

The relationship between employee perceptions of a corporate brand and employee engagement

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ABSTRACT

Secondary data defines employee engagement as “a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being” (Guest, 2009). Corporate branding is defined as “the systematic planned management of behaviours, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of an organisation” (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). This research paper has three research questions which examine the relationship between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement; what impact strong corporate brands have on employee engagement and lastly examines demographical factors that may impact employee engagement.

The study design was non-probability and convenience sampling was used. Statistical tools that were used in this study included t-test, correlation analysis, Cronbach’s alpha test and factor analysis. The data was collected from seven organisations namely: MTN, BMW, Absa, McDonalds, KFC, Eskom and Pep which are located within South Africa. The questionnaire was delivered to a 150 respondents across seven organisations.

The research results indicate that corporate brand variables: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation, have a positive influence on employee engagement.

The findings from this research can contribute to the body of knowledge within the domain of improving employee engagement within organisations, which will result in increased profitability, reduced turnover, improved working environment and enhanced employee satisfaction. The primary audience for the study will be the academic community and more specifically individuals interested in marketing and general business and managerial practices.

Keywords: Employee engagement, corporate branding

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Name: Candice Mann

Date: 26 September 2012

Signature: x

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To my supervisor Karl Hofmeyr: Thank you for your expertise, guidance, understanding and assistance. It was a pleasure working with you.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Research title

The relationship between employee perceptions of a corporate brand and employee engagement.

1.2 Research problem

Considerable research has been done into employee engagement which is defined as “a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being” (Guest, 2009).

Low levels of employee engagement are destructive in an organisation as it leads to dissatisfaction, poor productivity, absenteeism and employee turnover (Richards, 2012). Low employee engagement levels result in a disconnection between employees, peers, jobs, managers and the organisation. According to the United States Strategic Reward Survey by Watson Wyatt and WorldatWork, the levels of employee engagement have decreased by 9% from 2009 to 2010 (Richards, 2012), costing United States organisations between \$250 and \$350 billion a year (Rath & Conchie, 2009).

The Gallup Organisation has also found that 20% of United States employees are disengaged. The Corporate Leadership Council (2002) has conducted a survey whereby 50,000 employees at 59 global organisations were researched; the study found that 10% of employees were disengaged. A similar study done with more than 85,000 employees from 16 countries found that 24% of employees were disengaged (Towers Perrin, 2006). In order to ensure optimum employee engagement, an in-depth understanding regarding the cause and effects of low employee engagement need to be analysed.

A survey conducted by Akron’s Centre for Organisational Research has found that employees with low engagement levels have characteristics such as: dissatisfaction, employee attrition, low tolerance levels, inconsistency and low goodwill (Zaineb, 2010). Low employee engagement thus has a negative impact on the organisation as the

organisation loses top talent and the success of the organisation is jeopardised (Zaineb, 2010).

Ma and Lai (2010) believe that organisations should therefore focus on building a strong corporate brand, “the systematic planned management of behaviours, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of an organisation” (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010), as it improves employee performance and attitudes which enhance the firm’s competitiveness. This however requires a strong workforce within the organisation, Fiona Harris and Leslie de Chernatony (2001) state that corporate branding involves internal factors within the organisation such as paying more attention to employees.

There are three factors that affect brand perceptions and performance. These factors involve the similarity of brand team members, shared values and communication (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). However, employees are likely to differ in their perceptions of their brand’s identity as perception is created through one’s past experiences and current information provided by the stimuli (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Thus employees from different levels within an organisation have different information and decision criteria (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

In summary, low employee engagement still exists within many organisations which jeopardises the success of the organisation. Ma and Lai (2010) believe that building a strong corporate brand will improve employee attitudes and performance. With this said, the integration of employee engagement and corporate branding has largely been overlooked.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether employee perception of a corporate brand have an effect on employee engagement. This study will broaden our knowledge on some of the causes of poor employee engagement as well as provide us with a better understanding as to what degree employee perception of a corporate brand has an influence on employee engagement. It may also provide a way of formulating a treatment or solution that can be presented to facilitate overcoming low employee engagement.

The three objectives for this research are:

- i. To determine if a corporate brand is effective in raising employee engagement as perceived by employees.
- ii. To evaluate how the levels of employee engagement impact a corporate brand.
- iii. To investigate what factors within a corporate brand impact employee engagement.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study fills a gap in that extensive research has been done regarding employee engagement with little emphasis on employee perceptions of a corporate brand. Therefore there is a gap regarding the correlation between the two topics, which provides for a great opportunity to research this topic in more depth.

This is a relevant topic to acquire research on and will benefit students, organisations and employees as this research aims to increase profitability, reduce turnover, and improve the working environment and employee satisfaction. The primary audience for the study will be the academic community and more specifically individuals interested in marketing and general business and managerial practices.

1.5 Definition of terms

In order to completely understand the research topic – the relationship between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement, one needs to understand the terms. The following definitions have been provided: employee engagement, perception and branding.

1.5.1 Employee engagement

The term ‘employee engagement’ has been around for a long time and therefore numerous developments and changes have been accorded throughout the years. The most appropriate definition would emerge from an organisation whereby practical examples of employee engagement are seen on a daily basis (Robertson-Smith & Markwick, 2009). The following definitions are from organisations within the public and private sector:

“An outcome measured or seen as a result of people being committed to something or someone in the business – a very best effort that is willingly given” – Vodaphone. (Stuff, 2008)

“The degree to which employees are satisfied with their jobs, feel valued, and experience collaboration and trust. Engaged employees will stay with the company longer and continually find smarter, more effective ways to add value to the organisation. The end result is a high performing company where people are flourishing and productivity is increased and sustained.” – Johnson and Johnson. (Catteeuw, Flynn & Vonderhorst, 2007)

“The extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organisation, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment.” (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004)

“An emotional attachment to the organisation, pride and a willingness to be an advocate of the organisation, a rational understanding of the organisation’s strategic goals, values, and how employees fit and motivation and willingness to invest discretionary effort to go above and beyond” – Nokia Siemens Network. (Nokia Siemens Network, 2008)

The eight key drivers of employee engagement are (Soldati, 2007):

- Trust and integrity
- Nature of the job
- Line of sight between employee performance and company performance
- Career growth opportunities
- Pride about the company
- Co-workers/team members
- Employee development
- Employee relationships with their manager

1.5.2 Perception

Perception is defined as the process whereby individuals take unrefined sensations from their surroundings and interpret them, by using knowledge, experience and understanding of the world in order for sensations to become significant sensations (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy, 2006).

Each individual interprets a situation differently and may come up with different meanings of reality. However, Sharma (2011) states that individuals react to the “perception of reality rather than the reality itself”. It is therefore important to understand employees’ perceptions of an organisation as it will help the understanding of employees’ organisational behaviour better (Sharma, 2011).

Employees working for an organisation will experience different perceptions compared to those who work for an alternative organisation. It is this reason why organisations control employees with rules and regulations and ensure organisational culture and cooperation to guarantee optimal performance within the organisation (Sharma, 2011).

1.5.3 Brand

A brand is defined as: “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (American Marketing Association, 1960).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review consists of secondary data – “data that have already been collected for purposes other than the problem at hand” (Molhatra, 2010). The type of secondary data used for this study consisted of published sources such as academic journals, dissertations and academic articles.

The objective of the literature review was to provide information regarding employee engagement, branding and perception. Specific concepts and perspectives are discussed in this chapter with reference to a wide range of secondary data.

2.2 Employee engagement

2.2.1 Employee engagement – Definition and key drivers

Employee engagement is defined as: “a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being” (Guest, 2009). According to Konrad (2006) employee engagement involves three factors: emotional, behavioural and cognitive. The emotional factor is determined by how employees feel about their colleagues, leaders and organisation (Konrad, 2006). The behavioural factor is determined by the quality of work employees produce (Konrad, 2006). The cognitive factor is determined by the beliefs of employees regarding the organisation, its leaders and its culture (Konrad, 2006).

The relationship between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement focuses on the cognitive and emotional factors of employee engagement as this involves employees’ perceptions of an organisation and more specifically the perceptions of an organisation’s brand.

According to Lockwood (2007) the key lever for employee engagement is employees’ emotional commitment to their job. The level of emotional commitment is determined by factors such as the extent to which employees gain “enjoyment, meaning, pride or inspiration” from someone or something within an organisation (Lockwood, 2007).

Emotional commitment is found to deliver stronger performance than rational commitment and therefore studying employees' emotional commitment would be beneficial to any organisation as it will reduce employee turnover, increase customer satisfaction, employee productivity and profits (Attridge, 2009).

MacLeod and Clarke (2009) identify four “enablers” that contribute to employee engagement. The first enabler is leadership through storytelling which explains to employees the goals of the organisation and why certain goals have been put into place. This will help employees understand how their role contributes to the success of the organisation. The second enabler that contributes to employee engagement is supportive managers; managers need to motivate, challenge and support employees. The third enabler is an employee voice, employees should feel comfortable to express their opinions and employees should be given the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process. The last enabler is integrity – the values of the organisation need to be aligned with the behaviours of the organisation.

The Gallup Organisation, a consulting firm that specialises in employee engagement, has done extensive research, and has interviewed more than 10 million employees and managers across 114 countries in 41 different languages. The results from the research revealed 12 statements, better known as the Q12, that predict employee and workgroup performance (Gallup, 2012). These are:

- i. *I know what is expected of me at work* – Gallup’s research reveals that many successful organisations have set the correct goals and outcomes for their employees to follow and have provided a platform to measure performance.
- ii. *I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right* – Gallup suggests that organisations need to find out what employees need in order to accomplish goals and objectives.
- iii. *At work I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day* – It is important that the organisation acknowledges employees’ strengths and weaknesses, in order to help employees work on their strengths.
- iv. *In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work* – Gallup suggests that employees should receive praise and recognition once a week, this will encourage positive behaviour.
- v. *My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person* – Good organisations have good managers. Managers need to have good

relationships with their employees so that employees can share information with them.

