means more than just giving a name to a brand or to a product or products. They state that “brands are a direct consequence of the strategy of a market segmentation and product differentiation”.

According to Buckingham (2008:12), a brand is “a set of promises, thus it becomes unsustainable unless employees consistently keep promises”. Less effort is devoted to promise delivery and promise keeping rather than promise making. Bringing a brand to life and sustaining and nurturing it are two vital phases, though very different, in the evolution of a brand.

Thus, branding does not simply mean “...making a mark signifying ownership but it signifies a set of associations that we, as customers and employees, make, linked to a set of communicated promises (Buckingham, 2008).

The purpose of branding, as Mhlatji (2007:1) proposes, is to facilitate the organisation’s task of attaining and maintaining a loyal customer base in a cost-effective manner to achieve the highest possible return on investments. Therefore, branding cannot be used as a strategic tool directed at one element of the marketing mix, but should rather be used as a tactical tool, which integrates a marketing programme across the complete marketing mix.

However, researchers such as Fastyn (2004:23), Lury (2001) and Salser-Mörling and Strannegard (2004:228) assert that if a company treats its brand only as a name, sign or symbol that distinguishes a product from other products, then that company is missing the point because such definitions do not reflect the complexity of contemporary branding.

As such, it is crucial to briefly review the proposed differences between a product and a corporate brand later in this study. The challenge with branding is the development of a deep set of positive associations of the brand. Salser-Mörling and Strannegard (2004:228) propose that brands are not just identifiers but first and foremost, brands are providers of experience.

With respect to an organisation, King and Grace (2008:360) point out that branding should not only be regarded as an opportunity to shape customers' perceptions but also as an opportunity to shape employee perceptions as well. Moreover, a brand represents the relationship an organisation has with its employees just as much as it represents the relationship that it has with its customers. Buckingham (2008), Fastyn (2004:24), King and Grace (2008:360) present a similar view when explaining that a brand is a relationship and not a statement since it is not limited to an image, packaging or slogans which can be used to disguise the nature of what's within.

Therefore, a branded relationship is one that consists of the trust that only happens when two people believe that there is a direct association between their value systems. Hatch and Schults (2003:1043) highlights that in recent work, particular emphasis has been put on the importance of employees to branding, the need to understand better their behaviour and the organisational culture of the corporation. de Chernatony (2001), Hatch and Schults (2001), Harris and de Chernatony (2001) also indicate that employees are key to building relationships with all the company's stakeholders as well as adding to the meaning of the brand by conveying to others how the company perceives itself.

Thus, based on the above, it is important that employee branding be defined. Miles and Mangold (2004:68) identify employee branding as "...the process by which employees internalise the desired brand image and are motivated to project the image to customers and other organisational constituents". Employee branding goes beyond attaining customer satisfaction through internal marketing but employs all the organisational systems to inspire employees to project the desired organisational image through their

conduct, appearance and the manner in which they interact with the customers. This means that for an organisation to be successful at employee branding, it must create and implant the desired image in employees' minds before the image can be projected from the employees to others (Miles & Mangold, 2004).

King and Grace (2008:360) concur with Miles and Mangold (2004:68) by indicating that it is employees who must comprehend what a brand means and how it affords value to consumers in order for its intangible and intangible components to be established and delivered accordingly. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an intrinsic command in having a knowledgeable workforce that is able and committed to delivering what the brand promises. Without brand knowledge, employees are unable to transform the brand vision into the brand reality (King & Grace, 2008:360).

Yu Xie and Boggs (2006:348) posit that the study of branding has traditionally been dominated by an emphasis on product brands, the focus of which is on the unique features associated with a particular item of an organisation's product portfolio. However, the fast innovation, increased service levels and diminishing brand loyalty characterising today's marketplaces have led to corporate branding becoming a strategic marketing tool.

2.2 THE SHIFT FROM PRODUCT BRANDING TO CORPORATE BRANDING

Research by Urde (2003) indicates that corporate branding has received a substantial amount of attention from both practitioners and academics. Ward and Lee (2000) expand on Urde's (2003) statements by showing that there was a shift by organisations from depending on product brands to depending on corporate brands. This point of view is enhanced by researchers such as Harris and de Chernatony (2001); Dowling (2001); Ward and Lee (2000) and Hatch and Schultz (2001) who also bring to light that as organisations move toward globalisation, there has been a shift in marketing from product branding to corporate branding.

Research by Hatch and Schultz (2003:1043) highlights that even though there are differences between the conceptual frameworks emerging from marketing, corporate culture and organisational identity studies such as strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate image, there is an argument that the association of various stakeholders and the identification of gaps among diverse dimensions of corporate brands all point to the relational nature of corporate branding. Yu Xie and Boggs (2006:347) point out that numerous corporate brands and product brands are actively competing in the world markets.

Corporate branding refers to the strategy in which a brand and a corporate name are the same, whereas product branding builds separate brand identities for different products (Yu Xie & Boggs, 2006). According to a study by (Yu Xie & Boggs, 2006:348), some organisations such as International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), (Virgin, Mitsubishi, Nike and Sony almost exclusively emphasize their corporate brands while others such as Procter and Gamble, Sprite, Dove, Lux Toyota and Lexus focus their strategy on their product brands.

However, others use corporate branding and product branding simultaneously, shifting their emphasis between the product and the corporation in the different markets and contexts (Yu Xie & Boggs, 2006:348). Researchers such as Balmer (2001) and de Chernatony (2001) say that corporate branding enables firms to use the vision and culture of the whole organisation explicitly as part of its uniqueness. Moreover, corporate brands can increase the organisation's visibility, recognition and reputation to a greater extent than product brands.

Furthermore, Hatch and Schultz (2003:1043) accentuate that organisations believe that the repercussions of shifting from the product to the corporate level, is inadequately addressed in the marketing literature. Therefore, in order to remedy this situation, it is imperative to define both product branding and corporate branding as concepts and examine how corporate branding vary from product branding and to identify the major organisational repercussions of these distinctions.

2.2.1 Product branding

According to a study by Knox and Bickerton (2003:999), the development of product branding over the past 30 years has been characterised by layers of added value built around the core functionality of the product or service to create and maintain a distinction in a particular market. Yu Xie and Boggs (2006:350) point out that product branding yields different advantages for organisations.

An organisation that is using a product brand strategy rather than corporate branding will experience less damage to its corporate image if one of its individual brands fails. For Example, when the Tylenol brand was under siege in the USA because of tainted batches, Procter and Gamble's name and reputation were somewhat shielded by the product-branding strategy, leaving Pampers and Tide undamaged by the Tylenol scare (Yu Xie & Boggs, 2006:350).

Moreover, studies by Knox and Bickerton (2003) and Yu Xie and Boggs (2006) imply that a product brand is also flexible, allowing organisations to position and appeal to different segments in different markets. However, Knox and Bickerton (2003) argue that a challenge with product branding is that targeting different small segments through different brands can result in high marketing costs and lower brand profitability. The development of product branding has been built around the core role maintaining differentiation in a particular market (Knox & Bickerton, 2003).

2.2.2 Corporate branding

Ind (2007) defines corporate branding as the practice of using a company's name as a product brand name. Disney, Virgin and Nike for example, include the words "Disney", "Virgin" and "Nike" in the names of many of their products. This strategy contrasts with individual product branding, where each product has a unique brand name and the corporate name is not promoted to the consumer (Ind 2007). CoreBrand (2002:3) concurs with Ind's (2007) definition by highlighting that "corporate branding is a business process, one that is planned, strategically focused and integrated throughout the organisation". Moreover, corporate branding necessitates a different management

approach, due to the fact that the emphasis is moving from product branding to corporate branding.

Van Riel (2001:12) expands on the statements made by CoreBrand (2002:3) by defining corporate branding as a “systematically planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining a favourable reputation of the company with its constituent elements, by sending signals to stakeholders using the corporate brand”. However, Einwiller and Will (2002:101) do not entirely support Van Riel’s (2001:12) conceptualisation that the corporate brand is the tool for sending out signals (Scheffer, 2005:77). From a research conducted by Hatch and Schultz (2008) it can be said that corporate branding is not specifically restricted to a specific mark or name.

Branding can incorporate multiple touch points. These touch points include; logo, customer service, treatment and training of employees, packaging, advertising, stationery and quality of products and services. Any means by which the general public comes into contact with a specific brand constitutes a touch point that can affect perceptions of the corporate brand (Hatch & Schultz 2008). Punjaisri and Wilson (2007:58) concur with the above statements made by Hatch and Schultz (2008) through the indication that corporate branding is also about multiple stakeholders interacting with the organisation’s employees and its success is largely dependent upon employees’ attitudes and behaviours in delivering the brand promise to external stakeholders.

Einwiller and Will (2002:101) observed that “corporate branding is the process of creating a favourable reputation of the organisation by sending signals to all stakeholders by managing behaviour, communication and symbolism”. Signals that derive from the organisation are shaped by the organisation’s culture, vision and strategy, which are conveyed by the company’s behaviour, symbolism and communication. The same views are echoed by Yu Xie and Boggs (2006:349) who state that “corporate branding enables organisations to use the vision and culture of the organisation explicitly as part of its uniqueness”.

Harris and de Chernatony (2001:443) expand on the statements of Einwiller and Will (2002:101) and they indicate that “successful management of corporate brand resources should result in a favourable brand reputation”. According to a research by Ying (2005:346), a corporate reputation can be defined from different perspectives such as “a buyer’s perception as to whether an organisation is well known, good or bad, reliable, trustworthy, reputable and believable”. This is substantiated by Fombrun (2000) when he alluded that how people feel about an organisation as a result of whatever information or misinformation they have heard about that particular organisation’s activities, workplace, past performance and future prospects can affect its reputation.

Scheffer (2005:86) expands on Ying’s (2005:346) statements through the indication that a corporate reputation is the perception of a corporate identity built up over time, therefore making corporate reputation much steadier than corporate image. Whereas, a brand reputation is a collective representation of a brand’s past actions and results that describe the brand’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. The brand’s reputation needs to be “stable and represents the distillation of multiple images over time”, (Einwiller & Will, 2002:101).

Research findings by The Conference Board (2002:3) reveal that a corporate brand can be defined as “a brand that establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, systems, policies and behaviours toward the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees” (Scheffer, 2005:77). Additionally, a corporate brand can distinguish the organisation from its competitors. Corporate branding can also assist an organisation to further leverage on its tangible and intangible assets leading to branding excellence throughout the organisation (Conference Board 2002:2). Roll (2004a:2) advocates that corporate branding strategy creates simplicity. This is to say that corporate branding is at the top of the brand portfolio as the ultimate identifier of the organisation (Scheffer, 2005:85).

The efforts of corporate branding should be followed over a period of time in order to identify progress, strengths, weaknesses and points of improvement (Scheffer,

2005:84). Einwiller and Will (2001:30) identify image survey or tracking, advertising tracking, specialised surveys, employee surveys and media monitoring as instruments applied for observing the effects of corporate branding and corporate communication efforts. Conference Board (2002:4) indicates that when communicating a corporate brand, electronic channels of communication like, e-mail, intranet and chat rooms, play a decisive role when it comes to coordination. Therefore, disseminating and transferring information and knowledge is significantly facilitated by properly applied electronic channels. Interbrand (2001:2) presents similar views and he adds that “a corporate brand stands for the relationship that an organisation has with its employees, as much as it represents the relationship that it has with its customers through its product and service offering”.

One of the pre-eminent ways for an organisation to guarantee that things are done right externally, is to do things right internally (Tosti & Stots, 2002:1). A corporate brand functions serve as an umbrella for all the activities that take place in an organisation (Scheffer 2005:68). In order to maximise the effectiveness of a corporate brand, it must be understood by all key audiences: customers, the media, employees, business partners and all other groups that govern the viability of the organisation to engage in business practices (Scheffer 2005:68). Corporate branding requires greater emphasis on elements that are internal to the organisation, giving more attention on the role of employees in the brand building process. This means that top management can further enrich their brand potential by targeting to achieve greater congruence among members of the brand team and other employees (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001:442).

The success of a corporate branding campaign, specifically internal branding, is hard to measure or quantify (Blumenthal, 2001:4), as it is viewed as an intangible asset to the organisation. Authors such as Blumenthal (2001); and Einwiller and Will (2001) present similar views by pointing out that the more deeply the employees’ identify with their organisations, the more supportive they will be of organisational promises and objectives and the more they will implement a living-the-brand strategy into their work life.

A study conducted by McDonald, de Chernatony and Harris (2001:337) allude that although corporate branding is beneficial, it can also hamper an organisation from successfully growing into market segments or products which do not generally fit into its existing customer base. Harris and de Chernatony (2002:444) confirm that “all members of an organisation conduct themselves in accordance with the desired brand identity”.

Therefore, regarding Harris and de Chernatony’s (2001:441) statements, it can be assumed that “corporate branding relies on organisational members holding congruent perceptions about the nature of the brand”. Perception depends on a person’s expectations and previous knowledge and the information presented by the brand (Stanier 2001:29). Employees at various seniority levels and from departments tend to have incongruous information and decision criteria. Hence it is most probable for managers and employees to have different perceptions of what their organisation’s brand mean. Moreover, dissimilarities in managers’ functional backgrounds can contribute to “selective perception and imperfection”, (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001:446). As such, congruent perceptions will be fundamental to the effective management of corporate brands.

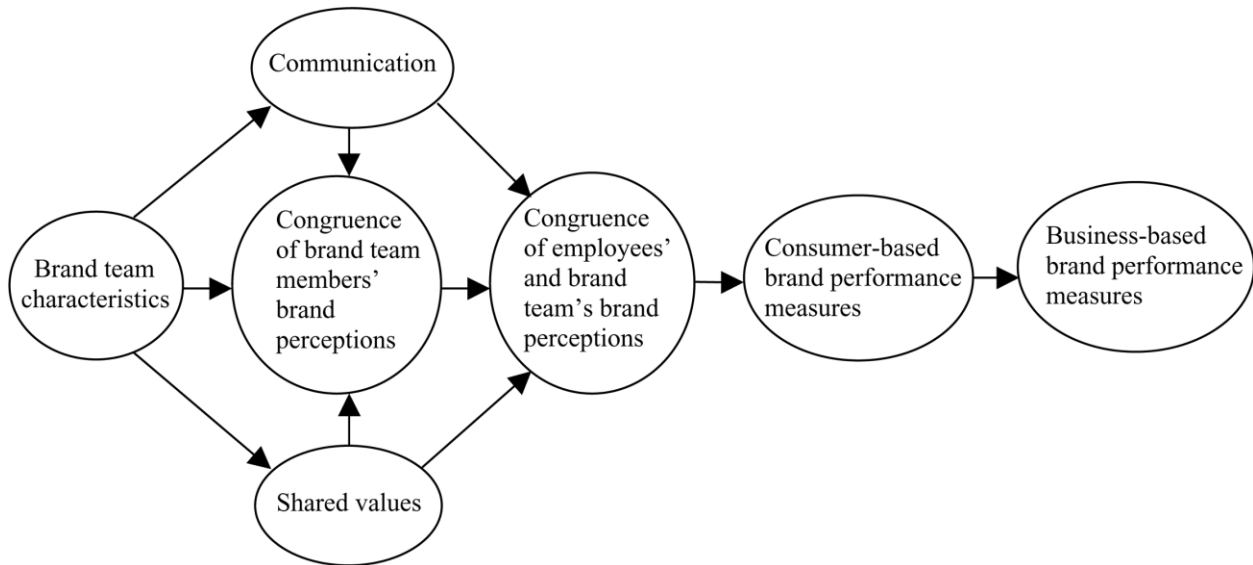
Harris and de Chernatony (2001:446) further indicate that corporate branding involves multiple stakeholders interacting with numerous staff across many departments in an organisation. Effective corporate branding requires consistent messages about a brand’s identity and uniform delivery across all stakeholder groups to create a favourable brand reputation. A corporate brand is the core component of corporate reputation.

Internal consistency and congruency are vital to the successful external communication of corporate identity (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001:446). Research by Cornelissen and Elving (2003:116) define corporate identity as the strategic development of a distinct and coherent image of an organisation that is consistently communicated to stakeholders through the corporate identity mix, comprised of symbolism, planned communication and behaviour.

From this definition, it can be put forward that the nature of a corporate identity characteristics set will affect performance positively if the characteristics are appealing to the internal customers of the organisation and to external stakeholders. In essence, the role of the employee becomes increasingly important as the employees are the link between the customer and the organisation. Therefore, it is crucial that managers ascertain mechanisms for developing diverse perceptions to dissuade inconsistencies (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Moreover, before everyone else, members of the brand team need to make known their own perceptions and make clear their brand's intended identity. The brand team should then work with employees to make sure that their perceptions align with the intended brand identity (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Furthermore, employees should be propelled to give feedback about how they believe consumers perceive the brand.

Employees play a crucial role in the process of building a brand and top management can enhance their potential further by aiming to achieve greater congruence among members of the brand team and other employees within an organisation (Scheffer, 2005:80). Research conducted by Harris and de Chernatony (2001:449) found that within an organisation, team members with similar characteristics are more likely to have similar experiences and perspectives, share values and communicate easily (see figure 2.1). For instance, people who join the organisation at the same time are more likely to share common experiences and have similar job value and orientations. Figure 2.1 below depicts a potential structure of the relationships between internal brand resources and brand performance.

Figure 2.1 The relationships between internal brand resources and brand performance (Adopted from Harris and de Chernatony (2001:447))



Moreover, people who share values tend to perceive things in similar ways. Harris and de Chernatony (2001:449) further point out that prosperous organisations see it as important to make their values clear and make certain that they are known and shared by employees. Shared values play a very crucial role in facilitating congruent brand perceptions and coherent actions both within the brand team and across the organisation. Communication also plays a significant part in the establishment of congruent perceptions. Communication is “...the sending, receiving and understanding of messages” Harris and de Chernatony (2001:450). Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:1) highlights that “communication is the lifeblood of all organisations”.

Harris and de Chernatony (2001:452) assert that when the similarities between members of the brand are eminent, there is more formal and frequent communication between them. The brand team has to make sure that all forms of brand communications present a coherent brand identity. Moreover, employees’ perceptions of their brand will be based not only on what the brand team tells them but also on their own experiences with the brand and brand advertisement. Harris and de Chernatony (2001:452) further advise that explaining to employees how consumer advertisements

are designed to communicate the corporate identity will increase the congruence between the brand team's and employees' perceptions about the nature of the brand.

2.2.3 The differences between product branding and corporate branding

The first difference is that focus of the branding effort shifts from the product to the corporation. Olins (2000) states that a product and a corporation are related in that a corporate brand adds economic value to the variety of products and services offered by the company. However, the broader scope of the corporate brand pushes brand thinking considerably beyond the product and its relationship to the consumer or customer (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1045).

Furthermore, this difference between product and corporate branding is emphasized by the second contrast which is a shift in managerial responsibility, as product brands typically remain part of the middle management marketing function while corporate brands entail a strategic perspective, based in the executive office (Balmer 2001a:2). The third difference is based on who the brand relates to in terms of both attraction and support. Whereas, product brands mostly target consumers or customers, corporate brands also contribute to the images formed and held by organisational and community members, investors, partners, suppliers and all other company stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz (2003:1045). The corporate brand relates to all of the organisation's multiple stakeholders and its products and services to each other through their relationship with the corporation instead of relating to consumers through a variety of individual products and serves with distinct product brand names.

Another significant contrast between product branding and corporate branding is in the "identity" of the offices or officers responsible for the branding effort. According to Hatch and Schultz (2003:1046) "product branding can be handled within a marketing department of an organisation, corporate branding requires the whole organisational support, from top to bottom and across functional units to be involved in realising the corporate brand, along with the audiences the brand is meant to attract and engage". De Chernatony (2001) highlights that unlike product branding, corporate branding

requires much more complex and sophisticated organisational practices. This is because a successful corporate brand is formed by the interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate images held by its stakeholders. Balmer (2001b:281) asserts that deliberate and orchestrated communication of corporate brands depends on the total corporate communication mix because corporate branding requires integration of internal and external communication, as well as creating coherence of expression across multiple channels and new media. These differences are depicted on table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 The differences between corporate branding and product branding as depicted by Hatch and Schults (2003:1045)

	PRODUCT BRANDS	CORPORATE BRANDS
Focus attention on	The product	The company
Managed by	Middle manager	CEO
Attract attention and gain support of	Customers	Multiple stakeholders
Delivered by	Marketing	Whole company
Communications mix	Marketing communications	Total corporate communication
Time horizon	Life of product is short	Life of product is long
Importance to company	Functional	Strategic

Another difference between product and corporate brands according to (Hatch and Schults (2003:1046) is that product brands live in the present and they are short term in their ambitions to attract potential customers and help in the delivery of sales. Moreover, marketers feel a strong need to freshen them with inventive campaigns whereas corporate brands live both in the past and the future, for they stimulate associations with heritage and articulate strategic visions of what is to come.

