

**THE EFFECT OF INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT ON
BRAND COMMITMENT AND BRAND TRUST**



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In loving memory of my daughter, Bethany Jean Mouton

04.08.1998 to 14.04.2015

She made broken look beautiful and strong look invincible.

She walked with the Universe on her shoulders and made it look like a pair of wings.



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- First, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength to persevere to complete this degree during very challenging personal storms. Job 29:2-3 has special meaning: *“Oh that I were in months gone by, As in the days when God watched over me; When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light, I walked through darkness”*.
- To my supervisor, Professor Frederick Herbst, thank you for your support, time, the invaluable guidance, and for reminding me “There is always time to do the right things, right”. A lesson I will take with me wherever I go.
- To my family and friends, thank you for being my biggest source of strength and encouragement. “Umntu ngumntu ngabantu” — I am because of you.
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“You may encounter many defeats, but you may not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it”.

Maya Angelou

DECLARATION

I declare that investigating the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust in the South African Post Office, is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Estelle Mouton



November 2018



ABSTRACT

The focus of branding is often externally focused, yet it is the employees through their direct interaction with the brand, that can make or break the brand promise. Despite the important role of employees in building the brand, they are often overlooked in brand building strategies.

The purpose of the study was to test the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust in a government organisation. Front-line employees of the South African Post Office, a state-owned organisation in South Africa was selected to collect the data using convenience sampling. Cronbach Alpha and content validity was used to test the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument. The data was not normally distributed and non-parametric tests were performed during data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the basic characteristics of the respondents and the correlation coefficient (Rho) was used to test the relationships between variables. All three hypotheses were accepted.

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The results are consistent with previous research, however, new developments are emerging. For front-line employees to commit to the brand, they must trust the brand, which in turn is created through brand identity. Negative external communication influences the ability of front-line employees to deliver the expected brand promise. Importantly, the role of top management in fostering internal brand management cannot be overlooked.

Keywords: Internal brand management, internal branding, branding, brand identity, brand communication, brand leadership, brand commitment, brand trust

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT	4
CHAPTER 1	
ORIENTATION	
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
1.2 BACKGROUND.....	12
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	13
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION.....	14
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	14
1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	15
1.6.1 Marketing.....	15
1.6.2 Internal marketing.....	15
1.6.3 Branding.....	15
1.6.4 Internal brand management.....	16
1.6.5 Brand commitment.....	16
1.6.6 Brand trust.....	17
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL.....	17
1.8 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS.....	18
1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	20
1.9.1 Research approach.....	20
1.9.2 Data sources and sampling.....	21
1.9.3 Measurement instrument development.....	21
1.9.4 Data analysis.....	22
1.10 DEMARCATION OF STUDY.....	22
1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	23
1.12 CONCLUSION.....	24
CHAPTER 2	
LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	25
2.2 MARKETING.....	25
2.3 INTERNAL MARKETING.....	25

2.4	BRANDING.....	28
2.5	INTERNAL BRANDING.....	31
2.6	INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT.....	34
	2.6.1 Brand identity.....	35
	2.6.2 Brand communication.....	36
	2.6.2 Brand leadership.....	37
2.7	BRAND COMMITMENT.....	38
2.8	BRAND TRUST.....	39
2.9	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	40
2.10	PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	41
2.11	FORMULATED HYPOTHESIS.....	42
2.12	CONCLUSION.....	43
CHAPTER 3		
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	44
3.2	RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY.....	44
3.3	RESEARCH APPROACH.....	45
	3.3.1 Deductive and inductive research approach.....	45
	3.3.2 Quantitative and qualitative research approach.....	46
3.4	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	46
	3.4.1 Collection of data.....	46
	3.4.2 Research design type.....	47
	3.4.3 Data source.....	48
	3.4.4 Research design strategy.....	48
	3.4.5 Data collection method.....	50
	3.4.6 Data collection measurement instrument.....	51
	3.4.7 Pre-testing.....	51
	3.4.8 Sampling.....	52
	3.4.9 Population of study.....	52
	3.4.10 Sample of the population.....	53
3.5	RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY.....	54
	3.5.1 Reliability.....	54
	3.5.2 Validity.....	54

3.6	STATISTICAL ANALYSIS.....	55
	3.6.1 Univariate analysis.....	55
	3.6.2 Bivariate analysis.....	56
	3.6.3 Multivariate analysis.....	56
3.7	ETHICS.....	57
3.8	CONCLUSION.....	57
CHAPTER 4		
RESEARCH RESULTS		
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	58
4.2	RESPONSE RATE.....	58
4.3	RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY RESULTS.....	59
	4.3.1 Reliability results.....	59
	4.3.2 Validity results.....	61
4.4	PROFILE RESPONDENTS.....	61
	4.4.1 Gender.....	61
	4.4.2 Marital status.....	62
	4.4.3 Front-line employees.....	62
	4.4.4 Age.....	63
	4.4.5 Race.....	63
	4.4.6 Years of service.....	64
	4.4.7 Education.....	64
	4.4.8 Salary bracket.....	65
4.5	RESULTS ON A QUESTION-BY-QUESTION BASIS.....	66
	4.5.1 DRIVERS OF INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT.....	66
	(a) Brand identity.....	66
	(b) Brand communication.....	67
	(c) Brand leadership.....	69
	4.5.2 INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCT.....	70
	4.5.2.1 NORMALITY TESTING FOR INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCT.....	72
	4.5.3.1 NORMALITY TESTING FOR BRAND COMMITMENT CONSTRUCT.....	73
	4.5.4 BRAND TRUST CONSTRUCT.....	75

4.5.4.1	NORMALITY TEST FOR BRAND TRUST CONSTRUCT.....	76
4.5.5	MEAN VALUES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CONSTRUCT.....	77
4.6	HYPOTHESIS RESULTS.....	78
4.6.1	H1: INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT WILL HAVE POSITIVE EFFECT ON BRAND COMMITMENT.....	78
4.6.2	H2: INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON TRUST COMMITMENT.....	79
4.6.3	H3: BRAND COMMITMENT WILL HAVE A POSTIVE EFFECT ON BRAND TRUST.....	80
4.7	SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS.....	80
4.8	MAIN FINDINGS.....	81
4.8.1	DRIVERS OF INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT.....	81
4.8.2	INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCT.....	81
4.8.3	BRAND COMMITMENT CONSTRUCT.....	82
4.8.4	BRAND TRUST CONSTRUCT.....	82
4.9	CONCLUSION.....	84
CHAPTER 5		
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH		
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	85
5.2	SUMMARY OF PROBLEM AND MAJOR FINDINGS.....	85
5.2.1	Summary of the problem.....	85
5.2.2	Summary of the major findings.....	86
5.2.3	Major findings based on hypothesis testing.....	86
5.2.4	Major findings in the drivers of internal brand management....	88
5.3	CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY.....	90
5.4	LIMITATIONS.....	91
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	91
5.5.1	Recommendations based on the literature review - theoretical implications.....	91
5.5.2	Recommendations based on empirical research.....	91

5.5.3 Managerial recommendations.....	92
REFERENCE LIST	93
APPENDIX 1: FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE	103
APPENDIX 2: PRE-TESTED QUESTIONNAIRE	106
APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS	108
APPENDIX 4: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH	110



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LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1.1	Conceptual framework.....	18
Figure 2.1	The fundamental understanding of identity based branding.....	36
Figure 2.2	Commitment trust theory of relationship marketing.....	40
Figure 2.3	Proposed conceptual framework of key constructs.....	41
Figure 3.1	Scatterplots of negative, no and positive correlation.....	56
Figure 4.1	Normality testing for the internal brand management construct.....	72
Figure 4.2	Normality testing for the brand commitment construct.....	74
Figure 4.3	Normality testing for the brand trust construct.....	76
Figure 5.1	Summary of major findings of the study.....	86



LIST OF FORMULAS

Formula 3.1	Same size formula.....	53
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LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 3.1	Research design strategies for quantitative research.....	49
Table 3.2	Three types of validity.....	54
Table 4.1	Response rate of postal mail survey.....	58
Table 4.2	Cronbach Alpha reliability test results.....	59
Table 4.3	Cronbach Alpha score per question.....	60
Table 4.4	Profile of respondents: Gender.....	61
Table 4.5	Profile of respondents: Marital status.....	62
Table 4.6	Profile of respondents: Front-line employees.....	62
Table 4.7	Profile of respondents: Age.....	63
Table 4.8	Profile of respondents: Race.....	63
Table 4.9	Profile of respondents: Years of service.....	64
Table 4.10	Profile of respondents: Education.....	64
Table 4.11	Profile of respondents: Salary.....	65
Table 4.12	Profile of SAPO respondents.....	65
Table 4.13	Results of the brand identity questions.....	66
Table 4.14	Results of the brand communication questions.....	67
Table 4.15	Results of the brand leadership questions.....	69
Table 4.16	Results of the internal brand management construct questions.....	70
Table 4.17	Normality testing results for the internal brand management construct.....	72
Table 4.18	Results of the brand commitment construct questions.....	73
Table 4.19	Normality testing results for the brand commitment construct.....	74
Table 4.20	Results of the brand trust construct questions.....	75
Table 4.21	Normality testing results for the brand trust construct.....	76
Table 4.22	Mean values and standard deviations of the constructs.....	77
Table 4.23	Mean values and standard deviations of the drives of the internal brand management construct.....	77
Table 4.24	Results of H ₁	78
Table 4.25	Results of H ₂	79
Table 4.26	Results of H ₃	80
Table 4.27	Summary of hypothesis results.....	80
Table 4.28	Summary of main findings.....	83

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a short background of the research topic is presented, followed by the research problem, research questions and research objectives. A condensed literature review follows, the key constructs are clarified and an overview of the research design and methodology introduced. This is followed by a demarcation of this study and a chapter outline that depicts the structure of this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Globally, CEO's believe that the next three years (2017 – 2020) will influence their industries even more than the past fifty years. Customer loyalty and product or services relevance are of critical concern. In order to transform and respond to these changes, fostering innovation, a stronger client focus, implementing disruptive technology, talent development and stronger marketing, branding together with communication are identified as the top five strategic priorities to take their business forward (KPMG, 2016:7). The scope of marketing will have to move from selling products towards a brand management approach to differentiate one organisation from another in order to attract and retain the perceptive consumer of today.

The purpose of building a strong brand is to develop functional and non-functional benefits that differentiate one organisation from another in the form of a brand promise. However, delivery of the brand promise remains a critical organisational challenge as it is the organisation's employees that are ultimately responsible to deliver the communicated brand promise. Therefore, employees are an important element to the success of the brand (Piehler, Grace, & Burmann, 2018:197).

While the focus of external marketing is the customer, internal marketing is about promoting the company brand to the employees, encouraging them to support, promote and live the organisation's brand (Strategic Direction, 2015: 33). When

companies embrace internal marketing, employees have a better understanding of the brand promise, they are encouraged to believe in the brand, to work harder and better. This notion is supported by Narteh and Odoom (2015:112) who emphasised “that employees are the most vital company asset, they must be nurtured, supervised, and motivated in order to achieve corporate objectives”.

Given the intangible nature of the service industry, people provide the basis of the brand and are critical to the success of the brand strategy. Developing strong brands will not only help service organisations to survive, but will enable them to thrive in challenging situations (Pinar, Girard, Trapp and Eser, 2015:529). Therefore, especially in service organisations, it is important that employees not only understand what the brand stands for, they must support and be committed to the brand promise (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010:381). Most institutions, however, spend little time and effort on internal marketing, yet it is employees that can strengthen or weaken a brand.

The customer’s attitude towards the company is dependent on the whole experience with the company, not just its products or services. Everyone in the organisation therefore influence the customer experience and ultimately the customer’s level of satisfaction. Against this backdrop, internal brand management, a branch of internal marketing, has become a strategic priority in which employees are nurtured to live the brand.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The important role of employees, especially in the service sector, cannot be over emphasised. From the customer’s viewpoint employees are the most important feature of the service. Organisations must recognise that the level of delivery on the brand promise by employees are a direct reflection of how they treat their employees internally. A lack of brand commitment will negatively affect the brand as employees in their interactions with the brand either promote or have a negative effect on the brand (Yeboah, Ewur, Adigbo & Asirifi, 2014:218-219).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question is to determine if internal brand management has an effect on brand commitment and brand trust.

1.4.1 Primary research question

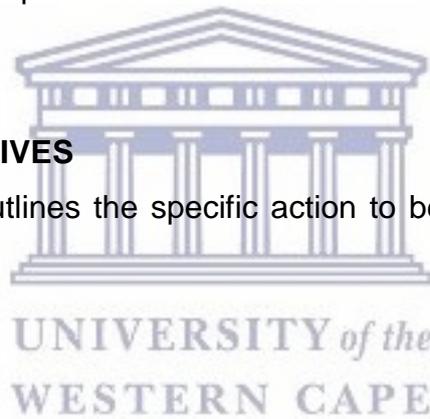
What effect does internal brand management have on brand commitment and brand trust?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

- (i) What are the drivers of internal brand management?
- (ii) What is the relationship between internal brand management and brand commitment?
- (iii) What is the relationship between internal brand management and brand trust?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives outlines the specific action to be taken in order to answer the research questions.



1.5.1 Primary objective

To explore the relationship between internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

- (i) Explore the concept of internal brand management.
- (ii) Examine the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment.
- (iii) Examine the effect of internal brand management on brand trust.
- (iv) Analyse if there is a relationship between brand commitment and brand trust.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review introduces key marketing concepts in relation to the concept of internal brand management and propose a conceptual framework that depict the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust.

1.6.1 Marketing

According to Du Plessis, Strydom and Jooste (2012:5) “marketing is the process by which organisations create value in the form of ideas, goods and services, to facilitate satisfying exchange relationships and to capture the value from customers”. A new development in marketing is relationship marketing in the form of building long-term relationships that are beneficial to both the customer and the organisation. Successful relationship marketing is dependent on competent staff to support the customer orientation, cross-functional collaboration and teamwork (Du Plessis et al., 2012:12).



1.6.2 Internal Marketing

Ahmed and Rafiq (2003:222) define internal marketing as a “planned effort to overcome organisational resistance to change and to align, motivate and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies”. Berry (1981:34) defined internal marketing as “viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organisation”. These definitions of internal marketing emphasise the need to communicate to employees the important role they play in achieving the organisation’s strategic objectives. Kotler, Armstrong and Tait (2011:258) echo that internal marketing must come before external marketing.

1.6.3 Branding

Keller (2012:125) emphasised that a “brand is not built by accident but is the product of carefully accomplishing a series of logically linked steps with consumers”.

Branding as a marketing practice refers “to the name, sign, symbol, term, design or combination of these elements used to identify an organisation’s products and to distinguish them from those of competitors” (Du Plessis et al., 2012:210). However, brands are more than just names and symbols. They represent how a brand is perceived in the eye of the consumer that has a direct impact on the brand’s performance and position in the marketplace (Kotler et al., (2011:246). In the service sectors, brands are critical as they offer a way to limit alternative options available to potential buyers.

1.6.4 Internal Brand Management

According to Piehler, Grace and Burmann (2018:197) vast amount of literature exist on external brand management, however limited research exists on internal brand management. Internal brand management is defined by MacLavery, McQuillan & Oddie, (2007:3) “as the set of strategic processes that align and empower employees to deliver the appropriate customer experience in a consistent manner”. In the competitive business world with similar product offerings, brands are faced with decreased brand loyalty and often weaker advertising effectiveness. An effective tool for creating and maintaining strong brands is through internal brand management as it serves as a platform to acquiring a sustainable competitive advantage whose position in the market is not easily threatened or copied. The fact that employee behaviour lies at the heart of any brand, strengthen the importance of internal brand management (Burmann, Zeplin & Riley, 2009:265). The focus of internal branding is thus the employees of the organisation (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010:402). However, the task of motivating employees to build and strengthen an organisation’s brand image remains a challenge for many organisations (Morhart, Herzog & Tomczak, 2009:122).

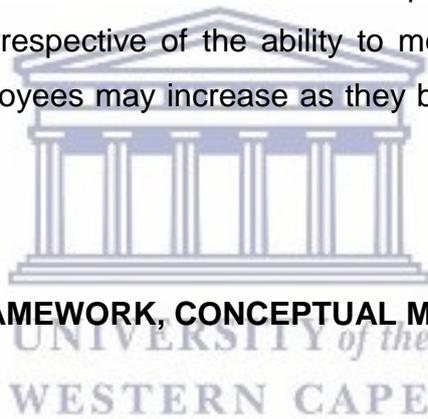
1.6.5 Brand Commitment

Brand commitment is defined by Burmann and Zeplin (2005:284) as “the extent of psychological attachment of employees to the brand, which influences their willingness to exert extra effort towards reaching the brand goals, in other words, to

exert brand citizenship behaviours”. It is important to understand the employee’s commitment to the organisation and to its brand, as employees become brand ambassadors, through commitment. Brand commitment is critical to the service industry as employees deliver the brand experience. This experience in turn creates the brand spirit and allows customers to develop an emotional connection with the brand.

1.6.6 Brand Trust

Delgado-Ballester (2003:11) defined brand trust as the “feeling of security held by the consumer in his/her interaction with the brand. Mayer and Davis (1995:712) defined trust as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trust or, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party”. Brand trust of employees may increase as they become more attached and committed to the brand.