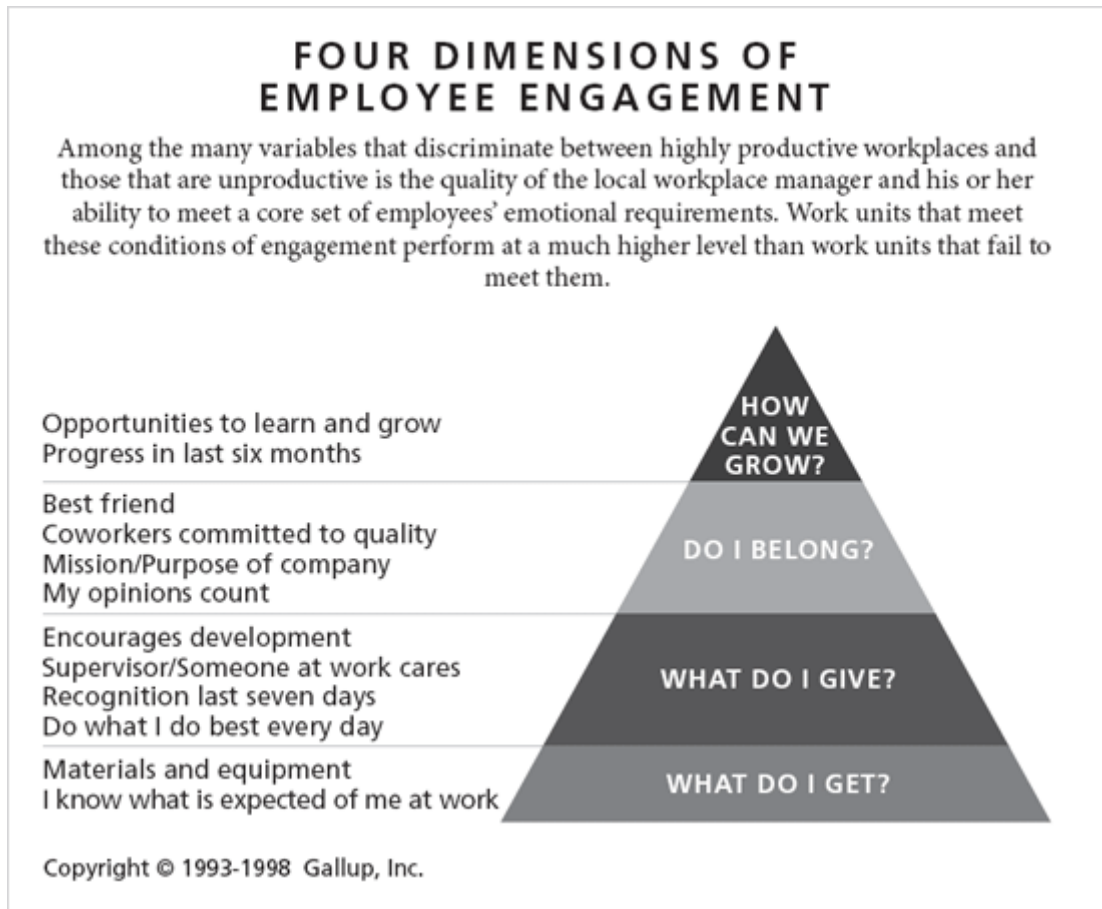
- vi. *There is someone at work who encourages my development* – Organisations need to help employees find their strengths by providing constant feedback and creative development opportunities.
- vii. *At work, my opinions seem to count* – Organisations need to provide different channels of communication and managers need to maintain those channels to ensure employees use them effectively.
- viii. *The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important* – Gallup states that organisations need to ensure employees understand the mission statement of the business and the ways in which employees contribute to the organisation as this statement defines how motivated employees are.
- ix. *My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work* – Managers need to communicate the standards of the business as this will increase accountability and trust amongst employees.
- x. *I have a best friend at work* – Managers need to encourage an open communication policy. Employees who have good friends at work tend to share values, watch out for each other and trust each other more than employees who do not have good friends at work.
- xi. *In the last six months, someone at work talked to me about my progress* – Gallup states that feedback improves performance therefore managers need to ensure that goals, objectives and achievement levels are clearly structured so that employees have something to aspire to.
- xii. *This last year, I have had the opportunities at work to learn and grow* – Organisations need to provide employees with educational programmes.

According to the Gallup Organisation, “only a sheer 33% of employees are actively engaged, 49% not engaged, and 18% actively disengaged.” To improve employee engagement levels, Gallup suggests following the above 12 mentioned statements.

2.2.2 Employee engagement model

The Gallup Organisation has devised a four dimensional model of employee engagement as illustrated in Figure 1 that attempts to measure core sets of employee emotions.

Figure 1: Four dimensions of employee engagement (Fleming & Asplund, 2007)



Employee engagement has four dimensions namely, 'how can we grow?', 'do I belong?', 'what do I give?' and 'what do I get?'. Managers need to ensure that employees meet their emotional requirements by applying the four dimensions of employee engagement. Organisations that follow the four dimensions tend to work better than organisations that do not follow them. The four employee engagement dimensions consist of the basic needs of individuals "to be recognised as individuals and to contribute". Managers can influence employees' basic needs by setting clear goals and objectives, providing appropriate resources and showing employees that they care "personally and professionally" (Fleming & Asplund, 2007). Research done by Fleming and Asplund (2007) found that when employees meet their basic needs, positive emotions that result assist employees to look beyond the work in front of them and look more towards the welfare of the organisation.

2.3 Branding

2.3.1 Corporate Branding

Corporate branding stresses the importance of employees' behaviours and attitudes and has given rise to internal branding and employee branding, as both emphasise the importance of aligning employees' beliefs and values with the corporate brand. Branding consists of the delivery of a message to potential and existing customers, it is essential that organisations clearly define their corporate brand. Corporate branding concerns "the systematic planned management of behaviours, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of an organisation" (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010).

Perception plays a major role in a corporate brand, as external stakeholders judge employees' behaviour. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) state that: "employees have the potential to make or break the corporate brand". It is therefore critical that every employee within an organisation understands what the corporate brand values stand for. Foster et al (2010) refers to corporate identity as the organisation's ethos, aims and values, which represents the corporate brand and links the organisation with its customers.

Knox and Bickerton (2003) identified six conventions of corporate branding: brand context (vision, image, culture and competitive landscape), brand construction/corporate brand positioning framework (organisational attributes, performance, portfolio and network benefits), brand confirmation/articulating the brand position (corporate language), brand consistency (consistent corporate communication), brand continuity (business processes that impact the corporate brand and customer value) and lastly, brand conditioning (brand monitoring, development and renewal).

Hatch and Schultz (2001) state that a corporate brand needs three elements in order to be successful. The three elements are referred to as "strategic starts" and comprise of vision, culture and image. (1) The vision of the organisation is top management's aspirations, (2) the culture refers to how employees feel about an organisation, these include attributes such as values, behaviours and attitudes, and (3) the image of the organisation refers to how stakeholders perceive the organisation.

According to van Haften (2009) corporate branding encapsulates brand vision, brand values, brand personality and brand positioning. In conclusion, a corporate brand

provides a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) in an organisation by providing economic value to products and services.

This study used eight corporate brand constructs, these were: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation.

2.3.2 Brand Awareness

Aaker (1996) claims that brand awareness is becoming more challenging and believes organisations that distribute messages across different non-traditional media such as TV, newspaper, radio, Internet, direct marketing, trade shows and event sponsorship, are organisations that will create brand awareness.

Brand awareness plays an important role in brand equity. In order for brand equity to exist in the minds of consumers, brand awareness needs to take place. Brand awareness needs to neglect brand recall and focus on how likely customers are to recommend your products or services to others (Weber, 2009).

Kotler and Keller (2006) state that brand awareness is the ability of individuals to recall a brand in detail which assists with acquiring a product or service. Brand awareness involves brand recall and brand recognition; brand recall is the most important and occurs outside the organisation as opposed to brand recognition which happens inside the organisation (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

2.3.3 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty has aroused vast interest amongst the academic field as they believe brand loyalty is one of the most important attributes when consumers choose a brand. According to Durkin (2010) loyalty begins with employees and she believes once employees are loyal to the brand they work for, customers will automatically become brand loyal, “cultivating a strong brand following”. Kotler, Brown, Adam, Burton and Armstrong (2007) state that one should not confuse brand loyalty, the commitment of a brand and the ability to make repeat purchases, with “habit, indifference, a low price or unavailability of other brands”.

Employees are loyal because they want to build a sustainable relationship with their employer. The economic downturn may also be a result of employee loyalty as some companies refuse to recruit new employees to save costs, making it difficult for

individuals to find a new position. Michalowicz (2012) states that employees are loyal due to three “secrets”:

- **Evaluate** – Employers need to recruit individuals who are naturally loyal. Loyalty cannot be taught and therefore it has to be present in the individual’s character. The seven organisations that took part in this study, must have recruited naturally loyal individuals, as employee loyalty was high across all seven organisations.
- **Reciprocate** – To encourage loyalty amongst employees, leaders need to be loyal to their employees and provide financial and non-financial rewards such as: respect and praise, employee of the month awards, work flexibility and listening to suggestions and feedback. The employee engagement questionnaire revealed that on average employees rated recognition, praise and feedback highly, which substantiates Michalowicz’s argument that explains why employees are loyal.
- **Simplify** – Employers must remove all barriers that prevent employees from achieving goals and objectives. Employees that find it easier to get a job done are more loyal than employees that have many barriers. When asked the question: “Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?” employees on average responded that they do have the correct material and equipment to do work right which explains why they are loyal to the brand they work for.

2.3.4 Perceived Quality of a Brand

Perceived quality of a brand is defined as an “intangible element or simply a feeling towards a brand, which would not only be constrained within the performance, feature, price, and other quality dimensions of the brand” (Tsang, Lee & Li, 2011). Gronroos (1988) points out that when experience meets expectations, consumers tend to perceive the quality of the brand to be good. This implies that organisations need to meet expectations of both consumers and employees, as this will create a good perception about the organisation’s brand.

2.3.5 Brand Leadership

De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011) define brand leadership by the profitability of an organisation and believe that organisations that have a higher market

share have higher profits. Leading brands also have lower costs due to the principle of economies of scale. For the purpose of this study brand leadership is measured according to three elements: innovation in comparison to competitors, popularity in comparison to competitors and lastly, brand leadership in comparison to competitors. Burkitt and Zealley (2006, as cited in De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011) explored research regarding the characteristics of high performing brands and discovered that they all have three common characteristics: measure and evaluate marketing activities and outcomes, recruit and train individuals with analytical skills and lastly, focus on business outcomes and link the data to common key performance indicators.

Brand leadership is therefore defined as managers that have distinctive talents that are focused on fulfilling customers and investors' expectations. The leadership brand is entrenched into the culture of the organisation through its "policies and its requirements for employees" (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007). Building a leadership brand requires organisations to follow five principles (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007). The first principle is to set strategies that will meet the goals and objectives of an organisation and to recruit the correct employees. The second principle is to ensure that managers internalise high expectations that are perceived by customers. The third principle is to evaluate leaders according to external perceptions. The fourth principle is to provide leadership skills to leaders within organisations so that they can fulfil external expectations. The last principle states that organisations need to track the leadership brand over the long term (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007).

2.3.6 Brand Value

"Brand equity is the value of the brand" (Kotler et al., 2007). Marketers and researchers use various views to study brand equity. Kotler and Keller (2009) define brand equity as: "the added value endowed on products and services, reflected in how consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands for the firm."