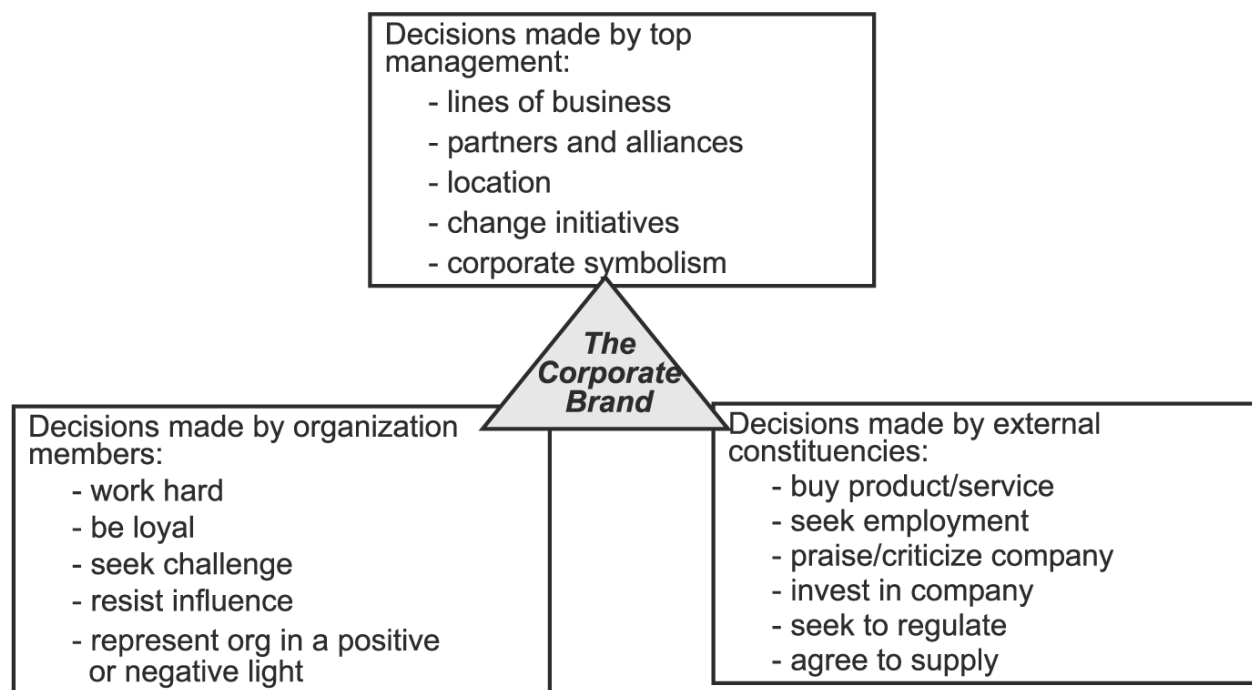
Lastly, Hatch and Schults (2003:1046) contend that corporate branding takes on strategic importance in contrast to the functional (marketing and sales) importance that is typically accorded to a product brand. The strategic importance of corporate branding

lies not only in its positioning of the company in the market place but in creating internal arrangements such as organisational structure, physical design and culture that support the meaning of the corporate brand.

2.2.4 A framework for corporate branding

Hatch and Schultz (2003:1046) propose that “a strong corporate brand acts as a focus for the attention, interest and activity stakeholders bring to a corporation”. Hatch and Schultz (2003:1046) further indicate that when corporate branding works, it is because it expresses the values and sources of desire that attract key stakeholders to the organisation and encourage them to feel a sense of belonging to it. It is this attraction and sense of belonging that affects the decisions and behaviours on which a company is built upon (see figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Successful corporate brands tap the attractive force that draws stakeholders to the organisation (as depicted by Hatch & Schultz 2003:1046)



Note: The company is then built upon the key decisions these stakeholders make

A strong corporate brand taps this attractive force and offers symbols that help stakeholders experience and express their values and thereby keep them active. A blend of corporate and cultural values with marketing practices is the hallmark of corporate branding and it is what brings corporate practice into direct contact with organisational culture, strategic vision and corporate images (Hatch & Schultz, 2003:1047) as depicted in Figure 2.3 in the following section. These three elements form the foundation of corporate branding.

However, the strategic importance of corporate branding lies in creating organisational structures and cultures that support the meaning of the corporate brand (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1046). Therefore, it is imperative that the concept of organisation culture be explored with its characteristics and why it is important to an organisation and also explain how the three elements (culture, vision and image) inter-relate to each other as they form the foundation of corporate branding.

2.3 HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES

Organisational culture, according to Giberson, Resick, Dickson, Mitchelson, Randal and Clark (2009:123) is a topic of considerable interest to organisational researchers, management consultants and corporate executives alike. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) define organisational culture as a set of shared mental assumptions that guide interpretation and action in organisations by defining appropriate behaviour for various situations.

Schein (1991:9) in Scheffer (2005:119) expands on Ravasi and Schultz's (2006) definition by adding that organisational culture is:

“...the pattern of shared basic assumptions, invented, discovered or developed, by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid therefore, to be taught to new members as the way to perceive, think and relate to these problems” (Schein 1991:9).

According to Scheffer (2005:119) the key feature in Schein's (1991:9) definition is that culture is taught to new members as the accepted way to behave, thus maintaining organisational survival and growth.

Wilson (2001:356) presents an all-encompassing definition of organisational culture which expands upon the above definitions,

“...the visible and less visible norms, values and behaviour that are shared by a group of employees which shape the groups' sense of what is accepted and valid. These are generally slow to change and new group members learn through both an informal and formal socialisation process” (Wilson 2001:356).

Therefore, for the purpose of this study Wilson's definition will be adopted.

Scheffer (2005:120) also points out that culture manifests itself in the ways employees all through ranks feel about the company they are working for. The significance of the role of organisational culture in the employees' socialisation process is also emphasized by Newstrom and Davis (1997), Schein (1991) and Stainer (2001).

Drawing on the various definitions presented, organisational culture can be referred to as “a set of values, beliefs and behaviour patterns that form the core identity of organisations and helps in shaping the employees' behaviour. Klein (2001:178) adds that “...the underlying message is that culture is something in which you participate, or to which you have the right to respond”.

Characteristics of organisational cultures can be identified based on the above presented definitions.

2.3.1 Characteristics of organisational culture

Research conducted by Newstrom and Davis (2001:356) indicates that the characteristics and dimensions of organisational culture are as follows:

- a) Each organisation is unique with its own history, patterns of communication, procedures and policies, mission statements and vision which, in totality constitute its distinctive culture.
- b) Organisational cultures are relatively stable in nature, generally evolving only slowly over time. An exception to this is when two organisations emerge with each other, thus requiring a careful blend of the two so as to avoid culture clash.
- c) Most organisational cultures evolve directly from the actions of top management, who can have a powerful influence on their employees by what they say and do.
- d) Historically most organisational cultures have been implicit rather than explicit. However, more recently organisations have begun discussing their intended cultures and many executives view one of their roles as speaking out about the type of environment they would like to create within their organisations.
- e) Most organisations are viewed as symbolic representations of the underlying organisational beliefs and values.
- f) There is no universal or best culture for all organisations. Organisational culture depends on the organisation's goals, industry, nature or competition and factors in the environment in which the organisation operates. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) contend that although a company may have its own unique culture, in larger organisations, there is a diverse and sometimes conflicting cultures that co-exist due to different characteristics of management team.
- g) Organisational cultures are more easily recognised when their elements are integrated and consistent with each other.

The above characteristics reveal that organisational cultures are exclusive to each organisation. However, Hoogervorst, Flier and Koopman (2004:293) are of the opinion that due to the fact that the organisation is an open system functioning within a broader system (its environment) and interacting with other systems (other organisations as well as the families of the organisational employees), there are multiple features which influence on each of the organisational culture. Therefore, it is crucial for the factors to be explored in the following chapter.

2.3.2 Factors influencing organisational cultures

Wilson (2001:359) conducted a research that reveals the four factors that underpin and influence organisational cultures:

a. The business environment

The environment in which an organisation operates helps to determine the organisational culture. According to Hatch and Schultz (2003), culture exhibits itself in the ways employees all throughout the ranks feel about the company that they are working for. Moreover, the traditions of a particular industry will also have an effect on the organisational culture. For example, banks and bankers have a risk-averse culture whereas stockbrokers have a deal-oriented culture and society as a whole will impact on opinions regarding work, status, financial performance and different types of jobs. Such societal traits lay the foundations upon which the organisational culture is developed.

b. Leadership

One of the most powerful facets in shaping an organisation's culture is the consistent alignment of leadership behaviours with their stated brand beliefs, and according to Mosley (2007:129) "...recent studies have highlighted the need to move beyond the tendency of many organisations to focus on the star qualities of their CEO towards a more pervasive brand leadership". Scheffer (2005:123) indicates that leadership has influence on the culture of an organisation because leadership is involved in the long-term direction of the organisation through the development of a vision and strategies for the future. This indicates a link between organisational culture and the organisation as a system; where leadership and organisational systems act as performance controls to encourage employees to implement strategies so as to accomplish results for the organisation.

Furthermore, according to Scheffer (2005:123), leadership within contemporary organisations differs from what was traditionally viewed as management. Within the new organisation, leadership is formed by mutual consent; coordinators replace traditional

leadership functions. The coordinator role is based on the foundation that the organisation is there to serve employees, not the other way round. The leader is then accountable for communicating through words and actions, the vision to internal and external audiences while monitoring and inspiring the employees who have to convey the vision. In contemporary organisations, such as those founded by entrepreneurs, the founder influences the culture through his or her own ambitions. As such, Stock (2001:1) assert that leaders who actively develop and maintain an organisational culture centred on sincere care and service fellow employees and customers, forms the basic premise of the Service-Profit Chain Model, which will be deliberated later in this chapter.

c. Management practices and the formal socialisation process

Scheffer (2005:123) indicates that the manner in which an organisation is managed is likely to impact either positively or negatively on the beliefs, behaviour and attitudes of the employees. According to Mosley (2007:129) human resources (HR) plays a very important role in implanting the desired brand ethos and culture. HR shapes people management practices to reflect the desired brand experience. Management represents the detailed planning, organising, controlling, problem-solving and staffing of the organisation. Within these management functions, managers have control over an array of factors which effect cultural transmission. These factors include recruitment, turnover of employees and formal socialisation procedures which includes induction training for new employees and comprehensive reward system.

d. The informal socialisation process

New members will endeavour to behave in a manner which is generally consistent with the established organisational norms, in order to be accepted into the organisation. This socialisation process, according to Scheffer (2005:125), is reinforced by the telling of stories about specific situations and how they were handled. This entrenches patterns of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, as well as being a tool for revealing inconsistencies in the main organisational cultures.

Research conducted by Scheffer (2005:125) indicates that, although there are factors which influence organisational cultures, there are also numerous organisational benefits attributed to organisational cultures.

2.3.3 The importance of organisational cultures

Organisational culture can stimulate growth and dignity of individuals, affirm a direction for the company, empower employees to freely acquire and solve problems and stand for integrity and honesty in everything the organisation embarks upon. This then lays the foundation upon which an organisation can create and maintain its competitive advantage in a saturated business environment. Furthermore, Scheffer (2005:125) suggests that organisational cultures are fundamental to the success of an organisation for several reasons. These reasons include:

- a) **Organisational identity:** Organisational cultures are an organisational identity to employees. Thus culture is a defining vision of what the organisation actually represents.
- b) **Organisational beliefs and behaviour:** According to Hoogervost et al (2004:294), organisational cultures identify appropriate sets of beliefs and behaviour, which will allow the organisation to fit its internal operating efficiencies with its problems of existence in its environment.
- c) **Competitive advantage:** Organisational culture may be a source of competitive advantage, but only when brand values are respectful of the organisational culture and its core values.
- d) **Organisational stability and continuity:** Scheffer (2005:125) explains that organisational cultures are an important source of stability and continuity to the organisation which in turn provides a sense of security to its members.
- e) **Employee Recognition and rewarding:** Organisational cultures “attract attention, convey a vision and typically honour high producing and creative individuals as heroes” through recognition and rewarding, organisational cultures are identifying these individuals as role models to emulate (Wilson, 2001:359).

In essence, according to Scheffer (2005:125), employees tend to incline toward an organisational culture they would prefer as a work environment, consequently resulting

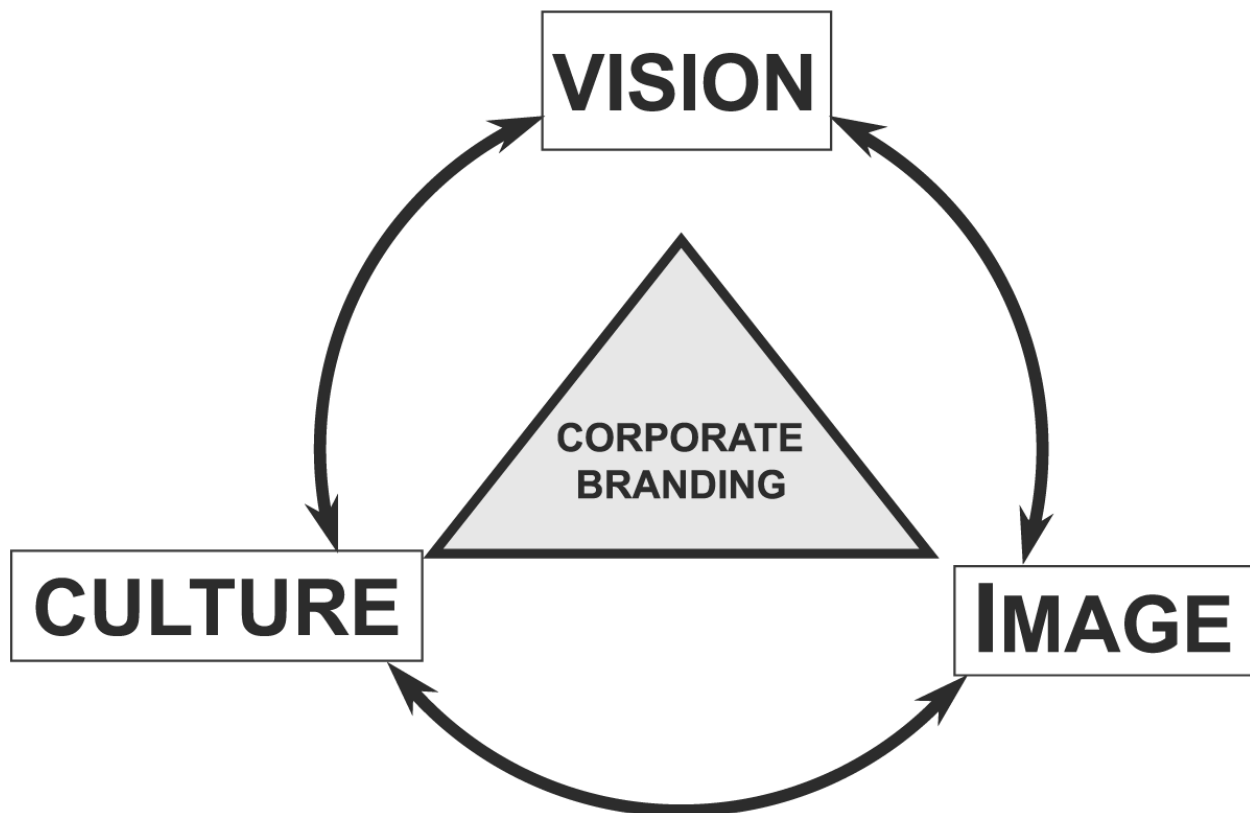
in a good alignment of employer and employee. Scheffer (2005:125) further explain that every structure and culture of an organisation has a bearing on its needs and processes for internal communication. Therefore, innovative practices in one organisation may be of restricted usefulness in another organisation with a different culture or organisational structure.

2.3.4 Strategic vision and organisational culture

Hatch and Schultz (2003:1048) define a vision as "...what the organisation aspires to be in the future". Vision encompasses the brand's core purpose, its reason for being and its core values which provide a system of guiding principles. Harris and de Chernatony (2001:443) highlights that when managers need to communicate their brand's purpose to employees clearly they (managers) stimulate them (employees) and help them understand how their roles relate to the brand purpose. It is therefore crucial to convey internally the brand's core values because these guide employees' behaviour. Thus, a strategic vision is the central idea behind the organisation and it encompasses and expresses top management's aspiration for what the organisation aims to achieve in the future. Bearing in mind that a vision can stretch the company toward new goals and levels of achievement, it must also connect authentically with the heritage of the company.

Furthermore, Kgomo and Swarts (2010:232) concur with Ravasi and Schultz's (2006) statements by defining organisational culture as "...the cornerstone of values, beliefs, norms, standards and assumptions concerning work that members of an organisation share, has a potent effect on the motivation of employees to continue working for their employers". This implies that strategic vision and organisational culture are strongly inter-related and there is a need for perceived mutual support between them. The interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate image is depicted in figure 2.3 below.

Figure 2.3 Successful corporate branding rests on a foundation of interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate image (Hatch & Schultz, 2003:1047).



Hatch and Schultz (2003:1048) further extent that since culture is deeply embedded in organisational behaviour, brand values based on credible cultural expression will serve to create genuine coherence between a promise the brand makes and the performance a corporation delivers. Meaning that, organisational members are important contributors to the creation of a corporate brand value. For a corporate brand to succeed, it must be directly linked to a strategic vision and an organisational culture. However, Figure 3 depicts that there is a third context of corporate branding that must be connected to both culture and vision, which is a corporate image.

2.3.5 Organisational culture and corporate images

Hatch and Schultz (2003:1049) purport that corporate images are the general impressions of the company as seen by the outside world, customers, shareholders, the media, the general public and other stakeholders. Harris and de Chernatony (2001:445) expand on the above author's statements by saying that a brand image reflects current and changing perceptions. Moreover, Aaker (2006) in Hatch and Schultz (2003:1049) agree add that when the brand values are consistent with organisational culture and company values they will create credibility in the eyes of key stakeholders such as an innovative organisation, a trustworthy organisation and an admired organisation. Researchers such as de Chernatony (2001); Dowling (2001); Hatch and Schultz (2001) and Hatch and Schultz (2003) share the same view, that an alignment between a perceived corporate image and an actual organisational culture magnifies an awareness among all stakeholders about who the corporate brand is and what it stands for and it also enhances organisational attractiveness and reputation.

Corporate branding efforts generally involve projections of an organisation's distinctiveness by using the total corporate communication mix to impress extended audiences, who are thereby encouraged to perceive and judge the organisation and its multiple offerings as attractive and desirable. Such images are expected to influence stakeholder behaviour in ways that generate brand equity at the corporate level (Keller 2000a). Hatch and Schultz (2003:1050) assert that first and foremost the projected images must tap into the organisational culture of a company in order to create a brand promise that resonates with the actual brand experience offered by organisational members. Furthermore, an organisational culture is the context for the heritage of beliefs, meanings, stories and other rich symbolic resources that are expressed in sense-making and sense-giving patterns that are unique to the company (Hatch & Schultz, 2003:1050).

2.3.6 Corporate images and strategic vision

Hatch and Schultz (2003:1051) recommends that similar to the relation between organisational culture and corporate images, the challenge in corporate brand building

is to align strategic vision with the corporate image. Unlike product brand thinking, corporate branding puts stronger emphasis on the role of strategic vision as it requires top management's reflections on who the company is and what it wants to become.

Accordingly, "...a corporate brand cannot be merely suggested from a desired market position or brand image, but must rather be grounded in core company values and the paths for the future unfolding from its heritage," (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1051). The authors further explain that managers who are sensitive to the images that others form of their organisations will be better at developing successful, sustainable corporate brands because they will benefit from recognising tensions that arise between strategic vision and the corporate images held by key stakeholders. When the managers also learn to bring organisational culture into this equation, they will be in a position to better manage their corporate brands (Hatch & Schultz, 2003:1051).

2.4 INTERNAL BRANDING

According to Mahnert and Torres (2007:55), internal branding refers to "the activities employed by a company to ensure intellectual and emotional staff buy-in into not only the corporate culture but also the specific brand personality invoked within this culture". Internal branding is also considered as a means to create powerful corporate brands. It assists an organisation in aligning its internal process and corporate culture with those of the brand (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007:59).

Tosti and Stots (2002:4) articulate that internal branding ensures that the entire organisation understands and actively pursues the delivery of the brand promise. The objective of internal branding is to ensure that employees transform espoused brand messages into brand reality for customers and other stakeholders. Punjaisri and Wilson (2007:60) point out that in branding literature; the employee role is recognised as crucial in delivering the service as promised by the brand.

Internal branding is defined by Blumenthal (2001:10) as "the way that people can relate to each other, be part of something, part of a unity, an image and that of everything I do

or say to a customer or another employee, I am representing that image". The idea of unity and conformity to the internal brand is established since this definition is from a managerial perspective. (Scheffer 2005:98). Einwiller and Will (2001:4) articulate that a strong internal brand is highly advantageous to the relationships with internal stakeholders, as it can heighten identification with the organisation and create a sense of unity that form the foundation for efficient coordination, motivation and performance within the organisation.