1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

The literature on internal brand management is grounded in the theoretical framework of the commitment – trust theory of Morgan and Hunt that explains that “successful relationship marketing requires relationship commitment and trust” (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:20). Trust is present when “one partner has confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability” (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:23). Based on the theoretical framework of Morgan and Hunt (1994:33) the following conceptual model is proposed in Figure 1.1 below.

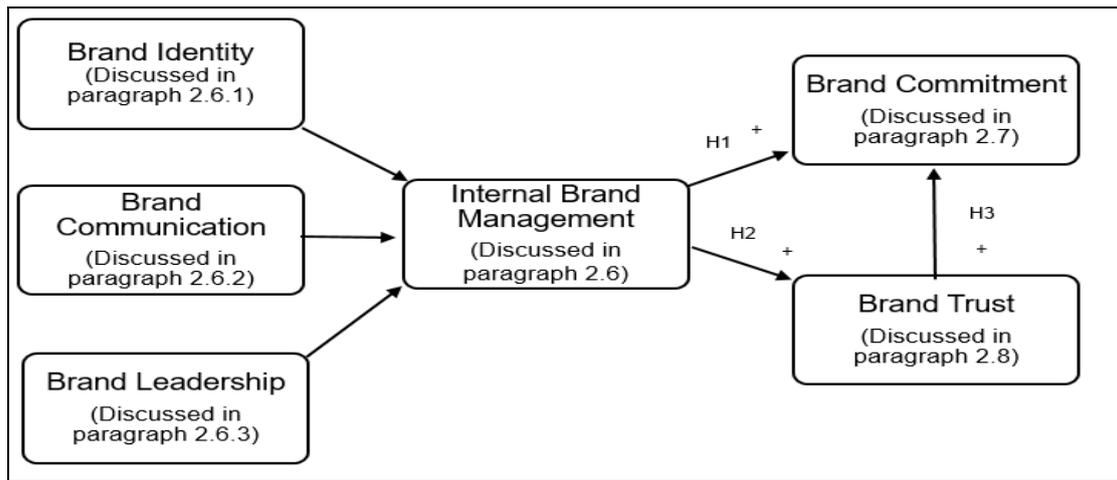


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

Based on the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.1 above, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H₁: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand commitment.
- H₂: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand trust.
- H₃: Brand commitment will have a positive effect on brand trust.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONSTRUCTS

The key constructs are explained in paragraph 1.8.2 to paragraph 1.8.7 below and form the basis of the literature review to seek answers to the research questions of this study.

1.8.1 Internal Marketing and Internal Brand Management

Internal marketing is defined as a “planned effort to overcome organisational resistance to change and to align, motivate and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies” (Ahmed and Rafiq (2003:222). Internal brand management is defined by MacLaverly et al., (2007:3) in paragraph 1.6.4 “as the set of strategic processes that align and empower employees to deliver the appropriate customer experience in a consistent manner”. Although internal marketing and internal brand management has evolved over time,

in literature, these concepts are often used interchangeably (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:81).

1.8.2 Internal Brand Management

Brand identity, brand leadership and brand communication has been identified as the three modern drivers of internal brand management (Burmamann & Zeplin, 2005:286).

(a) Brand Identity

According to Punjaisri and Wilson (2011:1526) brand identity is linked to the employee's sense of belonging to the brand and is achieved through a recruitment, selection and promotion process, training, mentorship and social functions.

(b) Brand Communication

Brand communication consists of two components, namely "internal and external communication" where an awareness and understanding of what the brand stands for is generated through internal communications (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:83).

(c) Brand Leadership

Chang and Ko (2014:65) defines brand leadership as the "consumer's perception about the relatively distinctive ability of a brand to continually achieve excellence through sufficient combinations of trendsetting and brand positioning within an industry segment" and is achieved through employee encouragement to "live the brand".

1.8.3 Brand Commitment

Brand commitment is defined "as the extent of psychological attachment that employees feel towards the brand" (Piehler, King, Burmann & Xiong, 2016:1578; Du Preez & Benidxen, 2015:281; King & Grace 2012:471). It is important to not only understand the employee's level of commitment to the organisation, but also their commitment to the brand. It is employees through their interactions with customers that become brand ambassadors. Employees may negatively affect the brand if they do not commit to it.

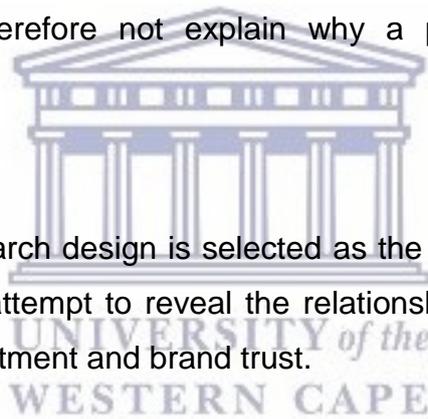
1.8.4 Brand Trust

A strong predictor of commitment is trust. If employees have trust in the organisation's reliability and integrity they become more committed to the brand (Erkmen & Hancer, 2014:2).

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design is the framework / blueprint of how the research will be conducted in order to obtain the information needed to answer the research questions (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2011:501). There are three broad types of research design methods – exploratory, descriptive and causal. Whereas exploratory research design provide insight and understanding of a problem, causal research design test hypotheses and examine relationships. Descriptive research is based on existing data and can therefore not explain why a phenomena has occurred (Blumberg, et al., 2011:9).

For this study, causal research design is selected as the most appropriate design as the research process will attempt to reveal the relationship between internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust.



1.9.1 Research Approach

Qualitative and quantitative research are two types of research approaches used to conduct business research. The distinct difference between the two approaches are that “quantitative research employs measurement and qualitative do not” (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, Dos Santos, Du Toit, Masenge, Van Aedt and Wagner, 2016:30). A quantitative research approach, through the use of a self-administered structured questionnaire will be used to collect the data of this study.

1.9.2 Data Sources and Sampling

The population for this study are the 5427 employees of the South African Post Office (SAPO), a state-owned enterprise, located in the Western Cape region of South Africa. The sampling frame containing the list of names, designation and geographic location of all employees has been sourced from the Human Resource Department. The unit of analysis is the front-line employees of SAPO that interact directly with customers that walk into the retail store and employees that interact with customers directly in the public domain.

Convenience sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, will be used as the researcher has direct access to the population, are least expensive and least time consuming. However, convenience sampling is not without limitations. There are many sources of selection bias and the sample may not be representative of the population, which means generalisation of the findings is not possible. In spite of these limitations, convenience sampling is appropriate as it is “available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility” (Bryman et. al., 2016:178). The self-administered questionnaire will only be distributed to geographical sites with more than four front-line employees. Selection bias are limited as the researcher will only play a role in identifying the location of the front-line employees and not who complete the actual questionnaire. In addition, recent studies (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:82; Yang, Wan & Wu, 2015:272; Erkmen & Hancer, 2014:4) on internal brand management found convenience sampling to be an effective sampling method.

1.9.3 Measurement Instrument Development

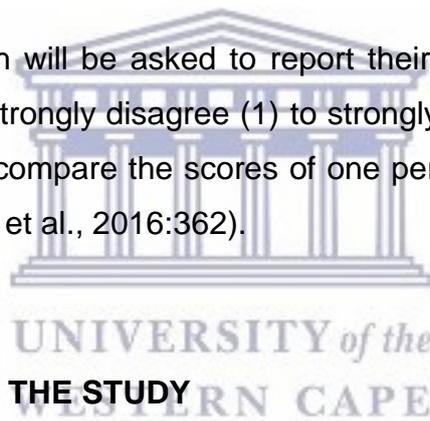
The measurement instrument for this study, a self-administered structured questionnaire, will consist of a combination of previously tested measurement instruments. The internal brand management construct will be measured with the Du Preez and Bendixen (2015:90) instrument, originally developed by Burmann and Zeplin (2005:286). Brand trust and brand commitment will be measured with the Erkmen and Hancer (2014:5) instrument. The purpose of the combined measurement instrument is to explore the effect of internal brand management on

brand commitment and brand trust as illustrated in the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1.

1.9.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the process of editing and reducing the collected data to a manageable size, looking for patterns in the data and applying statistical techniques in order to make sense of the data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a computer software, will be used to analyse the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics will be used to display the characteristics of the data set. Multivariate analysis, a statistical technique, will be used to explore the structure of the relationship between three or more constructs (Blumberg et al., 2011:490-497).

Participants in the research will be asked to report their responses on a five point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). A Likert scale will help the researcher to compare the scores of one person with that of the rest of the sample group (Bryman, et al., 2016:362).



1.10 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

This study will be limited to the front-line employees located in the Western Cape region employed by the South African Post Office. Notwithstanding the close correlation between customers and branding, the research will only focus on internal brand management in relation to employees, not customers. Internal brand management strategies are excluded, as it does not form part of the purpose of this study. Also, taking into consideration one disadvantage of convenience sampling is the possibility of bias, the findings will not be able to be generalised outside this study.

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study is divided into five chapters.

1.11.1 Chapter 1

The chapter begins with a background of the research topic, followed by a problem statement, the research questions and then the research objectives. A condensed literature review with a clarification of the key concepts are discussed. A theoretical and a conceptual framework is then presented, followed by an abbreviated research design and methodology section that covers the measurement instrument development, sampling process and the techniques to be used for data analysis. A demarcation of the research study and a chapter outline concludes Chapter 1.

1.11.2 Chapter 2

The chapter discusses the theory related to the research questions through a literature review that presents similarities, differences and gaps in previous literature. A theoretical framework forms the foundation of the conceptual framework that supports the key concepts. Chapter 2 is concluded with a short summary of the key issues discussed.

1.11.3 Chapter 3

The chapter explains the research design and methodology. The development of the measurement instrument is outlined, the data set clearly defined and advantages and disadvantages of sampling techniques used are discussed. Data validity, reliability and trustworthiness are outlined.

1.11.4 Chapter 4

The results are presented using statistical techniques to accept or reject the hypotheses presented in Chapter 1.

1.11.5 Chapter 5

The results of the study are discussed. A conclusion and recommendations for future research are presented based on the findings of the research study. Limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the roadmap of this study that started with a background to the research topic. The research objectives and questions were clarified. An abbreviated literature review, research methodology and design was presented. The chapter concluded with an overview of the chapters to follow.

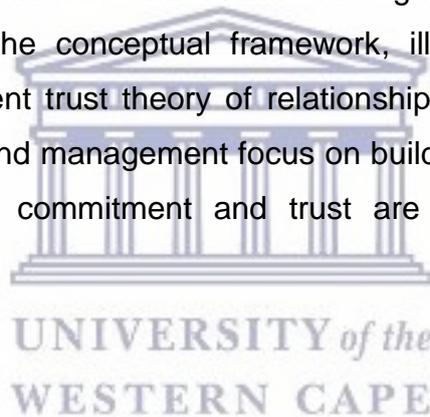
The next chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of the existing literature concerning internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust. A theoretical framework and a conceptual framework is then presented to formulate the hypotheses of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review section considers the relevant theory on internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust. Literature in the form of journal articles, books, websites and other materials are used to explain, support and / or disagree with the existing theory. The arguments of this study are aligned to Du Preez and Bendixen (2015:87) who states that “a successful internal brand management program would result in frontline employees living the brand while interacting with customers”. The comprehensive literature review on internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust guided the mapping of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 1.1, is grounded in the commitment trust theory of relationship marketing of Morgan and Hunt (1994) as internal brand management focus on building long term relationships with employees of which commitment and trust are the foundation of strong relationships.



2.2 MARKETING

Marketing is defined as “the process by which firms create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017:5). More than any other business function, the focus of marketing is customers, both internal and external. Gone are the days of thinking marketing is about selling and advertising.

2.3 INTERNAL MARKETING

External marketing is aimed at persuading customers to buy and remain loyal to the organisation’s products. Internal marketing emphasises that employees are the

organisation's first customer (Palmer, 2010:327) who deserve the effort of being convinced of what the organisation sets out to achieve.

The need for internal marketing was first made famous in the 1980's when the idea that employees should be viewed as customers came to light. Berry and Parasuraman (1991:151) defined internal marketing as "attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs and is the philosophy of treating employees as customers and it is the strategy of shaping job-products to fit human needs". Based on internal marketing literature of over 25 years, Rafiq and Ahmed (2000:454) presented a more rigorous definition in that "internal marketing is a planned effort using a marketing-like approach to overcome organisational resistance to change and to align, motivate and inter-functionally co-ordinate and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies in order to deliver customer satisfaction through a process of creating motivated and customer orientated employees". Authors (2015:33) supports this definition and argues that internal marketing is about promoting the organisation from within so that employees are "likely to be more satisfied with their job than employees who feel somewhat excluded from the big picture and consequently may be more likely to leave". Roberts-Lombard (2010:363), acknowledge that "no single business management function is effective if it operates in isolation" and "through internal marketing, silo's in organisations are discouraged and cross-functional activities are encouraged".

Boukis, Kostopoulus and Katsaridou (2014:127) further explains that internal marketing can be used for helping employees embrace organisational values and facilitate a better fit with their working environment. Mishra (2010:189) emphasised the following:

- Firstly, internal marketing helps to build the corporate image by creating "awareness and appreciation" of the organisation's strategic objectives by integrating the "business culture, structure, human resources management, vision and strategy" with the employee's needs.

- Secondly, internal marketing develops and supports the need for change. Employee resistance to change is reduced, which enables the successful implementation of change management strategies and transformation strategies achieved through mergers, alliances or downsizing.
- Thirdly, internal marketing promotes employee empowerment and accountability. Motivated and engaged employees are less likely to leave the organisation, resulting in reduced staff turnover, recruitment and training cost.
- Fourthly, internal marketing enhance organisational commitment. Through internal marketing, employees feel cared for by management, thereby enhancing the service quality they provide to external customers.

Organisations must keep in mind that it is employees through their direct interaction with customers that have the potential to make or break the organisation (Trapp, 2016:530). Therefore, it is critical for organisations to implement internal marketing initiatives to encourage employees to commit willingly to satisfying the needs and wants of customers. However, employees must support the organisation's internal marketing efforts since they are expected to render an effective and efficient service to the organisation's external customers. Therefore, internal marketing encourage and build relationships between the organisation's employees and management (Roberts-Lombard, 2010:371).

In service organisations, the importance of internal marketing to front-line employees cannot be over emphasised. Kotler et al., (2011:258) re-iterate that "internal marketing means that the service firm orient and motivate its customer-orientated employees to work as a team to provide customer satisfaction". Thus, effective internal marketing in service organisations results in front-line employees "who are productive, satisfied and capable of delivering a superior quality of service" (Du Preez Bendixen & Abratt, 2017:251).

2.4 BRANDING

Aaker in his book “Aaker on branding: 20 principles that drive success” writes: “Brands are an organisation’s promise to a customer to deliver what the brand stands for not only in terms of functional benefits but also emotional, self-expressive and social benefits. Brands are a journey, an evolving relationship based on the perceptions and experiences that a customer have every time he or she connects to the brand. Brands are powerful and serve as the core of the customer relationship, a platform for strategic options and a force that affects financials, including stock return” (Aaker, 2014:12).

Brands have evolved and are more than being referred to in traditional marketing practices as “the name, sign, symbol, term, design or a combination of these elements used to identify an organisation’s products and to distinguish them from those of competitors” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017:232; Du Plessis et al., 2012:210; Kotler et al., 2011:242). Today, brands are considered and managed as organisational assets that “encompasses issues like strategic market insights, the simulation of “big” innovations, growth strategies, brand portfolio strategies and global brand strategies. Organisations that consider brands as assets, change their brand management strategies from “tactical and reactive to strategic and visionary” (Aaker, 2014:12-20).

A strong brand positively influences the consumer’s perception of the brand and thereby enhances brand equity. Keller (2012:29) admits that brand equity has been “defined in a number of different ways for a number of different purposes” and that “no common viewpoint has emerged about how to conceptualise and measure brand equity”. However, a formal definition of brand equity is provided as “the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on the customer response to the product or service” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017:238; Keller, 2012:41; Kotler et. al., 2011:246). A high brand equity influence customer loyalty towards the brand irrespective of price and protects the brand against fierce competition.

Consumers are faced with complex lifestyles and similar service offerings from competitors, therefore to consumers, brands take on a special meaning. Brands help consumers find out “which brands satisfy their needs and which ones does not” and help consumers to “define who they are or who they would like to be” (Keller, 2012:6). For consumers, brands simplify the purchasing decision, reduce the purchasing risk and provide customers with the confidence of the guaranteed service quality process (Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2016:256). Consumers offer their loyalty to the brand with the understanding that the brand will consistently perform in a way that satisfy their needs (Keller, 2012:6).

The customer relationship, rather than functional benefits of the brand becomes a source of meaningful differentiation as competitors cannot copy the organisations “people, culture, heritage, assets and capabilities” (Aaker, 2014:55). Through the customer relationship, customers offer their trust and loyalty to the brand (Keller, 2008:8) which in turn “helps profitability by adding value that entices customers to buy” (de Chernatony, McDonald & Wallace, 2011:25). Thus, a strong brand forms the basis for “building strong and profitable customer relationships” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017:238) and can help organisations achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Xiong & King, 2015:58; Authors, 2015:34; Santos-Vijande, Belén, Suárez-Alvarez, & Díaz-Martín, 2013:150; Kotler et al., 2011:247). Therefore, “in many markets, relationships have become a new source of differentiation” (Palmer, 2010:66) because “brands allow the organisation to think of the relationship between a brand and the consumer as a type of bond or pact” (Keller, 2012:6).