Organisations build brand equity by creating the correct brand knowledge structures with the right target market (Kotler & Keller, 2009). There are three main sets of brand equity drivers: brand elements (brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, spokespeople, slogans, jingles, packages and signage), the products and services and all the accompanying marketing activities and supporting marketing programmes and

lastly, these associations indirectly transferred to the brand by linking it to some other entity (a person, place or thing).

Aaker believes that brand equity consists of five assets: perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1996). However, Brasco and Mahajan (in Pappu et al. 2005) classify brand equity into two categories. The first category consists of the financial consideration, which talks about the brand equity value for the organisation. The second category consists of the consumer perspective which talks about the brand equity value for the consumer.

According to research done by the Performance Improvement Council (2012) engaged employees have enormous impact in positively affecting brand value. According to research done by the Gallup Organisation, strong brands with high employee engagement levels have 3.9 times the earnings per share compared to organisations with low employee engagement levels (Performance Improvement Council, 2012). Another study done by Towers and Watson indicates that employee engagement has a positive influence on financial performance; there is a 5.75% difference with regards to operating margins and 3.44% difference in net profit margins (Performance Improvement Council, 2012).

2.3.7 Brand Personality

Brand personality is human attributes that are applied to a brand and acts as a form of competitive advantage within organisations by building trust, commitment and strong relationships between the organisation and the consumer (Sorensen, 2011). Jennifer Aaker identified that there are five brand personality traits: (1) sincerity, (2) excitement, (3) competence, (4) sophistication, and (5) ruggedness. Brands have their own personality traits, so consumers choose brands based on their preferences and personality traits and consumers tend to look at how their personality is aligned with that of the brand (Lin, 2010). Organisations need to create a long and lasting brand personality as it encourages brand loyalty from target customers (Lin, 2010).

Corporate brand personality is about employee perception of the actions, words and values of an organisation and can be characterised into three attributes: affective, cognitive and conative. These three attributes are distinctive personality traits that are used to guide employees within an organisation and influence how employees will view the organisation. The first attribute is affective or the “heart” of an organisation, which talks about “passionate and compassionate”. The first attribute states that

organisations need to be “passionate” about serving their customers and accomplishing objectives and “compassionate” about their community. The second attribute is cognitive or the “mind” of an organisation, which talks about “creativity and disciplined”. The second attribute states that organisations need to be “creative” in the ways they meet customers’ needs and requirements yet still be “disciplined” to stay on track. The third attribute is conative or the “body” of an organisation, which talks about “agile and collaborative”. The third attribute states that organisations need to be “agile” in order to adapt to change in the market and establish a “collaborative” approach that will work well to align common goals of an organisation (Keller & Richey, 2006).

2.3.8 Organisational Brands

“A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods or services of one seller and differentiate them from those of competition” (American Marketing Association, 1960). Branding is vital when conducting business as it acts as a form of competitive advantage and survival (Tsang, Lee & Li, 2011). A brand is a differentiating factor that distinguishes one product or service from another. Kotler and Keller (2009) support the views of Tsang, Lee and Li (2011) and suggest that the brand’s product performance may be different functionally, tangibly or rationally, creating a differentiation amongst competitors. According to research done in the past 30 years, the definition of branding has changed significantly. Branding tends to focus more on corporate agendas which supports value creation through the use of strategic tools (Urde, 1999).

Brand organisation looks beyond the brand, a name, term, sign, symbol or design used to differentiate goods or services from competitors (American Marketing Association, 1960) and instead measures to what extent organisations are socially responsible, its corporate citizenship and if an organisation cares about its customers. Andriof, Waddock, Husted and Rahman (2002) state that corporate citizenship not only increases corporate reputation, but also acts as a form of competitive advantage which benefits an organisation financially. In order to increase corporate reputation, organisations need to take part in five activities: “retain employees to avoid redundancies, assist in the development of employment programmes for the unemployed in the local region, focus on increasing the use of recyclable materials in their manufacturing processes, become industry leaders in developing environmentally

sustainable business practices and lastly subsidise and maintain services to rural communities.” (Andriof, Waddock, Husted & Rahman, 2002).

According to research done by Bhattacharaya, Sen and Korschun (2008), corporate citizenship has a positive influence on employee engagement and in order to increase employee engagement levels organisations need to focus on improving corporate citizenship, caring for the well-being of the organisation’s stakeholders and the environment (Glavas & Piderit, 2009). The result reveals a favourable response which indicates that employees from the seven organisations believe that their organisation has corporate citizenship. According to Ketvirtis (2012), the most important attributes of corporate citizenship as perceived by employees are: energy efficiency initiatives, social innovation opportunities and employee charitable contribution-matching programmes.

Well established brands in South Africa:

Absa

The Absa Group Limited (Absa), listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) is one of the largest financial institutions in South Africa. Absa offers its consumers an array of services such as: business, retail, corporate and investment banking, wealth and insurance management products and services. Absa operates not only in South Africa but also other African countries such as: Mozambique, Tanzania, Namibia, Nigeria and Botswana.

Absa focuses on five core values: value the people that are employed by Absa and treat them in an appropriate manner, display integrity in all actions, surpass the needs of customers, take responsibility for work done and lastly display leadership. In order for Absa to accomplish its goal of being the number one bank in South Africa and Africa in terms of profitability and equity, Absa needs to enter into new markets and seek new business opportunities, understand customer needs and requirements and meet all financial needs of customers.

The Absa brand was reinvented in 1998 with the goal in mind to create one brand with multiple financial services, a “one-stop shop which offers simple, uncomplicated banking relationships, value for money, stability, convenience and superior customer service”. The new visual identity emphasises the letter A, as the A means “Alpha” and represents a “new beginning”. The colour red was decided upon as red has a psychological connotation and resembles excitement and energy and is distinctively

different from Absa's four competitors. The Absa brand stands for "union, fusion and wholeness" and is rated the number one banking brand and coolest banking brand in South Africa for the 6th consecutive year (Absa, 2012).

BMW

BMW is one of the largest car manufacturers in the world today and produces several lines of cars, ranging from the 1 series to the X line. The popularity of the BMW car is due to their award-winning website, whereby individuals can design the interior and exterior of the car they wish to purchase. The popularity of the BMW car is also due to their high profile image campaigns, such as the James Bond promotion. "BMW's strategy is to keep its products in the introduction and growth stages by periodically introducing new models in each of its product lines. In fact, BMW does not like to have any products in the maturity and decline stage of the product life cycle, explains McDowell. A declining product does not do the brand image any justice and that is why BMW works hard at managing the growth aspect" (Stealing Share, 2010).

According to a study that was released in May 2012 by market research company Milward Brown, BMW is the most valuable automotive brand according to an annual ranking of the world's top brands (Cunningham, 2012).

McDonalds

McDonalds is a fast food company that was established in 1940, by two brothers who wanted to provide convenience to consumers. McDonalds is the largest fast food chain around the world and have done an excellent job with making the brand recognisable. McDonalds takes part in a number of marketing campaigns, which has led McDonalds to win numerous awards. In 2011 McDonalds ranked 16th as the employer brand by the Employer Branding Institution and ranked 15th in India's 100 most valuable brands study done by 4P's Magazine (Awards & Accolades, 2010). "In 2011, the total brand value of McDonalds increased by \$4,019 million to \$24,211 million. McDonalds has further improved its brand rating from a –AAA in 2010 to AAA in 2011 and increased in its brand ranking from 18 to 17 within the Brand Finance Global 500 2011" (Brand Directory, 2011).

MTN

MTN is a multinational telecommunication company which operates in 10 countries across Africa. MTN has been rated the country's most valuable brand according to the Sunday Times Top Brands Award in the Business to Consumer (B2C) category and is

the most preferred brand in the telecommunications sector (MTN, 2011). The MTN brand is valued at \$4.7 billion, almost double its rivalry. The MTN has received a number of awards including, a gold Loerie for the Ayoba campaign, AfricaCom Best Marketing Campaign for the Ayoba campaign, Sunday Times Marketing Personality of the Year, Serame Taukobong, and various Virgin Active Sport Industry Awards such as the FIFA World Cup and Last Fan Standing Award (MTN, 2011). MTN aims to expand across the globe by focusing on maintaining the five MTN brand values: integrity (consistently doing what is right), leadership (providing vision and guidance), innovation (finding new ways of doing things), can-do (anything is possible) and relationships (MTN, 2010).

KFC

KFC is the largest, most popular, chicken restaurant chain which operates in 109 countries across the world and has a total of 5 200 restaurants and every day KFC receives 12 million consumers (KFC, 2012). The annual Sunday Times Top Brands survey announced in 2011 that KFC won third place in the overall favourite brand category (Khan, 2011).

Less preferred brands in South Africa

Pep Stores

The Pep brand was established in the 1950's in the Northern Cape, Pep offered individuals durable and quality goods at discounted prices (Irwin, 2002). Pep is the largest single brand retailer which operates in 11 countries across Southern Africa, targeting the lower to middle income bracket and offering customers: textiles, footwear, household goods, clothing and cellular products (Irwin, 2002). Pep has 1400 stores in operation with total employment of 14 000 employees (Irwin, 2002).

Eskom

Eskom generates, transmits and distributes 95% of South Africa's electricity (Eskom, 2012). Eskom has insufficient generation capacity to meet the demand of their customers, so load shedding has been introduced to "prevent instability of the country's interconnected generation network which would result in uncontrolled nation-wide blackouts" (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). Load shedding has damaged Eskom's brand and is viewed as a less preferred brand.

2.3.9 Brand Differentiation

Differentiated marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on establishing new market segments by providing new product offerings to consumers (Kotler et al., 2007). By offering consumers a wide range of products and services, market differentiation hopes to increase sales, market share and profitability (Kotler et al., 2007). Dibb and Simkin (1997) have developed a segmentation process that involves three stages: marketing analysis, strategy development and marketing programmes. When starting out the segmentation process organisations need to establish clear objectives, as this will provide a clear direction of issues to be addressed and issues to be researched. The segmentation process is an ongoing cycle, which begins with the analysis strategic link, this link talks about marketing intelligence and states that individuals in charge of making strategic decisions should understand the marketing intelligence. The next link is the strategic programme link, which states that organisations need to develop programmes that reflect the strategy and the appropriate target market. The last link is the programmes analysis link, which states that organisations should develop marketing programmes that not only fulfil marketing strategies but also change the status quo. The results will change consumers' perception and behaviour and therefore further research needs to be undertaken to monitor consumers and competitors (Dibb and Simkin, 1997).

2.3.10 Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is actions that position the brand in the minds of consumers. More specifically, brand positioning is the reason why consumers choose brands over competitors. Kotler and Keller (2006) define brand positioning as an “act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinct place in the minds of the target market.”

In order to position the brand in the minds of the consumers, Trout (1995) suggests that a mental model should be used. There are five mental models that can be applied when positioning a brand:

- *Minds are limited* – minds only remember new information if it matches one's current mind set.
- *Minds hate confusion* – when positioning a brand, one needs to reveal the most powerful attributes and keep the message simple in order for consumers to remember the brand.