According to Blumenthal (2001:5), the communication perspective of internal branding means ensuring that the organisation's reputation (explained in section 2.3.2) is consistent with organisational values, or even protecting the organisation's reputation among internal stakeholders. The idea is to "create a system populated by the kind of people whose behaviours will support corporate messages both internally and externally (Blumenthal, 2001:5).

However, from a human resources perspective, Blumenthal (2001:10) views internal branding in more strategic terms, wherein the common understanding of the direction of the organisation by its employees is emphasized. From this perspective, internal branding is about people knowing who the organisation is, what the organisation does, where the organisation aims to go in the future and the employees being aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation.

In this regard, the alignment process works to deliver strong performance when employees understand and accept that the organisational values are genuine, they align their attitudes and behaviour to the brand values. Thus resulting in greater satisfaction for both customers and employees, this in turn leads to employee and customer preference and customer salience (Scheffer, 2005:98).

Bickerton (2000:2) expands on Blumenthal's (2001) views through the belief that corporate branding, especially internal branding, is an organisational tool that must be managed to create alignment between the internal and external image of the

organisation. This must begin with the organisations' mission and vision (Bickerton 2000). Tosti and Stots (2002) explain that organisational alignment is derived from human performance technology and focuses on linking an organisation's culture, processes and behaviours with its corporate goals and strategies. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, internal branding is viewed as an organisational alignment effort designed to make sure an organisation can and will effectively deliver on its brand promise to customers.

As such internal branding translates the corporate brand into internal behaviour and systems that support people in turning the brand promise into the reality of customer experience (Scheffer, 2005:99). The author continues to express that, internal branding transforms a corporate brand into internal behaviour and systems that support employees and customers. Therefore, the link can be made to the theoretical suggestion that the more passionately the employees identify with their organisations, the more loyal they are of organisational alignment into their daily work life.

Drawing on the rich literature review of branding, internal branding and organisational culture, it can be concluded that corporate branding requires increased emphasis on internal brand resources to present a coherent brand identity to stakeholders. Moreover, corporate brands need to be managed in relation to the interplay between vision, culture and image.

Achieving this requires effective dialogues between top management, external stakeholders and members of the organisational culture. Hatch and Schultz (2003:1062) point out that effective corporate branding comes with a dedication to honest self-assessment, responsive attitudes toward stakeholders and respect for the values that attract all parties to the corporation. In essence, what is actually needed is drawing from the rich resource that is the organisational culture and makes an integrated part of the effort to build a corporate brand. Furthermore, organisations need to pay attention to the composition of their brand teams and be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Organisations will also need to pay attention and be careful when

appointing new staff members to the team, taking into consideration that the team's composition and whether the new and existing members will be able to work together.

Having explored internal branding, it is important to discuss employee engagement in order to be able to relate it to internal branding and check if there is a relationship between the two constructs. Thus, the following section is a discussion of employee engagement and what it entails.

2.5 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

According to Mmutle (2014:15) employee engagement is a phenomenon that was introduced in the early 1990s and continues to gather the attention and implementation into organisations. In the 21st century many business organisations – including non-profit organisations like universities - are implementing employee engagement as a fundamental tool of accelerating interaction or engagement between employees to employees and employees to line managers (Hayase, 2009 in Mmutle, 2014:15).

The idea of employee engagement has clearly captured the attention of many researchers and practitioners across the globe (Bakker & Leiter (2010); Little and Little (2006); Macey and Schneider (2008) and there is a surprising dearth of research on employee engagement in the academic literature (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010; Albrecht 2010, Saks 2006:600) presents a similar view that there has been a significant amount of academic research being published on employee engagement over the past five to ten years, therefore it is no longer the case of employee engagement coming from the literature of practitioners and consulting firms.

Researches by Welch (2011:328) and Frank, Finnegan and Taylor (2004:15) add to the above statements by indicating that employee engagement is a matter of concern for leaders and managers in organisations across the globe that recognise employee engagement as a vital element affecting organisational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness and not as in the past a function "viewed as a terrain of Human

Resources (HR) discipline although HR departments have a significant impact on engagement, the same goes for Marketing and Communication or Public Relations departments (Mmutle, 2014:15).

Research conducted by Thomas (2009) supports this by defending that in the last few years; organisations have adopted the phrase employee engagement in order to capture the kind of motivation required in today's workplace. Employee engagement is an engaging concept that gets employees excited, focused, involved, innovative, proactive and willing to invest time and effort in it (Macey, Schneider & Barbera, 2009).

Furthermore, many employees would envy those that are so absorbed in their work that time flies, those who seem passionate about their work, find meaning and challenge in their jobs, do the right things the right way and simply those who look forward to coming to work every day. Not only does employee engagement have the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty, it is also a key link to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value (Lockwood, 2007:2).

2.5.1 Definitions of employee engagement

Employee engagement is according to Sias (2005:29), an employee being fully - intellectually and emotionally- committed to a particular job, so that "he or she wants to give to that job what is known as discretionary effort". This discretionary effort is not necessary for the employees to give, but they have an innate desire to give anyway (in Mmutle, 2014:18).

Researchers such as Albrecht (2010), Welch (2011), Kahn (1990) who were the first to theorise the work-related engagement describe employee engagement, which can also be referred to as work engagement or job engagement as "the harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people play and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance". In essence, employee engagement connotes high levels of personal investment in and emotional connection with the work tasks performed in a job.

May *et al.* (2004) and Rich *et al.* (2010) agree with Kahn's (1990) indications by defining employee engagement as a cohesion among physical ('I exert a lot energy when performing my job'), emotional ('I really put my heart into my job') and cognitive ('Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else') energies that individuals bring to their work roles.

However, having considered the definitions discussed above, this researcher adopts the definition that is offered by Schaufeli *et al.*, (2000:74) who defined employee engagement as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption". Employee Engagement "is a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour" (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006:702).

Vigour connotes high levels of energy and mental resilience on the job, persistence in the face of difficulties and willingness to invest effort in one's work. Dedication represents a sense of inspiration, pride, significance, enthusiasm and challenge at work. Absorption imply being happy, fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work so that time passes quickly, with difficulty detaching from work (Lockwood, 2007:4).

In essence, employee engagement captures how employees experience their work as stimulating, energetic and as something to which they really want to devote their time and effort (vigour), feel great pride and enthusiasm (dedication), are eager to focus absolutely on the task at hand (absorption) and are constantly devoted to go the extra mile in order to achieve success. It is indeed what people expect when they start a new job. That is why some of the most admired business leaders speak wistfully about engagement and view it as essential to organisational success (Macey *et al.*, 2009).

Having explored the different definitions of employee engagement it is considered necessary to look at the levels of employee engagement so as to assess the conceptual fit of Gallup's employee engagement measure and also to explain and add value to the

relationship between employee engagement and the effectiveness of managers in today's organisations.

2.5.2 Levels of employee engagement

The Gallup developed its Q12 benchmark specifically to correlate its measure of employee engagement to better productivity, lower turnover, better customer loyalty and sales growth and other manifestations of superior performance (Stock, 2011 & Thackray, 2005). Gallup consultants sifted through hundreds of questions in hundreds of surveys before choosing the twelve questions with the highest correlations to external measures (Stock 2011). Topics covered include workplace expectations, supervisory relations, even working with a best friend. Ratings from all twelve questions are then combined into an index, which can be used to segment employees into three categories, namely: engaged employees, disengaged employees and actively disengaged employees (Stock, 2011; Thackray, 2005 & Welch, 2011).

Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company (Thackray, 2005). They drive innovation and move the organisation forward. These employees work hard to innovate and improve because they feel a strong connection to the organisation (Lockwood 2007:3 & Thackray, 2005). Disengaged employees are essentially 'checked out'. They are sleep walking through their work day, putting time, not energy or passion into their work. Actively disengaged employees aren't just unhappy at work, but they are busy acting out their unhappiness and spreading it to other staff members.

Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish (Lockwood 2007:3 and Thackray, 2005). Using Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement, Luthans and Peterson (2002) indicated that organisational members who are personally engaged (cognitively and emotionally) as opposed to disengaged, are not only more satisfied, but also more productive. This is similar to what the Gallup organisation found using their empirically validated GWA instrument designed to measure their conceptualisation of engagement. By conceptually comparing the GWA Buckingham

and Coffman, (1999) with Kahn (1990) theoretically derived dimensions of engagement, there seems to be a conceptual fit, and thus establish theoretical grounding for better understanding of employee engagement and a way to operationalize and measure it through the GWA (Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

As Kahn's (1990) research on employee engagement points out (Luthans & Peterson, 2002), employees experience dimensions of personal engagement (physical, cognitive and emotional) or disengagement during daily task performances. For psychological engagement and organisational behaviours, the two major dimensions are emotional and cognitive engagement. Engagement occurs when one is cognitively vigilant and/or emotionally connected to others. For instance, engaged employees are those who know what is expected of them at work, are able to form strong relationships with co-workers and managers, or those who in other ways experience meaning in their work (Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

However, disengaged employees, detach themselves from work roles and withdraw emotionally and cognitively. Moreover, (Luthans & Peterson, 2002), disengaged employees display partial role performances and task behaviours become effortless or robotic. Disengagement may be a result of employees who lack desirable social interaction at work, who experience little independence in work-roles or who feel their jobs are unimportant.

2.5.3 Complexity of employee engagement

Employee engagement is a complex concept with many issues influencing engagement levels. Consequently, there are many pathways to foster engagement, with no one 'kit' that fits all organisations (Lockwood, 2007:2). While each company may define employee engagement differently, ultimately, the key to effective engagement will be rooted in the flexibility of approach most appropriate for each individual organisation (Lockwood, 2007:2). The perception of employee engagement being a positive work-related psychological state that is insinuated in words like enthusiasm, energy, passion and vigour and engagement being a motivational state reflected in a genuine

willingness to invest focused effort toward organisational goals and success, is common to many definitions that have been offered by researchers and practitioners (Albrecht, 2010:4). For example, Bakker *et al.* (2008:189) indicate that engagement is best conceptualised and characterised by a “high level of energy and strong identification with one’s work”.

Research by Albrecht (2010:5) concluded that even though it is highly unlikely that there will ever be a universal agreement about a single definition and measures of engagement, it is crucial that measures of engagement reflect what is conceptually at the core of the construct. Definitions of employee engagement might usefully recognise that employee engagement is a positive work-related psychological state characterised by a genuine willingness to contribute to organisational success. It is hoped that the inclusion of these core qualities in definitions and measures will reinforce understanding of what engagement is (Albrecht, 2010:5).

Thomas (2009) agrees with researchers such as Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006); Bakker *et al.* (2004); Macey and Schneider (2008) and expands that employee engagement is the logical successor to old constructs such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and citizenship behaviour, in the evolution of work. Furthermore, Thomas (2009) reiterates that workers’ jobs were ‘enriched’ in the 1970s, and then they were ‘empowered’ in the 1980s and 1990s. And now that the work is more demanding and there is looser supervision, we need to make sure that workers are psychologically ‘engaged’ in performing that work.

Unfortunately, employee engagement has been used in quite different ways by different writers, often without a specific definition. A more specific and useful definition of engagement is the degree to which people actively self-manage in their work (Thomas, 2009). Kimball and Nick (2006) expand on Thomas’ (2009) statements by pointing out that there are many opportunities for enhancing engagement in employees which starts with asking employees what they want and what is important for them in order to be effective in their job roles.

2.5.4. The evolution of the concept of employee engagement

Various factors have contributed to the academic interest of employee engagement. Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) and Kahn (1990) conducted qualitative studies that conceptualise personal engagement in work roles and identify the psychological conditions and antecedents. Secondly, according to Rothmann (2003) and Strumpfer (2003) the interest in engagement grew with the shift in focus in psychology from weaknesses, malfunctioning and damage towards happiness, human strengths and optimal functioning. Lastly, Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) convey that the need for businesses to maximise the inputs of employees has contributed to the high interest in engagement. Business needs are driven by intense global competition, which is escalating the need for employees to be emotionally and cognitively committed to their organisation, their customers and their work.

According to Little and Little (2006:117) the concept of employee engagement was coined by the Gallup research group, as a result of 25 years of interviewing and surveying employees and managers. The intention of the Gallup Organisation was to create a measure of workplaces that could be used for comparison (Little and Little 2006:118). Research conducted by Kimball and Nick (2006:66) concur with Little and Little (2006) through the indication that employee engagement is vital to the overall organisational success. Furthermore, the research by Gallup revealed that employee engagement is not tied to a salary level but rather to the relationship employees have with their immediate supervisors (Kimball & Nick, 2006:66). Moreover, employee engagement seems to be attractive because it has been shown to have a statistical relationship with productivity, profitability, employee retention, safety and customer satisfaction (Coffman & Gonsales Molina, 2002).

Albrecht (2010:11) expands on the suggestions made by Kimball and Nick (2006), Little and Little (2006), Coffman and Gonsales Molina (2002) by adding that engagement has influence on a wide range of fundamental individuals, teams and organisational outcomes, yet it remains an on-going challenge for both practitioners and researchers. Macey *et.al.* (2009) agree by asserting that despite considerable progress on

engagement, there is more still to be done, particularly with regard to establishing relationships between engagement, important individual employees, business units and organisational metrics. Albrecht (2010) further indicate that in order for engagement to remain an esteemed organisational focus, it will be essential for both researchers and practitioners to demonstrate both financial and non-financial advantages associated with interventions intended to improve employee engagement.

Research by Macey and Schneider (2008) indicates that most definitions of employee engagement give the impression that it is similar to already established constructs like organisational commitment, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour. A number of researchers such as Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006); Newman and Harrison (2008), concur with Macey and Schneider (2008) by indicating that employee engagement may be nothing but 'old wine in a new bottle' However, according to Albrecht (2010:99), the literature is not very clear whether employee engagement is a new concept or whether it is simply a new mixture of existing and well established constructs. Albrecht (2010:5) further argued that for engagement to be of any practical value, it needs to be shown to be different from other related organisational constructs such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment.

Several authors have contradictory observations about employee engagement being seen as a new construct (Macey & Schneider, 2008) but at best it is seen as a re-alignment of old constructs Albrecht (2010:99) and an insightful construct in the process of gaining authenticity (Newman & Harrison, 2008). Other views are of the opinion that it might be theoretically diverse but it is not empirically distinct, hence not greater than organisational commitment or job satisfaction (Harter & Schmidt, 2008). Other scholars think it lacks a distinctive meaning, it is (complex to gauge or operationalize "extra role" or "beyond expectations" performance (Griffin, Parker & Neal 2008; and Saks, 2008). Lastly, there is also an argument that employee engagement lacks a comprehensive framework and should be included in the self-determination theory as an alternative (Meyer & Gagne, 2008).

Research by Luthans and Peterson (2002:377) contends that work done by Kahn (1990 & 1992) on personal engagement, can offer one such convergent theory for Gallup's empirically derived employee engagement. Luthans and Peterson (2002:377) further advocates that Kahn (1990) explains employee engagement as different from other employee role constructs such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Furthermore, even though these constructs increase our understanding of how employees perceive themselves and their work, the understandings are too general. Alternatively, employee engagement focuses on how the psychological experiences of work shape the process of people presenting and absenting themselves during task performances (Luthans & Peterson, 2002:378).

In contrast to engagement, which is characterised by activated, high arousal and positive feelings at work (energy, enthusiasm and vigour), job satisfaction and organisational commitment are characterised by less activated positive feelings such as contentment and comfort (Albrecht 2010:6). Moreover, it is important to acknowledge some overlap between the contemporary views on engagement and the old constructs but also consider employee engagement to be a unique construct which deserves the same theoretical and practical attention.

Academic researchers such as Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006); Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke (2004) and Salanova, Agut and Peiro (2005) agree with Albrecht (2010:6) by indicating that there is increasing evidence that shows a robust relationship between employee engagement and a range of vital organisational outcomes such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and citizenship behaviour.

Therefore, the constructs or theories will be discussed in the following sub-sections in order to understand them better and point out the differences between them and employee engagement.

2.5.4a Job satisfaction

A study by Little and Little (2006:121) defines job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of one's job or job experiences. Generalised job satisfaction has been made known to be related to other attitudes and behaviours. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) that job satisfaction is positively related to organisational commitment, job involvement, as well as organisational citizenship behaviours.

However, it is also negatively associated to turnover, perceived stress and pro-union voting. Furthermore, Little and Little (2006:121) assert that Ostroff (1992) indicates that the relationship between job satisfaction and performance is weak at the individual level, but is stronger at the aggregate level.

2.5.4b Organisational commitment

According to Albrecht (2010:100), organisational commitment has drawn a substantial interest from researchers and practitioners based on the idea that it is a more stable attitude and a better predictor of work behaviour than job satisfaction. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979 & 1986) in Albrecht (2010:100), defined organisational commitment as:

“...the relative strength of the individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation is characterised by at least three factors: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation”.

Albrecht (2010:100) adds that since the construct originated, this perspective of organisational commitment has remained unchallenged. However, over the years, researchers have questioned the type of relationship between organisational commitment and organisational outcomes, such as, turnover, performance and absenteeism.

More recently organisational commitment has been defined by Little and Little (2006:122) as the degree to which an individual identifies with an organisation and is committed to its goals. Furthermore, commitment has been shown to be related to voluntary employee turnover and seen as very important to performance in modern organisations that require greater self-management than in the past. In the engagement literature, several authors such as Fleming, Coffman and Harter (2005) and Wellins and Concelman (2005) use terms such as commitment, loyalty, productivity and dealership.

2.5.4c Organisational citizenship behaviour

Research by Albrecht (2010:101) reveals that organisational citizenship behaviour was first mentioned in the early 1980s (Smith Organ & Near, 1983; Organ, 1988) and was recommended as the good soldier syndrome of extra-role behaviour that is beyond formal requirements in the organisation. Little and Little (2006:122) mention that “organisational citizenship behaviours are discretionary behaviours that are beyond formal obligations because they lubricate the social machinery of the organisation, by reducing friction and increasing efficiency”. These positive behaviours have been revealed to be interrelated to job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Little and Little, 2006:122).

Albrecht (2010:101) concurs with Little and Little (2006:122) through the indication that the primary formulations of good citizenship behaviour in organisations are expressed in the ability and willingness of employees to perform beyond the call of duty and beyond expectations. In essence, employees are more committed to going the extra mile in their jobs, working longer hours, trying harder, accomplishing more and speaking positively about the organisation (Wellins & Concelman, 2005; Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004).

Robbins (2005:) is in agreement with Albrecht (2010:10); Little and Little (2006:122); Wellins and Concelman (2005); Robinson *et al.* (2004) but Robbins (2005) goes further to define organisational citizenship behaviour as a voluntary individual behaviour, that is promoting the effective functioning of the organisation, even though it is not part of

formal job requirements. Therefore, good organisational citizens are liable for the external provision of high quality service to customers and also have a general positive effect at all levels of the organisation (Hui, Lam & Schaubroeck, 2001).

2.5.5 The perspective

While there are many definitions of employee engagement, a few people would disagree that engaged employees are those that go the extra mile to do a great job, those who show a passion for work and whose grasp of their role goes beyond mere satisfaction. Based on the perspectives of Kahn (1990), researches by Saks (2006) and Schaufeli *et al.* (2002), concluded that employee engagement comprises three dimensions, namely a physical component, a cognitive component and an emotional component.

This means that, it is important to be physically involved in a task, showing vigour and a positive affective state, being alert at work, experiencing absorption and involvement. It is also important to be connected to the job while working and showing commitment and dedication (Van Schalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma & Rothmann, 2010). The above statements are reiterated by Haudan and McLean (2002) who point out that engagement as a sustained connection and undivided concentration, where time seems unimportant and the hearts and minds of employees are involved.

Moreover, it can be put forward that engaged employees are highly energetic, self-efficient individuals who exercise control over events that affect their lives (Gorgievski, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2010). Because of their positive attitude and activity level, engaged employees create their own positive feedback, in terms of appreciation, recognition and success. Although engaged employees do feel tired after a long day of hard work, they describe their tiredness as rather a pleasant state because it is associated with positive accomplishments. Gorgievski *et.al.*(2010) further imply that engaged employees enjoy other things outside work; unlike workaholics, they do not work hard because of a strong and irresistible inner drive, but because for them working is fun (Gorgievski *et.al.*, 2010).

Luthans and Peterson (2002) extend that in addition to the role that a theoretical framework such as Kahn's (1990) personal engagement may provide for better understanding and measurement of engagement, testing the role of widely recognised psychological constructs such as manager's effectiveness may add considerable value. Moreover, employees who have strong emotional ties to their managers, who feel that their opinions count, and who believe that their managers have an interest in their development or emotional engagement are more likely to positively respond to their managers and produce favourable outcomes that help the managers to be more effective (Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

Similarly, employees who know what is expected of them understand their purpose or mission, who are given opportunities to excel and grow and who are constantly seeking information regarding how to improve their progress or cognitive engagement are more likely to experience success (Luthans & Peterson, 2002). This cognitive and emotional engagement of employees leads to the enhanced self-efficiency of their managers through experienced success and psychological arousal. Because, not only should managers strive to have their employees become engaged, they should also be selected for their efficiency and be developed. This would increase the manager's efficiency for decision making and problem solving, self-motivation and self-management (Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

Furthermore, Mosley (2007:126) reasons that the evidence that employees have a significant impact on the service experience has been further reinforced by the various studies that have identified a strong correlation between satisfied employees, satisfied customers and positive business results, usually referred to as the service-profit chain.