The different components (brand names, URL’s, logos, symbols, package designs or other characteristics) that distinguish one brand from another are referred to as brand elements (Keller, 2012:31). Brand elements serve as a form of identification for both products and services organisations. Each brand element has different strengths and weaknesses, therefore marketers use a combination of brand elements to build brand equity. To create favourable brand elements that enhance brand awareness and brand association, Keller (2012:114-119) explains that the brand elements must adhere to six criteria’s.

- First, brand elements should be memorable in that they capture attention and are easily recognised by the consumer.
- Second, brand elements should have meaning for the consumer in that they represent general information, attributes and benefits about the product or service.
- Third, the brand elements should be likeable enough by the consumer so that it reduce the need for marketing communications.
- Fourth, brand elements should be transferable to enhance the brand across product lines and geographical boundaries.
- Fifth, brand elements should be adaptable in order to remain relevant as customer preferences change.
- Sixth, brand elements should be protectable in both the legal and competitive environment.

Organisations have control over certain elements of their brand, for example, their brand name and advertising. However, it is the brand experience that forms the foundation of the customer relationship. In service organisations, the brand experience is the most important element of the brand. It is the customer's actual experience with the brand that influences "brand meaning", i.e. the customer's dominant perceptions of the brand". For the brand experience to be a source of differentiation, it should be "pleasant, exceed expectations and inspire people to talk about positive interactions" (Aaker, 2014:100). However, the opposite are also true as the customer relationship are threatened when the brand do not live up to the customer expectations. A poor brand experience can result in customers "close the door opened by the presented brand" (Berry, 2016:4) and may result in financial loss for the organisation, loss of loyal customers and a poor brand reputation (Hsiao, Shen, & Chao, 2015:863). Therefore, everyone in the organisation must live the brand in order to effectively position the brand in the mind of the targeted customers. Organisations should train employees to be customer focused to ensure employees understand the brand, live the brand and are enthusiastic about the brand experience (Kotler et al., 2011:255).

For the organisation, brands serve as a form of identification with inventory management and accounting purposes and assist the organisation to track product performance. In addition, the organisation is rewarded with a strong and loyal customer base as the brand allow satisfied customers to choose the product over and over. The brand loyalty from repeat customers in turn offers the organisation protection against new firms entering the market. Furthermore, the unique features of the product or service offers the organisation with legal protection through registered trademarks, patents and copyright. Through this legal protection, the organisation is able to invest in the brand and ultimately enjoy the benefits of the brand building initiatives (Keller, 2012:7).

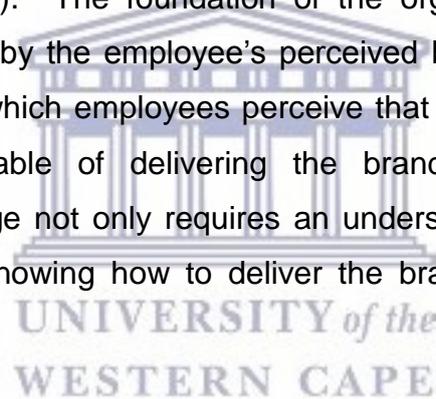
Brands serve as a form of identification for both products and service organisations and for both organisations, the brand strategy are similar. Both organisations focus outward to “identify market opportunities, segmenting the market, or positioning the brand” (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015:2). Given the intangible nature of service organisations, a different approach is needed to build a strong brand (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010:378) as the brand benefits are mostly experienced through the feeling(s) it evokes. Therefore, it important for service industries to focus inward as it is through the attitude and behaviour of employees that brand promise is delivered to external stakeholders (Piehler, et al., 2016:1580; Xiong, King, & Piehler, 2013:349). For this reason, the employee’s role in building the brand should be included in brand management strategies (King & Grace, 2012:469).

2.5 INTERNAL BRANDING

During the 1970’s to 1990’s the term internal marketing referred to marketing that relates to employees. Since the mid 1990’s up to today, the term internal branding are more commonly used in literature to explain internal marketing. It is believed that internal branding is an important subset of internal marketing (Du Preez et.al., 2017:251; Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:79).

Punjaisri and Wilson (2011:1523), defined internal branding “as the activities undertaken by an organisation to ensure that the brand promise reflecting the espoused brand values that set customer’s expectations is enacted and delivered by employees”. Internal branding requires employees to consciously commit to promoting the brand promise. Natarajan, Balasubramaniam and Srinivasan (2017:95) supports this notion stating “that internal branding influence employees’ knowledge, commitment and image of the brand”. Importantly, Du Preez & Bendixen (2015:80) recognise that “to date no single definition of internal branding has been accepted”.

Internal branding emphasise ‘that an organisation’s employees are its first market (Kaplan, 2017:10) that can be converted into brand champions (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014:324) to serve as a source of competitive advantage (Natarajan et al., 2017:95). The foundation of the organisation’s desired brand performance is influenced by the employee’s perceived brand knowledge, which is “defined as the extent to which employees perceive that they know what the brand represents and are capable of delivering the brand promise to customers. Therefore, brand knowledge not only requires an understanding of what the brand stands for, but includes knowing how to deliver the brand promise (Xiong et al., 2013:351).



Piehler, Hanisch and Burmann (2015:55) found that the desired outcome of internal branding is brand citizenship defined as “all employee behaviours that are consistent with brand identity and brand promise and in sum strengthen the brand”. Through brand citizenship, all employees, irrespective of whether they interact with the customer or not, focus on advancing the brand. It is the employees positive brand supporting behaviours that differentiates one organisation from their competitors (Du Preez et al., 2017:252). However, multiple internal branding strategies are required because how employees strengthen the brand depends on their role in the organisation (Piehler et al., 2016:1577).

Aaker (2014:134-135), emphasised that internal branding offer the organisation several benefits.

- First, internal branding informs employees of what the brand stands for and offer direction of the expected behaviour of employees that support the brand.
- Second, through internal branding employees are motivated and inspired to come up with innovative brand building ideas as they are aware of when the brand message is delivered or when not.
- Third, internal branding energize employees to talk about the brand in a positive way, be it to another employee, an external customer, a family member, a neighbour. This positive communication is extremely important to the organisation as it builds the brand from the inside out.
- Fourth, through internal branding, employees are provided with meaning and fulfilment in their jobs, which leads to more productive and committed employees.

For the organisation to enjoy the benefits of internal branding, it is critical to overcome organisational challenges. Internal branding requires a paradigm shift from organisational quick wins to mid and long term gains as it “involves a change of employee understanding, attitude and behaviour, as well as a change of structures and processes”. Organisations need to move away from viewing internal branding as internal advertising (e.g. company intranets with top-down information) that ignore the importance of creating brand identity, external brand communication and brand leadership. It is thus required of management to have a clear understanding of internal branding and the available internal branding managerial tools (Piehler et al., 2015:59).

Internal branding entails continuous change “concerning structures, processes, management, leadership, and communication”. Management should be mindful that internal branding entails resistance to the change management process across the organisation (Piehler et al., 2015:59). Companies should view internal branding as a critical strategic business objective rather than it become a consequence of human resource management (Authors, 2015:34). Therefore, the success of any internal

branding initiative depends on commitment from the top (Aaker, 2014:135). It requires top management to live the brand promise by being transparent, responsive and accountable in their interactions with employees and customers. However, as internal branding initiatives are driven and designed from the top, employees may be resistant to the initiative (Vatsa, 2016:12).

2.6 INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT

Internal marketing and internal brand management are often interchangeable even though both concepts have evolved over time (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:80). Internal brand management is “a sub-set of internal marketing that focus on developing, strengthening and maintaining the organisation's brand” (Poricelli, Yurova, Abratt & Bendixen (2014:746). Whereas internal marketing is often met with resistance as the top down approach allows for very little employee involvement, internal brand management strives to build employees that willingly embodies the brand and deliver the brand promise to customers (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:87; Authors, 2015:34; King & Grace, 2012:474).



Internal brand management is defined as an “effective tool for creating and maintaining strong brands” and a source of competitive advantage that are achieved by meeting customer expectations through employees that consistently deliver the brand values (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011:1523). The purpose of internal brand management is to develop, maintain, strengthen and promote the organisation’s brand internally (Xiong & King, 2015:66). Internal brand management has advanced as organisations realised the value of employees who are aware and motivated by the brand promise (Du Preez et al., 2017:252).

Burmann and Zeplin (2005:286) developed the modern concept of internal brand management. The authors believed that there are three drivers of internal brand management - brand identity, brand communication and brand leadership. Brand

identity focus on creating employee awareness and understanding of the brand. Brand communication is created through maintaining and enhancing awareness and understanding of the brand. Brand leadership is encouraged through employees to “live the brand” (Du Preez et al., 2017:253; Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:81; Porricelli et al., 2014:746).

2.6.1 Brand Identity

The theory of brand identity is often interchanged with corporate or organisational identity and symbolise the vision, the mission and influence the strategic direction of the organisation. Traditionally, brand identity has been identified as “a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain” (Aaker, 1996:68) and as a tool that “represents what the organisation can and will do over time” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000:13). More recently, brand identity has been found to be a key concept in brand management that determines how the brand act, think and behave and “defines not only the purpose and meaning of the brand, but also the directions to follow” (Buil, Catalán, & Martínez, 2016:4).

However, da Silveira, Lagas and Simoes (2011:29) expressed there is a blurred distinction of what brand identity is - internal vision, external perception of customer or a combination of both? Piehler et al., (2016:1591) found that employing the right kind of employees with similar values of the organisation are more likely to exhibit the acceptable brand attitudes and behaviours that enhance brand commitment.

The focus of brand identity is to enhance awareness and understanding of the organisation’s brand. For employees to identify with the brand and deliver on the brand promise, employees must have brand knowledge. When employees have brand knowledge, they are aware of the organisation’s promise made to its customers and they understand their role in delivering the promise. Employees can only deliver the brand promise if they identify with the organisation’s brand and understand how their job function enhances the brand promise (Xiong & King, 2018:68; Xiong et al., 2013:349). Therefore, brand knowledge helps employees to deliver the desired brand experience, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

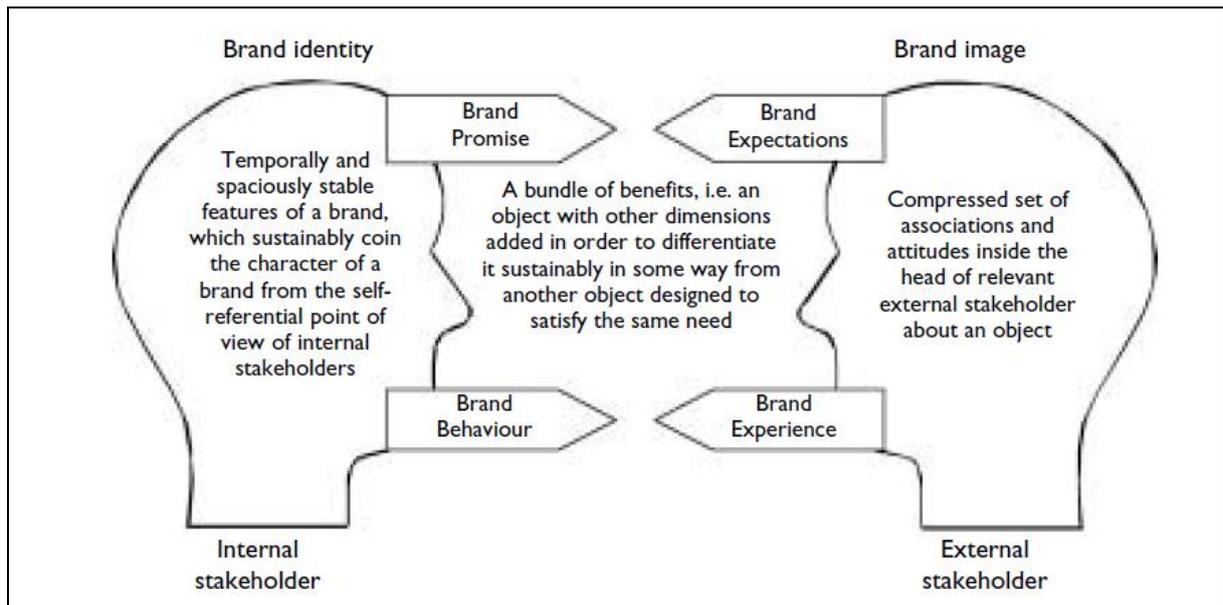


Figure 2.1: The fundamental understanding of identity based branding
Source: Adapted from Meffert, Burmann and Kirchgeorg (2008:359)

Figure 2.1 above depicts that brand identity influences brand image. Brand identity reminds employees of the brand promise and the expected brand behaviour needed to deliver a positive customer experience. Natarajan et al., (2017:99) found that the employee’s understanding and knowledge of the brand is a critical requirement for achieving a positive brand image outside the organisation.



2.6.2 Brand Communication

Internal brand management reinforces brand awareness and understanding among employees through brand communications (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:81). Brand communication is a powerful managerial tool (Piehler et al., 2015:19) that facilitates the distribution of information and shapes how the employee identify with the brand (Vallaster & Lindgreen, 2013:299). Brand communication forms the foundation to manage brand relationships and expose the brand to all stakeholders. By exposing the brand, an increased awareness of the brand is created, which is critical to the brand success as customers will buy the brand “which has the highest recall rate”. Brand communication affects the customer’s response to the brand which can be measured in “brand awareness, in terms of recall and recognition, favourability,

strength and uniqueness of the brand associations in the consumer memory” (Zehir, Kitapçı, & Öz, 2011:1219).

Brand communication consist of two components, namely “internal and external communication”. Even though brand identity and external brand communication are critical for successful internal brand management, “internal brand communication is the most important contributor” (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:83). Engagement in internal communication lead employees to “authentic and congruent brand value perceptions” and help employees to “engage in brand building behaviours that enhance customer evaluations of delivered service” (Baker, Rapp & Meyer, 2014:13). This is in support of Wallace and de Chernatony, (2011:482) who advocate a paradigm shift from believing that employees only play a role in delivering the brand promise, to taking employees into account when communicating the brand by encouraging participation and feedback. When organisations positively engage employees through internal brand communication, employees are more likely to promote the organisation’s brand through positive word of mouth (Bughin, Doogan & Vetvik, 2010:2).

2.6.3 Brand Leadership

According to Rashid and Ghose (2015:6), brand identity and brand communication are important pre-requirements of brand leadership. Chang and Ko (2014:65) defines brand leadership as the “consumer’s perception about the relatively distinctive ability of a brand to continually achieve excellence through sufficient combinations of trendsetting and brand positioning within an industry segment”. Previously, in the area of luxury branding, internal branding was conceptualised as “a consumer assessment that a brand is successful, visionary and is up-to-date with the latest trends” (Miller & Mills, 2012:1474).

Brand leadership enhance understanding of market dynamics by providing insight into the competitive relationship between brands in a specific industry segment. The strategic direction of organisations is influenced by brand leadership as the brand leader sets an example and influence other brands in “visible (imitation products)

and invisible forms (organisation's vision or goals)". Brand leadership influences the competitiveness among leading and following brands and reflects the brand leader's competitive advantage over other brands (Chang & Ko, 2014:64-65).

The purpose of brand leadership is to position the organisation towards brand performance and sustainability. By creating brand leadership among consumers, organisations "procure and cultivate loyal customers" and "positively influence brand equity and consumption behaviour". However, for brand leadership to be a source of competitive advantage, effective brand positioning and communication are critical. If consumers perceive brand traits of the brand leader in competing brands, the brand leader risks loss of market share to the competing brand. The competing brand then has a "strong potential to become a brand leader" (Chang & Ko, 2014:65).

To date, little research has explored the basic concept of brand leadership (Chang & Ko, 2014:77), as well as what brand leadership means from the employee's perspective. However, Poricelli et al., (2014:750) found that brand leadership contributes to internal brand management "indicating that associates want to feel informed about the brand and what it stands for". Yet, Du Preez and Bendixen (2015:83) found that brand leadership "failed to materialise as a component of internal brand management". Thus, conflicting findings on brand leadership in relation to internal brand management exist.

2.7 BRAND COMMITMENT

From the employee's perspective brand commitment as explained by Burmann and Zeplin (2005:284) is defined "as the extent of psychological attachment that employees feel towards the brand" (Piehler et al., 2016:1578; Du Preez & Benidxen, 2015:281; King & Grace 2012:471). To drive employee brand commitment, it is important to understand the employee's relationship with the organisation and the brand promise as employees only become brand advocates when they are

committed. Therefore, brand commitment “is defined as the psychological attachment or the feeling of belonging an employee has towards the brand (King, 2010:520). However, limited research exists on what drives the employee’s relationship to become committed to the company brand (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015:48; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010:381).

From the customer perspective, brand commitment as a marketing concept is defined as the customer’s desire to maintain a positive relationship with a brand due to previous positive interactions (Hsiao et al., 2015:863). However, Gazzoli, Hancer and Kim, (2013:383) argues that the customer’s perception of the experienced interaction is influenced by the employee’s commitment to the organisation’s brand. King, So and Grace (2013:173) states that “the service provider plays a critical role in forming customer perceptions of a service brand” and therefore, the employee’s commitment to the brand and the brand promise cannot be over emphasised.

Employees, exhibiting desired work related attitudes and behaviours, are responsible to deliver the brand promise to external stakeholders. Therefore, “employees represent a relevant target for brand management efforts” (Piehler et al., 2016:1576). Employees commitment to “living the brand” (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:80) is achieved by motivating employees to not only deliver basic service quality, but “to deliver a brand-aligned experience to customers that truly differentiates the brand from other brands that provide similar services” (Xiong & King, 2018:14).