- *Minds are insecure* – Consumers are more emotional and rely on people for advice when making a purchasing decision.
- *Minds do not change* – Consumers' minds are sensitive and do not change easily, it is therefore essential the brands are perceived correctly by consumers.
- *Minds can lose focus* – Consumers may lose focus when brands have too many line extensions. When there are many line extensions, brands lose consistency and do not focus on key attributes of the brand.

In order to create the desired positioning strategy for a brand, Kapferer (2007) identified four determinations: (1) definition of the target market, (2) definition of the frame of reference and subjective category, (3) consumer benefits or promise, and (4) reason to believe.

Corporate Image

A brand image is related to the perceptions of reality that are associated with a particular brand (Aaker, 1991). Banutu-Gomez, Coyle, Edenhoech, Fallucca, Minetti and Sarin (2009) believe that employees' perception of an organisation should run parallel to that of the customer. Brand image, an organisation's image and employee trust have a direct impact on customer value through customers' perceptions of service quality (Banutu-Gomez, Coyle, Edenhoech, Fallucca, Minetti and Sarin, 2009). Research has however found that employees' perception of an organisation is not always parallel with that of the customer (Banutu-Gomez, Coyle, Edenhoech, Fallucca, Minetti and Sarin, 2009).

2.4 Perception

2.4.1 Perception – Definition

Perception is defined as the process whereby individuals take unrefined sensations from their surroundings and interpret them, by using knowledge, experience and understanding of the world in order for sensations to become significant sensations (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy, 2006).

There are three main approaches when understanding perception: computational, constructivist and ecological approaches. A computational approach is defined as an approach that involves the nervous system translating raw sensory data into an

experience, the constructivist approach involves sensory information that constructs reality and lastly the ecological approach believes that humans have an innate ability to perceive stimuli without high level analysis (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy, 2006). Employees within an organisation will therefore use sensory information, nervous system and environmental influencers when constructing a perception about the brand of the organisation they work for.

According to Tsang, Lee and Li (2011) there are three possible factors of employees' perception based on previous studies: employee commitment, employee identification and service quality. Employee commitment describes the degree of employees' emotional relationship with a brand, which controls their readiness to exert brand citizenship behaviour (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005). According to Burmann and Zeplin (2005) the level of brand awareness contributes toward employees' commitment to a brand.

2.4.2 Employee identification

Employee identification is defined as the "acceptance of social influence due to a sense of belongingness to the group, determining the brand experience and a perception of being intertwined with the group's fate, i.e., its success or failure are perceived as one's own" (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005). Research has found that employees are more committed to an organisation if they feel a sense of belonging to the brand. Little and Dean (2006) found that service quality capability has a direct correlation with employee commitment levels. Thus service quality capabilities, employee commitment and employee identification within organisations are vital when improving employee perception of a corporate brand.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to explore the relationship between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement, research objectives were combined with literature reviewed and the following questions were proposed as relevant to the research:

Research question 1:

Is there a positive correlation between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement?

Research question 2:

Do companies with a strong established corporate brand have employees with high engagement?

Research question 3:

Do demographical factors influence employee engagement and brand perception?

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

The aim of the research was to obtain a better understanding of what role employees' perception of a corporate brand play with regard to employee engagement. Most research related to this topic neglected employees' perception of a corporate brand when measuring employee engagement. As a result little prior research had been done in this field and therefore it was important to undertake explanatory research. Explanatory research was used to identify and obtain information on the characteristics of the issue as it described the casual relationship between two variables (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

Applied research was used as it intended to solve practical problems of contemporary society, rather than to acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake. The aim of the researcher was to improve employee engagement through employee perception of a corporate brand.

The data collected was quantitative and statistical techniques were used to summarise the information. A quantitative research design was chosen as the research attempted to finalise the results and prove or disprove the hypothesis of the study (Shuttleworth, 2008). A quantitative research design filtered out any bias and therefore the results can be seen as real (Shuttleworth, 2008). Based on the aims of the research, a questionnaire was used to gain data.

This study identified the correlation between two variables: perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement. With this approach the researcher took an objective position and the approach treated phenomena as hard and real. The researcher favoured the Gallup Organisation's employee engagement questionnaire and a corporate brand assessment questionnaire. The researcher attempted to test hypotheses with a view to predict, control and generalise. This approach concentrated on measuring, collecting and analysing numerical data and applying statistical tests.

The Gallup Organisation has identified 12 pointers that positively impact an organisation's "outcome and profitability" with employee satisfaction (Thackray, 2001). The pointers, also known as the "Q12", were divided up into four categories: "customer satisfaction/loyalty, profitability, productivity and employee turnover" (Thackray, 2001).

There are a variety of consulting organisations that offer employee engagement surveys, such as Blessing White, Hewitt, Sirota, Towers Perrin, Valtera and Whatson Wyatt Worldwide (Attridge, 2009). However, according to Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2003) the Gallup Organisation's survey is one of the most influential approaches when determining employee engagement within an organisation. The Gallup Organisation has been conducting research over the past 30 years with reference to employee perception of managerial efforts across numerous industries (Attridge, 2009).

4.2 Population and sample

4.2.1 Population

The study recruited 150 employees, both male and female and of varying ages, from seven organisations in South Africa and 29 questionnaires were given to MTN employees, 25 to McDonalds, Absa and Pep employees, 23 to BMW employees, 15 to KFC employees and 8 to Eskom employees. The questionnaire comprised of three sections. Section A involved four demographic questions, section B involved 12 employee engagement questions and section C involved 25 corporate branding questions. The data collected were from the Gauteng region, with a limited geographical reach.

The researcher made use of a non-probability sampling, "sampling techniques that do not use chance selection procedures. Rather they rely on the personal judgement of the researcher" (Malhotra, 2010). Non-probability sampling is however not representative of the entire population and therefore cannot be generalised.

Convenience sampling techniques were used as the population of the seven organisations are of a large nature. It would be extremely challenging to collect the names of all the employees working for each organisation, as organisations have privacy policies in place, which restrict the access to employees' personal details. Thus convenience sampling techniques were used as it collects data from convenient elements and where immediate access is available (Malhotra, 2010).

The sample consisted of 150 employees who comprised of employees from organisations in South Africa with a well-established brand and less preferred brand. The researcher chose seven South African brands: BMW, Absa, MTN, McDonalds, KFC, Pep Store and Eskom. As defined in Chapter 2, the researcher used both

personal judgement and convenience to gain randomness amongst the population. Demographical questions were asked and recorded regarding employees' personal details and perceptions of the brand they are employed at. The questionnaires were recorded on paper.

4.2.2 Sample and sampling method

The sample plan was defined as the process involved in the selection of units from the population to be included in the sample (Bernstein et al., 2006). The sampling method that was used is convenience sampling as the population is too large to include every individual. Convenience sampling is quick, economical, and simple and the subjects are willingly available (Saunders et al., 2009).

An experimental research method was used, but more specifically a non-equivalent group comparison was used, as this study compares a group that has been exposed to the stimuli – employees who work at well-established South African brands.

The researcher distributed 150 surveys randomly to seven organisations in total. The survey had a total of 23 questions, 12 questions regarding employee engagement and eight questions regarding the organisation's brand. The researcher got potential respondents to participate by physically going to each organisation, convincing potential respondents to participate in the study. The table below illustrates seven well established brands in South Africa.

Table 1: Profile of respondents at well-established brands in South Africa

Description of respondent type	Number to be sampled
BMW	23
ABSA	25
MTN	29
Pep	25
McDonalds	25
KFC	15
Eskom	8

4.3 The research instrument

The research objective was to answer the three research questions. The researcher conducted a questionnaire that assisted in answering the research questions. Questionnaires are written or verbal questions which are answered by respondents in order to collect data about a particular issue.

The researcher made use of a questionnaire, a structural technique to collect data (Malhotra, 2010). The questionnaire, as shown in Appendix 1, was split up into three sections:

- Section 1 – Demographics
- Section 2 – Gallup employee engagement questionnaire
- Section 3 – Corporate brand questionnaire

The questionnaire included four questions regarding demographics, 12 questions regarding employee engagement from the Gallup Organisation and 25 questions regarding corporate branding. Section A included demographic questions and focused on gender, age, qualifications and working year. Section B focused on employee engagement questions developed by the Gallup Organisation, these questions required respondents to rate 12 individual items on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly agree and 5 represents strongly disagree. The 12 employee engagement questions from the Gallup Organisation (Thackray, 2001) were as follows:

Table 2: Employee Engagement Questions

No.	Employee Engagement Questions
1.	Do you know what is expected of you at work?
2.	Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?
3.	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?
4.	In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5.	Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?

6.	Is there someone at work who encourages your development?
7.	At work, do your opinions seem to count?
8.	Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?
9.	Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?
10.	Do you have a best friend at work?
11.	In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
12.	In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?

Section C focused on employee perception of a corporate brand. This section required respondents to rate 25 individual items on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly agree and 5 represents strongly disagree. The 25 corporate branding questions were divided into eight sub-categories: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality of the brand, leadership of the brand, perceived value of the brand, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation. Section C was tailored to seven organisations, for the use of this explanation “x” had been used which represented the seven organisations.

Table 3: Corporate Brand Questions

Corporate Brand Constructs	Questions
Brand Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I think of product/service, the first brand that comes to mind is x • X is a brand I am very familiar with • X is a very popular brand • I know what the x brand stands for • I have an opinion about the x brand
Brand Loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next time I use a product/service, I intend to use x brand • I was delighted with x brand during my last use experience • X is the only product/service brand I use • I would recommend x brand to others

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am willing to pay a premium for x brand
Perceived Brand Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In comparison to alternative supplier brands, x brand has high quality service • In comparison to alternative supplier brands, x brand has consistent quality service • In comparison to alternative supplier brands, x brand is the best
Brand Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In comparison to alternative supplier brands, x brand is growing in popularity • In comparison to alternative supplier brands, x brand is innovative • In comparison to alternative supplier brands, x brand is the leading brand
Perceived Brand Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X brand provides good value for money • There are reasons to use x brand over competitors
Brand Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X brand has a personality • X brand is interesting
Brand Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would trust x brand • X brand is a good corporate citizen • X brand is socially responsible • X brand cares about its customers
Brand Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X brand is basically the same as competing brands

4.4 Questionnaire process

The researcher scheduled meetings at seven organisations: BMW, Absa, MTN, Eskom, Pep, McDonalds and KFC and conducted 29 questionnaires at MTN, 25 questionnaires at McDonalds, Absa and Pep, 23 at BMW, 15 at KFC and 8 at Eskom, over a period of one month. The questionnaires were undertaken in the office space of each employee. The researcher was present while each individual completed the questionnaire and explained the purpose of the research in depth and ensured each individual understood the questionnaire.