Therefore, based on the above literature discussions of internal branding and employee engagement, it is considered essential for the purpose of this study to discuss how productive employees can lead to a successful organisation. Therefore, the following section will explore the Service-Profit chain.

2.6 THE SERVICE-PROFIT CHAIN

The pioneering research conducted by Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger in 1994 at the Harvard Business School on the Service-Profit Chain (SPC) (Scheffer 2005), as well as studies conducted by Lau (2002), Payne *et al.* (2000) and Stock (2001) on the various aspects of the SPC Model, point out to the significance of the application of the SPC Model in organisational settings.

Rhey and McMurrian (1999:3) observed that the SPC is “a chain of relationships involving customer loyalty; customer satisfaction; the value of goods and services delivered; the quality of the process; and employee loyalty, satisfaction, productivity and support”. Thus employee loyalty drives productivity, which drives value, which increasingly enhances the organisational profit. Additionally, ensuring that the employees are nurtured and content ensures that the organisation will gain an increase in immediate productivity, as well as being less likely to lose staff (Stock, 2001:1).

The SPC is a key business dynamic utilised to establish what maximises profit and growth in service organisations (Lau, 2000). Payne *et al.* (2000) are of the opinion that the SPC is based upon perceptions of employees, customer loyalty and satisfaction. A cycle of capability shows that satisfied employees are productive employees, leading to loyal customers. Therefore, committed, satisfied, productive employees create service value because they enjoy the quality of work life (QWL) provided by the service organisation.

According to Blumenthal (2001:2), QWL is “the favourable conditions and environments of a workplace that support and promote employee satisfaction by providing them with rewards, growth opportunities and job security”. Research conducted by Lau (2000) expands on the work done by Blumenthal (2001) through the indication that QWL is measured by the feelings that employees have toward their colleagues, jobs and companies, which will cause a chain effect leading to profitability and growth of an organisation in the long run.

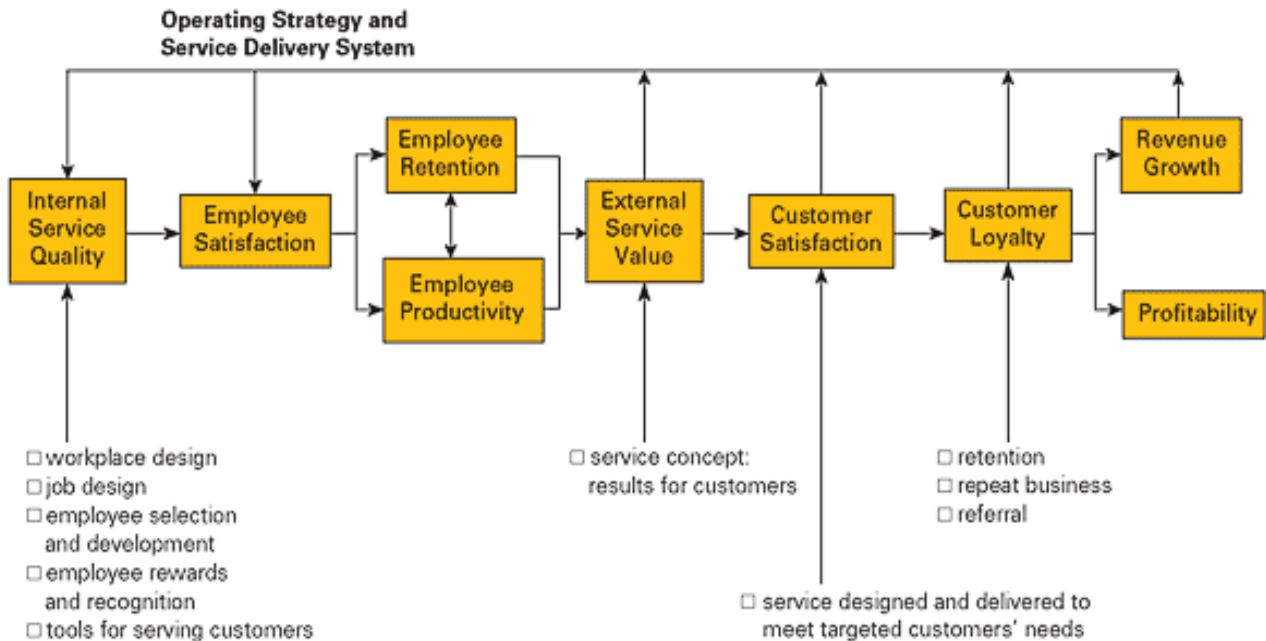
The service-profit chain model tries to link all the components required to make an organisation successful. According to this model, a company that performs well in one aspect and poorly in another will eventually develop problems that affect the entire organisation. This working model highlights the importance of the links between quality management, a good work force and exceptional service to the customer (Heskett *et al.*, 2003). According to a research conducted by Homburg, Wieseke and Hoyer (2009:38), the SPC refers to “a casual chain linking employee satisfaction to firm financial performance through mediating constructs such as customer satisfaction and customer loyalty”. Kamakura, Mittal, de Rosa and Masson (2002:294) expand on the above definition by postulating that the SPC is “a framework for linking service operations, employee assessment and customer assessments to a firm’s profitability”.

As depicted in Figure 2.4 below, the SPC provides an integrative framework for understanding how an organisation’s operational investments into service quality are related to profitability, customer loyalty, and employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity and how these translate into profits. Scheffer (2005:58) adds that internal service quality serves as the foundation of the SPC Model and it ignites a chain effect that leads to employee satisfaction, which in then drives employee loyalty and productivity. Heskett *et al.* (2003) concur with the statements made by Scheffer (2005:58) through the indication that the SPC establishes relationships between profitability, customer loyalty, and employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity.

Heskett *et al.* (2003) further purport that the links in the chain (which should be regarded as propositions) are as follows: Profit and growth are stimulated primarily by customer loyalty. Loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is largely influenced by the value of services provided to customers (Homburg *et al.*, 2009:38). Value is created by satisfied, loyal, and productive employees. Employee satisfaction, in turn, results primarily from high-quality support services (e.g. support of upper management) and policies that enable employees to deliver results to customers (Heskett *et al.*, 2003).

Figure 2.4 The Links in the Service-Profit Chain (Adapted from Heskett *et al.* 1994)

The Links in the Service-Profit Chain



2.6.1 Customer satisfaction drives customer loyalty

Customer satisfaction does not equal customer loyalty. In order to gain customer loyalty, the customer has to perceive value for money spent. The SPC model recognises that a customer becomes loyal through this perceived value. Since customer expectations constantly change, the organisation must recognise and support these changes (Heskett *et al.*, 2003).

2.6.2 Value

Value means different things to different people. Many individuals associate value with an emotional aspect of a purchase based on experiences. For example, a company can create a well-priced product that has exceptional guarantees. However, a customer might not consider this product valuable enough to become a loyal customer. This is

one of the reasons why advertisers use different campaigns for the same product. People respond to stimuli differently based on emotions and experiences (Heskett *et al.*, 2003).

2.6.3 Employee productivity drives value

The workforce of a company can help to drive the company's profits. When an organisation has engaged, productive and highly satisfied employees, the organisation will have a higher chance of succeeding. Many types of businesses from service businesses to manufacturing businesses sell products to customers. If a business's employees have a good working knowledge of the product, the employees have a better ability to service and satisfy customers. Product knowledge comes from both experience and longevity with a company. New employees typically cannot relate to customers as effectively as employees with years of experience working for the company. The service-profit chain model recognises that employee retention directly impacts customer satisfaction (Heskett *et al.*, 2003).

In summation, the SPC is the most widely known example of a linkage model that measures different elements of organisational performance. Therefore, the SPC represents significant processes of how the employee, customer and shareholder value domains are linked (Lau 2000 & Lundby, 2002). In essence, the SPC presents the idea that satisfied employees become satisfied customers, that satisfied customers become faithful guests of the organisation and provide revenue to the organisation. Hence, increased revenue in turn, when properly managed, produces high profits (Monical, 2002 & Stock, 2001). Furthermore, Lau (2000:425) advocates that the SPC improve the value of promoting and enhancing corporate efforts between employees and employers. Thus, an organisation's performance can be regarded as the direct result of how effectively the organisation is structured and managed. This focus on internal issues, such as communication aspects, will support external processes and garner the organisation the means to provide the customer with what is promised, as it is that leads to customer retention and loyalty.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Drawing from the literature that has been reviewed, it can be decided that when components of internal branding are brought together they set to achieve certain outcomes within an organisation. These outcomes include the broad internal branding concepts of employee engagement and internal brand culture (Nelson, 2005) and good internal communication (Lockwood, 2007). Often the success of an internal brand strategy will be measured on the performance of these outcomes (Nelson, 2005). These measures are unified to such a point that when considering changing or influencing drivers of one, it is important to understand the impact this may have on the entire organisation.

In true systems thinking, these components are interdependent on each other for their effectiveness. According to Nelson (2005) employee engagement as a measure of the internal branding strategy can be described as the ability and willingness of the employee to deliver on the brand promise to internal and external audiences. In a study conducted by Media Lab it was seen that an engaged employee generated 17% more revenue growth and 38% better earnings in comparison to less engaged employees (Fletcher, 2009).

However, Mosley (2000) indicates that despite these impressive results, it has been a sector dismissed by marketers as a responsibility for human resources management, as well as underfunded because it cannot offer concrete evidence of return on investment for board members.

The critical shortfall in employee engagement is that although employees have a willingness to “live the brand”, they are unsure of what actions and behaviours they must undertake to do this (Nelson, 2005). In essence, employee engagement must be reinforced with active and practiced processes with the organisation. For instance, this can include training for staff or specific company rituals like the staff “power hour” at Yellow Wood (a brand strategy agency), that allows staff and leadership to discuss

issues of concern with each other and engage in a meaningful way that will advocate the internal brand culture (Nelson, 2005).

Another measure of the internal branding strategy is the internal brand culture, which is a device that creates an environment which is conducive for employees to follow brand practices and values otherwise known as “living the brand” (Nelson, 2005). According to Lockwood (2007:5) brand culture sets the tone or provides an environment that promotes better employee engagement. Organisations considered as ‘employer of choice’ are more likely to attract and retain the best talent and have higher levels of engagement. Beyond compensation and benefits, key retention factors include the mission and values of the company, treatment of people, learning and development opportunities, work/life balance policies and practices and rewards to employees for their efforts (Lockwood, 2007:5).

A culture, or (“the way we do things around here”), should therefore be formed where employees are intellectually and emotionally dedicated to accomplish the mission and vision of the organisation (Columbine, 2011). In essence, the test for management is how to create an organisational culture that will act as a means to promote the growth of a truly engaged work force.

Smith (2008) portrays culture as having different roles in the organisation. The varying cultures include the power culture, in which leadership takes command of all the communications and tailors them to the individual leader’s demands (Smith, 2008:33). The second culture is the role culture, in which the culture is heavily defined by the structures and procedures within it (Smith, 2008:34). The third culture is the person culture which leans towards a more progressive approach whereby it seeks to support the individuals working within the organisational system (Smith, 2008:35). Lastly, there is the task culture which is not typically seen within the branding sphere as it is focused on the short term task team that is often disbanded after the project is completed, which is the antithesis of how branding focuses strategically on the long term recognition of its business and culture (Smith, 2008:36).

The establishment of an internal culture that embraces the core values of the organisation, employee engagement and internal communication practices, enables the alignment between internal branding, organisational values and the external image the organisation portrays to the external environment (Scheffer, 2005:3). Internal organisational alignment aids in employee satisfaction, which in turn has a positive impact on the service quality that is delivered to the external customers. Eventually, satisfied customers become loyal customers and they then impact positively on the organisation's profitability (Scheffer, 2005:3).

Lastly, communication plays a fundamental role in developing programmes to shape an organisational culture into one that engages employees (Stanier, 2001:28). Once the connection between internal culture and employee engagement is understood, internal communication (Scheffer, 2005:3) becomes a powerful reason for why communicators should be concerned with how an internal branding programme is implemented.

According to Scheffer (2005:38) internal communication is the process of gathering, processing, disseminating and storing information. In essence, it is the process of sharing information with other individuals within an organisation. Proctor and Doukakis (2003:276) postulate that internal communication is one of the core elements of implementing employee development and is a vital ingredient (Quinn & Hargie, 2004:146) that attempts to increase participation and also secure the widespread ownership of corporate goals.

Clear, consistent and honest communication is an imperative management tool for employee engagement. HR promotes thoughtful communication strategies that encourage employee engagement by keeping the workforce energised, focused and productive (Lockwood, 2007:5). Such strategies are critical to long-term organisational success. Moreover, strategic and continuous communication lends credibility to the organisation's leadership. In contrast, (Lockwood, 2007:5) "lack of communication or poorly communicated information can lead to distrust, dissatisfaction, scepticism, cynicism and unwanted staff turnover". Branding, for example is a type of

communication tactic that can encourage employee engagement by sending 'the right message' about the organisation, its mission, values and products/ services to the workforce and marketplace at large (Lockwood, 2007:5).

Mosley (2007:126) claims that based on research about branding, "it is clear that engaged and satisfied employees are more likely to deliver a consistently positive service experience". In essence, employees are an important aspect when developing sustainable service brand, not only through the development of consistently positive service attitude, but also through the emotional values that tend to be evoked by a particularly distinctive style of service. According to Mosley (2007:126), "these tangible brand characteristics are far more difficult for competitors to copy than the operational components of a service brand experience". Farner *et.al* (2001:350) proposes that every organisation consists of an interdependent chain of individuals and functional units each taking inputs from one another and converting them into external customer service. In essence, if each member of the organisation works to provide their internal customer with better service, then the end customer will receive high quality service (Farner *et.al.*, 2001:350).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design chosen to address the research problem is discussed and the reasons for its appropriateness presented. Also discussed are the research methodology, the sample of the study and the sampling procedure, the data collection methods, how the collected data was analysed, and the ethical issues that are relevant to the study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research conducted by Mouton (1996:175) points out that the research design serves to “plan, structure and execute” the research to maximise the validity of the findings”. In essence, research design can be assumed of as the rationality of a research that directs how a study is to be conducted. It indicates how all of the fundamental portions of the research study, that is the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs work together in an endeavour to address the research question (Mouton, 1996:175).

The researcher opted for an exploratory design for this study. An exploratory design is used to explore a new topic so as to learn about it. Scheffer (2005:15) substantiates this by adding that an exploratory research design is used “to describe and explain a set of concepts, explore and interpret the relationships between the concepts and to build theory about a topic. The researcher decided on the exploratory design because it was appropriate for this study, based on the fact that the purpose of this study is to determine the effects of internal brand perception on employee engagement levels of the management, management, academic and support staff of NWU Mafikeng Campus.

Moreover, the exploratory design affords an opportunity for respondents the greatest respond freely as the aim was to explore new ideas from the behaviour and experience of the respondents. In essence, the exploratory design allowed the respondents to

express their views and experiences and produce rich data as they have the freedom to respond. Moreover, exploratory design considers the worth of the secondary data which is the literature search as fundamental. It was also cost effective in terms of time and money. Furthermore, based on the exploratory nature of the study; a research hypothesis was not formulated, the researcher decided to use the research questions instead (Mmutle, 2014:65).

The study employs a mixed methods approach. Research conducted by Sandelowski (2000:246) indicates that the idea of combining or mixing qualitative and quantitative methods has stimulated much interest and debate. Therefore, in order to enhance understanding of the research design, it is vital to highlight the significance of using the mixed methods approach.

3.2.1 Significance of mixed methods

Sandelowski (2000:246) further mentions that “the purpose of using mixed-method techniques is for the researchers to expand the scope of their studies and also to deepen their insights from their studies”. The researcher finds this to be very relevant in this study because a mixed methods research approach is far more comprehensive than tackling a problem from only one point of view. This is substantiated by Cresswell (2008) who states that when both the quantitative and qualitative data are combined together, they provide a better understanding of the research problem than either type by itself. Moreover, with the materialisation of strategies and tools for combination these different types of data, it allows for the crossing of disciplinary boundaries more easily.

Scheffer (2005:152) explain that quantitative and qualitative research methodologies differ in many ways though they also complement each other in so many other ways. Kelle’s (2006:293) research expands on the above authors’ statements by postulating that “both qualitative and quantitative methods have specific limitations as well as particular strengths; therefore, they should be combined in order to compensate for their mutual and overlapping weaknesses”. Subsequently, the way they approach research and collect data will vary.

As much as quantitative and qualitative research methodologies share basic principles of science, they differ in significant ways and have their own strengths and limitations. Thus, based on the above statement, it is of essence that qualitative and quantitative research methods are explored and that the differences between both research methodologies are discussed.

3.2.2 Qualitative research method

According to Scheffer (2005:155) qualitative researchers often rely on interpretive or critical social science. The interpretive approach is defined by Neuman as “the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (2000:71). Whereas, critical social science is defined as a “critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves” (Neuman 2000:76). Furthermore qualitative researchers use a transcendent perspective, follow a non-linear research path and apply logic in practice, where the logic of how research is actually carried out, is criticised as being relatively ambiguous and tied to specific cases and oriented toward the completion of a task (Scheffer, 2005:155).

Anon. (2003:1) indicates that the aim of a qualitative analysis is a complete, detailed description. Furthermore, qualitative analysis allows for fine distinctions to be drawn, as it is not necessary to categorise the data into a fixed number of classifications. Based on the fact that the researcher only rarely discusses variables or hypothesis and prefers to interpret the soft data (words, impressions and symbols) collected, researcher integrity is a critical issue in the qualitative researcher (Creswell, 2008: 213 in Mmutle, 2014:67).

Neuman (2000:145) expands on the above indications by adding that qualitative data are empirical, as they involve documenting real events, recording what people say, examining visual images and studying written documents. In light of these arguments,

Densin and Lincoln (2000) assert that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. It is because of the empirical nature of the study that the researcher has selected a mixed method approach. The qualitative research method makes it easier to understand the behavioural patterns and experiences that are involved in a naturalistic approach.

Furthermore, Anon. (2002:4) says that “the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and explain, to explore and interpret and to build a theory”. Scheffer (2005:156) concurs with these statements by deducing that qualitative approaches are considered as exploratory. Exploratory research may be the first stage in a sequence of studies. An exploratory study may be conducted in order to know enough to design and execute a second, more systematic extensive study (Neuman, 2000:21).

3.2.3 Quantitative research method

Neuman (2000:123) contends that quantitative research methods are the description of the scientific action that combines the use of numbers, deduction and hypothesis testing. The purpose is to explain and predict and also to test, confirm and validate the theory (Anon. 2002:4).

Quantitative researchers follow a linear research path and emphasize measuring variables and testing hypothesis that are linked to general casual explanations. In this regard, quantitative research uses reconstructed logic, which signify that the logic of doing research is highly organised and restated in a formal, idealised and systematic form (Neuman, 2000:122). Researchers such as Fouché and Delport (2002:81) and Neuman (2000:126) are of the opinion that quantitative research addresses the issue of integrity by relying on an objective technology such as standard techniques, statistics, replication and numerical measures.

Table 3.1 The differences between quantitative and qualitative research methodology as proposed by Fouché and Delport (2002:81) and Neuman (2000:123)

Quantitative (Verification-based) Research Methods	Qualitative (Discovery-based) Research Methods
Statistical analysis.	Thematic analysis
Researcher is detached.	Researcher is involved.
Many cases or subjects.	Few cases or subjects.
Measure objective facts, such as test hypothesis that the researcher begins with.	Construct social reality and cultural meaning, so as to capture and discover meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data.
Research procedures are standard and replication is assumed.	Research procedures are particular and replication is very rare.
Focus on variables, due to the fact that the theories are in the form of distinct variables.	Focuses on interactive processes, events, due to the fact that theories are in the form of themes, motifs, generalisations and taxonomies.
Analysis proceeds by using statistics, tables or charts and discussing how what they show relates to the hypotheses.	Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalisations from evidence and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture.

Based on Table 3.1 above, it can be established that the most significant difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods is in the basic supposition concerning the role of the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher has an opportunity to learn the most about the situation by being engrossed in it. Whereas, in quantitative research, the researcher is just an unbiased observer that does not participate or influence what is being studied. Another important difference to note is that qualitative data is inductive and involves words whereas; quantitative data is deductive and involves numbers. Quantitative and qualitative researchers frequently have different suppositions about social life and have different objectives. In contrast to

qualitative researchers, quantitative researchers try to convert concepts about various aspects of social life into variables that can be precisely measured with numbers (Scheffer, 2005:152).

A mixed method has been chosen in order to achieve a robust research outcome. This is due to the fact that the Gallup Q12 is used, which is a quantitative survey method used to measure employee engagement and an exploratory qualitative research is used for internal branding in order to gauge the feelings and emotions of the respondents.