2.8 BRAND TRUST

The basis of all human relationships is trust. According to Erkmen and Hancer, (2015:2) “trust has been proposed to be a strong predictor to explain commitment” and it has been defined as “existing when one party has confidence in the exchange partner's reliability and integrity” (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010: 380; Morgan & Hunt, 1994:23). More recently, Delgado-Ballester (2011:11) defined brand trust as the “feeling of security held by the consumer in his/her interaction with the brand, that it is based on the perceptions that the brand is reliable and responsible for the interests and welfare of the consumer”.

Brand trust significantly influences the strength of the customer relationship with the brand. If the brand does not consistently deliver on its promise, customers will not trust the brand (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010:384). Therefore, organisations must build brand trust among employees that deliver the brand promise as it is the employees that deliver the brand promise.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Internal brand management can be considered as part of relationship marketing. The outcomes of trust and commitment are grounded in the commitment – trust theory of relationship marketing of Morgan and Hunt (1994:22) as illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

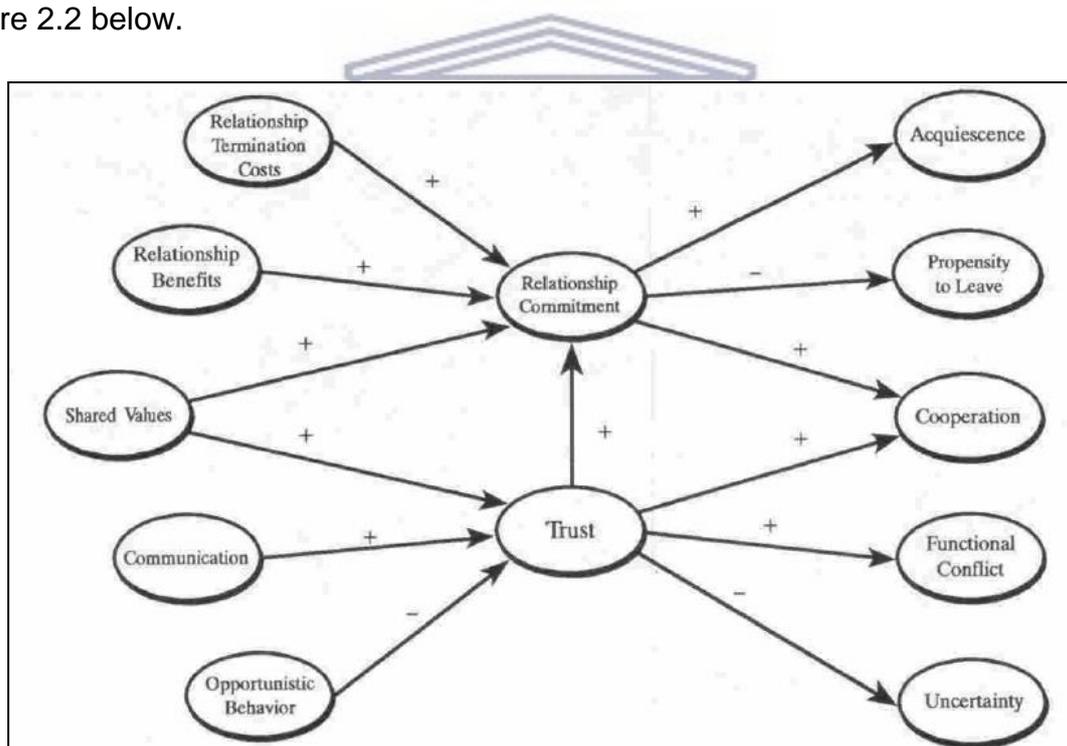


Figure 2.2: Commitment trust theory of relationship marketing
Source: Adapted from Morgan and Hunt (1994:22)

In relationship marketing as illustrated in Figure 2.2 above, commitment and trust are critical as it encourages marketers to preserve exchange relationships and to resist quick fixes in favour of long-term benefits. When both commitment and trust are

present in the relationship, it leads to co-operative behaviours that are conducive of maintaining successful relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:22). The focus of internal brand management is to establish, develop and maintain sustainable relationships and is therefore, antecedents of commitment and trust.

2.10 PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below, presents the relationship between internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust. The model argues that internal brand management is an antecedent of brand commitment and brand trust. Brand commitment and brand trust are enhanced through the drivers of internal brand management - brand identity, brand communication and brand leadership (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:84; Porricelli et al., 2014:748; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005:286).

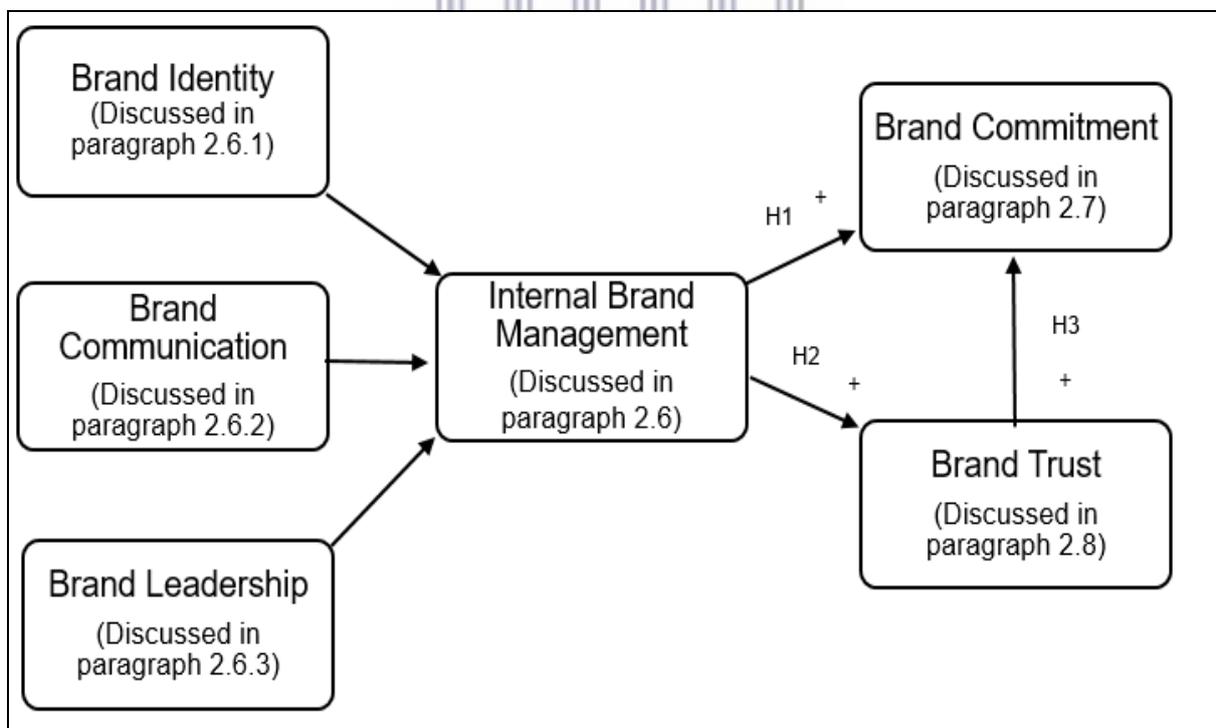


Figure 2.3: Proposed conceptual framework of key constructs

Figure 2.3 above illustrates the proposed conceptual framework. Brand identity, brand communication and brand leadership are the drivers of internal brand management. Brand commitment and brand trust are outcomes of internal brand management.

2.11 FORMULATED HYPOTHESES

Based on Figure 2.3 above, the hypotheses were formulated and discussed below.

2.11.1 Internal Brand Management and Brand Commitment

O'Callaghan (2013:478) argued that brand commitment is often focused on the customer "with little attention afforded to internal brand commitment". Yet, research has found that internal brand management creates brand commitment (Du Preez et al., 2017:257; Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:84; Xiong et al., 2013:354; King & Grace, 2012:480; King, 2010:526; Burmann et al., 2009:277). Furthermore, the organisation's internal brand management activities help employees to believe in the brand and become committed to deliver the brand promise (Erkmen, Hancer & Leong, 2017:312). However, "the employee must be receptive to the organisation's efforts to develop mutually beneficial relationships" (King & Grace, 2012:472). The following hypothesis is formulated:

H₁: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand commitment

2.11.2 Internal Brand Management and Brand Trust

Employees are the central point of the organisation's brand. Employee brand trust is created when employees understand and identify with the brand. The organisation fosters brand trust when they communicate to employees what the brand stands for as well as through leaders who live up to the brand values (Erkmen et al., 2017:316). As illustrated in Figure 2.3 above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₂: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand trust.

2.11.3 Brand Commitment and Brand Trust

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994:23) commitment are fostered through trust. Once employees have brand trust, they commit to the brand. Therefore, brand trust has a positive influence on brand commitment (Erkmen et al., 2017:316; Albert & Merunka, 2015:20; Erkmen & Hancer, 2015:52). However, Morgan and Hunt (1994:22) argued that, “when both commitment and trust – not just one or the other – are present, they produce outcomes that promote efficiency, productivity and effectiveness”. Therefore, trust and commitment fosters conducive relationships that are encouraged through cooperative behaviours. The following is hypothesised:

H₃: Brand trust will have a positive effect on brand commitment.

2.12 CONCLUSION

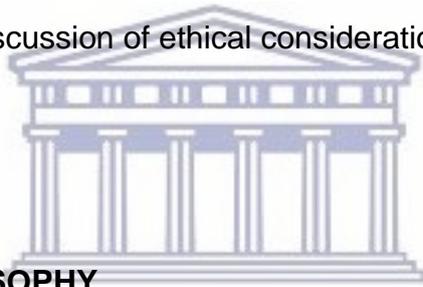
Successful execution of internal brand management can lead to a source of competitive advantage (Aaker, 2014:134-135), hence the employee’s role in delivering the brand promise can no longer be overlooked. Internal brand management is especially important to the service sector as it is the employees that cement the relationship between the customer and the actual brand promise. So often, marketing strategies are designed with the customer as the key focus point. Yet, in service organisations, employees deliver the brand promise through brand supporting behaviours. Today’s organisations function in a turbulent external competitive environment. Organisations are thus encourage to look inward, to their employees, as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

The research methodology will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The significance of internal brand management in organisations, especially services organisations, cannot be over-emphasised. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust. Whereas Chapter 1 described why the research questions are asked and Chapter 2 reviewed literature to develop a conceptual framework, Chapter 3 describes how the research questions were answered. The choice of research approach are first explained, followed by the research design. The sample size and sampling strategy are then discussed. Finally, the data analysis techniques are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations.



3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Positivism and interpretivism are two research philosophies that help researchers to “clarify the research design and facilitates the choice of an appropriate one” (Blumberg et al., 2011:16). Whereas positivism “advocates applying natural science methods to study social reality”, interpretivism is “critical of the application of the scientific method to study the social world” (Bryman & Bell, 2016:13).

Interpretivists claim that “an objective observation of the social world is impossible” and argue that “simple fundamental laws are insufficient to understand the whole complexity of social phenomena”. However, positivists believes that “knowledge develops by investigating the social reality through observing objective facts”.

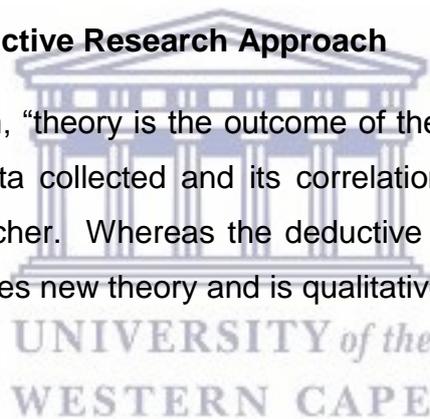
This study adopted a positivist research philosophy. Theory development started with “deducing what kind of observations support or reject the theoretical predictions of the hypotheses” (Blumberg et al., 2011:17). Assumptions of this study were then tested by the use of quantitative data analysis to draw objective conclusions.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACHES

The approach in which a researcher attempt to answer a research question is referred to as the research approach. Based on the influence of one construct on another, the researcher can choose between a deductive or inductive research approach and a quantitative or qualitative research approach.

3.3.1 Deductive and Inductive Research Approach

With an inductive approach, “theory is the outcome of the research”. The choice of theory is based on the data collected and its correlations based on the empirical observations of the researcher. Whereas the deductive approach tests theory, the inductive approach generates new theory and is qualitative of nature (Bryman & Bell, 2016:10).



The deductive approach is based on what is known about the research problem in theory and practice. With the deductive research approach, the researcher formulate research questions based on existing knowledge and literature for empirical investigation. Theoretical concepts are operationalised for data collection, which are quantitative of nature (Bryman & Bell, 2016:10).

The deductive research approach is used for this study as the theory tested is based on existing literature that will be scientifically supported or rejected. The researcher identified the key concepts in the form of a theoretical framework and formulated the hypotheses (predictions) that will be empirically tested.

3.3.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Approach

There are two different research approaches that can be used when conducting research – the quantitative and the qualitative research approach. Quantitative research entails the collection of large amounts of numeric data of which the results are statistically measures and used to test theories. Qualitative research is used to explain complicated situations or when little previous research has been done through the use of words, not numbers (Bryman & Bell 2016:101-121).

The main objectives of this study is to describe, predict and / or explain the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust. The quantitative research approach will facilitate the testing of hypotheses. Therefore, a deductive quantitative research approach is used to make generalisations of the statistical results based on the large amount of data collected.



3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design “provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman & Bell, 2016:100). The research design provide a plan on how to achieve the central purpose of research – that is, to answer the research question or to tests hypotheses.

3.4.1 Collection of Data

The collection of data starts with clarifying the type of research to be conducted. This is followed by explaining sources of obtaining data, the research design strategy, the data collection method, the measurement instrument used to collect the data, pretesting and piloting of the measurement instrument and sampling methodologies employed in this study.

3.4.2 Research Design Type

Explanatory research, descriptive research and causal research are three types of research designs used to collect data. The type of research depends on what the researcher wants to achieve – is it to describe something or is it to provide an explanation?

Explanatory research focuses on gaining insight and understanding in order to answer a phenomena using why and how questions. Theories are used to explain the reasons that caused the phenomena (Blumberg et al., 2011:9). Exploratory research is fact finding in nature as researchers are unclear of the problems they will encounter during the research and informs researchers if the problems are significant enough for further studies (Blumberg et al., 2011:150).

Descriptive research is used across business disciplines in an attempt to answer the questions “who, what, when, where and, sometimes, how”. Descriptive research is based on existing data and can therefore not explain why a phenomena has occurred (Blumberg et al., 2011:9). The goal of descriptive research is to “paint an accurate picture of how the world is” through the use of one construct and used to explain the relationship between two different constructs (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015:11).

Causal research seek to answer “what if” questions. The purpose of the research is not only to determine whether one construct influences another, but also to determine the effect of the influence (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015:12). Causality can never be proved or completed with certainty, however causality “allow us to build knowledge of presumed causes over time and provide us with successive approximations of the truth” (Blumberg et al., 2011:156).

A causal research design is chosen as the objective of this study was to make causal inferences of how internal brand management effects, or is responsible for changes in brand commitment and brand trust.

3.4.3 Data Sources

There are two sources of data collection, i.e. primary data and secondary data. Primary data is “the collection of new data to provide a description or explanation of the world”. Secondary data is “data that was collected by others, such as existing government surveys, administrative records or transcripts” (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015:8).

Surveys are the most frequently used source of primary data collection and involves the collection of information through the use of self-administered structured questionnaires and interviews. Other sources of primary data collection are trained observation, scientific instruments and computer code and data extraction algorithms. Trained observation involves the gathering of quantitative information through observation. Scientific instruments are mostly used in health science to read data from specific instruments (e.g. body mass index) or laboratory tests (e.g. DNA). Computer code and data extraction algorithms are data collected from the use of computers and the internet (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015:233-236).

For this study a combination of primary and secondary data are used. Although previous research has been conducted on the research topic, data has not yet been collected in the government sector. Primary data was collected as the aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding about internal brand management in SAPO by the use of a previously developed measurement instrument. Secondary data was collected in the form of company documents to include the vision of SAPO in the questionnaire.

3.4.4 Research Design Strategy

There are five research strategies that can be considered for evaluating research findings. Table 3.1 below provides an overview of the different strategies in relation to the quantitative research approach discussed previously in paragraph 3.3.2.

Table 3.1: Research design strategies for quantitative research

Research design strategy	Quantitative research approach
Experimental design strategy: There are two types of experimental design strategy – laboratory or field experiment. A laboratory experiment takes place in a laboratory or a controlled environment. A field experiment occurs in a real life setting such as the workplace.	Quantitative comparison between experimental and control groups with regard to the dependent construct.
Cross-sectional design strategy: Involves the collection of data on more than one case at a single point in time.	Social survey research or structured observation on a sample at a single point in time. Also content analysis on a sample of documents.
Longitudinal design strategy are used to map change in organisations over time.	Social survey research on a sample on more than one occasion or content analysis of documents relating to different time periods.
Case study design strategy involves the detailed and intensive analysis of one or more cases (workplaces).	Social survey research on a single case with the view to revealing important features about its nature.
Comparative design strategy involves using more or less identical methods or two or more contrasting cases.	Social survey research in which there is a direct comparison between two or more cases, including cross-cultural research.