The researcher stated that participation was voluntary and that the individual may withdraw at any time without penalty. The research also ensured individuals that the information obtained would remain confidential and only be used for the purpose of this research report.

The researcher collected data by making use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire had three sections. The first section of the questionnaire posed questions regarding

demographics, the second section referred to the Gallup employee engagement questions and the third section posed questions regarding brand assessment.

Once the questionnaires were collected, the researcher made sure all the questions were answered to avoid response error. The researcher thanked each respondent for his/her time and for participating in the study. The questionnaire took about five minutes to complete.

4.4.1 Questionnaire

Malhotra (2010) identified the advantages and disadvantages of using a questionnaire to collect data.

The advantages are:

- A standardised questionnaire will enhance speed, correctness, comparability and ease of data processing.
- Questionnaires are more objective as the process of collection is standardised.
- Questionnaires allow for a large sample size.
- Costs are generally lower than most forms of data collection.
- A well-designed questionnaire may increase the response rate.
- The results of the questionnaire can be easily quantified, making it easier for the researcher to compare and contrast.

The disadvantages are:

- The development of questions that individuals can and will answer is difficult.
- Response error is high due to the fact that individuals may interpret the question incorrectly and thus give the incorrect answer.
- Questionnaire design may be challenging as there is no theory guaranteeing an optimal questionnaire. Questionnaire design is based on one's experience.
- Participants may become bored, lazy and tired resulting in an incomplete questionnaire. The research needs to therefore ensure participants are engaged by providing a well-designed questionnaire.
- Lacks validity.

4.5 Data analysis process

The collection of the data was made possible through employee engagement and corporate brand assessment questionnaires. This study used statistical analysis as the goal was simple as the researcher wished to make the strongest possible conclusion from limited amounts of data. The researcher interpreted the findings through the use of SPSS's graphical outcome. The researcher also used explanatory research, "studies that establish casual relationships between variables" (Saunders et al., 2009).

The data analysis had the goal in mind to answer the three research questions. The data analysis was divided into two groups: demographics and research questions.

- Demographics – This segment comprised of section 1 of the research questions and consisted of questions such as range of age, gender, organisation they are working for, working year, department, and level of agreement on the perceived brand of the organisation they are working for. The information was recorded on paper which was later captured into SPSS for analysis.
- Research questions – This segment comprised of section 1: Gallup employee engagement questionnaire and section 2: Brand assessment questionnaire. Hard copies of the recorded responses were captured into SPSS for analysis.

The findings are explained in further detail in Chapter 6 of this research report.

4.6 Research assumptions

Employees who work for organisations with a well-established brand in South Africa will have higher employee engagement levels. Thus employees who work for organisations with a well-established brand in South African will be more productive and less absent, resulting in minimal turnover for the organisation. This study aimed to control the findings by implementing well-perceived brands into organisations to increase profitability, reduce turnover, and improve working environment and employee satisfaction.

4.7 Limitations of the study

The limitation for this study was that the participants were only given one employee engagement and branding assessment questionnaire with limited number of questions and from the responses the researcher concluded if there was a correlation.

Using a quantitative research design required the researcher to plan effectively in order to make sure that the study is completed on time with the appropriate resources. Timing and planning are vital when undertaking a quantitative research design (Shuttleworth, 2008). A quantitative research design also brings uncertainty to the study as it tends to produce either proven or unproven results which then need to be statistically analysed (Shuttleworth, 2008).

The researcher made use of a questionnaire. Malhotra (2010) points out that the development of questions that individuals can and will answer is difficult. The response error of questionnaires is high due to the fact that individuals may interpret the question incorrectly and thus give the incorrect answer. Questionnaire design may also be extremely challenging as there is no theory guaranteeing an optimal questionnaire. Participants may become bored, lazy and tired resulting in an incomplete questionnaire. The research needed to therefore ensure participants were engaged by providing a well-designed questionnaire.

The researcher made use of non-probability convenience sampling. The researcher undertook convenience sampling as the population was too large; however this created a limitation as the sample was not representative of the entire population, which may result in sampling bias (Lund & Lund, 2010). Convenience sampling is not representative of the entire population and therefore may not have the ability to develop any accurate results (Malhotra, 2010).

4.8 Validity and reliability

This study portrayed validity as the test scores were interpreted correctly and used appropriately through the use of statistical analysis (Bernstein et al., 2006). There were similar tests done on this study which also increased the study's validity. The study portrayed reliability as the test can be repeated and one will find the same results (Bernstein et al., 2006).

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology. In this chapter the research results will be discussed. The measuring instrument that was used was a questionnaire and consisted of three sections. Section A dealt with the demographics of the participants and had four questions. Section B had 12 questions which dealt with employee engagement. Section C had 25 questions which dealt with employee perception of a corporate brand. Section C was divided into brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation. The results will be discussed in a similar way; section A followed by sections B and C.

5.1 Sample

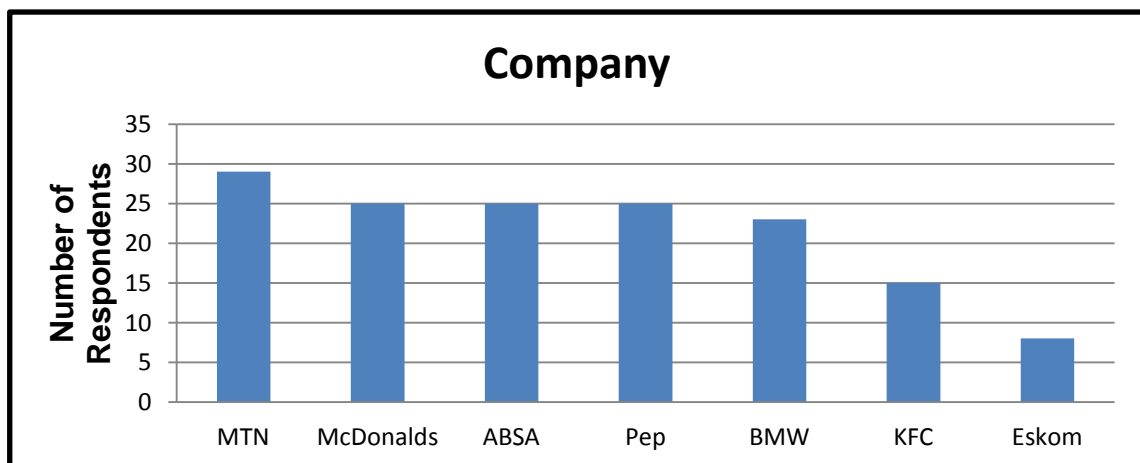
The response sample consisted of 150 respondents. A total of 150 complete questionnaires were received and analysed. Questionnaires were given to seven organisations: Absa, BMW, MTN, Pep, McDonalds, KFC and Eskom.

5.2 Section A: Demographic Information

5.2.1 Companies

The sample was made up of 150 respondents from seven companies, of which 29 respondents were from MTN, 25 from McDonalds, 25 from Absa, 25 from Pep, 23 from BMW, 15 from KFC and eight from Eskom.

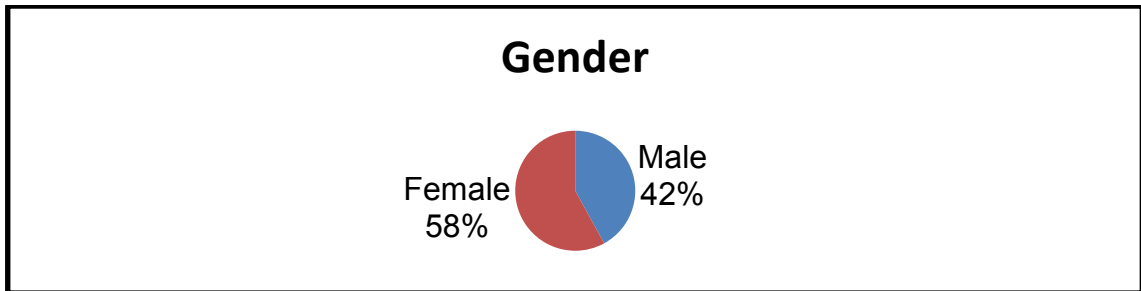
Table 4 – Company



5.2.2 Gender

Data collected relating to the sex of respondents is represented in Table 5. The mode for the sample group was female, with 87 of the 150 respondents falling into this category. The distribution of respondents in terms of percentages was 58% female with 42% male.

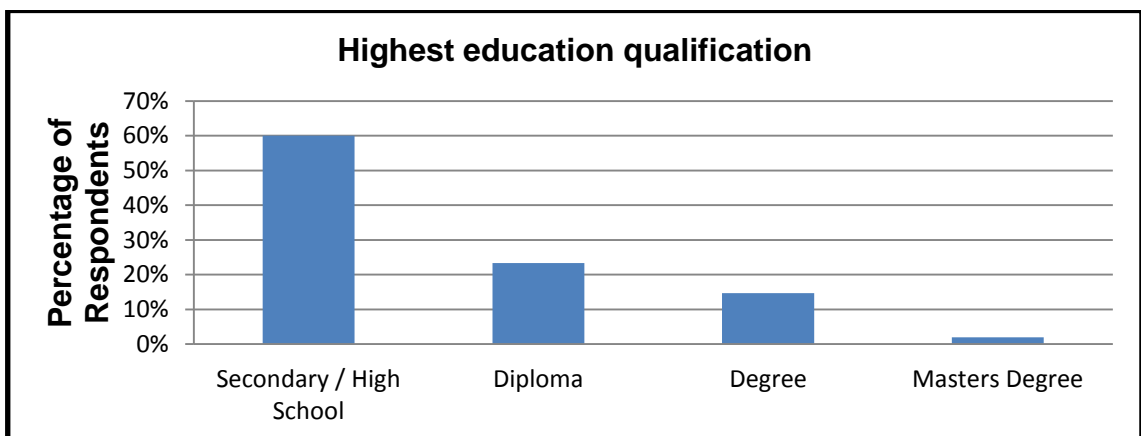
Table 5 – Gender



5.2.3 Highest education qualification

Table 6 reveals that there were four different education qualifications in the sample. The highest education qualification held by respondents is a Master's degree, followed by a Bachelor's degree, diploma and lastly secondary/high school qualification. Only 2% (3 respondents) had a Master's degree, followed by 15% (22 respondents) of respondents holding a Bachelor's degree, 23% (35 respondents) of respondents had a diploma and the remaining 60% of respondents had received a secondary/high school qualification. In summary the majority of respondents had a secondary/high school qualification, a total of 90 respondents.

