

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE RURAL SURVIVALIST CULTURE ON CORPORATE
IMAGE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Frances-Marie Botha declare that “*The influence of the rural survivalist culture on corporate image*” is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown on the reference list.

I further declare that the content of this thesis is and will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

Frances Botha

Date

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ABSTRACT

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by

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Burgess (2003) has identified 16 different South African consumer groups. For the purpose of this research, and for the sake of simplicity, the 16 consumer groups were combined into four clusters. The four clusters are the following: the rural survivalist, the emerging, the urbanised middle class and the urban elite consumer group.

The main objectives of the research were the following:

- To determine the rural consumers' perceptions of the corporate image of Pharmaceutical organisations in the greater Bushbuckridge area.
- To provide guidelines for aligning organizational behaviour more closely with the rural consumers' perceptions of corporate image.

Structured interviews were conducted to determine the consumers' perceptions on how corporate image should be structured in order to improve healthcare delivery in the pharmaceutical sector in Bushbuckridge. A sample of 850 rural consumers was interviewed and the data obtained were analysed through content analysis and descriptive statistics.

The following main conclusions were made:

- With respect to corporate social responsibility, the consumers consider HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS treatment and support for pensioners as the most important intervention areas for the pharmaceutical organisations.
- With respect to corporate business conduct, rural consumers expect leaders to be able to listen, treat people with respect and to act intelligently.
- Expectations when buying medicine: The respondents expect the pharmaceutical companies to be trustworthy, act in confidence, to be able to analyse and clarify consumers' needs.
- Distribution channels: Respondents prefer to buy their medicine at pharmacies, government hospitals and clinics.
- Qualities of the sales force: Respondents expect that pharmaceutical companies should emphasise the following services: privacy during consultation, clean environment and training on how to live a healthy life.
- Pharmaceutical products: Western medicine is preferred in Bushbuckridge.
- Employee behavior: It is evident from the study that the respondents value “ubuntu”, believe that time is money, are undecided towards the influence of witchcraft in the workplace and also undecided towards the value of the extended family.

The literature review and the resulting empirical survey will assist leaders in the pharmaceutical sector to obtain a better understanding of rural consumers' perceptions of corporate image.

Key words: Organisational behaviour, corporate image, rural survivalist consumer group, culture