Source: Adapted from Bryman and Bell (2016:101-117)

As illustrated in Table 3.1 above, a cross-sectional research strategy was considered to be more suitable for this study. Cross-sectional research is defined by Bryman and Bell (2016:149) as “social survey research or structured observation on a sample at a single point in time”. Descriptive research allows for the collection of data during a specific time frames unlike experimental studies that pre-test and post-test constructs. Even though a cross-sectional study is “carried out once and represents a snapshot of one point in time” (Blumberg et al., 2011:149), it allows researchers to make causal inferences using individual (age, gender etc.) and organisational (size, structure etc.) level of analysis.

3.4.5 Data Collection Method

Surveys and structured interviews are two of the main instruments used when collecting quantitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2016:191).

Surveys are questionnaires where the respondents answer questions with given alternatives. There are various modes of surveys. For example, intercept survey interviews involves stopping people in public places to complete a survey. Household interview surveys involves visiting people at their homes. Telephone interview surveys are faster and cheaper as it involves asking people to complete a survey telephonically. Postal mail surveys involves the posting of the survey to respondents (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015:215-219).

Surveys are cheaper and quicker to administer where a wide distribution of the respondents can be reached. A negative aspect is that the researcher cannot probe respondents to explain their answers or check for missing data. Surveys also need to be short since long questionnaires can discourage the respondent to complete the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2016:192).

Structured interviews are the use of standardised questions asked to respondents. Each respondent is asked the same questions, in exactly the same order. The interviewer ticks a box based on the respondents answer. However, structured interviews require the researcher to build rapport with the respondent to encourage them to participate in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2016:216-217).

The data collection method for this study was the use of a postal, self-administered survey as the respondents are geographically scattered which makes the use of structured interviews difficult. Postal surveys were chosen for this study as only managers have access to electronic mail or are available by telephone. Also, the respondents are all in direct contact with customers, hence surveys were the quickest way to get information from them without interrupting their work.

A low response rate is one disadvantage of self-administered surveys. To improve the survey response rate, a covering letter explaining the purpose of this study was included, as well as a self-addressed postage paid return envelope. Prior to posting

the surveys, a meeting was conducted with the responsible line managers to address the steps to improve the response rate. From this meeting, it was agreed to email all supervisors at participating sites the cover letter to sensitise employees about this study. The researcher was also advised that the completion of the surveys should be during the low peak period of the month to improve the response rate.

3.4.6 Data Collection Instrument

The use of previously tested questions added richness to this study and enabled the researcher to draw comparisons with other internal brand management research. The measurement items for the self-administered structured questionnaire were adopted from previous reliable and valid internal brand management studies. The theoretical drivers of internal brand management, discussed in paragraph 2.6, were adapted from Du Preez and Bendixen (2015:84). The measurement of brand commitment, (discussed in paragraph 2.7) and brand trust (discussed in paragraph 2.8) were adapted from Erkmen and Hancer (2015:51).

3.4.7 Pre-testing

Pre-testing, tests whether the research instrument is understandable to respondents and offers an opportunity to test whether what is being measured is indeed tested (Bryman & Bell, 2016:209). Pre-testing is especially important for self-administered questionnaires as the researcher will not be there to clarify any confusing questions. By re-writing confusing questions, the researcher limits the risk of incomplete questionnaires, which are not usable in the research. The questionnaire was pre-tested amongst two managers and ten employees who are part of the study population of this study. Their thoughts on improvement were taken into consideration by the researcher and changes were made to questions that were unclear. The input received through the pre-testing was corrected before proceeding with the final questionnaire. As illustrated in Table 4.13, the word “*brand message*”, used in question one, two and three, were changed to include the word “*vision*”. Question 10 “*I understand the origins and traditions of SAPO*”, was changed to “*I understand the important role of SAPO in our country*”. Question 11, “*I understand the competencies and abilities of SAPO*”, the question was changed to “*I know the products and services that SAPO offers*”. To eliminate bias, those that participated

in the pre-testing where excluded from the data collection. The final questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1 and the pre-tested questionnaire is provided in Appendix 2.

3.4.8 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a representation of a population to make generalisation of the research findings. The two main types of sampling techniques are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling techniques (simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, systematic random sampling, cluster sampling and multi-stage systematic sampling) provide an equal opportunity to each sample to be randomly selected. Non-probability sampling techniques (convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling) uses non-randomised methods as participants are selected because they are easy to access. A major disadvantage of non-probability sampling is the inability to generalise the research findings outside of the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2016:178).

The selected sampling technique used in this study was convenience sampling, in which the members of the population were selected based on their availability, accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. Willingness and availability of the respondents were the key determinant to participate in this study as SAPO at the time of conducting the study were under severe business challenges (financial bankruptcy and a national strike). To minimise the disadvantage of selection bias, the researcher only identified the respondents of the populations that fit the selection criteria. The questionnaires were then distributed to geographical sites indicating only the number of respondents required to complete the questionnaires.

3.4.9 Population of the Study

The total population for this study was the 5427 employees of the South African Post Office (SAPO), based in the Western Cape. The sample frame containing the list of 1209 front-line employees, was sourced from Human Resources Department. The unit of analysis are front-line employees in SAPO who are defined as employees that either interact with customers walking into post offices (retail sites) or employees that interact with customers directly in the public domain. Employees willing to

participate were asked to complete an anonymous, structured self-administered questionnaire. Respondents were asked to report their responses on a five point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.4.10 Sample of the Population

The sample frame consisted of a total number of 1209 front-line employees of which 417 front-line employees were accessible to the researcher. To determine the sample size of the ending population, the following sample size formula in Formula 3.1 was applied:

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where (Z) = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level), p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal and c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal.

Formula 3.1: Sample size formula

Source: Adapted from <https://www.surveysystem.com/sample-size-formula.htm>

The sample size are:

$$SS = \frac{1.96^2 * (417) * (1-417)}{.95^2}$$

$$= 200$$

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To establish the quality of this study, the decision rule on how reliability and validity are measured, are discussed below.

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistent achievement of the same results on repeated occasions under the same conditions (Heale & Twycross, 2015:66). For this study, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used as it is described by Tavakol and Dennick (2011:53) as "the most widely used objective measure of reliability", that has a value between 0 and 1. If the coefficient is 0, 7 or above, the measure is seen as reliable. The decision rule will be applied in Chapter 4. Reliability is important for replication and consistency to allow a different researcher using the same kind of method to find the exact same results to the research question(s) under investigation.

3.5.2 Validity

Validity refers to the accurate measurement of the concepts. To obtain a high standard of quality research, consideration must be given to the rigour of the study, as well as the results. Rigour, in quantitative research, is achieved through the measurement of validity and reliability (Heale & Twycross, 2015:66). There are three types of validity – content, construct and criterion validity explained below in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Three types of validity

Type	Description
Content validity	The ability of the instrument to accurately measure the construct
Construct validity	The extent to which a research instrument (or tool) measures the intended construct
Criterion validity	The extent to which a research instrument is related to other instruments that measure the same constructs

Source: Adapted from (Heale & Twycross, 2015:66)

Content validity for this study was based on the use of a previously tested measurement instrument that covered the drivers of internal brand management construct (Du Preez & Bendixen 2015:90; Porricelli, 2014; King & Grace, 2008), as discussed in paragraph 2.6. The brand commitment (discussed in paragraph 2.7) and brand trust (discussed in paragraph 2.6) constructs were adapted from Erkmen and Hancer (2015:51).

3.6 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

There are three types of statistical data analysis methods available in research: univariate analysis, bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis. The data analysis tool used for this study are SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics 25).

3.6.1 Univariate Statistics

Univariate analysis are used to analyse a single construct using frequency tables and diagrams to present a holistic overview of the data collected. A frequency table displays the count and percentage of each construct. Diagrams, in the form of bar charts, pie charts and histograms, are used to display the data in a user friendly format (Bryman and Bell, 2016:318).

Univariate statistics are presented by the use of descriptive statistics and normality tests. Descriptive statistics is presented by the use of a table displaying the top-box and low-box frequency of responses, where top-box referred to respondents that strongly agreed and low-box referred to respondents that strongly disagree. The mean value are displayed to indicate what the respondents consider as the most important clustered responses to a question.

The purpose of the normality tests is to determine the distribution of the sample size to understand whether the sample collected falls within an appropriate range. For samples that are not normally distributed, non-parametric tests are used for further analysis. For samples that are normally distributed, the parametric techniques are used for further tests. Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test and Shapiro-Wilk test are two of the most widely used normality tests (Oppong & Agbedra, 2016:26-27).

3.6.2 Bivariate Statistics

Bivariate statistics are used to analyse the relationship between two constructs. The technique used are dependent on the two types of constructs analysed. For example, to analyse the relationship between two interval or ratio constructs, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) is used. To analyse the relationship between ordinal constructs or between one ordinal construct and one interval or ratio construct, Spearman's rho (ρ) is used. To analyse the relationship between two dichotomous constructs, the phi coefficient (ϕ) is used. Contingency tables are used to analyse the relationships between any two constructs that normally includes percentages for easy interpretation. To establish how confident we are about the relationship between two nominal constructs, the chi-square test is used (Bryman & Bell, 2016:320-327).

For this study, Spearman's correlation coefficient are used to measure the strength of the relationship between two constructs where the decision rule of whether a strong relation exist or not are based on the closer rho is to 1 the stronger the relationship, illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

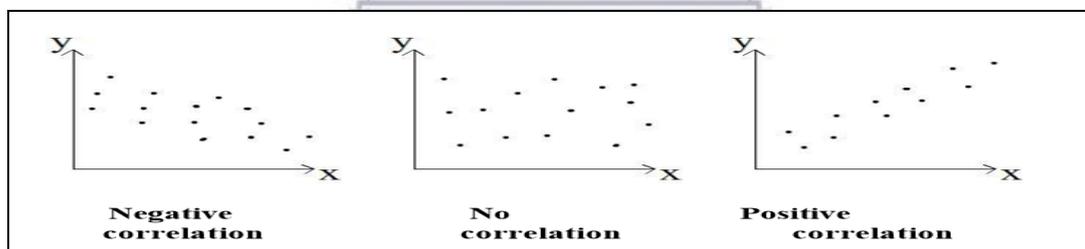


Figure 3.1: Scatterplots of negative, no and positive correlation

Source: Adapted from

<http://www.statstutor.ac.uk/resources/uploaded/pearsons.pdf>

3.6.3 Multivariate Statistics

Multivariate analysis are used to analyse the relationship between three or more constructs. However, the type of data analysis method are subject to the type of data collected. The main types of constructs used to test the hypotheses are nominal constructs, ordinal constructs and interval constructs. Nominal constructs,

also known as categorical constructs, cannot be ranked, for example gender. Ordinal constructs have some order, but the distance between the orders are not equal, for example, level of education. Interval constructs have identical distances between the categories, for example monthly salary.

3.7 ETHICS

The researcher is employed by SAPO and permission was granted by SAPO to conduct the study (see Appendix 4). Permission was also given for the circulation of the questionnaires through the postal system at SAPO's cost.

SAPO, as well as each participant, was given an official letter from the University of the Western Cape. This letter explained the nature of the study, its purpose and the requirements. SAPO will be provided with a copy of the results, as well as a copy of the final dissertation.

In the interest of privacy, the survey did not require the employees to disclose their names for privacy and confidentiality purposes. The anonymous nature of the responses ensured the honesty of the responses from employees. On the information page of the questionnaire, detailed information was provided regarding the right to participate or to withdraw from the study (see Appendix 3).

3.8 CONCLUSION

This study adopted a positivist philosophy and used a quantitative deductive research approach to investigate the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust. A self-administered questionnaire was sent by post to respondents selected using convenience sampling. Validity and reliability issues were discussed and the collected data will be analysed by the use of SPSS. Informed consent and confidentiality issues were addressed.

The research results will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research results using univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis, the response rate is presented, as well as the reliability and validity results. Descriptive statistics describe the basic characteristics of the respondents. Normality testing will be conducted to identify the use of appropriate statistical analysis for hypothesis testing.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

The self-administered structured questionnaire was distributed to 200 SAPO front-line employees as defined in paragraph 3.4.9. The response rate is illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Response rate of postal mail survey

	Number of questionnaires
Questionnaires mailed	200
Questionnaires received back	163
Data capturing on computer	163
Refusals	17
Final data set	146
Effective response rate	73%

The response rate of 73% was negatively influenced by no postal questionnaires being returned to the researcher due to a protected strike by SAPO employees that lasted almost two weeks. To improve the response rate during the strike period, follow-up telephone calls and emails were used.

4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY RESULTS

The reliability and validity results are discussed below.

4.3.1 Reliability results

Table 4.2 below, show the Cronbach Alpha (α) for brand identity, brand communication, brand leadership, brand commitment and brand trust.

Table 4.2: Cronbach Alpha (α) Reliability Test Results

Construct	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Number of items
Brand Identity	.783	3
Brand Communication	.803	6
Brand Leadership	.815	5
Brand commitment	.884	6
Brand trust	.915	4
Total	.873	24

Special note: The number of items and the specific items are provided in the final questionnaire (See Appendix 1)

As discussed in paragraph 3.5.2, Cronbach Alpha (α) was selected to measure reliability of the measurement instrument. The total Cronbach Alpha (α) for the scale of this study is .873, which suggests a high internal consistency among the constructs. The Cronbach Alpha (α) for each of the individual internal brand management drivers are brand identity (.783), brand communication (.803) and brand leadership (.815). Brand commitment and brand trust has a Cronbach Alpha (α) alpha score of .884 and .915 respectively. These findings are in congruence with Tavakol and Dennick (2011:54) whom asserted that a Cronbach Alpha (α) for the scales used in social research should have an “acceptable” reliability coefficient of at least .70 to .95.

The Cronbach Alpha (α) scores for each of the 24 questions used to measure the drivers of the internal brand management construct (brand identity, brand communication and brand leadership), the brand commitment construct and the brand trust construct are illustrated in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Cronbach Alpha (α) score per question

Question number	Question	Cronbach Alpha (α) score
Internal brand management construct		
Brand Identity		
Q1	Our brand message (vision) is understandable	.632
Q2	Our brand message (vision) is easy to memorize	.708
Q3	Our brand message (vision) is convincing	.771
Brand Communication		
Q4	I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO	.750
Q5	I feel well informed by my direct superior about SAPO	.771
Q6	I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues	.825
Q7	In our company there are information circulated that express what SAPO stands for	.764
Q8	When I see external information of our brand, I am proud to be working for SAPO	.755
Q9	What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me	.759
Brand Leadership		
Q10	I understand the important role of SAPO in our country (origin and traditions of SAPO)	.793
Q11	I know the products and services that SAPO offers (competencies and abilities)	.760
Q12	I know the values / personality of the SAPO brand	.750
Q13	I understand the vision of SAPO and I believe it to be achievable	.793
Q14	I know my behaviour influence the brand image	.794
Brand Commitment construct		
Q15	I usually tell my friends that SAPO is a great company to work for	.849
Q16	I am proud to tell others that I work for SAPO	.845
Q17	For me, SAPO is the best employer to work for	.853
Q18	I am extremely glad that I choose to work for SAPO over any other company	.847
Q19	I really care about the SAPO name brand	.820
Q20	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working	.907
Brand Trust construct		
Q21	I trust the SAPO brand	.892
Q22	I rely on the SAPO brand	.889
Q23	SAPO is an honest brand	.893
Q24	SAPO is a safe brand	.885

An important note as presented in Table 4.3 above is that question 1 “*Our brand message is understandable*” lowered the Cronbach’s Alpha score of brand identity to .632, which is lower than the decision rule to measure reliability at an acceptable score of between .70 to .95. However, Question 1 was not excluded from further analysis as brand identity was only measured by three questions. In marketing research, an acceptable level of reliability is a score of 0.6 – 0.7 as discussed in paragraph 3.5.1.

4.3.2 Validity

Content validity for this study was based on the use of a previously tested measurement instrument that covered the drivers of the internal brand management construct (Du Preez & Bendixen 2015:90; Porricelli, 2014; King & Grace, 2008) and the brand commitment and brand trust construct (Erkmen and Hancer 2015:2) , discussed in paragraph 3.5.2.

4.4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The profile of the respondents is discussed below.

4.4.1 Gender

Table 4.4 below indicates that 48 respondents (32.9%) were female and 98 were male (67.1%).

Table 4.4: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	48	32.9
Male	98	67.1

It is clear from Table 4.4 above, that more males than female respondents were included in this study, which a representation of the actual gender profile of SAPO of more males than females.

4.4.2 Marital Status

The marital status of the respondents is presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	91	62.3
Single	41	28.1
Divorced	9	6.2
Other	5	3.4

Table 4.5 above, shows that there are more married (62.3%) compared to singles (28.1%) and divorced (6.2%) respondents.

4.4.3 Front-line Employees

The profile of the frontline employees of SAPO is depicted in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Front-line employees

Front-line employees	Frequency	Percentage (%)
In public contact	97	66.4
Walk in (retail space)	49	33.6

Table 4.6 above indicate that 97 (66.4%) respondents work directly with customers in the public domain and 49 (33.6%) work with customers walking into SAPO post offices.

4.4.4 Age

Table 4.7 below indicates that the age groups of the respondents are ranging from 18 to 65 years of age.

Table 4.7: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
56-65	11	7.5
46-55	50	34.2
36-45	45	30.8
26-35	38	26.0
18-25	2	1.4

As shown in Table 4.7 above, the majority (34.2%) of the respondents were between the ages of 46 – 55, followed by 30.8% aged between 36 – 45 years, 26% aged between 26 – 35 years and the minority (1.4%) were aged between 18 – 25.