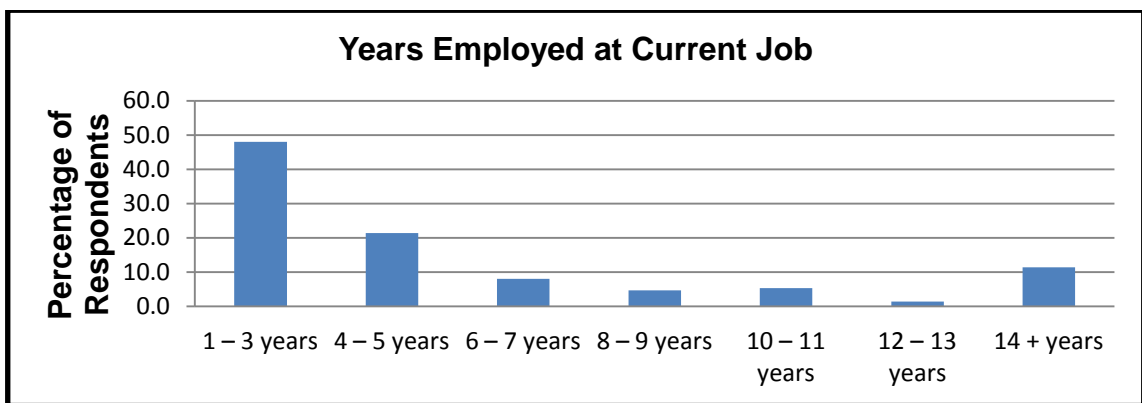
Table 6 – Education Qualification



5.2.4 Years employed at current job

Table 7 represents the number of years respondents have been employed at their current jobs. When asked on the length of time that they have been employed at their current job, the results show that the highest proportion, 48% of respondents (72 respondents) have been employed at their current job for 1-3 years, followed by 21% of respondents which have been employed at their current job for 4-5 years. The least proportion reveals that only 1% of respondents (two respondents) have been employed for 12-13 years.

Table 7 – Years Employed at Current Job



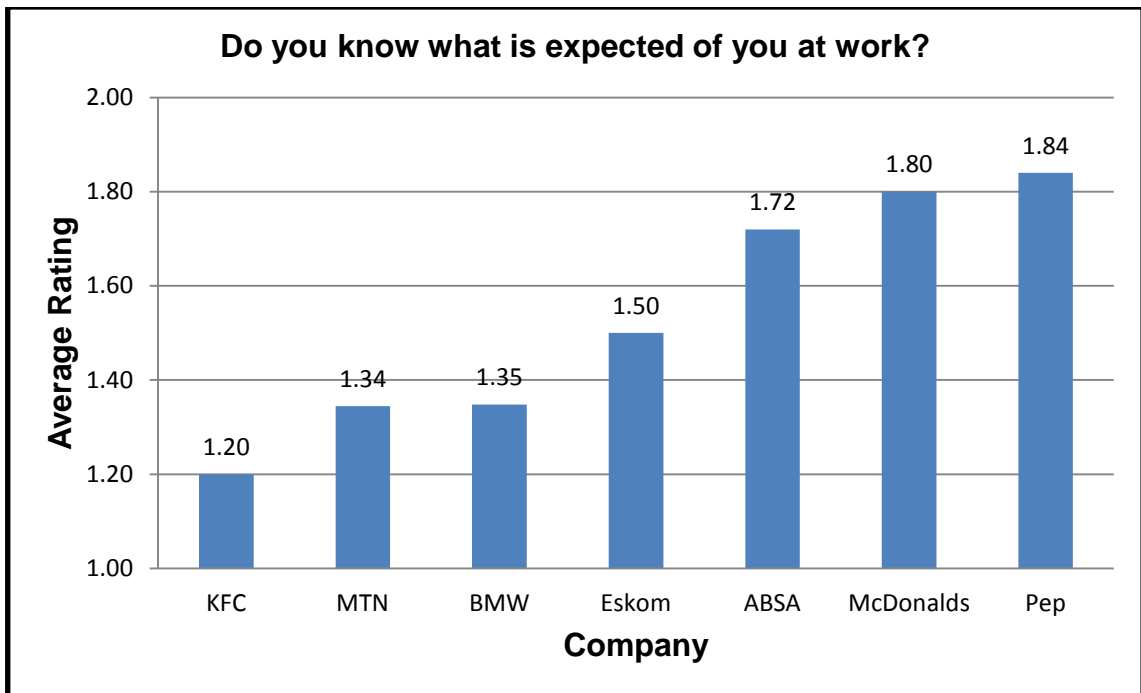
5.3 Section B: Employee engagement

Twelve questions about employee engagement were rated by employees from seven companies on a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 is strongly agree, 2 is agree, 3 is neutral, 4 is disagree and 5 is strongly disagree. The mean engagement value was calculated for each question, a value closer to one implies high employee engagement and a value closer to five indicates a higher level of employee disengagement.

5.3.1 Do you know what is expected of you at work?

Table 8 below reveals that out of the seven companies, employees from KFC know the most regarding what is expected of them at work (1.20) followed by MTN (1.34). Pep at 1.84 is had highest average rating out of the seven companies which reveals that employees that work for Pep are less aware of what is expected of them at work, however the number is low and closer to one than five, which means that Pep employees do know what is expected of them at work, just not as much as KFC employees.

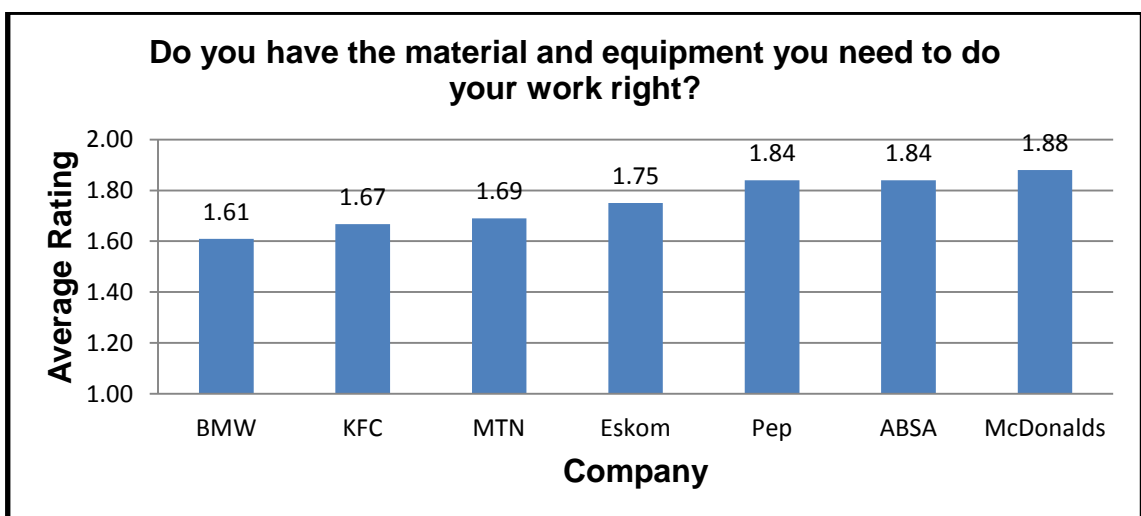
Table 8 – Do You Know what is Expected of You at Work?



5.3.2 Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?

Table 9 identifies whether or not employees have material and equipment to do their work right. Employees from all seven companies indicated that they have the material and equipment needed to do their work right, with the highest level of agreement recorded from BMW (1.61), followed by KFC (1.67), MTN (1.69), Eskom (1.75), Pep (1.84), Absa (1.84) and Mc Donalds (1.88). All seven companies lean towards one which reveals that all companies have material and equipment to do work right.

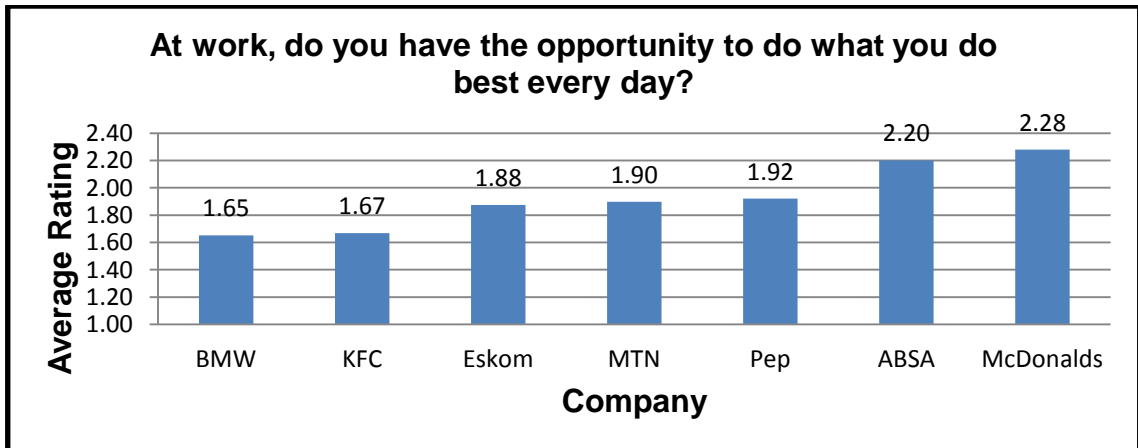
Table 9 – Material and Equipment To Do Work Right



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

Table 10 below shows that employees from BMW agreed most that at work, they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day (1.65) followed by KFC (1.67). On the other side Absa at 1.84 and McDonalds at 2.28 are the lowest and believe they are given an opportunity to do what they do best just not as often as BMW and KFC.

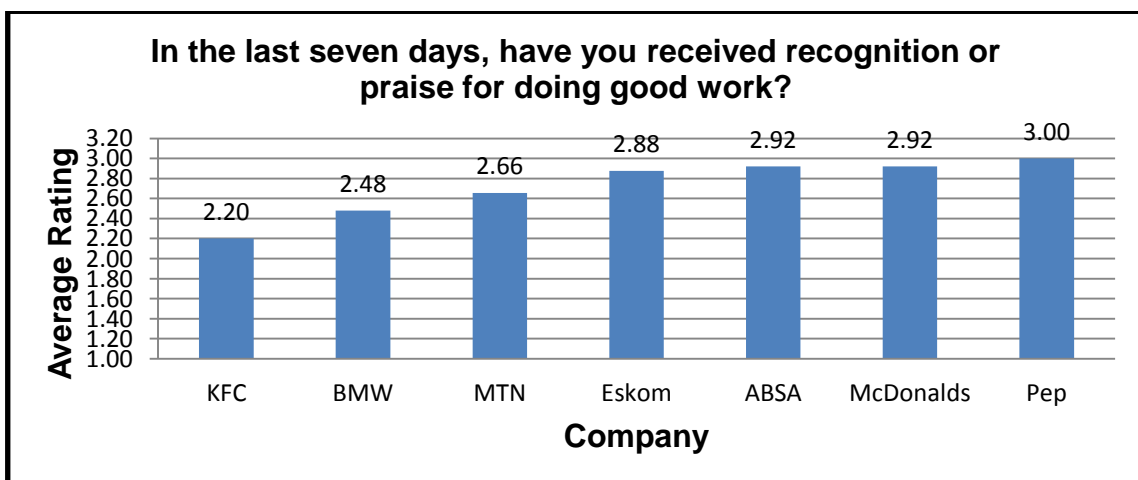
Table 10 – Opportunity to do your Best Every Day



5.3.4 In the last seven days have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

Table 11 reveals that on average employees do receive recognition and praise for doing good work often. Out of the seven companies, one company scored above the neutral, three. The companies that scored below neutral were KFC (2.20), BMW (2.48), Eskom (2.88), Absa (2.92) and McDonalds (2.92). Employees from Pep were neutral at 3.00.