The purpose of exploratory research methodology is to describe and explain a set of concepts, to explore and interpret the relationships between the concepts and to build theory about a topic. Furthermore, an exploratory study has been chosen due to the sparseness of research in the field of internal branding. Researchers such as Ying (2005:342); Punjaisri and Wilson (2007:58) and Mahnert and Torres (2007:54) are all in agreement that the concept of internal branding remain unclear and ambiguous despite voluminous literature. This potentially creates a setting for confusion and misinterpretation, as no universally accepted definitions have emerged since the definitions come from the integration of several different disciplines within the wider communication field (Scheffer, 2005:159).

Based on the fact that as part of the research design, the researcher has opted for a case study, it is important for the purpose of the study to discuss what a case study is and why it was an advantageous option.

3.3 CASE STUDY

A case study is defined by Yin (1989:23) as “an empirical enquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context in which the boundaries between the phenomenal and context are not clearly evident”. This definition advocates how a case study essentially varies from other research strategies. Scheffer (2005:167) adds by saying that case studies enable the

researchers to connect the micro level, which are the actions of individual people to the macro level which are the large scale social structures and processes. In essence, a case study is implemented when a researcher aims to understand or explain a phenomenon. Therefore, drawing on Yin's (1989) and Scheffer's (2005) explanations, the researcher can say that the term case study generally refers to a fairly intensive examination of a single unit such as a person, a small group of people, or a single establishment. Research by Neuman (2000:32) complements the above mentioned authors by proposing that the data acquired from case studies are usually more comprehensive, diverse and extensive.

The researcher chose a case study approach as a research design because of the following grounds:

- A Case study technique can purport why something has occurred
- Case studies enable the researcher to obtain a wealth of information about a research topic because of the multiple sources of evidence consulted.
- Case studies are also advantageous to the researcher who is trying to find clues and ideas for further research.

Scheffer (2005:168) further proposes that although a case study is advantageous to the researcher, there are three criticisms of the case study approach that have been documented by Wimmer and Dominick (1987:157) namely:

- There is a general lack of scientific rigor in many case studies
- A case study is not easily open to generalisation, since a case study cannot represent all similar groups or situations. A case study looked at may be unique and, therefore not representative of other instances.
- Moreover, case studies are likely to be time-consuming, with the added risk of producing large quantities of data that are hard to summarise. However, the researcher has controlled this by the research method.

Even though there are some disadvantages to a case the researcher has found it to be the best option for this particular study because case studies involve measuring what is there and how it got there. In this sense, it is historical. It can enable the researcher to explore, unravel and understand problems, issues and relationships. In essence, the case study approach will enable the researcher to unravel whether the way the NWU Mafikeng Campus employees internalise the desired brand image can influence their engagement levels and the quality of service they give to the clients. In this instance, the case study approach is opted for, in order to make practical improvements. Contributions to general knowledge are also incidental.

In order to increase the depth of understanding of the research, after explaining the research design, the population and sampling techniques of the study are discussed in the following section.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A sample is a portion of the population to be targeted to assemble information to infer something about the group (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). As such a sample is a somewhat small sub-group of individuals from the population.

Sampling enables a reduction of data so as to make it easier to interpret Scheffer (2005:160). The purpose of sampling is to collect specific cases that can clarify and deepen an understanding. Based on the fact that the population of interest is usually very large and may be spread over a large area, making it difficult to access it. And since it is not easy to observe all of the population's members, the researcher used a sample from the population to study it. Therefore, the population comprised of all the full-time employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus.

However, the researcher was well aware that the findings can only be generalised among the sample population. Sandelowski (2000:248) submits that whereas, qualitative research naturally involves purposive sampling to heighten understanding of

the information-rich case, quantitative research ideally involves probability sampling to allow statistical inferences to be made. Even though purposive sampling is oriented toward the development of ideographic knowledge; from generalisations and about individual cases, probability sampling on the other hand is oriented toward the development of monographic knowledge; from generalisations, sampling to populations Sandelowski (2000:248). However, in spite of these key differences, purposive and probability sampling can be combined usefully. Since the ultimate choice about who to sample should be motivated by the study's research questions and goals, the researcher has opted to use this method of combining both the purposive and probability sampling so as to get the desired results of finding out the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement.

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is used since the study is an exploratory research. According to Strydom and Delport (2002b:334) purposive sampling uses the judgement of an expert in choosing cases or it chooses cases with a precise resolve in mind. Purposive sampling is concerned with providing a sample with a lot of information rather than a random sample. Research by Tongco (2007:147) explains that purposive sampling can also be used with both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The author continues to insinuate that the integral bias of the technique enhances its competence, and the technique remains robust even when verified against random probability sampling.

Selecting the purposive sample is fundamental to the quality of data gathered; therefore, reliability and proficiency of the informant must be ensured (Tongco, 2007:147). However, with purposive sampling, the researcher does not know whether the cases selected are representative of the population Scheffer (2005:163). Sampling may begin with larger units such as schools, organisations or agencies and then proceed to selected individuals at these locations. Qualitative studies rely heavily on people who can sufficiently articulate and introspect in order to offer rich descriptions of their experiences (Padgett, 2008:56).

There are two different kinds of sampling methods, the probability sampling method and the non-probability sampling method. Research conducted by Cohen and Manion (1994) contends that the difference between the probability sampling and the non-probability sampling lies in the fact that the population of a probability have an equal chance of being selected while in the non-probability sample the group chosen suits the needs of the study and possess certain characteristics. For the purpose of this study, the non-probability sampling was used because the researcher decided that population does not have an equal chance of being selected.

Purposive sampling (Scheffer, 2005:160), “is used with the knowledge that it does not represent the general population, but rather it attempts to represent a specific portion of the population”. Therefore, 150 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted simultaneously because the researcher collected data in person.

The reason for this sample size was to have a manageable research population size. These included management, academics and administrative staff. Five respondents were selected from each faculty and departments respectively. The aim was to get the respondents’ experiences, opinions and feelings about the way they perceive the internal brand and gauge whether those perceptions have any influence on their engagement levels.

Therefore, having explained the research design and sampling procedure it is crucial to explain how data will be collected in the following section so as to get the final results of the study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data collection is an important aspect of any type of study. Inaccurate data collection can impact on the results of a study and ultimately skew the results. This is substantiated by Bernard *et al.* (1986 in Tongco 2007:147) who contends that data gathering is essential in research and should be done with sound judgment, especially

since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data. Moreover, the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. The purpose of data collection is to obtain information to keep on record, to make decisions about significant issues, or to pass information on to others. Data was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Using both techniques ensured validation of the data through cross verification from these sources (Cresswell, 2012).

A brief description of the data collection tools and procedures used in the study is presented here.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires contain a systematically compiled and well organised series of questions intended to elicit the information which will provide insight into the nature of the problem under study (Annun, 2015). Both closed and open-ended questions were used in the questionnaire. The former type is more structured and objective and may require short responses such as 'yes', or 'no'; while the latter is unstructured and call free responses in the respondent's own words. Respondents in open-ended questions may also express their own opinions.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also used to collect data. According to a research conducted by Rodger and Bouey (1996: 52), it is "without a doubt that the most utilised data collection method in qualitative research studies is the interview". The advantage of semi-structured interview is that the researcher gets detailed and multiple responses for the set of question (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 98). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview is excellent because it affords the respondents an opportunity to express views in their own words leading to them being key players in the study. For the purpose of this study, a common setting was recommended, which was the interviewee's workplace, which the interviewees were familiar with. The location chosen was free of distractions for better concentration. The respondents participated voluntarily without rewards or compensation of any kind from the researcher.

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006) it is normally the best to audio-record interviews and later transcribes them for analysis, since it is challenging to focus on conducting the interview and jotting notes. However, if tape-recording is out of the question, the researcher may consider having a note-taker present during the interview (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Either, one of these options is essential since it is not easy to listen and write at the same time. However, research by Cresswell (2007) defends that recording may raise issues for qualitative researcher such as keeping disturbing room sounds to a minimum. Drawing on Cresswell's (2007) claims, the researcher avoided being faced with a challenge of keeping the disturbing external sounds out of the tape recorder for audibility.

Audio recording would have posed as a challenge because the NWU as an academic institution has a lot of people especially students and there is usually a lot of activities going on and noise around the campus. Therefore, in light of the above, note-taking was opted for. And also for the purpose of this study, note-taking was seen as the best option in order to allow the researcher to go over the notes after the interview and clarify the responses with the interviewee immediately, therefore, eliminating any miscommunication.

Table 3.2 below that was adopted from Debus (1986) demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent can influence the topic, so unexpected issues/topics materialise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained interviewers are needed to probe without being directive or judgemental.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher can probe to understand perspectives and experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of findings is time-consuming and difficult and must be done by people who did the

	interviews.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic guide ensures that a core list of questions is asked in each interview because the order of questions is not fixed, flow and sharing of views are more natural. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher has to avoid bias in analysis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher needs to know something of the local culture to capture the interviewees real meaning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to generalise findings.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis and interpretation forms a critical part of the research process. According to de Vos (2002) data analysis is the process of bringing direction or making sense of the collected data by consolidating, reducing and interpreting what respondents have said and what the researcher has observed and read. In addition to what de Vos (2002) has pointed out, Silverman (2004:121) extends that data analysis does not come after data gathering, but that after each and every session with a participant the researcher must start transcribing.

In this study, the data gathered from interviews was analysed qualitatively and the data that was gathered from the questionnaire was quantitatively analysed. The researcher employed content analysis as a technique to analyse and interpret data. In so doing, the researcher drew inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of the messages being conveyed in the data being analysed. Data from the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS which according to Caokes (2009) is a

sophisticated piece of computer software used by social scientists and other professionals for statistical analysis. Thereafter, data from the interview notes was analysed and interpreted according to different themes derived from characteristics of data received. Thereafter, these themes were analysed, managed and processed.

3.6.1. Content analysis

Content Analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid references from the text. These inferences are about the sender of the message, the message itself or the audience of the message, depending on the theoretical or substantive interests of the researcher or the investigator (Weber, 1990:9). However, Berg (1998:224) offers an all-encompassing definition by adding that “content analysis deals with drawing inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of the messages conveyed in the data being analysed and it can be carried out by means of an explicit rule, which must be formally established before the actual analysis”. Berg’s (1998:224) definition is not limited to the area of textual analysis, but may be applied to other areas.

Text data might be in audio, print, or electronic form and might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). These categories can represent either explicit communication or inferred communication. The aim of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:314).

In this study, the overall objective was to determine whether employee engagement levels were affected by the internal brand perceptions. In essence, the phenomenon under investigation was employee engagement, the perceptions attitudes, opinions, thoughts and feelings of the respondents. The study had to determine the positive staff

disposition versus the negative or indecisive disposition. Therefore, content analysis was a useful technique for allowing the researcher to discover and describe the focus of the employees and it also allowed for inferences or interpretations to be made.

3.6.1a Advantages of content analysis

The researcher opted for content analysis because of its advantages (Webber 1990:10).

- The best content analytic studies use both qualitative and quantitative operations on texts. Therefore, content analysis methods combine what are usually thought to be negative modes of analysis.
- Communication is a central aspect of social interaction. Content analytic procedures operate directly on the text of human communication.

3.6.1b Purpose of content analysis

In this study, to add on the advantages, content analysis was used because of the following reasons, as highlighted by (Webber 1990:9),

- Code open-ended questions in the survey.
- Identify the intentions and other characteristics of the communicator.
- Reflect cultural patterns of groups, institutions or societies.
- Reveal the focus of individual, group, institutional or societal attention.
- Describe attitudinal and behavioural responses to communications.
- Describe trends in communication content.

In essence, it can be said that content analysis is a research tool used to determine the existence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Researchers quantify and analyse the occurrence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts. Texts can be defined broadly as books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, informal conversation, or really any occurrence of communicative language.

However, this study focused only on the interview schedule and survey questionnaire. The researcher took the qualitative responses and categorised them into positive and negative, using discretion with “uncertain/not sure” answers by categorising it as negative. This was decided on by the researcher because in employee engagement, reputation, job performance, culture and internal brand perceptions, the positive disposition of the staff is the driving force of reputation or the image of the organisation. Therefore, negative, uncertain or indecisive dispositions must be changed into positive disposition and the existing positive disposition must be strengthened. Moreover, the researcher wanted to determine the emotional state of the respondents.

3.7 PILOT STUDY

It is imperative to note that a pilot study was conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of the questions asked and also to improve reliability and validity of the instruments (Robson, 2002). Research by Leedy and Ormrod (2002) concur with Robson’s (2002) assertions by adding that the pre-testing of the final survey questionnaire resulted in recommended changes in order to improve understanding and enhance validity.

This was conducted through establishing congruence between research problem, research questions, research objectives and the literature reviewed. Within this pilot study, it was determined that the questions (both the interview questions and the survey questionnaire) were inadequate and needed to be modified. Moreover, the respondents complained that the questionnaire was too long and the interview questions were also too long, therefore, both had to be shortened.

The pilot study was conducted on ten employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus. Since problems were encountered throughout the duration of the pilot study; the questions were changed and another pilot study was conducted in order to make sure that everything was fine. Therefore the second set of questions and the new questionnaire were used and no problems were encountered.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study adhered to the policy of the North-West University and steps were taken to ensure the ethical soundness of this study. Firstly, the researcher requested the approval of the ethics committee before embarking on the research and also taken into consideration was the following:

- Participation was voluntary and the respondents were assured that they can withdraw from the study at any point in time.
- As respondents are entitled to full disclosure about the research the researcher informed them about of the objectives of the research and what it aims to achieve.
- The respondent's permission was sort to use their responses in the study however; there was no identification of the respondents. Therefore, the researcher treated the information as private and confidential and the responses were only used for the purposes of this study.
- Findings to be kept Anonymous.
- Responses will not impact on participants' jobs or career prospects.
- Image of the NWU Mafikeng Campus must not be compromised; thus confidentiality of sensitive information must be maintained.
- Constructive feedback will be provided based on the research findings.
- Sensitivity of research findings.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methodology of this study which evidently outlined the importance of this study as an exploratory study. The methodology described the whole process of exploration of being, by the respondents, as well as the realisation of being in the process by the researcher.

The research design, methods and processes that were used in this study were stated in this chapter. The data collection method was also outlined. The plan, layout or design of how the study was carried out was also described in this chapter. A mixed methods approach involves many techniques or process that needs a detailed plan of execution so as to meet the research findings. Thus, the researcher has outlined the significance of this approach in the study and the empirical strategy of executing the study to better understand the phenomenon under exploration. The next chapter presents the research findings, data analysis and interpretations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research methodology and design was discussed – triangulation - with the focus on qualitative research due to the importance of the opinions and feelings of the respondents about a specific phenomenon, this chapter will analyse and present the findings and reflected against the main research question:

- What are the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement on the NWU Mafikeng Campus?

4.2 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The method of analysis has already been discussed in Chapter Three and it can be referred to in order to avoid repetition in this chapter. The researcher started with the analysis of the demographic details, followed by organisational culture, then employee engagement (Q12) ended with the qualitative analysis.

4.2.1 Demographic Details

SECTION A

Figure 4.1 Gender

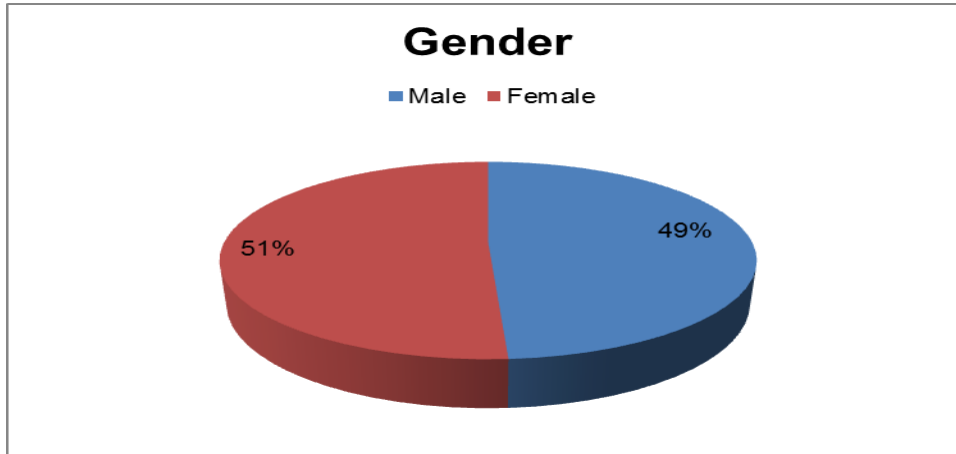
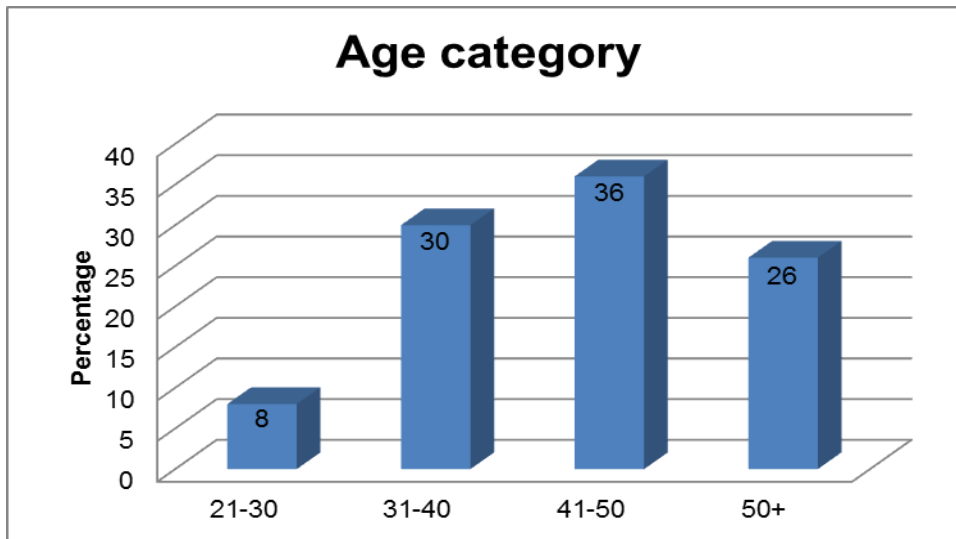


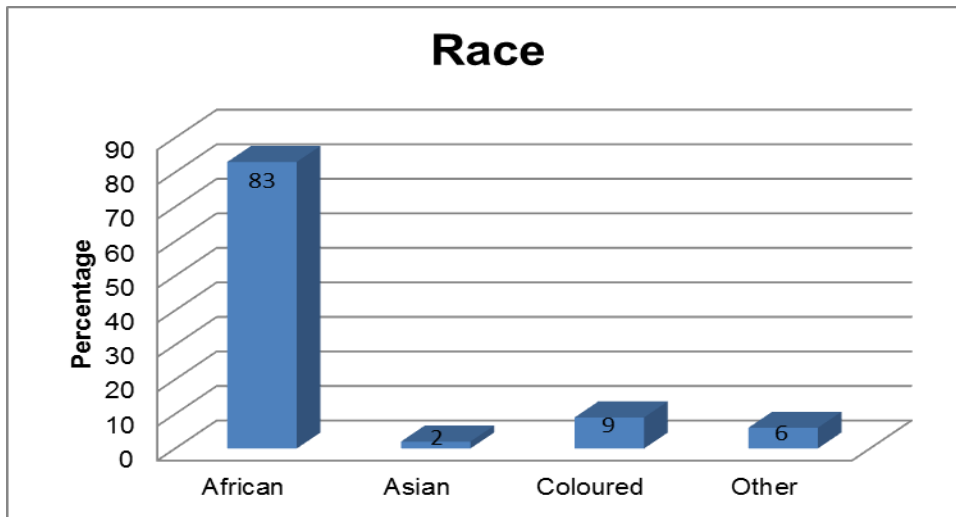
Figure 4.1 above depicts that the number of female respondents is 51% more than the male respondents who are 49%.

Figure 4.2 Age Category



The age category shown in Figure 4.2 above of between 41 and 50 show a significant percentage of 36 followed by the ages between 31 and 40 with a percentage of 30 whereas, the ages between 21 and 30 show a low percentage of 8.

Figure 4.3 Race



It is clear from Figure 4.3 above that the majority which is 83% of the respondents were African, 9% of Coloureds, 6% are of other races, e.g. Jewish, Greek or European, that are not listed and only 2% are Asian.