4.4.5 Race

Table 4.8 below shows there are four ethnic groups.

Table 4.8: Race

Race	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Asian	1	.7
Black	44	30.1
Coloured	85	58.2
White	16	11.0

As indicated in Table 4.8 above, the majority of respondents were Coloured (58.2%), 30.1% were Black respondents and 11% were White which is a reflection of the race profile of SAPO in the Western Cape.

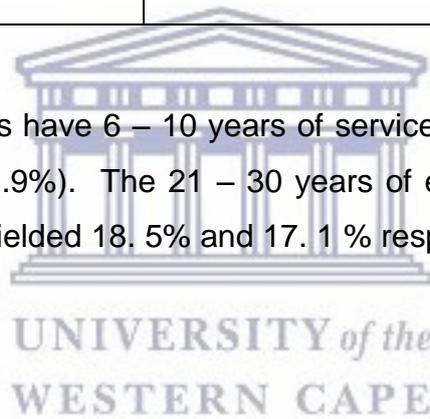
4.4.6 Years of Service

Table 4.9 below indicates that the years of service of the respondents are ranging from zero (0) years to 31 years and more.

Table 4.9: Years of service

Years of service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
31 and more	25	17.1
21-30	27	18.5
11-20	32	21.9
6-10	53	36.3
0-5	9	6.2

The majority of respondents have 6 – 10 years of service (36.3%), followed by 11 – 20 years of experience (21.9%). The 21 – 30 years of experience and the 31 and more years of experience yielded 18.5% and 17.1% respectively.



4.4.7 Education

Table 4.10 below, shows the educational level of the respondents ranging from lower than Grade 12 to postgraduate level.

Table 4.10: Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Postgraduate	1	.7
Diploma / Degree	10	6.8
Grade 12	95	65.1
Lower than Grade 12	40	27.4

Table 4.10 above, indicates that the majority of the respondents hold a Grade 12 certificate (65, 1%). This is followed by 27, 4% that have not completed school. The minority of the respondents (.7%) were in possession of a postgraduate education.

4.4.8 Salary Bracket

Table 4.11 below shows the salary bracket of the respondents.

Table 4.11: Salary bracket

Salary bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Permanent C2 – C5 Managerial	26	17.8
Permanent A1–C1 Non-managerial	73	50.0
Part-time Non-managerial	47	32.2

Table 4.11 above, indicates that the majority of respondents (50.0%) were permanently employed on a non-supervisory level, followed by 32.2% that were employed on a permanent part time basis. The minority of respondents (17.8%) were employed permanently on supervisory level.

Based on the results reported in 4.4.1 – 4.4.8, the profile of the respondents is depicted in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Profile of SAPO respondents

He / She.....
* is male (67.7%)
* is married (62.3)
*work with customers directly in the public domain (66.4)
*has an average age of 46 to 55 years old (34.2%)
*is 2 out of 3 times (58.2%) Coloured
*works more than 20 years (35.6%) for SAPO
*has a matric (65.1%) and (27.4%) has a lower than matric qualification
*is permanently employed (67.8%)

4.5 RESULTS ON A QUESTION-BY-QUESTION BASIS

The results of the Likert scale questions are presented by using the mean value, top-box score and low-box score and the standard deviation.

4.5.1. INDIVIDUAL DRIVERS OF INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT

The individual drivers of internal brand management are first discussed in order to understand which of the questions are considered the most and least important amongst the front-line employees in SAPO.

4.5.1.1 Brand Identity

The questions relating to brand identity, a driver of internal brand management, is depicted in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Results of the brand identity questions

Brand Identity						
Question number	Question	N	Mean	Top-box score	Low-box score	Standard deviation
Q1	Our brand message (vision) is understandable	146	1.94	37.0	2.7	.991
Q2	Our brand message (vision) is easy to memorise	146	2.03	28.8	3.4	.968
Q3	Our brand message (vision) is convincing	146	2.00	16.4	2.1	.989

“Our brand message (vision) is easy to memorise” (Question 2) in Table 4.13 above, is considered as the main aspect of brand identity as shown by a mean value of **2.03**, a top-box score of **28.8%** (respondents that selected strongly agree) and a standard deviation score of **.968** depicted in Table 4.13 above. “Our brand message (vision) is understandable” (Question 1), is considered the least important aspect of brand identity as shown by a mean value of **1.94**, a top box score of **37.0%** and a standard deviation score of **.991**. Front-line employees in SAPO acknowledge that

the brand message is easy to memorise, they however do not agree that the brand message is understandable.

The standard deviation score of Question 2 is the lowest (**.968**) of the three brand identity aspects. Therefore, this study concludes that the answer to this question was the most consistent in relation to the importance of brand identity as a driver of internal brand management.

4.5.1.2 Brand Communication

The questions relating to brand communication, a driver of internal brand management, are depicted in Table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14: Results of the brand communication questions

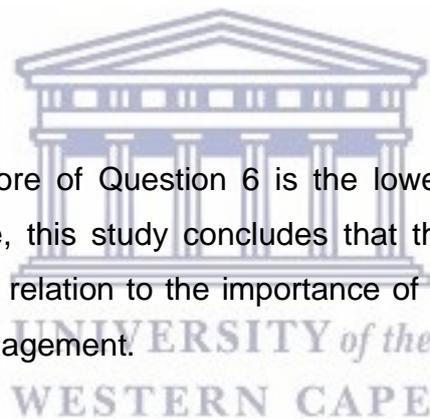
Brand Communication						
Question number	Question	N	Mean	Top-box score	Low-box score	Standard deviation
Q4	I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO	146	2.99	8.2	11.6	1.177
Q5	I feel well informed by my direct superior about SAPO	146	2.54	15.8	8.9	1.151
Q6	I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues	146	1.98	33.6	3.4	.993
Q7	In our company there are information circulated that express what SAPO stands for	146	2.48	21.2	8.2	1.193
Q8	When I see external information of our brand, I am proud to be working for SAPO	146	2.66	15.8	10.3	1.186
Q9	What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me	146	3.23	6.8	17.1	1.186

“What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me” (Question 9), is indicated as the most important aspect of brand communication as shown by a mean value of **3.23**, a top-box score of **6.8%** (respondents that selected strongly agree) and a standard deviation score of **1.186** depicted in Table 4.14 above. This is followed by

“I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO” (*Question 4*), as shown by a mean value of **2.9**, a top-box score of **8.2%** and a standard deviation score of **1.177**. “I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues” (*Question 6*) is the least important aspect of brand communication as shown by a mean value of **1.98**, a top box score of **33.6%** and the lowest standard deviation score of **.993**.

The very low top-box score of **6.8%** (respondents that selected strongly agree) of “*What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me*” (*Question 9*), indicates that front-line employees are not motivated by what they read in the media about SAPO. However, the high mean value (**3.23%**) indicates that frontline employees considers this as an important aspect of brand communication to positively influence internal brand management.

The standard deviation score of Question 6 is the lowest (**.993**) of the six brand communication. Therefore, this study concludes that the answer to this question was the most consistent in relation to the importance of brand communication as a driver of internal brand management.



4.5.1.3 Brand Leadership

The questions relating to brand leadership, as a driver of internal brand management, are depicted in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Results of the brand leadership questions

Brand Leadership						
Question number	Question	N	Mean	Top-box score	Low-box score	Standard deviation
Q10	I understand the important role of SAPO in our country (origin and traditions of SAPO)	146	1.95	32.9	2.7	.923
Q11	I know the products and services that SAPO offers (competencies and abilities)	146	2.03	32.9	2.7	1.030
Q12	I know the values / personality of the SAPO brand	146	2.11	34.9	3.4	.955
Q13	I understand the vision of SAPO and I believe it to be achievable	146	2.17	27.4	2.1	.879
Q14	I know my behaviour influence the brand image	146	1.71	31.5	5.5	.879

From Table 4.15 above, “*I understand the vision of SAPO and I believe it to be achievable*” (Question 13), is considered as the most important aspect of brand leadership as shown by a mean value of **2.17**, a top-box score of **27.4%** (respondents that selected strongly agree) and a standard deviation score of **.879**. This is followed by “*I know the values / personality of the SAPO brand*” (Question 12), as shown by a mean value of **2.11**, a top-box score of **34.9%** and a standard deviation score of **.955**.

“*I know my behaviour influence the brand image*” (Question 14), is considered as the least important aspect of brand leadership as shown by a mean value of **.1.71**, a top-box score of **31.5%** and a standard deviation score of **.879**. The front-line employees in SAPO understand the vision and believe it to be achievable. Interestingly, they also understand that their behaviour influence the brand image, but do not consider this to be an important brand leadership aspect to influence internal brand management.

The standard deviation scores of Question 13 and 14 are both **.879**, the lowest of the five brand leadership questions. Therefore, this study conclude that the answer to these questions were the most consistent in relation to the importance of brand leadership as a driver of internal brand management.

4.5.2 INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCT

The result of the internal brand management questions are depicted in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Results of the internal brand management construct questions

Question number	Question	N	Mean	Top-box score	Low-box score	Standard deviation
Brand Identity						
Q1	Our brand message (vision) is understandable	146	1.94	37.0	2.7	.991
Q2	Our brand message (vision) is easy to memorise	146	2.03	28.8	3.4	.968
Q3	Our brand message (vision) is convincing	146	2.00	16.4	2.1	.989
Brand Communication						
Q4	I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO	146	2.99	8.2	11.6	1.177
Q5	I feel well informed by my direct superior about SAPO	146	2.54	15.8	8.9	1.151
Q6	I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues	146	1.98	33.6	3.4	.993
Q7	In our company there are information circulated that express what SAPO stands for	146	2.48	21.2	8.2	1.193
Q8	When I see external information of our brand, I am proud to be working for SAPO	146	2.66	15.8	10.3	1.186
Q9	What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me	146	3.23	6.8	17.1	1.186
Brand Leadership						
Q10	I understand the important role of SAPO in our country (origin and traditions of SAPO)	146	1.95	32.9	2.7	.923
Q11	I know the products and services that SAPO offers (competencies and abilities)	146	2.03	32.9	2.7	1.030
Q12	I know the values / personality of the SAPO brand	146	2.11	34.9	3.4	.955
Q13	I understand the vision of SAPO and I believe it to be achievable	146	2.17	27.4	2.1	.879
Q14	I know my behaviour influence the brand image	146	1.71	31.5	5.5	.879

It is evident from Table 4.16 above, that in SAPO, the three most important internal brand management questions are all related to brand communication. For example, “*What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me*” (Question 9) is indicated as the most important aspect of internal brand management as shown by a mean value of **3.23**, a top-box score of **6.8%** (respondents that strongly agree), a low-box score of **17.1%** (respondents that strongly disagree) and a standard deviation score of **1.186**. This study therefore concludes that the frontline employees are not motivated by what they read in the media about SAPO.

The second most important aspect of internal brand management is “*I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO*” (Question 4) as shown by a mean value of **2.99**, a top-box score of **8.2%**, a low-box score of **11.6%** and a standard deviation score of **1.177**. This study therefore concludes that the frontline employees do not feel well informed through various communications about SAPO.

The third most important aspect of internal brand management is “*When I see external information of our brand, I am proud to be working for SAPO*” (Question 8) as shown by a mean value of **2.66**, a low top-box score of **15.8%**, a low-box score of **10.3%** and a standard deviation score of **1.186**. This study therefore concludes that when the front-line employees see external information about the brand, they do not feel proud to work for SAPO.

“*I know my behaviour influence the brand image*” (Question 14) is indicated as the least important aspect of internal brand management as shown by a mean value of **1.7**, a top-box score of **31.5%** and a standard deviation score of **.879**. This study therefore concludes that the front-line employees understand that their behaviour influence the brand image, but do not consider this as important. This is followed by “*Our brand message (vision) is understandable*” (Question 1) as shown by a mean value of **1.94**, a top-box score of **37.0%** and a standard deviation score of **.991**.

4.5.2.1 Normality Testing for Internal Brand Management

The Shapiro-Wilks, as illustrated in Table 4.17 below, was used to determine whether the data for the internal brand management construct were normally distributed or not.

Table 4.17: Normality testing results for internal brand management construct

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		Shapiro-Wilks	
Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
.103	.000	.940	.000

The Shapiro-Wilks for internal brand management has a significance of .000 as depicted in Table 4.17 above. The p-value is less than 0.05 at a 95% confidence level. This infers that the data does not fit normal distribution and are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

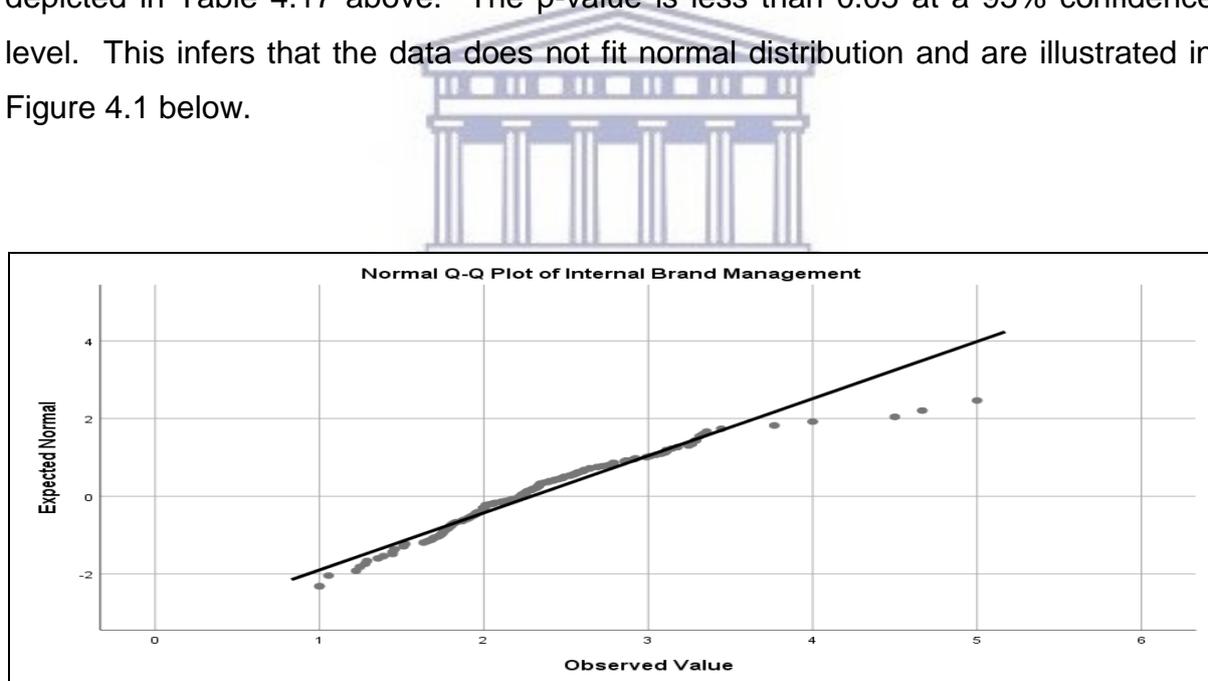


Figure 4.1: Normality testing for internal brand management

As illustrated in Table 4.17 and Figure 4.1 above, the data was not normally distributed and therefore non-parametric statistical tests were applied during data analysis.

4.5.3 BRAND COMMITMENT CONSTRUCT

The result of the brand commitment questions are depicted in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18: Results of the brand commitment construct questions

Brand Commitment						
Question number	Question	N	Mean	Top-box score	Low-box score	Standard deviation
Q15	I usually tell my friends that SAPO is a great company to work for	146	2.69	19.9	11.6	1.268
Q16	I am proud to tell others that I work for SAPO	146	2.57	19.2	11.6	1.259
Q17	For me, SAPO is the best employer to work for	146	2.95	12.3	17.7	1.267
Q18	I am extremely glad that I choose to work for SAPO over any other company	146	2.71	15.1	13.7	1.233
Q19	I really care about the SAPO name brand	146	2.10	26.0	4.8	.978
Q20	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working	146	2.47	20.5	7.5	1.134

It is evident from Table 4.18 above that front-line employees regard “*For me, SAPO is the best employer to work for*” (Question 17) with a mean value of **2.95** and standard deviation of **1.267** as the most important aspect of brand commitment. However, the low top-box score (respondents that strongly agree) of **12.3** and the slightly higher low-box score (respondents that strongly disagree) of **17.7**, suggests that front-line employees do not feel that SAPO is the best employer to work for. The second most important aspect of brand commitment is “I am extremely glad that I choose to work for SAPO over any other company” (Question 18) with a mean value of **2.71** and a standard deviation of **1.233**. There is not a significant difference between the top-box score of **15.1** and the low-box score of **13.7**. This suggests that there is conflicting feelings amongst the front-line employees about choosing SAPO as an employer over any other company.

The least important aspect of brand commitment is “*I really care about the SAPO name brand*” (Question 19) with a mean value of **2.10**, a top-box score of **26.0** and a

standard deviation of **.978**. The front-line employees care about the SAPO name brand, but so not consider it as an important aspect of brand commitment.

4.5.3.1 Normality Testing for Brand Commitment

The Shapiro-Wilks, as illustrated in Table 4.19 below, was used to determine whether the data for the brand commitment construct were normally distributed or not.

Table 4.19: Normality test for the brand commitment construct

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		Shapiro-Wilks	
Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
.114	.000	.955	.000

The Shapiro-Wilks for internal brand commitment has a significance of .000 as depicted in Table 4.19 above. The p-value is less than 0.05 at a 95% confidence level.