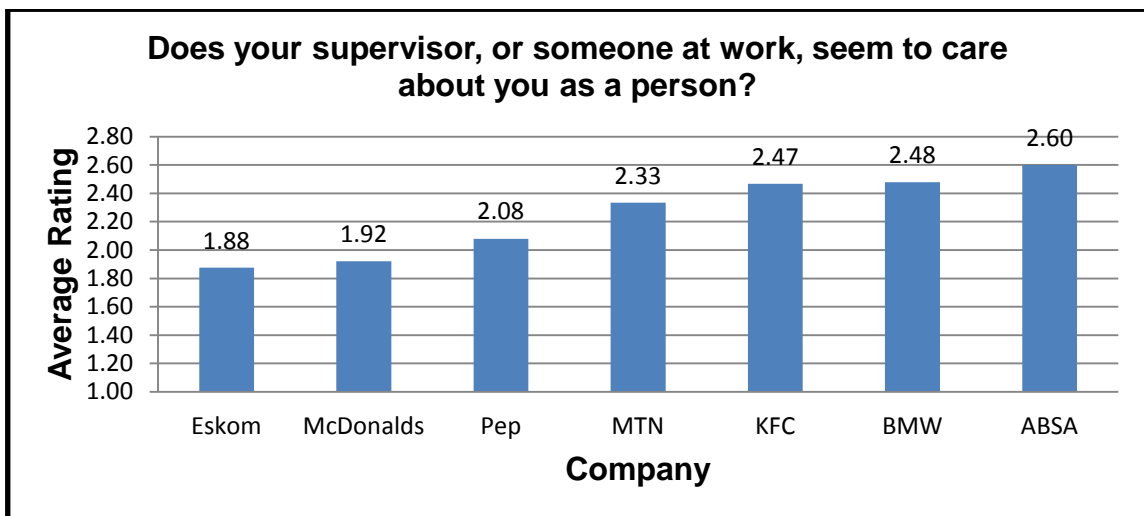
Table 11 – Recognition or Praise Received for Good Work



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

Table 12 reveals that Eskom and McDonalds employees scored the highest to the question regarding an individual at work caring about you as a person, Eskom scored the highest with 1.88 followed by Mcdonalds with 1.92. Employees from Absa and BMW felt that individuals at work care the least about them as a person, resulting in Absa scoring a low 2.60 followed by BMW scoring the second lowest at 2.48.

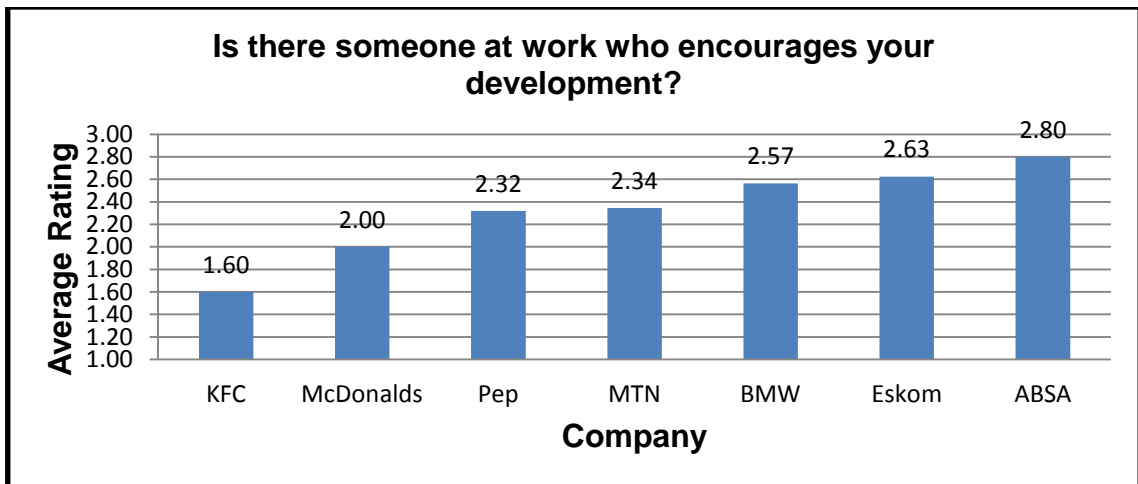
Table 12 – Supervisor or Someone at Work Caring for you as a Person



5.3.6 Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

Table 13 shows that respondents from KFC had the best rating regarding having someone at work who encourages employee development with a score of 1.60 followed by McDonalds with a score of 2.00, and Pep with a score of 2.32. Eskom and Absa employees rated this attribute the least with Eskom scoring 2.63 followed by Absa scoring 2.80.

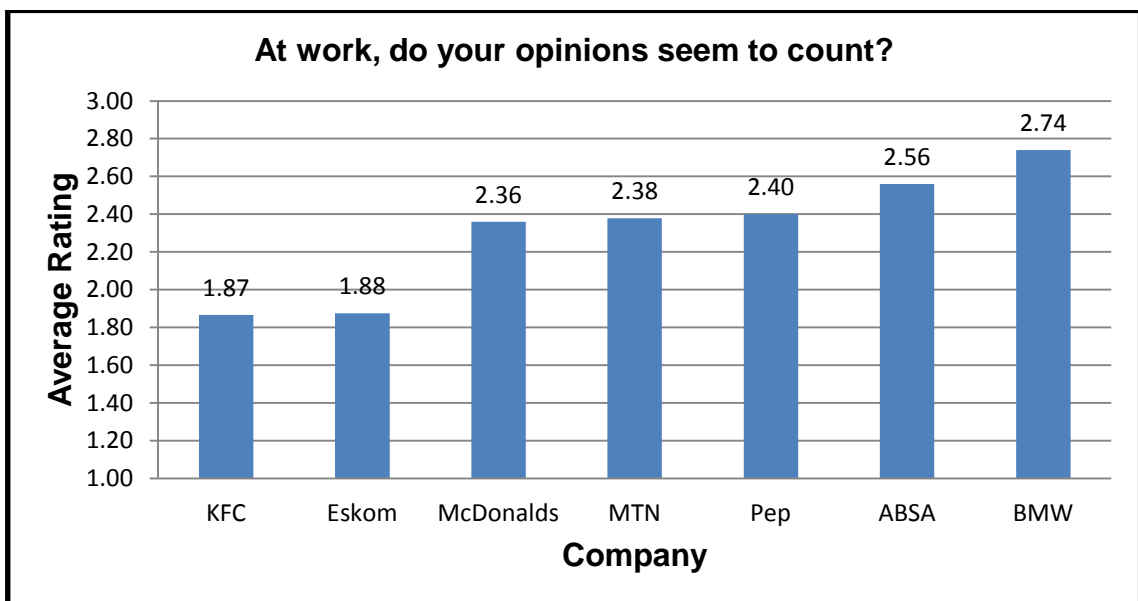
Table 13 – Someone at Work Encouraging your Development



5.3.7 At work, do your opinions seem to count?

Table 14 identifies that KFC employees had the best rating regarding the attribute that their opinions seem to count at work with a score of 1.87 followed by Eskom with a score of 1.88. BMW employees had the worst rating with a score of 2.74.

Table 14 – Do your Opinions Count at Work?

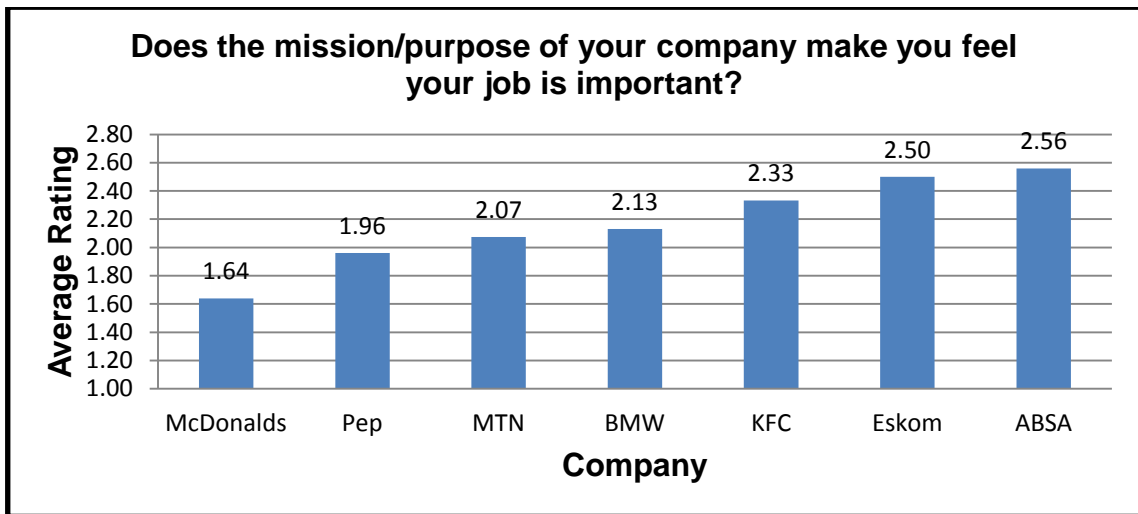


5.3.8 Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?

In Table 15, respondents were asked whether the mission/purpose of their company make them feel their job to be important and employees from McDonalds had the best

rating on this attribute (1.64), followed by Pep (1.96). Absa had the poorest rating at 2.56.