Figure 4.4 Position

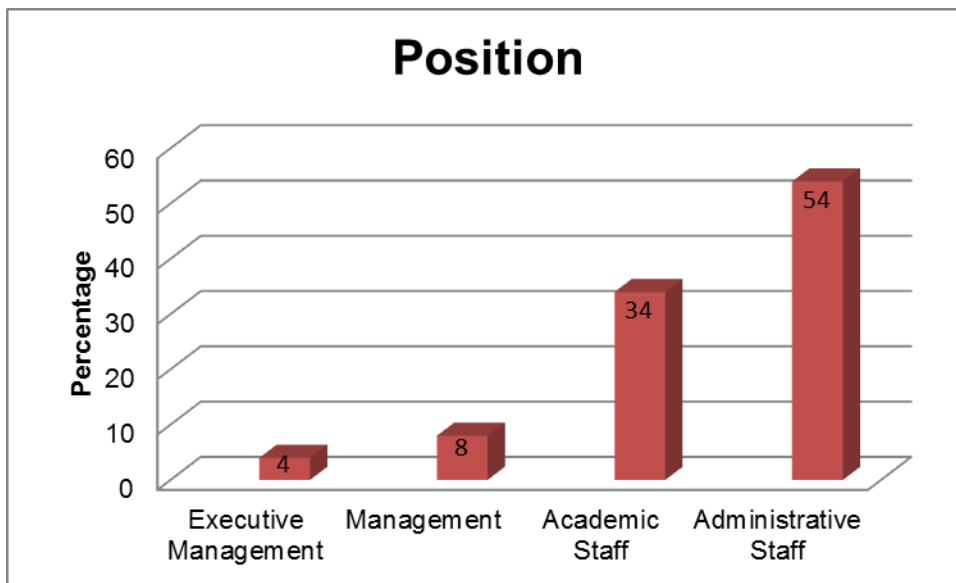


Figure 4.4 above illustrates that 54% of the respondents in NWU Mafikeng Campus are administrative staff, 34% are academic staff, 8% are management and only 4% are executive management.

Figure 4.5 Years of service in NWU

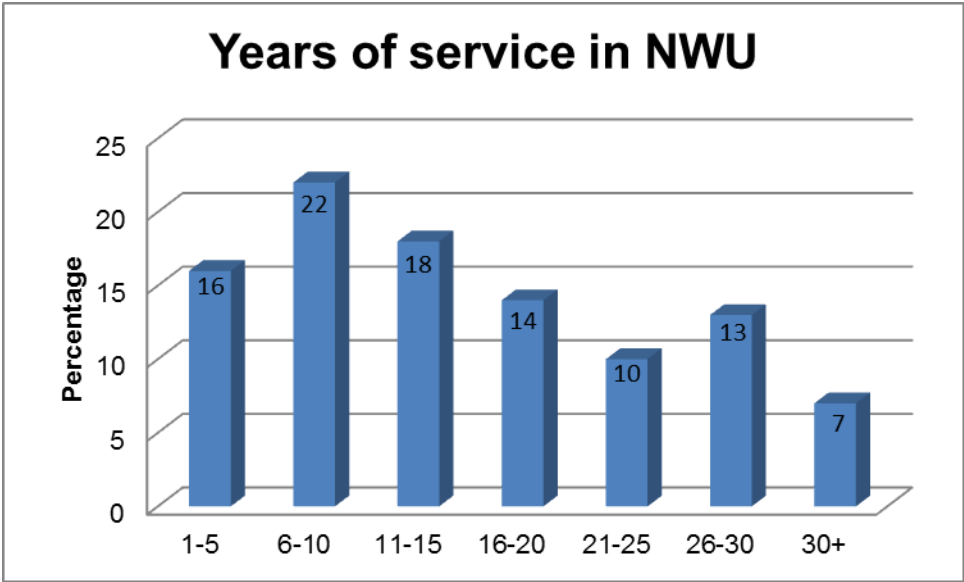


Figure 4.5 above demonstrates that 22% of the respondents have been working for NWU Mafikeng Campus between 6-10 years, followed by 11-15 that holds 18% and only 7% is accounted for the ones who have been working for the university for over 30 years.

4.2.2 Organisational Culture

SECTION B

Table 4.1

Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Certain (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1 The culture of the organisation is reflected in the brand and I feel like I am part of it.	0	7	49	34	10
2 I understand my organisation's vision and mission statement.	0	0	8	61	31
3 I believe that team work drive drives high performance and engagement in the organisation rather than individualism.	0	1	0	45	54
4 I feel that I have my manager's support in what I do.	12	18	18	46	6
5 The organisation has communication programmes	0	0	11	86	3
6 Cultural differences contribute to conflicts in my organisation.	8	25	20	37	10
7 I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	0	0	4	59	37
8 I frequently take sick-leave.	18	62	0	20	0
9 I feel that I am part of the brand and I am proud of it.	0	3	55	31	11

The organisational culture that is illustrated in Table 4.6 above can be regarded as very positive. For example, the respondents understand the vision and mission, team work and find their work to be full of meaning. However, there are some respondents who

feel that cultural differences contribute to conflicts in the organisation, some feel they do not have their managers' support and also feel they are not part of the brand.

4.2.3 Employee Engagement (Q12)

SECTION C

Table 4.2

Item	Yes (%)	Not Sure (%)	No (%)
1 Do you know what is expected of you at work?	99	0	1
2 Do have the materials and equipment to do your work?	74	0	26
3 At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	76	0	24
4 In the last 30 days, have you received any recognition or praise for doing good work?	6	0	94
5 Does your supervisor or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	49	1	50
6 Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	48	1	51
7 At work, do your opinions seem to count during decision making processes?	35	11	54
8 Does the mission or purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	87	6	7
9 Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	61	4	35
10 Do you have a best friend at work?	34	0	66
11 In the last 6 months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	62	0	38
12 In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?	66	0	34

The findings concerning Employee Engagement (Q12) are also generally positive, ranging from employees who understand what is expected of them at work to those who

feel that the mission and vision of the university make them feel that their jobs are important and those that have the opportunity to do their best every day. However, it should be noted that even though most of the response are good, there are some negative responses from employees who feel that they do not receive recognition or praise for doing good work and those who feel that their opinions do not count during decision making processes.

Q01 Expectations: It is not surprising that this question scored a positive of 99% and only a negative of 1%. This is the most basic need of all employees and manager responsibilities because in order to achieve organisational goals, outcomes have to be defined and clarified so that the employees may know what is expected of them at work. If this question had scored negatively, it would mean that the employees do not know what they are doing at work therefore the organisational goals and objectives would not be met.

Q02 Materials and equipment: Effective 'great' managers understand that making sure employees get materials equipment for their jobs so as to maximise efficiency. This question also scored a positive of 74% with only 26% on the negative side. The result is thought some improvements are needed. By providing employees with materials and equipment to do their jobs efficiently will show employees that the organisation is supporting them and this will make them realise that their work is valued. This question ties in with question **4.2.5c** of the qualitative research below.

Q03 Opportunity to do what I do best: Managers can position people efficiently within the right roles by learning about individual differences through experience and assessment. By doing this, individuals will excel in their assigned jobs. The attainment of a workplace with high- calibre employees begins with choosing the right people for the right jobs. This question scored a positive of 74% and only a 26% are on the negative. Though the score is good, an improvement is needed in order to get employees into positions where they can fully use their inherent talents.

Q04 Recognition for good work: This is a very critical question because it motivates employees to excel in their jobs and it scored very poorly with a negative of 94% and a

positive of only 6%. This shows that managers need to engage with employees in order to comprehend how each person or the team prefers to be recognised based on performance of course, then make it an objective and do it frequently.

Q05 *Someone at work cares about me:* This question scores fairly, with 49% of employees who feel that someone at work care about them as individuals and 50% who do not think so. The best managers listen to individuals and respond to their exclusive needs because for each person being “cared about” may mean a completely different thing. It is imperative for employees to sense that they are cared for as human beings and not just machines that have to get the job done.

Q06 *Encourages my development:* A 51% was scored negatively for this question and 48% was scored positively. It is crucial for managers to assist employees to improve as individuals by presenting opportunities that are in line with the employees’ abilities and in that case both the employee and the company will profit.

Q07 *Opinions count:* Better decisions are made when the employees’ inputs are asked for and considered during decision making. This scored a negative of 54% with employees who feel that their opinions do not count, only 35% of the employees on the positive side and about 11% are not sure. This is not a good sign because employees are closer to each other and also closer to the variables that affect the overall system than the manager.

Q08 *Mission or purpose:* It is essential for great managers not only to assist employees see how useful their work is but also how each person’s work contributes and relates to the purpose of the organisation. As crucial as this question is, it scored very positively (87%), only 7% of the employees were negative and 6% were not sure. This is a good sign that the organisation is on the right track and the employees are aware of the big-picture impact and how their work impacts on the customers, safety and the public.

Q09 *Associates committed to quality:* This question scored reasonably well with a positive score of 61% and only 35% of the employees do not think that their associates are dedicated to doing quality work. Managers can stimulate the degree to which

employees' respect one another by choosing diligent employees, providing some common goals and metrics around quality and also increasing opportunities for associates to interact with each other. This will assist in employees getting to know one another better and be able to offer support to each other.

Q10 Best friend: This in essence is a follow-up question of Q05, Q06 and Q09 and has only scored a positive of 34% with most (66%) of the employees expressing that they do not have a best friend at work. From this score it can be decided that employees do not understand that it is essential to have a best friend at work. Managers differ in the degree to which they generate chances for people at work to get to know each other and also in whether they value close and trusting relationships at work. The best managers encourage these close relationships they free people to know one another, which is a basic human need.

Q11 Progress: The score for this question is 62% on the positive and only 38% on the negative, which show that the managers are trying even though an improvement is needed on some managers. In order to enhance better decision making by both managers and employees, it is imperative for managers to meet with individuals to discuss the employee's progress and achievement goals.

Q12 Learn and grow: Lastly, managers select training that will add value to an individual and the organisation. This question did not score so badly with 66% of employees who have had opportunities to learn and grow and only 34% were negative. This denotes that managers are doing well however, there are some that need to do more to encourage employees to improve themselves. Over and above being recognised for doing good work, most employees need to know that they are progressing and are also given chances to improve.

After analysing the quantitative data, the following section is the Chi-square test independence that checks the connections or relationships between different factors. This will be made between demographic categories and other factors in the study, which are the organisational culture and employee engagement (Q12) factors.

4.2.4 Chi - square Test of Independence

This test of independence is concerned with the relationship between two different factors (or categories) in a population under study (Scheaffer, 1990). There is a significant relationship between the two categories if the probability value (p-value) is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4.3 Cross-tabulation of perceptions (opinions) of respondents about cultural differences by gender.

	Cultural differences contribute to conflicts in my organisation.					
Gender	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Certain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Male	4	7	9	25	4	49
Female	4	18	11	12	6	51
Total	8	25	20	37	10	100

p-value = 0,041

chi-square statistic = 9,972

df = 4

Minitab software package was used to perform a chi-square test of independence for the data in Table 4.3. The chi-square statistic and the p-value with 4 degrees of freedom in Table 4.3 are 9,972 and 0,041, respectively. Since the p-value is less than 0,05 level of significance, then the perception of respondents about the cultural differences is significantly dependent on their gender. It means that the majority (18/51 = 35%) of female respondents tend to disagree that cultural differences contribute to conflicts in their organisations, whereas the majority (25/49 = 51%) of the male respondents tend to agree (see Figure 4.6 below).

Figure 4.6

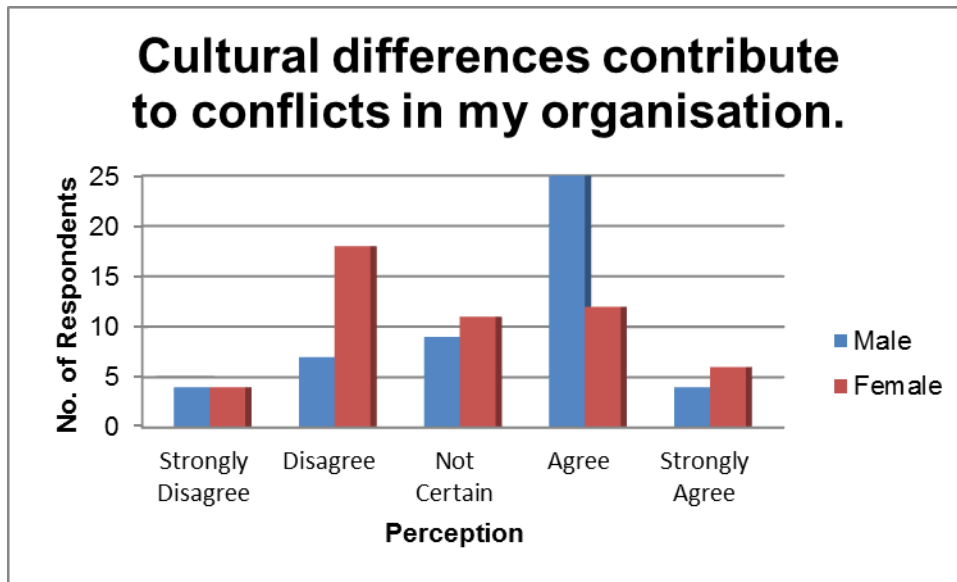


Table 4.4 Cross-tabulation of perceptions of respondents about work opportunity by gender

Gender	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?		Total
	Yes	No	
Male	33	16	49
Female	43	8	51
Total	76	24	100

p-value = 0,047 chi-square statistic = 3,944 df = 1

The chi-square statistic and the p-value with 1 degree of freedom in Table 4.4 are 3,944 and 0,047, respectively. Since the p-value is less than 0, 05 level of significance, then it means that the perception of respondents about the work opportunity is significantly dependent on their gender. It means that the majority (43/76 = 57%) of the respondents who tend to agree are women, whereas the majority (16/24 = 67%) of the respondents who tend to disagree are men (see Figure 4.7 below).

Figure 4.7



Table 4.5 Cross-tabulation of perceptions of respondents about having a best friend at work by age

Age	Do you have a best friend at work?		Total
	Yes	No	
40 yrs and below	18	20	38
Above 40 yrs	16	46	62
Total	34	66	100

p-value = 0,027 chi-square statistic = 4,881 df = 1

The chi-square statistic and the p-value with 1 degree of freedom in Table 4.10 are 4,881 and 0,027, respectively. Since the p-value is less than 0,05 level of significance, then the perception of respondents about having a best friend at work is significantly dependent on their age. It means that the majority (18/34 = 53%) of the respondents who tend to agree are at most 40 years of age, whereas the majority (46/66 = 70%) of the respondents who tend to disagree are above 40 years of age (see Figure 4.8 below).

Figure 4.8

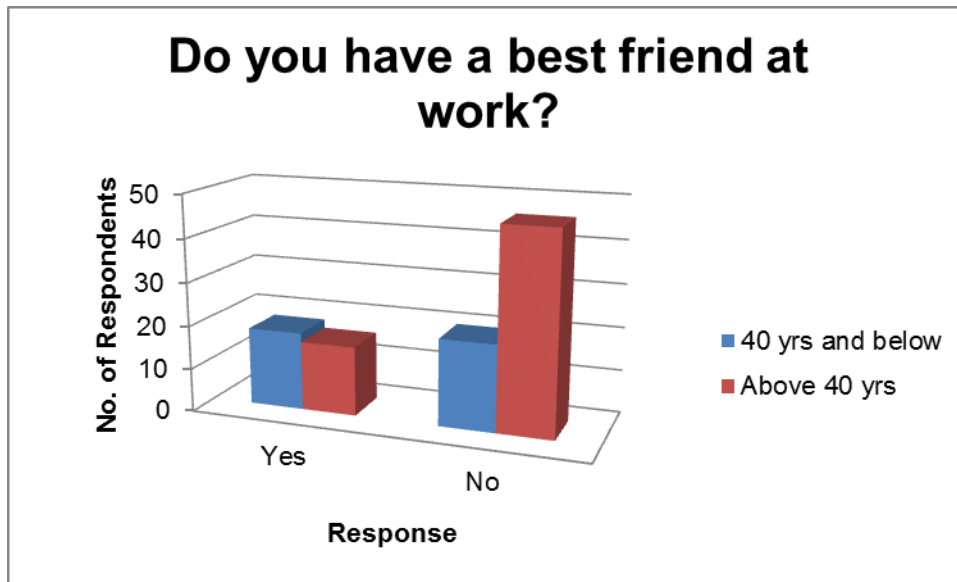


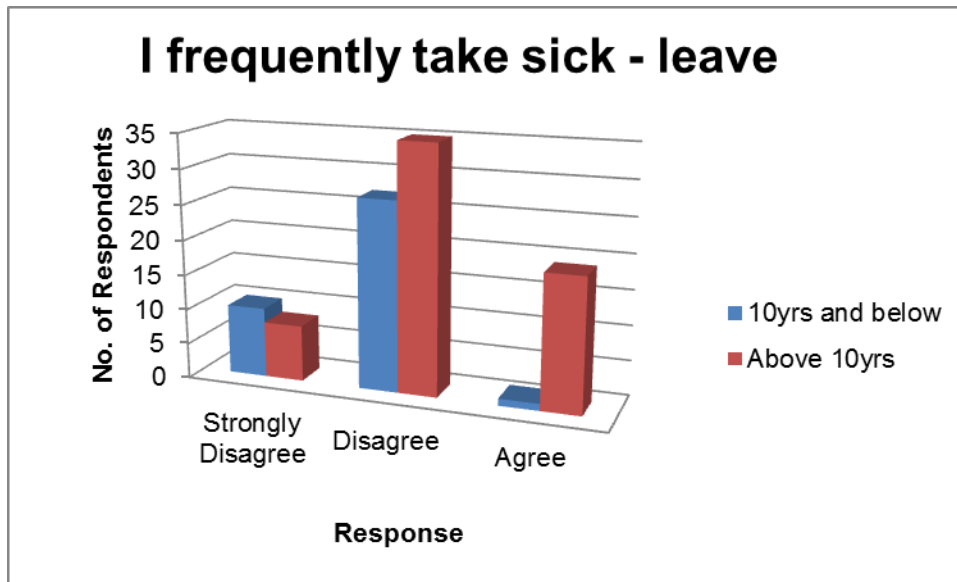
Table 4.6 Cross-tabulation of perceptions of respondents about sick - leave by years of experience in NWU

Job experience(yrs)	I frequently take sick – leave			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	
10 yrs and below	10	27	1	38
Above 10 yrs	8	35	19	62
Total	18	62	20	100

p-value = 0,002 chi-square statistic = 12,409 df = 2

The chi-square statistic and the p-value with 2 degrees of freedom in Table 4.6 are 12,409 and 0,002, respectively. Since the p-value is less than 0,05 level of significance, then the perception of respondents about sick - leave is significantly dependent on their job experience. It means that the majority (10/18 = 56%) of the respondents who tend to strongly disagree have at most 10 years of job experience in NWU, whereas the majority (19/20 = 95%) of the respondents who tend to agree have over 10 years of job experience (see Figure 4.9 below).

Figure 4.9



4.2.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

SECTION D

This section discusses the findings of the qualitative data. The 100 interviews that the researcher conducted about the NWU brand, the brand values, internal and external customer service and the reputation, as measured on the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University, indicated that the staff are relatively well-informed and positive, but that more input from management is needed. The role of managers, individually and collectively, is crucial and it plays an important role in the way employees perceive the internal brand and their level of engagement in the work place:

- It must be noted that some of the comments had to be interpreted by the researcher or the researcher had to use her discretion to categorise the responses as positive or negative, and

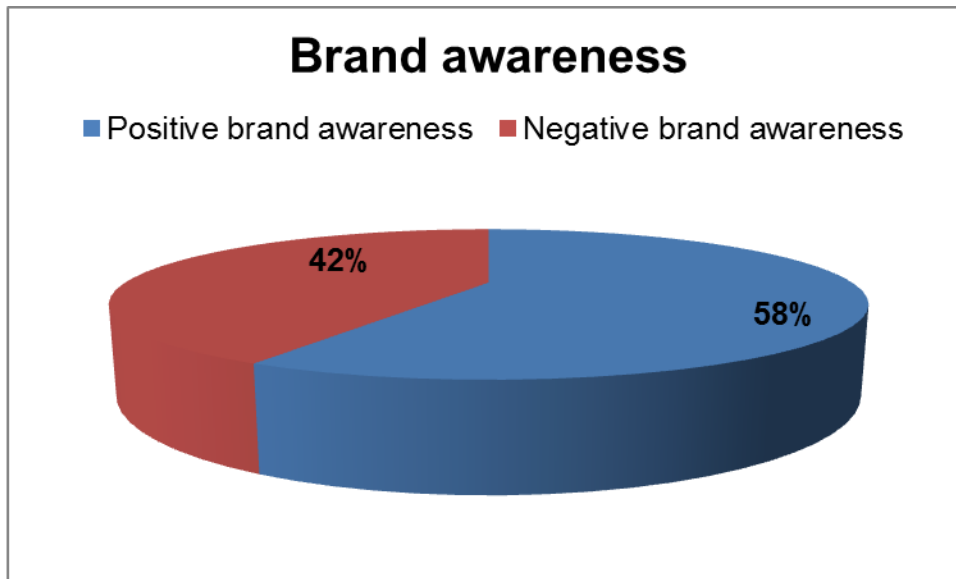
- A small number of the respondents were very negative - less than 10% - to the extent that some of their responses are in the discretion of the researcher not publishable because individuals were mentioned and the use of un-acceptable words.

The interpreted responses to the ten qualitative questions are themed and the percentages are given below¹.

4.2.5a Do you know your organisation's (logo) brand and what it stands for?

Staff awareness and knowledge of the NWU brand as manifested on the Mafikeng Campus was found to be **58%** versus **42%** who did not share the knowledge and awareness. This is depicted in Figure 4.10 below.