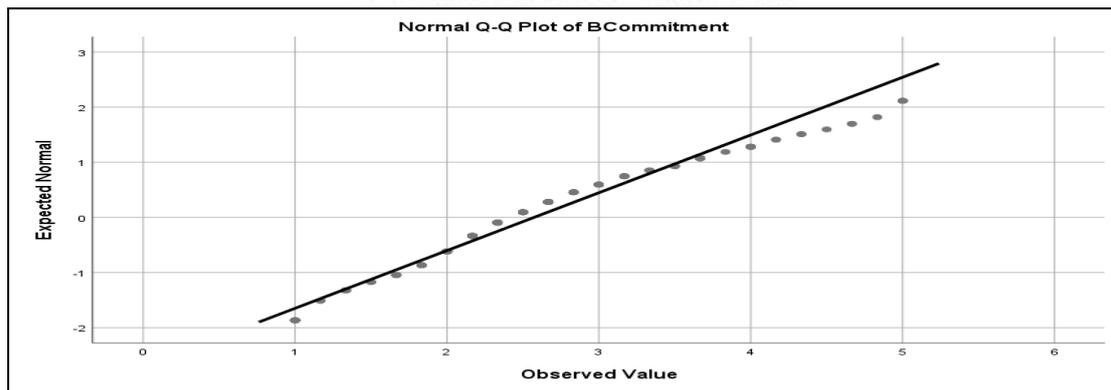


Figure 4.2: Normality test for brand commitment

As illustrated in Table 4.18 and Figure 4.2 above, the data is not normally distributed and therefore non-parametric statistical tests were used during data analysis.

4.5.4 BRAND TRUST CONSTRUCT

The result of the brand trust questions are depicted in Table 4.20 below.

Table 4.20: Results of the brand trust construct questions

Brand Trust						
Question number	Question	N	Mean	Top-box score	Low-box score	Standard deviation
Q21	I trust the SAPO brand	146	2.50	14.4	6.8	1.086
Q22	I rely on the SAPO brand	146	2.46	17.1	5.5	1.067
Q23	SAPO is an honest brand	146	2.79	9.6	7.5	1.055
Q24	SAPO is a safe brand	146	2.72	8.2	5.5	.991

Table 4.20 depicts that “SAPO is an honest brand” (Question 23) is the most important contributor to brand trust with a mean value of **2.79** and a standard deviation of **1.055**. However, the top-box score (respondents that strongly agree) of **9.6** and low-box score of **7.5** (respondents that strongly disagree) indicates that there is no definitive response from the front-line employees confirming that SAPO is an honest brand or not. “I rely on the SAPO brand” (Question 22) is considered as the least important contributor to brand trust with a mean value of **2.46**, a top-box score of **17.1** and a standard deviation of **1,067**. This study therefore concludes that front-line employees rely on the SAPO brand, but does not consider it as a strong contributor of brand trust.

4.5.4.1 Normality Testing for Brand Trust

As illustrated in Table 4.21 below, the Shapiro-Wilks, was used to determine whether the data for the brand trust construct were normally distributed or not.

Table 4.21: Normality test for brand trust

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		Shapiro-Wilks	
Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
.118	.000	.952	.000

The Shapiro-Wilks for brand trust has a significance of .000 as depicted in Table 4.21 above. The p-value is less than 0.05 at a 95% confidence level.

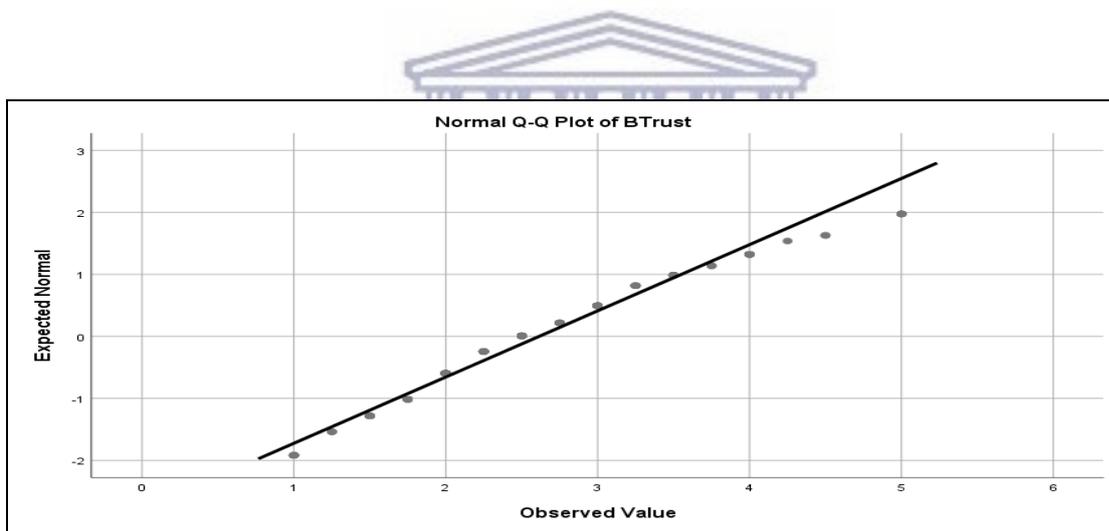


Figure 4.3: Normality test for brand commitment

As illustrated in Table 4.21 and Figure 4.3 above the data was not normally distributed and therefore non-parametric statistical tests were applied during data analysis.

4.5.5 MEAN VALUES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS

The mean value and standard deviations for each of the constructs of this study are depicted in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22: Mean values and standard deviation of internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internal Brand Management	2.29	.680
Brand Commitment	2.57	.949
Brand Trust	2.61	.933

As shown in Table 4.22 above, the mean value for brand trust is the highest (**2.61**), followed by brand commitment (**2.57**) and internal brand management (**2.29**). The brand trust construct was discussed in paragraph 4.5.4, brand commitment construct in paragraph 4.5.3 and internal brand management construct in paragraph 4.5.2.

The mean values and standard deviations of the individual drivers of internal brand management are depicted in Table 4.23 below.

Table 4.23: Mean values and standard deviations of the drivers of internal brand management

Driver	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brand identity	2.23	.837
Brand communication	2.64	.818
Brand leadership	1.99	.747

Table 4.23 depicts that brand communication received the highest mean value (**2.64**), followed by brand identity (**2.23**) and brand leadership (**1.99**). Each of the drivers of internal brand management was discussed in paragraph 4.5.1.

4.6 HYPOTHESIS RESULTS

The results of the hypotheses are presented below.

4.6.1 H₁: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand commitment

Table 4.24 below presents the results used to test internal brand management and brand commitment.

Table 4.24: Results of internal brand management and brand commitment

Variable		Correlation coefficient (Rho)	Beta coefficient (β)	R ²	P - Value
Independent	Dependent				
Internal brand management	Brand commitment	.629	.648	.420	.000

The results in Table 4.24 above indicates a strong significant relationship between internal brand management and brand commitment (rho = .629, β = .648, p < .001). The decision rule in paragraph 3.6.2 to measure the strength the relationship for all the constructs was based on the closer to 1 rho was, the stronger is the relationship. Therefore, a strong correlation exist between internal brand management (independent variable) and brand commitment (dependent variable) where commitment is a strong predictor of internal brand management (R² = 42.0%).

H₁ is therefore accepted.

4.6.2 H₂: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand trust

Table 4.25 below, presents the results used to test internal brand management and brand trust.

Table 4.25: Results of internal brand management and brand trust

Variable		Correlation coefficient (Rho)	Beta coefficient (β)	R ²	P - Value
Independent	Dependent				
Internal brand management	Brand trust	.618	.629	.392	.000

The results in Table 4.25 above indicates a strong significant relationship between internal brand management and brand trust (rho = .618, β =.629, p < .001). The decision rule in paragraph 3.6.2 to measure the strength the relationship for all the constructs was based on the closer to 1 rho was, the stronger is the relationship. Therefore, a strong correlation exist between internal brand management (independent variable) and brand trust (dependent variable) where brand trust is a strong predictor of internal brand management (R² = 39.2%).

H₂ is therefore accepted.

4.6.3 H₃: Brand trust will have a positive effect on brand commitment

Table 4.26 below, presents the results used to test brand commitment brand trust.

Table 4.26: Results of brand commitment and brand trust

Variable		Correlation coefficient (Rho)	Beta coefficient (β)	R ²	P - Value
Independent	Dependent				
Brand trust	Brand commitment	.730	.790	.624	.000

The results in Table 4.26 above indicates a very strong significant relationship between brand commitment and brand trust ($\rho = .730$, $\beta = .790$, $p < .001$). The decision rule in paragraph 3.6.2 to measure the strength the relationship for all the constructs was based on the closer to 1 rho was, the stronger is the relationship. Therefore, a very strong correlation exist between brand commitment (independent variable) and brand trust (dependent variable) where brand trust is a very strong predictor of internal brand management ($R^2 = 62.4\%$).

H₃ is therefore accepted.



4.7 SUMMARY OF THE HYPOTHESIS RESULTS

Table 4.27 below, presents a summary of the hypothesis results.

Table 4.27: Summary of hypothesis results

Independent variable	Dependent variable	P - Value	R ²	Decision
Internal brand management	Brand commitment	.000	47.8%	Accepted
Internal brand management	Brand trust	.000	41.3%	Accepted
Brand trust	Brand commitment	.000	62.4%	Accepted

All three hypotheses were accepted as illustrated in Table 4.27 above.

4.8 MAIN FINDINGS

4.8.1 Drivers of Internal Brand Management

4.8.1.1 Main finding 1: Brand Identity

The front-line employees of SAPO acknowledges that the brand message (vision) is easy to memorise. They however disagree that the brand message is understandable and therefore do not identify with the brand. The results of the brand identity questions were discussed in paragraph 4.5.1 (a).

4.8.1.2 Main finding 2: Brand Communication

The front-line employees are not motivated by what they read in the media about SAPO, but considers this as an important aspect of brand communication to positively influence internal brand management. Importantly, they want to be informed about what is happening in the company. Front-line employees discuss SAPO amongst themselves which, in the absence of formal communications, can be risky for SAPO. The results of the brand communication questions were discussed in paragraph 4.5.1 (b).



4.8.1.3 Main finding 3: Brand Leadership

It is evident that the front-line employees in SAPO understand the vision and believe it to be achievable. Interestingly, they also understand that their behaviour influence the brand image, but do not consider this to be an important brand leadership aspect that influence internal brand management. The results of the brand leadership questions were discussed in paragraph 4.5.1 (c).

4.8.2 Main finding 4: Internal Brand Management Construct

The three most important drivers of internal brand management in SAPO, relates to brand communication. The front-line employees do not feel motivated about what they read in the media about SAPO. Also, they do not feel well informed through

various internal channels about SAPO. The lack of internal communication and the negative external communication makes the front-line employees to not feel proud of the SAPO brand. The results of the internal brand management questions were discussed in paragraph 4.5.2.

4.8.3 Main finding 5: Brand Commitment Construct

The front-line employees do not consider SAPO as the best employer to work for. There are no conclusive results as to whether they would seek alternative employment or not. Importantly, they care about the SAPO brand, but this does not influence their level of brand commitment. The results of the brand commitment questions were discussed in paragraph 4.5.3.

4.8.4 Main finding 6: Brand Trust Construct

There are no definitive results to indicate that SAPO is an honest brand amongst the front-line employees. They do rely on the SAPO brand, but this does not drive brand trust. The results of the brand trust questions were discussed in paragraph 4.5.4.



Table 4.28: Summary of main findings

The summary of the main findings are illustrated in Table 4.26 below

Question number	Question	Results	Conclusion
Drivers of internal brand management			
Brand identity			
Q1	Our brand message (vision) is understandable	Considered as the least important aspect of brand identity that drives internal brand management.	It is evident that front-line employees in SAPO acknowledges that the brand message is easy to memorize, they however do not agree that the brand message is understandable.
Q2	Our brand message (vision) is understandable	Considered as the most important aspect of brand identity that drives internal brand management and have the lowest standard deviation score.	
Brand communication			
Q4	I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO	Considered as the second most important aspect of brand communication that drives internal brand management. Importantly, they want to be informed by SAPO about company.	The front-line employees are not motivated by what they read in the media about SAPO but considers this as an important aspect of brand communication to positively influence internal brand management. Importantly, they want to be informed about what is happening in the company. Front-line employees discuss SAPO amongst themselves which, in the absence of formal communications, can be risky for SAPO.
Q6	I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues	Considered as the least important aspect of brand communication that drivers	
Q9	What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me	Considered as the most important aspect of brand communication that drives internal brand management.	
Brand leadership			
Q12	I know the values / personality of the SAPO brand	Considered as the second most important aspect of brand communication that drives internal brand management.	It is evident that the front-line employees in SAPO understand the vision and believe it to be achievable. Interestingly, they also understand that their behaviour influence the brand image, but do not consider this to be an important brand leadership aspect to influence internal brand management.
Q13	I understand the vision of SAPO and I believe it to be achievable	Considered as the most important aspect of brand leadership that drives internal brand management.	
Q14	I know my behaviour influence the brand image	Considered as the least important aspect of brand leadership that drives internal brand management.	
Internal brand management construct			
Q4	I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO	Considered as the second most important driver of internal brand management.	The three most important drivers of internal brand management relates to brand communication. The front-line employees do not feel motivated about what they read in the media about SAPO. Also, they do not feel well informed about SAPO. This in turn makes them to not feel proud of the SAPO brand. The front-line employees understand that their behaviour influence the brand image, but do not consider this as important.
Q8	When I see external information of our brand, I am proud to be working for SAPO	Considered as the second most important driver of internal brand management.	
Q9	What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me	Considered as the third most important driver of internal brand management.	
Q14	I know my behaviour influence the brand image	Considered as the least important driver of internal brand management.	
Brand commitment construct			
Q17	For me, SAPO is the best employer to work for	Considered as the most important aspect of brand commitment, but the low top-box score indicates the opposite.	The front-line employees do not consider SAPO as the best employer to work for. There are no conclusive results as to whether they would seek alternative employment. Importantly, they care about the SAPO brand, but this does not influence their level of brand commitment.
Q18	I am extremely glad that I choose to work for SAPO over any other company	Considered as the second most important aspect of brand commitment.	
Q19	I really care about the SAPO name brand	Considered as the least important aspect of brand commitment.	
Brand trust			
23	SAPO is an honest brand	Considered as the most important aspect of brand trust.	There are no definitive results to indicate that SAPO is a honest brand amongst the front-line employees. They do rely on the SAPO brand, but this does not drive brand trust.
22	I rely on the SAPO brand	Considered as the least important aspect of brand trust.	

As illustrated in table 4.28 above, the main findings of this study were discussed in paragraph 4.8.

4.9 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the results of the non-parametric tests used to test the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust. The measurement instrument was tested to be reliable. All three hypotheses were accepted and a summary of the main findings were presented.

The next chapter presents a summary of the main findings, conclusion and recommendations.



CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief summary of the problem, methodology and major findings, followed by a discussion on the contribution of this study. The limitations of this study are discussed and the theoretical, empirical and managerial recommendations are presented.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM AND MAJOR FINDINGS

5.2.1 Summary of Research Problem

Despite the important role of employees in creating and building the brand, especially in services organisations, brand building efforts directed to develop employees into brand champions through internal brand management, are often overlooked.

Therefore, the primary research question formulated in paragraph 1.4.1 was answered and the main objectives listed in paragraph 1.5.2 were met.

5.2.2 Summary of Major Findings

Based on the data analysis presented in Chapter 4 and the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.3, the major findings of this study are illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

- (b) H₂: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand trust**

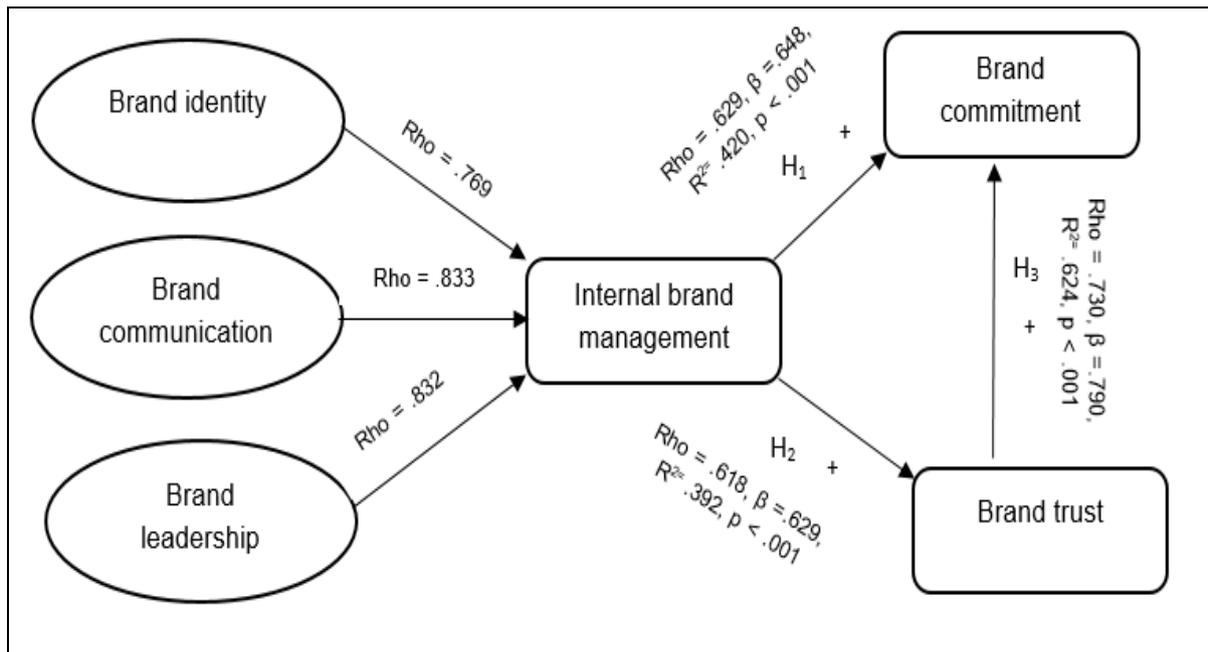


Figure 5.1: Summary of major findings of this study

5.2.2.1 Major Findings Based on Hypothesis Testing

- (a) **H₁: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand commitment**

It is clear from Figure 5.1 above, that internal brand management has a positive relationship with brand commitment. This is in support of previous studies (Du Preez, Bendixen & Abratt, 2017:258; Erman, Hancer & Leong, 2017:312; Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015:87; Javid, Monfared & Aghamoosa, 2015:412; O'Challen, 2013:478).