Figure 4.10



The awareness and knowledge, in Figure 4.10 above, varied from correct to a general understanding. In both groups emotion concerning the NWU logo was expressed. Racial sensitivity and the 'domination' of the Potchefstroom campus were still perceived

¹ All the responses are in the possession of the researcher for record purposes as the objective of the study was to determine the disposition of the majority of the respondents and not to focus on that of the disgruntled minority.

to be evident. However, in most instances this perceived “domination” was not seen to be destructive but within the boundaries of the history of the NWU.

The “voice” of the respondents is captured below;

Typical positive response:

- *Yes - it reflects its culture and history and it stand for the relationship that exists between blacks & whites at NWU after the merger.*
- *Yes - it is a trademark that is associated with the University and its products or services and distinguishes it from other institutions.*

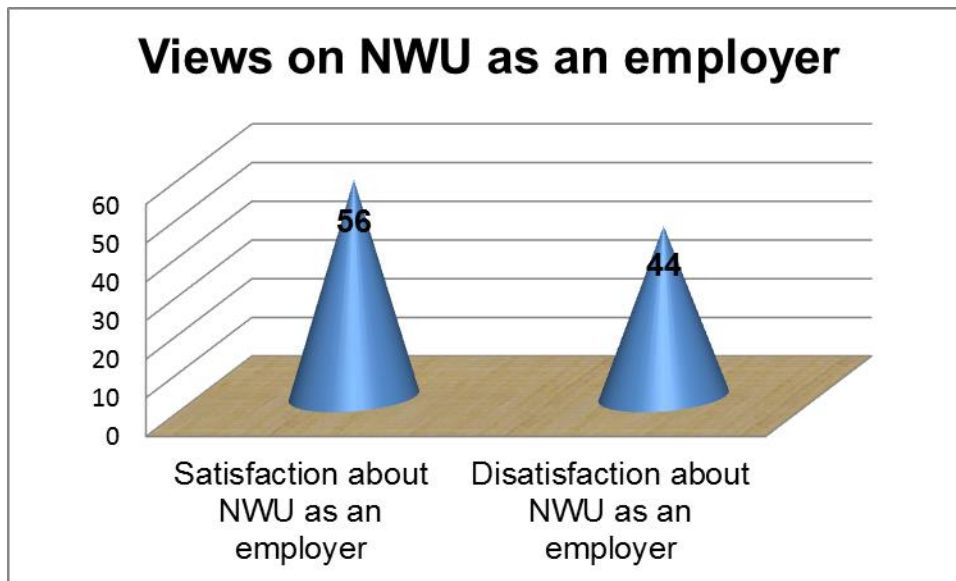
Typical negative response:

- *Not sure – I just know that there are three chains locked together maybe it means that after the merger the NWU is one now.*
- *It is really embarrassing to say to you that I’m not sure what our brand stands for.*
- *I don’t know and I do not want to know.*

4.2.5b If somebody were to ask you, in a social context who you work for, what would you say and why?

The majority of the employees taking part in the study were positive about the company as an employer; **56%** versus the **44%**, that were moderately to seriously dissatisfied with the NWU Mafikeng Campus as an employer.

Figure 4.11



As illustrated by Figure 4.11 above, there is only a little difference between the positive and the negative responses which show that change or motivation is needed to motivate the employees to like NWU Mafikeng Campus and think of it as employer of choice. The following are the “voices” of the respondents as captured by the researcher;

Typical positive responses:

- *A great company because I have a manager who always encourage me to do better & improve myself.*
- *Not a bad place at all. I'll be forever grateful. When I first came here, I had no experience and no qualifications; right now I have an honours degree.*

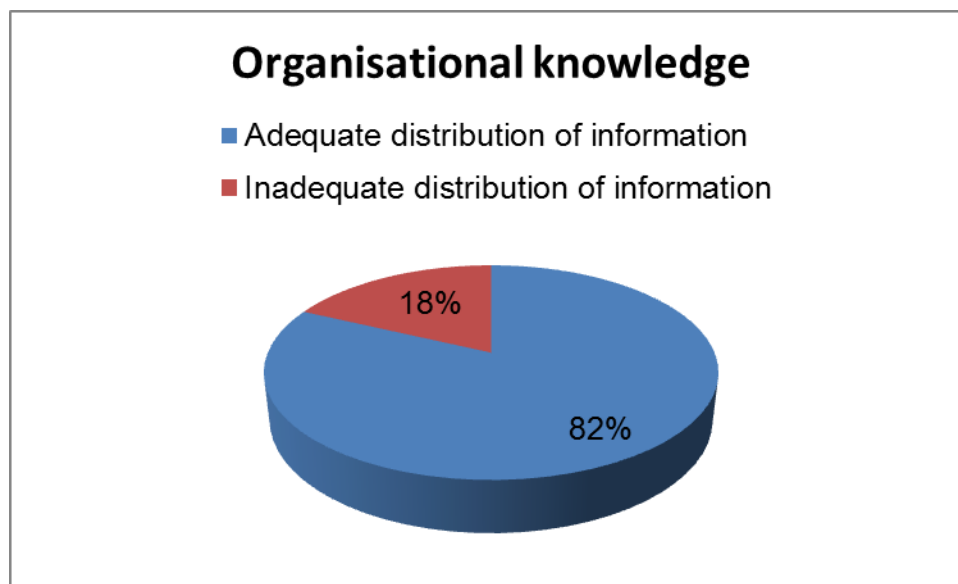
Typical negative response:

- *An ok place, there is nothing special going on here & my colleagues are mostly black & 2 are white & there is no unity.*
- *A nonsense university that treats us like garbage. Moreover you will never get support when you want to develop yourself.*

4.2.5c How do you as an employee acquire organisational knowledge to help you carry out your roles and responsibilities in accordance with your organisation's brand promise?

It became clear that the NWU webpage and (informative) emails to the staff are the most used and trusted source of information and in some instances added to by the direct managers - for **82%** of the respondents versus the **18%** who found the distribution of knowledge and information lacking. According to these results, this score is very impressive and it shows that at least NWU Mafikeng Campus is doing something right. There is nothing worse than lack of knowledge as the saying goes “knowledge is power”. The results of this question are shown in Figure 4.12 below.

Figure 4.12



The “voice” of the respondents is captured below by the researcher as follows;

Typical positive response:

- *Website (Intranet). There is a lot of organisational information on the website (NWU) that we can use to carry out our roles.*
- *A job description is a guideline of what we should do daily but that's not*

all. One needs to read a lot about jobs that are similar to his/hers in other organisations and also read what's on the website of the University regarding the rules, objectives, mission and vision of NWU.

Typical negative response:

- *From my manager & from the web...things like the mission & vision shouldn't only be put in the web but our managers should make sure they mention them to us more often.*
- *I don't know. I don't care.*

4.2.5d Do you realise that your personal success is inseparable from the company's success?

The respondents were not all convinced that their personal success reflected on the success of the company as **57%** indicated that they agreed while **43%** did not understand the connection or did not believe the two are connected. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.13 below.

Figure 4.13



The “voice” of the respondents is captured below as positive and negative.

Typical positive response:

- *Yes. I use my expertise in my job therefore I can't succeed alone.*
- *Yes, if I excel in my job it will be good for the company because I will be using what I know to give good customer service & the customers will be happy.*

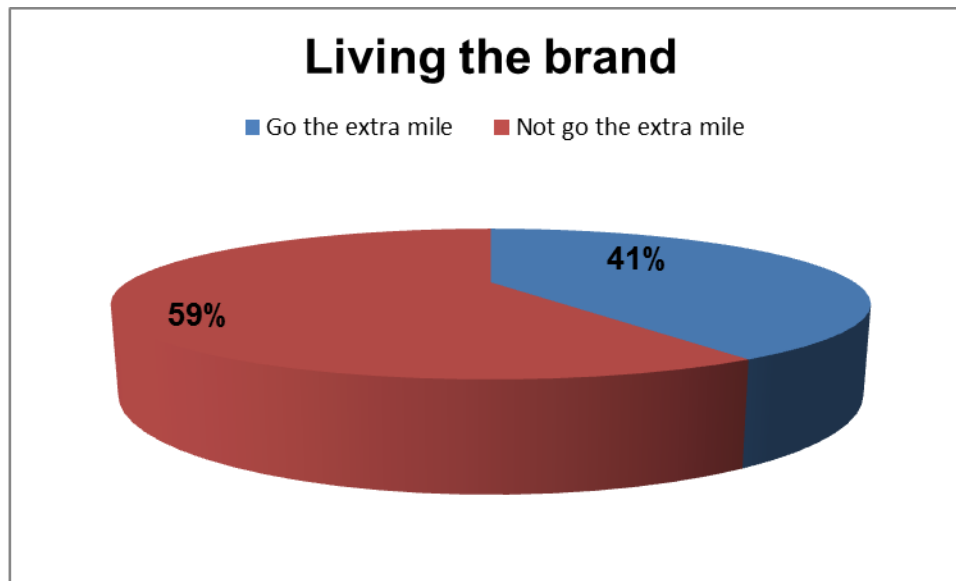
Typical negative response:

- *No, I do not see how my personal success can be linked to my company*
- *when I am not even allowed to study.*
- *No, it's got nothing to do with each other.*

4.2.5e Do your colleagues often go the extra mile and live the brand?

Going the extra mile is clearly problematic to the majority of the respondents as **41%** regarded it as their duty while **59%** do not see it as their duty or do not regard it as worthwhile. These results are worrisome and they may be attributed to the lack of motivation or low morale, disengagement and the feeling that good customer service is never celebrated. Figure 4.14 below demonstrates these results.

Figure 4.14



Therefore, the “voice” of the respondents is captured below with regard to how the employees feel about going the extra mile and living the brand. These responses are categorised into positive or negative.

Typical positive response:

- *Yes they do. Sometimes they don't even rush to knock off because they will be assisting clients.*
- *Yes they do go the extra mile, even during lunch time they can assist clients if needs be.*

A typical negative response:

- *No. They just do what is in their job description & would even say that to each other.*
- *No, they don't and I can't say I blame them because nobody will notice, so why kill ourselves? You won't even get a little bonus at the end of the year.*
- *No they don't. The atmosphere is too relaxed here and there is not much drive.*

4.2.5f Do you understand that you are a brand ambassador for your company?

The respondents understood the responsibility of being a brand ambassador better than the responsibilities pointed out in Questions 4 and 5 as **73%** understood that they are brand ambassadors while **27%** did not understand the responsibility or disagreed. These records are shown in Figure 4.15 below.

Figure 4.15



The results of this question are very good and it shows that there are some staff members who are committed to living the brand and represent it well. The “voice” of the respondents is shown below as positive or negative.

Typical positive response:

- *Yes. I have to present NWU in every way, even the way I dress or speak to the clients.*
- *Yes. How I dress and behave in and outside of work says a lot about my company.*
- *Yes. My conduct is very important because it has consequences on the reputation of the organisation.*

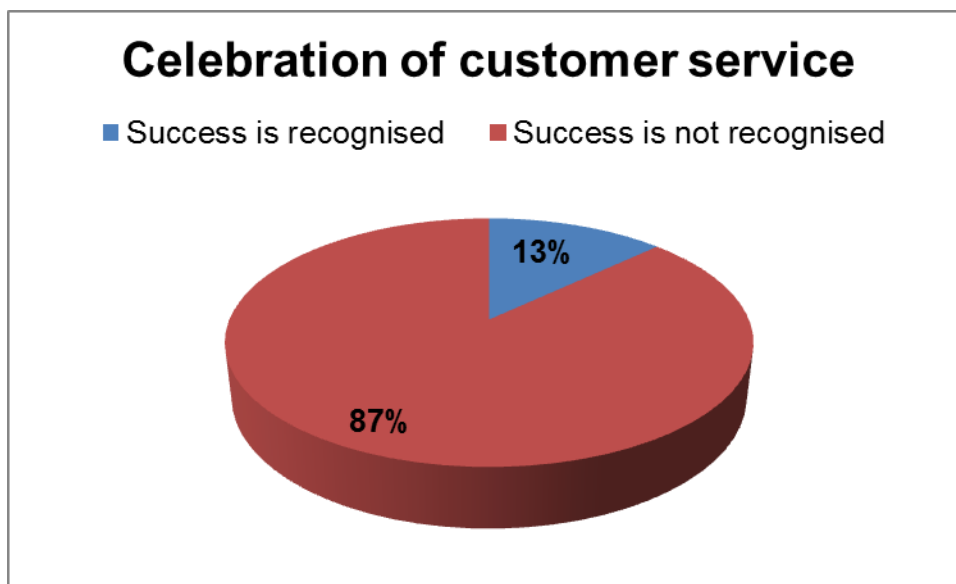
Typical negative response:

- *Not sure because I do not know what a brand is.*
- *No. There is a marketing department on campus so that should be their responsibility.*
- *No I don't, it's got nothing to do with me, I'm just here to do my job, that's all.*

4.2.5g How often does your department celebrate customer service success?

The recognition of customer service successes seems to be neglected as **13%** responded that these successes are recognised and a huge **87%** responded that it was never celebrated. These results are depicted in Figure 4.16 below.

Figure 4.16



With regards to Figure 4.16 above, the “voice” of the respondents is captured below as either positive or negative.

Typical positive response:

- *It is not a celebration as such but we do congratulate our team members verbally when they do well.*
- *We celebrate it twice a year after every semester.*

Typical negative response:

- *We have never celebrated it & that is sad because we give our all.*
- *Never ever.*

4.2.5h Do your supervisors or managers often meet with teams in order to make sure that you as employees are treated fairly?

Regular team meetings do not take place often as only **13%** reported regular team meeting while and **87%** reported that regular team meeting did not take place. The respondents indicated workload, a lack of time and indifferent managers as the most common reasons.

Figure 4.17

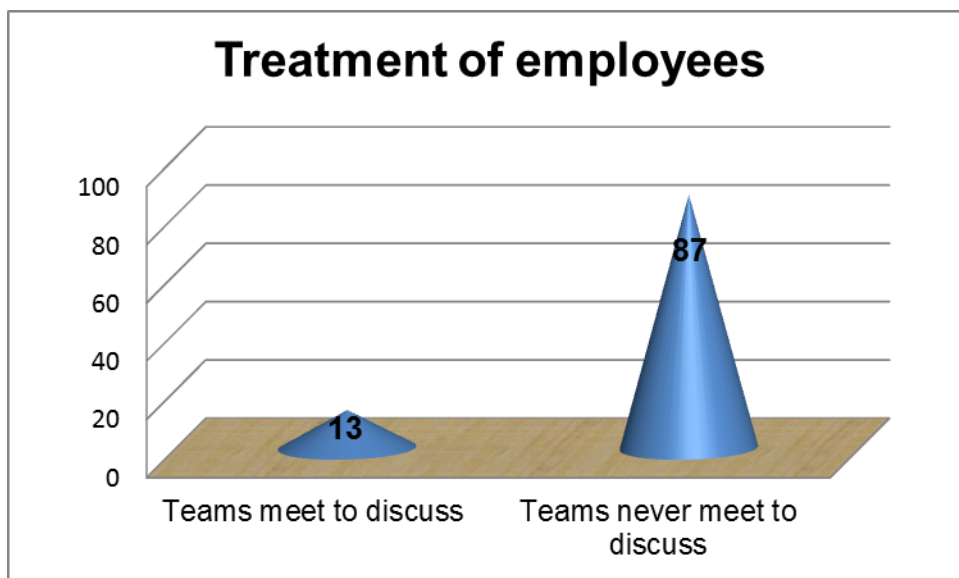


Figure 4.17 above illustrates the treatment of employees and the results show whether the teams regularly meet with supervisors or managers to discuss how they are being treated in the work place.

Typical positive response:

- *Yes, we have monthly meetings to discuss such important matters because the well-being of the employees is a priority.*
- *Yes. The well-being of the staff is a priority because if they are unhappy and disgruntled they will not give good customer service.*

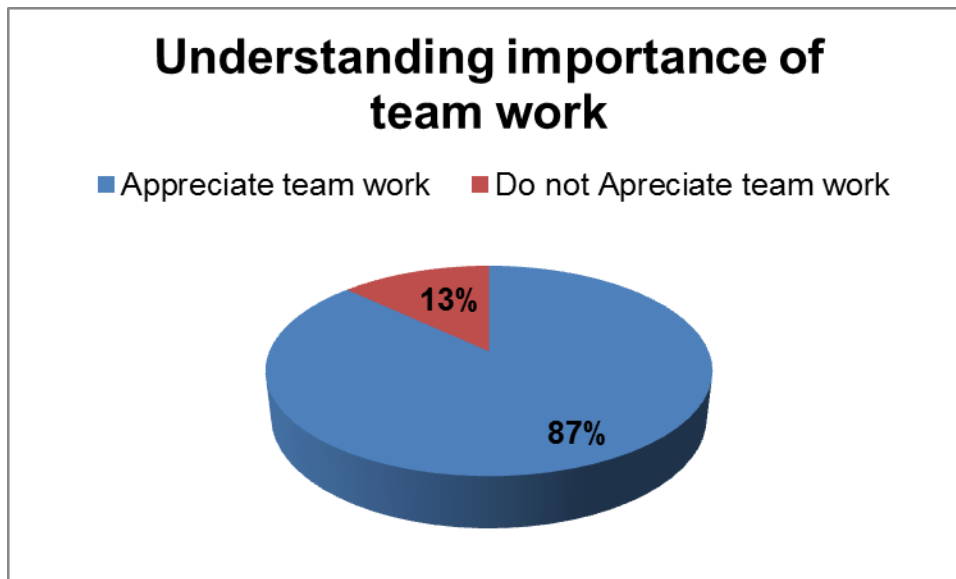
Typical negative response:

- *Never & it's important to keep employees happy so that they don't take out their frustrations on customers, I think that is why most of my colleagues are demotivated because nobody cares about our well-being.*
- *Never. They wouldn't care less if we are not treated fairly. They just want the job done.*
- *No. No such thing exists.*

4.2.5i Do you as employees understand the importance of team work and active participation?

In contrast to the responses above **87%** of the respondents indicated that they understand and appreciate team work and **13%** did not appreciate team work and indicated an “each one for themselves” attitude. These results are shown in Figure 4.18 below.

Figure 4.18



The “voice” of the respondents below show what the respondents thought or felt about teamwork and whether it is important to work as a team.

Typical positive response:

- *Yes. It promotes unity & increases performance.*
- *Yes. Team work makes the running of the office smooth and increases good customer service.*
- *Yes. It improves relationships in the work place and also improves performance.*

Typical negative response:

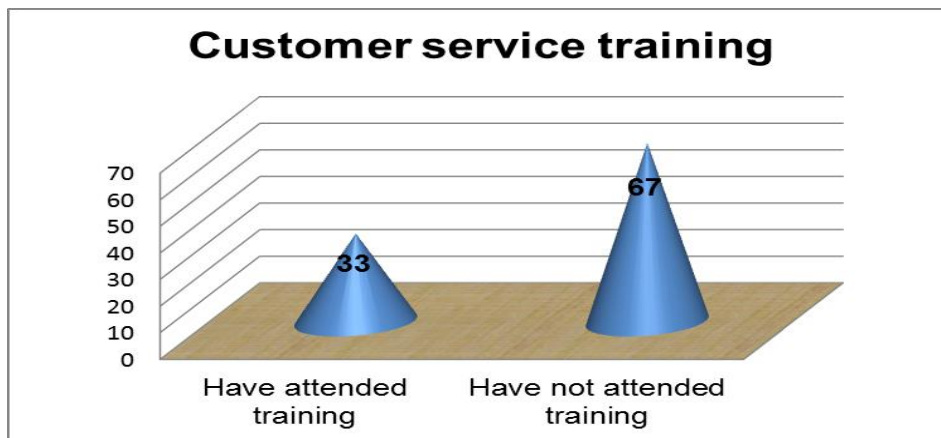
- *No because we don't work together as a team & there is a lot of back stabbing here because some people want to be promoted.*
- *No because we do not work as a team, sometimes we don't even talk to each other. Our offices are also far apart, so each person concentrates on their job.*

4.2.5j How often have you received customer service training as an employee?

Only **33%** of the respondents indicated that they did attend at least one customer service training – although not regularly – while **67%** indicated that they did not attend any training sessions while being employed by the NWU Mafikeng. The 33% respondents who answered positively felt that the trainings were good and informative and further indicated that they would recommend them to all their colleagues in order to improve customer service.

The general feeling of the 67% respondents was that the trainings took the whole day and at times more than a day therefore, their managers or supervisors were not willing to let them go for such long periods of time. These percentages are depicted by Figure 4.19 below.

Figure 4.19



The “voice” of the respondents with regards to Figure 4.19 above, shows how happy or unhappy the respondents are about the customer service training.

Typical positive response:

- *Once every year. I would recommend these trainings to all employees they would help them with customer service skills.*
- I attend at least every two years just to remind myself of how important customer service is and why we should keep our emotions in check.

Typical negative response:

- *Not often. The trainings take the whole day sometimes they take up to two days and I can't afford to be out of the office for that long, my job will suffer.*
- *Never even once.*

4.2.6 Correlation between quantitative and qualitative analysis

1. All the respondents irrespective of the demographic indicate the need for brand or logo training.
2. Younger staff members are more positive about the NWU Mafikeng Campus as an employer; this is due to the high unemployment rate in South Africa.
3. All the staff members, irrespective of the demographics are positive about IT, which is the intranet and the web page, as well as some managers informing them about important issues in order for them to do their jobs effectively.
4. All staff members are not fully aware of the effects of individual success on the success of the company.
5. Younger staff members, both males and females with less number of years of employment at NWU Mafikeng Campus are more willing to go the extra mile.
6. The idea of "brand ambassador" is not clear to the staff, more so the younger staff members.
7. There was a general dissatisfaction with celebrating customer service, irrespective of gender, age, position, race or experience.
8. Dissatisfaction was also found on the topic of regular meetings about fair treatment.
9. Team work is well established amongst all staff members despite the demographics.
10. The need for regular training and workshops amongst all NWU staff, of all ages, races, positions or experience is very high.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the findings of the study were presented and analysed. The quantitative and qualitative sections of the questionnaires were distributed amongst the staff and was analysed. Fields of improvement were identified where the NWU Mafikeng can improve on a relatively established disposition. In the final chapter the findings are summarised and the recommendations are made.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter documents the research findings with a more comprehensive viewpoint from the analysis and interpretation of data. The preceding chapter analysed the units of scrutiny or themes that emerged from the comprehensive analysis of data collected from the research respondents to quantify the phenomena under investigation. This chapter draws a unique framework to present the research findings in a chronological approach to suggest implications and reach a cohesive conclusion.

The original aim of this study was indicated in Chapter One, what follows is the revisit of the research objectives of the study. The primary aim of the study was to look at the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement and organisational performance. This was done through a survey amongst employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus, South Africa.

5.2. RE-STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The research aims of the study as stated on page 9 was to define and explore the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement, and to ascertain whether the way employees internalise the desired brand image influences their engagement levels in the work place.

It is regarded by the researcher to at this stage also reflect on the objectives of the study on page 10 by re-stating them. In order to gain clarity as to how internal brand perceptions contribute to the engagement of employees and the overall success of the organisation, the research objectives emanated from the general research aim were as follows:

- To measure the extent to which internal brand perceptions can influence employee engagement in the NWU Mafikeng Campus.
- To determine the connection between employees and their daily roles towards the success of NWU Mafikeng Campus.
- To assess how employees impact on the NWU Mafikeng Campus' performance and managements' vision of leadership.
- To evaluate the role of University employee engagement in establishing and maintaining the expected reputation of NWU Mafikeng Campus.

The researcher, being responsible for customer service in her professional capacity, realised the aims, objectives and research questions. The research findings are summarised below.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

As already indicated the findings about the NWU brand, the brand values, organisational culture, internal and external customer service and the reputation, as measured on the Mafikeng Campus, indicated that the staff are relatively well-informed and positive, but that more inputs from management is needed.

Table 5.1 Summary of the percentages of the positive and negative responses by the staff to each question.

Question Number	Positive%	Negative%
1	58	42
2	56	44
3	82	18
4	57	43
5	41	59
6	73	27

7	13	87
8	13	87
9	87	13
10	33	67

From the research findings it is clear that Fields 1 to 4, 6 and 9 – understanding the brand and logo, feelings about the employer, acquiring internal information or knowledge and the effects of personal success, being a brand ambassador and the importance of team work - seem to be established on the Mafikeng Campus of the NWU.

It was also evident that Fields 5, 7, 8 and 10 – ‘go the extra mile’, celebrate customer service success, team meetings to ensure fair treatment and customer service training seems to be problem areas. A drive towards or encouragement is needed with regards to these points in order to motivate the disengaged employees to improve.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study proved that the way employees of NWU Mafikeng Campus perceive the internal branding has an effect on their engagement levels at work. Therefore, against the background of the findings the researcher recommends the following:

5.4.1 Regular staff mini-workshops facilitated by ‘third parties’ – e.g. specialists in brands and branding from outside the NWU – can be used and can be supported by experienced academic staff in marketing or communications or employees in the administrative department of marketing and communications on the campus.²

² The researcher experienced the fact that employees appreciate the fact that other organisations have the same problems and are usually quite ‘open’ to sympathetic and understanding outside specialists.

These workshops should not last for more than three hours per session once a week, as the audience are all in positions where time is of the essence and with very specific responsibilities. It will strengthen the already established base of brand knowledge and customer service on the NWU Mafikeng Campus.

The above suggestions are confirmed by researchers such as Kimpakorn & Tocquer (2007:533) who indicate that it is essential for employees to be committed to demonstrating the brand values, as expressed by top management, each time a customer interacts with the brand. Boyd (2004) also concurs with the above statements by highlighting that successful branding campaigns should now include getting employees to behave in a manner that is representative of that company's brand values since the value of a brand correlates directly to the value of that business. These mini-workshops will ensure that all the staff understands the NWU logo and brand and their role as builders of the brand and how these can affect the image and reputation of the University.

5.4.2 The roles of individual managers are crucial. The findings revealed that the managers should be more staff orientated than being task orientated only. It is regarded as fundamental that staff achievements are recognised, especially in environments where the workload is heavy to demonstrate to staff that management cares for them as human beings. More regular sessions or meetings with staff are essential as they need regular recognition for good work and for reassurance that they are appreciated.

5.4.3 Against the background of the responses to question 10: **How often have you received customer service training as an employee?** At least two customer service training sessions should be held per year. This will ensure that the more experienced staff can be revitalised and that new staff members are properly initiated into customer service. The 'older' staff members must not be excluded as they can contribute to the training by sharing their experiences.

Staff members; administrative and academic, must realise that Top Management interacts with relatively few but very influential individuals per day. On the other hand, a young admissions clerk or academic staff member – even before the classes started - sees a large number of current and new students at the beginning of each year through registration and at the Add and Drop.

The impression the staff member makes has a far wider reach in numbers and at least equals that of top management with less individuals but on a higher level of authority.

5.4.4 Managers or supervisors should recognise customer service often in order to motivate employees to strive to do more.

5.4.5 It is crucial for managers to ensure that employees are treated fairly. There is nothing dangerous like disgruntled employees. They can either make or break the company. This corresponds with the points that state it is important to have managers who care about staff well-being.

5.4.6 In this study it was found that the University should introduce wellness activities in order to motivate employees. These activities include: focus groups which allow employees to discuss the brand at length with each other; fieldwork whereby employees go out and engage with their consumers (e.g. community development) and lastly corporate events through which leadership can play a role in creating an event that conveys brand values and helps the employee understand how to live the brand. This will help disengaged employees and low achievers to be more engaged and strive to do more in order to improve themselves and the institution.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher recommends further research on the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement in South African academic institutions since the study only focused on the institution used as the case study. There were no attempts made to visit other institutions in South Africa to compare the empirical findings of the

study. Within this perspective, there was no endeavour for the researcher to generalise the findings from this study to a broader geographical area outside the scope of the utilised institution. The results gained are specific for the stimulus material for the respondents tested in the specific geographic location.

5.6 LIMITATIONS

This particular study noted several limitations. The results of the study reflect the reality of internal brand perceptions and employee engagement at a single campus of a multiple campus university, namely North-West University, Mafikeng Campus (NWU Mafikeng). As a result, the findings cannot be generalised. However, the theoretical framework that had been developed to depict these relationships should be applicable to other organisations.

The case study approach may have posed a risk in terms of scientific rigour and may have been time-consuming, with an added risk of producing large quantities of data that are hard to summarise, but the research design controlled for this. The researcher knows the research context well and is a current employee at NWU, Mafikeng Campus. This may have led to research bias in the interpretation of qualitative findings. However, knowledge of the organisation has assisted in ensuring access to the research context and has also assisted in the interpretation of research results. The researcher had already obtained permission to conduct the research so access was not a problem.

Also very crucial to note is that the majority of the respondents were fully aware of the fact that the researcher is an employee of NWU Mafikeng and were not willing to participate in the study even though they were assured that their responses will be confidential. Moreover, some of the respondents whom were supposed to participate in the research study indicated in the last minutes that they had several engagements elsewhere. Therefore, a smaller sample of 100 respondents than the 150 respondents that was initially anticipated by the researcher was utilised for the study.

5.7 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study was set out to investigate the effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement. In doing so, a mixed approach method was selected as indicated in Chapter Three. Data was collected by means of various processes, including, the Gallup Q12 survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The study was carried out among employees of the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University in South Africa, in order to determine the extent to which employees' perceptions of the internal brand can influence their engagement levels in the work place. Factors that emerged were in line with the literature study and represented the views of the respondents.

The study relied on the perceptions, opinions, experiences and thoughts of the research respondents as key contributors of the data gathered. The study also evaluated the literature to establish common elements between the results and the literature.

An investment in staff recognition and training in customer service can benefit the NWU Mafikeng where a positive disposition is already established.

5.8 FINAL CONCLUSION

Employee Engagement, as a measure of the internal branding strategy, can be described as the ability and willingness of the employees to deliver on the brand promise to internal and external audiences (Nelson 2005). In a study conducted by Media Lab it was seen that an engaged employee generated 17% more revenue growth and 38% better earnings in comparison to less engaged employees (Fletcher 2009).

This study indicated that clear, consistent and honest communication is indeed an imperative management tool for employee engagement. HR promotes thoughtful communication strategies that encourage employee engagement by keeping the

workforce energised, focused and productive (Lockwood 2007:5). Such strategies are critical to long-term organisational success.

Moreover, strategic and continuous communication lends credibility to the organisation's leadership. In contrast, (Lockwood 2007:5) lack of communication or poorly communicated information can lead to distrust, dissatisfaction, scepticism, cynicism and unwanted staff turnover. Branding, for example is a type of communication strategy that can promote employee engagement by sending 'the right message' about the organisation, its mission, values and products/ services to the workforce and marketplace at large (Lockwood 2007:5).

Mosley (2007:126) extends that based on research about branding, it is clear that engaged and satisfied employees are more likely to deliver a consistently positive service experience. In essence, employees are an important aspect when developing sustainable service brand, not only through the development of consistently positive service attitude, but also through the emotional values that tend to be evoked by a particularly distinctive style of service. According to Mosley (2007:126), these tangible brand characteristics are far more difficult for competitors to copy than the operational components of a service brand experience. Farner *et.al* (2001:350) proposes that every organisation consists of an interdependent chain of individuals and functional units each taking inputs from one another and converting them into external customer service. In essence, if each member of the organisation works to provide their internal customer with better service, then the end customer will receive high quality service (Farner *et.al* 2001:350).

Finally, based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the only differentiator between similar organisations is staff or employee engagement; that is, their knowledge about their organisation and the services it's offering, their enthusiasm in doing their daily work or service encounters with customers and the service quality or the manner in which they deliver the service to the customers.

Therefore, in order for NWU Mafikeng Campus, to achieve the desired organisational results, the change should start from within, whether it is colleagues who are internal customers or the clients who are external customers, the attitude of employees, despite the position, race, age, gender or years of service, should be; I am willing to go the extra mile for you, I respect you, despite who you are and your well-being matter to me. All these correlate with the values of the North-West University which are applicable across all the three Campuses (already mentioned in Chapter One), including the Mafikeng Campus. The values are human dignity, equality, freedom, integrity, tolerance, respect, commitment to excellence, scholarly engagement, academic freedom and can be described in one Tswana phrase: **“Ke a kgathala”**³

³ In English it can be translated as: “I care about you as a human being, I respect you, I acknowledge you, you are crucial to our business and you as a human being are important to us.”

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT LETTER

1. INTRODUCTION

My name is Princess Motsamai. I am an MA student at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus in South Africa. For the completion of the degree MA in Communication (Magister Artium) it is required that I conduct research as part of the requirements.

My topic for this degree is: *The effects of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement*. For the purpose of this study I have used the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University (NWU Mafikeng Campus) as a case study. The reason for this choice is because NWU has undergone a merger and is a multi-cultural university. Therefore, I had to interview employees on their experiences, expectations, opinions and thoughts regarding the influence of internal brand perceptions on employee engagement in their organisation, aiming at increasing organisational success and maintaining a good reputation.

2. PROCEDURE

The survey questionnaires and interviews conducted for this study will be treated as confidential. Confidentiality is guaranteed. Participation in this study is voluntary.

You have been selected as a respondent to provide an opinion on the matter mentioned above. Can you kindly take some few minutes to have a discussion with me? If you agree to be part of this research study, the following will be requested:

- As this study will consider opinions, it is crucial to record them as accurately as possible.

- For this purpose, the researcher will bring along somebody to write down the responses for easier recording of the conversation.
- The purpose of bringing along a third person is also so that the researcher may concentrate better without being distracted.

Is it fine with you to allow the researcher to bring along a third person to record this conversation?

You are most welcome to ask questions during our discussion if you require any clarification. And if for any reason, you feel uncomfortable with the questions asked, you have a right to withdraw from the study.

I SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION AND PATIENCE

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

APPENDIX B:

SECTION A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

As part of my research for the Master's Degree in Communications at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, I am conducting a survey:

- Please take a few minutes to complete the questions below.
- Your responses are confidential; no identity is needed or will be revealed.
- Responses will not impact on your job or career prospects.
- Information will be used for research purposes only.
- Please read each question carefully before answering.
- Once you have finished please take a minute to ensure that you have answered all the questions.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Researcher: Rev. Princess Motsamai

SECTION A: Demographic Details

Instructions

Please mark with an "X" in the appropriate box.

Gender

Male	
Female	

Age

17-20	
21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
50 +	

Race

African	
European	
Asian	
Coloured	
Other	

Position

Executive Management	
Management	

Academic staff	
Administrative staff	

Years of service in NWU

1-5	
6-10	
11-15	
16-20	
21-25	
26-30	
30+	

SECTION B: Organisational Culture

Instructions

Kindly answer the following questions to the best of your ability using the scale below.

Scale

1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= I am not certain, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

1. The culture of the organisation is reflected in the brand and I feel like I am part of it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. I understand my organisation's vision and mission statement.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. I believe that team work drive drives high performance and engagement in the organisation rather that individualism.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. I feel that I have my manager's support in what I do?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. The organisation has communication programmes that give employees information about new positions, fringe benefits, new services and remunerations.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. Cultural differences contribute to conflicts in my organisation.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. I frequently take sick-leave.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. I feel that I am part of the brand and are proud of it?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

SECTION C: Employee Engagement (Q12)

Instructions

Kindly respond to the questions to the best of your ability, with a yes, no or not sure.

1. Do you know what is expected of you at work?

.....

2. Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work?

.....

3. At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?

.....

4. In the last thirty days, have you received any recognition or praise for doing good work?

.....

5. Does your supervisor or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?

.....

6. Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

.....

7. At work, do your opinions seem to count during decision making processes?

.....

8. Does the mission or purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?

.....

9. Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?

.....

10. Do you have a best friend at work?

.....

11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?

.....

12. In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

.....

I SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION AND PATIENCE

SECTION D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Dear respondents

I am a student at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus and it is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for the completion of the degree MA in Communication (Magister Artium).

- Please take a few minutes for us to discuss the questions below.
- Your responses are confidential; no identity is needed or will be revealed.
- Please take your time to think about each question carefully.
- Your cooperation is highly appreciated!

Researcher: Rev. Princess Motsamai

Prepared Interview Questions

Instructions

Kindly respond to the questions to the best of your ability.

1. Do you know your organisation's brand and what it stands for?

Elaborate more.

.....

.....

.....

2. If somebody were to ask you, in a social context who you work for, what would you say and why?

Kindly explain.

.....
.....
.....

3. How do you as an employee acquire organisational knowledge to help you carry out your roles and responsibilities in accordance with your organisation's brand promise?

Elaborate more.

.....
.....
.....

4. Do you realise that your personal success is inseparable from the company's success?

Elaborate more.

.....
.....
.....

5. Do your colleagues often go the extra mile and live the brand?

Kindly explain.

.....
.....
.....

6. Do you understand that you are a brand ambassador for your company?

Please explain.

.....
.....
.....

7. How often does your department celebrate customer service success?

Explain further.

.....
.....
.....

8. Do your supervisors or managers often meet with teams in order to make sure that you as employees are treated fairly?

Please explain.

.....
.....
.....

9. Do you as employees understand the importance of team work and active participation?

Elaborate more.

.....
.....
.....

10. How often have you received customer service training as an employee?

Explain further.

.....
.....
.....

I SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION AND PATIENCE

APPENDIX C

EXPLANATION OF THE GALLUP Q12 QUESTIONS



SAIC Employee Engagement Survey Gallup Questions

May 2011

Company Confidential

What are the Gallup Questions?

The Gallup Questions are questions that Gallup has consistently found measure the aspects of employee engagement that link to business outcomes. Gallup tested thousands of questions on millions of employees to find the right questions with the exact wording that provided the highest correlation to business results most companies regularly measure —profitability, productivity, turnover, and safety. The following slides explain each of the Gallup Questions that will be posed in the SAIC employee engagement survey.

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

Gallup's research shows that many great workplaces have defined the right outcomes; they set goals for their work groups or work with them to set their own goals. They do not just define the job but define success on the job. For work groups to be aware of their expectations, they should have a way to rank, rate, or count as many of the desired outcomes as possible. Also, these measures of performance should fit with what the rest of the organisation is saying and doing.

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Based on Gallup's extensive research, great managers:

- Find out what people need in the way of materials and equipment
- Place the responsibility for this on the work groups
- Make sure work groups know how to earn the right to certain materials and equipment. A great way for work groups to increase their responsiveness to this question is to determine what "materials and equipment" means to them. Sometimes they are referring to accessibility of information, rather than specifically to materials and equipment.

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

For this item, it is important to keep each work group member's talents in mind, to build relationships, and to help others identify their unique talents. It is vital that every individual understands his or her strengths and weaknesses. A good way of promoting this is to discuss what each person believes his or her leading strengths are, in terms of skills, knowledge, and innate talents. Writing these strengths down often helps.

Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Workplaces that excelled in this question relied on forms of recognition that are specific, predictable, frequent, and instantaneous. They are known to promote a recognition-rich environment, with praise coming from every direction, and with everyone knowing how others like to be recognised. Many wonder how often people should be praised, but a good rule of thumb is about once a week. Here's why: Whenever a person does something, there are consequences. Those consequences will affect whether work groups engage in that behaviour again. We know that to get the results or consequences we want, frequent praise can encourage the behaviour that produces it.

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

Remember, people leave managers, not companies. A productive workplace is one in which people feel safe —safe enough to experiment, to challenge, to share information, to support each other, and where the work groups are prepared to give the manager and the organisation the “benefit of the doubt.” None of this can happen if work groups do not feel cared about.

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

In this case, “development” does not mean getting people promoted. It does not mean each work group member gets what he or she wants. It means helping individuals find roles that fit their natural strengths: their unique combinations of skills, knowledge, and talent. Previous Gallup findings have concluded that workgroups that receive high scores on this particular item do not try to put in what was left out, but rather, try to draw out what was left in; they provide constant feedback; and they find creative developmental opportunities for each other.

Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Work groups who give high scores on this item feel they have access to channels of communication across different levels or divisions of the organisation, and their managers work to maintain those channels. Groups do not function very well when the work group members feel insignificant or irrelevant. Managers should ask work groups for their opinions and include their ideas in the decision-making process whenever possible. This means everyone should have a chance to express his or her ideas.

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

This question measures a key source of motivation for work groups —the idea that their organisation represents values that they themselves share. Effective workplaces cultivate that feeling, including providing constant clarification of the overall mission of the organisation, as well as the ways in which each individual team member contributes to the achievement of the mission.

As human beings, we like to feel as though we belong. Individual achievement is great, but we are likely to stay committed longer if we feel we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Work groups that score well on this question tend to be good at providing clear quality standards and keeping those standards at the forefront of work group members' minds. Thus, work groups are capable of accurately evaluating their own performance, as well as that of their teammates.

Clear communication of standards enhances accountability and builds trust among co-workers. We also know that not everyone will see "quality" in the same way if everyone's concept of the word is different. To remedy this, having a clear definition helps. The best place to start is with customers, both internal and external.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

I have a best friend at work” is really a proxy for trust. We are interested only in whether there is a person at work whom **you would consider a best friend “at work”**. Think about people whom you would consider “best friends.” People with whom you share values, you can trust, and who are watching out for you. **You are going to feel more confident in making decisions, taking risks, and being more productive because you do not do not have to spend a lot of time watching your back.** Chances are, you’re going to feel like there is more open communication within your team.

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

One of Gallup’s most consistent research findings has been that feedback improves performance. High-scoring groups establish structured feedback processes for their work groups, which include clearly defining goals and achievement levels, and then meeting regularly with each work group member to track his or her progress toward those goals. We realise that we all need feedback to know how far we have come. We need signs to track our progress.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Engaged work groups need to feel that their job contributes in some way to their professional or personal development. Great workplaces are those in which work groups are provided with educational opportunities that address their development — this may include formal classes or simply finding new experiences for them to take on. Each work group member will define “opportunities” differently. For some work groups, this may mean training classes and seminars; for others, this means promotions and increased responsibilities; and for others, this might mean working on special projects or assignments.