However, the front-lines employees do not feel that SAPO is a good company to work for and even though they care about the SAPO brand, it does not influence their level of commitment in a positive way.

Brand commitment is fostered through internal brand management when employees are open the organisation's efforts to build sustainable relationships that are

beneficial to both employees and the organisation (App & Büttgen, 2016:706; King & Grace, 2012:472). In service organisations, like SAPO, it is the employee's commitment to the brand that influence how the brand is experienced by the customer and whether or not the customer develop an emotional connection to the brand (Yang, Wan & Wu, 2015:270). This notion is supported by Natarajan et al., (2017:97) who stated that "service brands strive to accomplish emotional reciprocation from employees, as it is an obligatory part to make them live and deliver the desired brand".

However, Piehler et al., (2016:1591) found that employing the right kind of employees with similar values of the organisation are more likely to exhibit the acceptable brand attitudes and behaviours that enhance brand commitment. Erkmen, Murat and Leong (2017:317) support the notion emphasising that "employees represent the central point of the company brand and therefore should be the starting point by recruiting the right employees". When employees know what the brand stand for, they may feel more positive about their workplace (Vallaster & Lindgreen, 2013:298). Therefore, brand commitment is achieved by shifting the organisation's focus first to their employees then to the organisation's customers.

(b) H₂: Internal brand management will have a positive effect on brand trust

As depicted in Figure 5.1, internal brand management has a positive relationship with brand trust, which is supported by Erkmen and Hancer (2015:2).

Front-line employees feel that they rely on the SAPO brand, but do not consider it as an important aspect of brand trust. Mixed results emerged regarding whether SAPO is an honest brand or not.

Trust is created when employees identify with the brand. For service organisations, internal brand management through brand identity plays a critical role to build or restore customer confidence and trust (Buil, Catalan & Martinez, 2016:4-10). Brand trust significantly influence the strength of the customer

relationship with the brand. If the brand do not consistently deliver on its promise, customers will not trust the brand (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010:384). Therefore, organisations must build brand trust among employees that deliver the brand promise as it is the employees that deliver the brand promise.

(c) H₃: Brand trust will have a positive effect on brand commitment

Figure 5.1 depicts that there is a very strong positive relationship between brand commitment and brand trust. This is in support of previous studies that established brand commitment to have a strong positive relationship with brand trust (Erkmen et al., 2017:316; Albert & Merunka, 2015:20; Erkmen & Hancer, 2015:52; Morgan & Hunt, 1994:22).

Morgan and Hunt (1994:23) proposed that in relationship commitment, trust is “existing when one party has confidence in the exchange partner's reliability and integrity” and proposed that trust is the strongest predictor to explain commitment. When frontline employees have confidence in SAPO's reliability and integrity, they willingly commit to the relationship, which in turn increase commitment and build successful relationships between the employees and management. Therefore, like in all relationships, there can be no commitment without trust. Erkmen et al., (2017:320) echoes this by stating that “brand trust is the most important factor to enhance the brand commitment of employees”.

5.2.2.2 Major Findings on the Drivers of Internal Brand Management

(a) Brand identity

The front-line employees in SAPO feel that the brand message (vision) is easy to memorise and believe it to be convincing. They, however, do not understand the brand message (vision) and therefore brand identity was found to not enhance internal brand management. Punjaisri and Wilson (2011:1526) emphasised that brand identity is linked to the employee's sense of belonging to the brand and involves both cognitive and affective identification. Cognitive identification involves

the employees own perception of belonging to the organisation. On the other hand, affective identification involves the employee's positive feelings of being part of the organisation (Piehler et al., 2016:1579). However, Vallaster and Lindgreen (2013:303) reveal that affective identification lies with top management "as they share a greater knowledge about and a deeper emotional attachment to the brand identity than do their colleagues lower down in the organisation". Therefore, SAPO should re-look at how they foster brand identity as the role of the employees plays a critical role to build or restore customer confidence and trust. The level of commitment to deliver the brand promise is influenced by brand identity that creates the bond between employees and organisations. However, for employees to project a positive image of the brand, they must first commit and believe in the brand. Therefore, fostering brand identity not only has an impact on the organisation's employees, but on the external customer as well (Buil et al., 2016:4).



(b) Brand Communication

Brand communication was found to be the strongest driver of internal brand management in SAPO. Service organisations have little control over their front-line employee's interaction with the brand as their behaviour or attitude may influence the manner in which they represent the brand.

An effective way to ensure the brand promise are delivered consistently, is to communicate directly with employees to ensure there is alignment in how brand promise is delivered (Baker, Rapp, Meyer & Mullins, 2014:642). This notion is supported by Gelb and Rangarajan (2014:108) who emphasised the significance of internal brand communication as it reminds employees that they are the brand ambassadors and influence the employee to deliver on the brand promise (Vallaster & Lindgreen, 2013:298, King & Grace, 2012:473). Furthermore, Du Preez and Bendixen (2015:83) found internal brand communication to be the strongest contributor of internal brand management that foster satisfied employees who are more likely to be committed to give their best to the organisation. This finding is in of support of Piehler, Schade and Burmann (2015:19) who found internal communication to have a significant positive effect on brand understanding.

However, this study found that negative external communication that the organisation have no control over, to influence the ability of front-line employees to deliver the expected brand promise. If employees feel negative about the organisation's brand, they have the ability to destroy both the organisation and the brand. Through open communication, an awareness of the desired brand image is reinforced and an alignment is achieved "between how the firm wants the brand to be represented and how the brand is actually delivered" (Baker et al., 2014:2).

(c) Brand Leadership

The front-line employees understand the important role of SAPO in our country, yet this was found to be the least important to create brand leadership. The purpose of brand leadership is to facilitate an awareness of the direction the brand need to take to achieve its purpose (Ahmad, Quoquab, Bahrun & Mansor, 2014:55). Botschen, Combe and Thelen, (2012:3) found that brand leadership is "determining the future long term resonance based on the chosen brand identity". Therefore, the role of top management in building brand leadership is crucial. When employees have trust in top management as role models, they are more likely to adopt brand supporting behaviours (Erkmen et al., 2017:319).

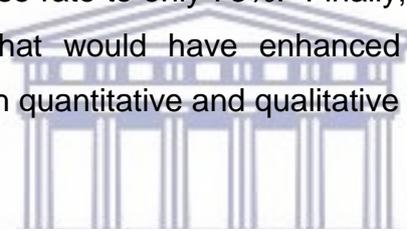
5.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study is the first internal brand management study that was conducted in a government department, adding a different sector as opposed to the banking, hospitality and airline industry to the field of internal brand management. Front-line employees understand that their behaviour influence the brand image, but do not consider it an important aspect of internal brand management. Historically, government departments constitute more mature employees, which could possibly explain this reasoning, highlighting the need to explore other drivers of internal brand management, for example, age or years of service. Other than Erkmen and Hancer (2015:50-51), this is the only other study that focus on internal brand management, brand commitment and brand trust in one

study. This study tells us that employees can no longer be viewed in isolation if they are expected to consistently deliver the brand promise. A more holistic approach is needed taking into consideration marketing theory, organisation behaviour theory and organisational culture theory.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

Even though this study contributes to the knowledge on internal brand management and its effect on brand commitment and brand trust, this study also has limitations. Firstly, the study was conducted in one region of SAPO, with specific timeframes to collect the data, raising the issue of external validity of the findings. Secondly, the use of convenience sampling to select the respondents, limits the generalizing of the results. Thirdly, during the data collection period, SAPO went on an industrial strike, which influenced the response rate to only 73%. Finally, the use of only quantitative data limited triangulation that would have enhanced the richness of the data collected with the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approach.



5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.5.1 Recommendations Based on the Literature Review – Theoretical Implications

There is a link between front-line employee's behaviour to deliver the brand promise, organisational performance and individual versus organisational values. Research suggests matching the values of individuals with that of SAPO through recruitment and selection processes to improve the delivery of the brand promise. Therefore, there is a link between marketing theory, organisational theory and organisational culture theory. This link and its impact on marketing strategies warrant future investigation.

5.5.2 Recommendation Based on the Empirical Research

So far, most internal brand management studies have been conducted in the banking and hospitality sectors. This study was conducted in the government sector in a single geographic location. Further, internal brand management studies are required in different government departments, as the profile of employees in government departments may differ to those from the private sector. Future research could establish whether the results are specific to SAPO or typical of the government sector.

This study, other than Erkmen and Hancer (2015:50-51), is the only study that focus on the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust. Future empirical research is needed to explore the critical link between brand commitment and brand trust. How trust is created through marketing strategies from the employee's perspective should therefore be investigated.

5.5.3 Managerial Recommendations

Given the diverse geographical spread of SAPO's front-line employees, SAPO needs to review its communication strategy to ensure that it is more inclusive. An integrated communications strategy will enhance internal brand management efforts. The role of top management in SAPO cannot be overlooked. For an organisation of this magnitude and importance, all employees, not only front-line employees, must understand what the brand stands for and implements strategies to consistently deliver on the brand promise.

SAPO is in a process of restructuring with a key focus on enhancing customer confidence to restore faith in the brand. This will not be achieved if SAPO does not communicate with front-line employees about what is good and not so in good in the organisation. If not, frontline employees are exposed to outside influence, which may harm the brand even further.

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**APPENDIX 1:
FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Questionnaire number

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INTRODUCTION: The purpose of the research is to establish if internal brand management has an effect on brand commitment and brand trust in SAPO. The research forms part of a master’s thesis as explained in detail in the attached information letter. Please be assured that no one, not even the researcher, will know your identity. Your honest completion of this questionnaire is critical to the success of the research project. The questionnaire consists of three (3) pages and will not take more than seven (7) minutes.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Instructions: Please circle the most appropriate option. Answer ALL eight (8) questions.

1. Gender	
Female	1
Male	2
Other	3

2. Marital status	
Married	1
Single	2
Divorced	3
Other	4

3. Department	
Delivery	1
Retail	2

4. Age group	
18 – 25	1
26 – 35	2
36 – 45	3
46 – 55	4
56 – 65	5

5. Race	
Asian	1
Black	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
White	5

6. Years of service	
0 - 5	1
6 - 10	2
11 - 20	3
21 - 30	4
31 and more	5

7. Education	
Lower than Grade 12	1
Grade 12 / Matric	2
3 year Diploma / Degree	3
Postgraduate diploma	4
Honours and higher	5

8. Your salary level	
PPTE	1
A1 - C1	2
C2 - C5	3
D1 or higher	4

SECTION B: DRIVERS OF INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT

Instructions: Please circle the most appropriate option ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Answer ALL twenty two (22) questions. Choose only one answer per question.

South African Post Office (SAPO) vision: A leading provider of postal, logistics and financial services to the South African market.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral "Neither agree nor disagree"	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. Our brand message (vision) is understandable	5	4	3	2	1
10. Our brand message (vision) is easy to memorise	5	4	3	2	1
11. Our brand message (vision) is convincing	5	4	3	2	1
12. I feel well informed through various communications by our head office about SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
13. I feel well informed by my direct superior about SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
14. I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues	5	4	3	2	1
15. In our company there are information circulated that express what SAPO stands for	5	4	3	2	1
16. When I see external information of our brand, I am proud to be working for SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
17. What I read in the media about SAPO motivates me	5	4	3	2	1
18. I understand the important role of SAPO in our country (origin and traditions of SAPO)	5	4	3	2	1
19. I know the products and services that SAPO offers (competencies and abilities)	5	4	3	2	1
20. I know the values / personality of the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
21. I understand the vision of SAPO and I believe it to be achievable	5	4	3	2	1
22. I know my behaviour influence the brand image	5	4	3	2	1

SECTION C: BRAND COMMITMENT

Instructions: Please circle the most appropriate option ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Answer ALL six (6) questions. Choose only one answer per question.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral "Neither agree nor disagree"	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. usually tell my friends that SAPO is a great company to work for	5	4	3	2	1
12. am proud to tell others that I work for SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
13. or me SAPO is the best employer to work for	5	4	3	2	1
14. am extremely glad that I choose to work for SAPO over any other company	5	4	3	2	1
15. I really care about the SAPO name brand	5	4	3	2	1
16. would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working	5	4	3	2	1

SECTION D: BRAND TRUST

Instructions: Please circle the most appropriate option ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Answer ALL four (4) questions. Choose only one answer per question.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral "Neither agree nor disagree"	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. I trust the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
18. I rely on the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
19. SAPO is an honest brand	5	4	3	2	1
20. SAPO is a safe brand	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX 2

PRE-TESTED QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. You may only choose one response per question.

Brand identity (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015:90)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our brand message is understandable	5	4	3	2	1
Our brand message is easy to remember	5	4	3	2	1
Our brand message is convincing	5	4	3	2	1
Brand communication (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015:90)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel well informed by our head office about SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I feel well informed by my direct superior about SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I often discuss SAPO issues with my colleagues	5	4	3	2	1
In our company there are stories circulating that express what SAPO stands for	5	4	3	2	1
When I see advertising for our brand, I am proud to be working SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
What I read in the press about SAPO motivates me	5	4	3	2	1
Brand leadership (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015:90)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I know the origin and tradition of the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
I know the competencies of the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
I know the personality of the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
I know the vision of SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I know how I am expected to behave to ensure our brand has a positive brand image	5	4	3	2	1

Brand commitment (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015:90)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I will work harder than I am expected to in order to make SAPO successful	5	4	3	2	1
I am proud to work for SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I feel very loyal to SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I talk about SAPO to my friends as a great company to work for	5	4	3	2	1
I really care about the future of SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
My values are similar to those of SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I feel like I really fit in at SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
Brand trust (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015:90)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I plan to be working for SAPO five years from now	5	4	3	2	1
I am likely to be looking for a new job in the next few year	5	4	3	2	1
I seldom think about leaving SAPO	5	4	3	2	1
I am presently looking for a new job	5	4	3	2	1
Brand trust Erkmen and Hancer (2014:5)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I trust the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
I rely on the SAPO brand	5	4	3	2	1
SAPO is an honest brand	5	4	3	2	1
SAPO is a safe brand	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX 3

INFORMATION LETTER



**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (UWC)
FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Dear participant

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mrs Estelle Mouton (Student number: 3318147). It is a full completion of a research thesis towards the MCom Degree at the School of Business and Finance at the University of the Western Cape. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what it would entail. Please take your time and read the following information carefully.

The title of my thesis is:

Effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study, conducted as part of the requirements for a MCom degree at the University of the Western Cape and seeks to establish the effect of internal brand management on brand commitment and brand trust.

What will the study involve?

All employees in direct contact or interaction with customers will be asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire to determine if internal brand management has an effect on brand commitment and brand trust.

Do you have to take part?

No this is absolutely voluntary. However, if you decide to participate you will sign a consent form declaring your interest to participate in the study and in case you decide to withdraw you have the right to do so by not completing the self-administered questionnaire.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. None of the questions within the questionnaire require for you to identify yourself and your identity will not, in any way appear in the thesis.

What will happen to the information which you give?

It will be safely stored in a scientific system for the duration of the study. Upon completion of the study the data will, in agreement with the supervisor, be destroyed.

What will happen to the results?

The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, relevant department/faculty management and examiners. The thesis may be published in a research journal.

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact me or my supervisor on the contact details listed below.

Thank you for your time.

Student:

Estelle Mouton

Student number: 3318147

Mobile number: 0825683178

Email: 3318147@myuwc.ac.za



Supervisor:

Prof F Herbst

Telephone: 021 959 2240

Email: ferbst@uwc.ac.za

APPENDIX 4

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPO

Memo



To : Estelle Mouton
From : Susan Myburg – General Manager – Human Capital – Organisation Effectiveness
Nomsa Nkosi – Senior Manager – Talent and Succession

Date : 06 September 2017

Re : Research Proposal:

This serves to confirm that SAPO has granted you permission to conduct the research as per all the conditions, requirements stipulated by SAPO and received from you.

Please ensure that all information is in line with SAPO policies and procedures, pertaining to the Confidentiality of information, in accordance with the ethical codes and practices of SAPO.

Research submitted to the institution may be used by SAPO for referencing and it will be filed by HCM accordingly.

SAPO will not incur any costs arising from you conducting the research.

We take this opportunity to wish you good luck.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Nomsa Nkosi.


Supported: Nomsa Nkosi
Senior Manager – Talent and Succession
012-649-7032


Approval: Susan Myburg
General Manager – HCM – Organisation Effectiveness
012-649-7791