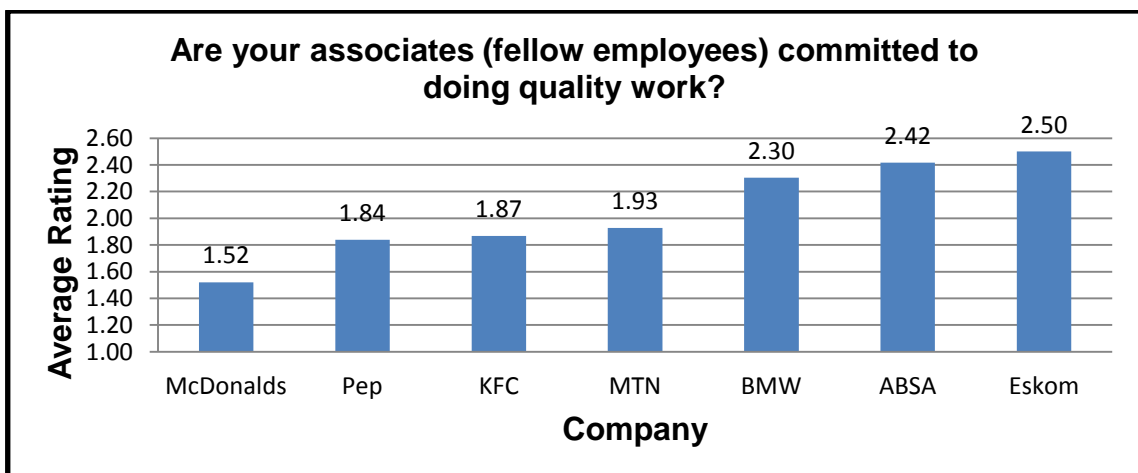
Table 15 – Mission/Purpose of your company makes the job more important



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

Table 16 shows that McDonalds also had the highest rating on having associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work, with a score of 1.52. The lowest rating was for Eskom (2.50). Absa and Eskom employees rated this attribute the lowest out of the seven companies, with a score of 2.42 for Absa and a score of 2.50 for Eskom.

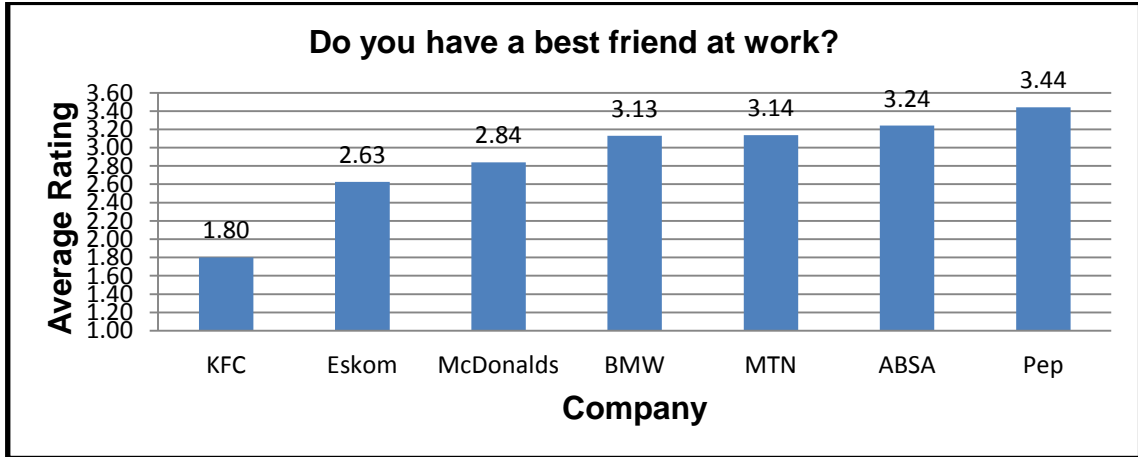
Table 16 – Associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work



5.3.10 Do you have a best friend at work?

Table 17 reveals that there is generally a low level of agreement with employees having best friends at work with four out of seven companies except KFC which had a rating (1.80) on this attribute.

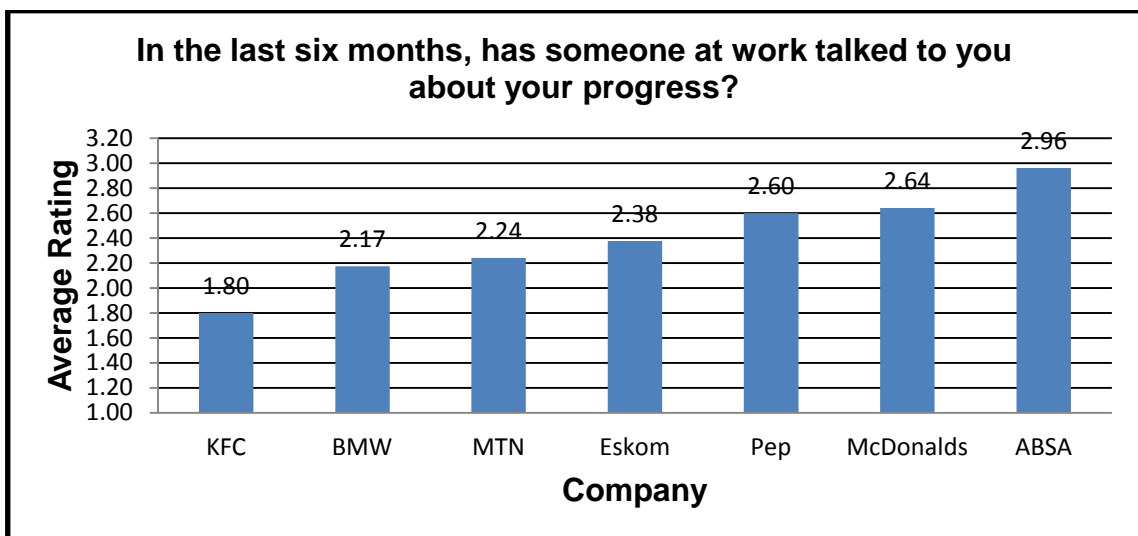
Table 17 – Best Friend at Work



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

Table 18 shows that KFC had the best rating (1.80) regarding having someone at work talking to employees about their progress in the last six months. The worst rating came from McDonalds and Absa, with a score of 2.64 from McDonalds and a score of 2.96 from Absa. In summary, employees on average have received a talk about their progress in the last six months.

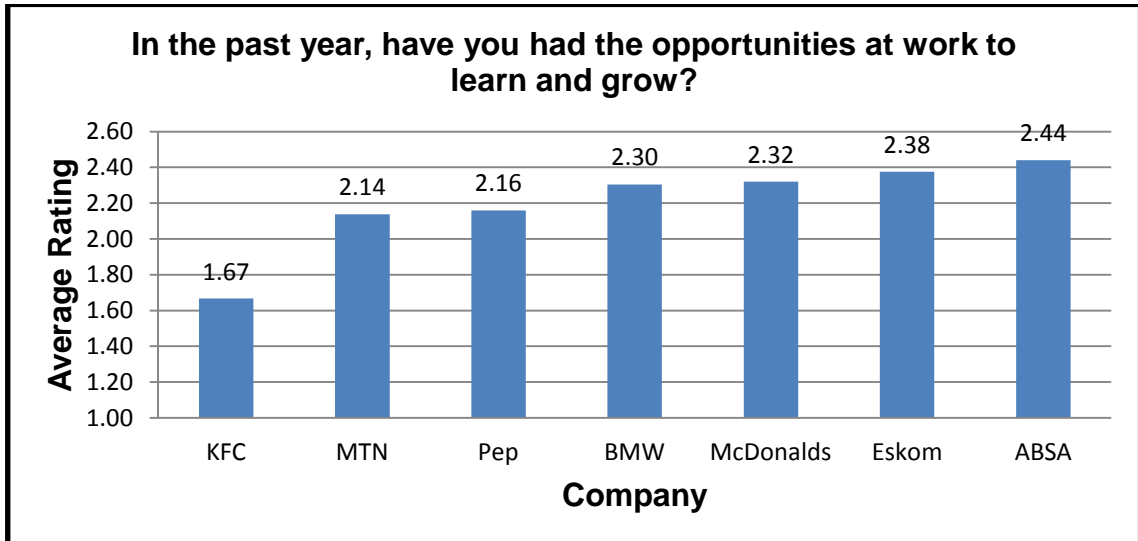
Table 18 – Progress at work



5.3.12 In the past year, have you had the opportunity at work to learn and grow?

Table 19 illustrates that there is generally a low level of agreement on employees having had the opportunities at work to learn and grow in the past year with the exception of KFC which had a rating (1.67) on this attribute.

Table 19 – Opportunity to Learn and Grow



5.4 Research questions

Results obtained from the questionnaire under Section A - Demographical factors, Section B - Employee engagement and Section C – Corporate branding, assisted the researcher in answering the research questions.

5.4.1 Research Question 1 – Is there a positive correlation between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement?

5.4.1.1 Cronbach's Alpha Test

Using a five-point Likert scale, with five as strongly agree, four as agree, three as neutral, two as disagree and one as strongly disagree, employees rated 25 statements on corporate branding. The 25 statements were split into 8 constructs: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation. A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted for each of the eight constructs. Cronbach's alpha is the most common measure of internal consistency to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. It is most commonly used when there are multiple Likert questions in a

questionnaire that form a scale and the research wishes to determine if the scale is reliable. The results are shown below:

Table 20 – Cronbach's Alpha Test

Construct	Items	Alpha
Brand awareness	The first brand that comes to mind	0.790
	Company is a brand I am very familiar with	
	Company is a very popular brand	
	I know what my company brand stands for	
	I have an opinion about company brand	
Brand loyalty	The next time I use a company, I intend to use my company	0.788
	I was delighted with my company last use experience	
	My company is the only company brand I use	
	I would recommend my company to others	
	I am willing to pay a premium for my company	
Perceived brand quality	In comparison to alternative brands, my company has high quality service	0.854
	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, my company has consistent quality service	
	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, my company is the best	
Brand leadership	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, my company is growing in popularity	0.828
	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, my company is innovative	
	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, my company is the leading brand	
Perceived brand value	My company provides good value for money	0.718
	There are reasons to use my company over competitors	
Brand personality	My company has a personality	0.799
	My company is interesting	
Brand organisation	I would trust my company	0.849
	My company is a good corporate citizen	
	My company is socially responsible	
	My company cares about its customers	
Brand differentiation	My company is basically the same as competing brands	-

A Cronbach's alpha value less than 0.5 is unacceptable, 0.5 - < 0.60 poor, 0.6 – < 0.70 questionable, 0.7 – < 0.80 acceptable, 0.8 – < 0.90 good, and 0.9 and above is considered to be excellent. Table 20 shows that seven of the eight constructs had Cronbach's alphas greater than 0.7 which is high and acceptable. This means that the seven constructs with an Alpha greater than 0.7 can be grouped to construct a summated scale for the construct. The eighth construct had 1 variable and thus no Cronbach's alpha can be calculated.

5.4.1.2 Factor Analysis

While a high value for Cronbach's alpha indicates good internal consistency of the items in the scale, it does not mean that the scale is un-dimensional. Factor analysis should be conducted to determine the dimensionality of a scale. In addition to computing the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability for each construct, factor analysis was also carried out to investigate the dimensionality of the constructs.

Table 21 – Factor Analysis

		Final Communality Estimates					Variance Explained by the Construct
Construct	Number of Factors	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	
Brand awareness	1	0.502	0.761	0.618	0.524	0.434	57%
Brand loyalty	1	0.695	0.651	0.422	0.627	0.443	57%
Perceived brand quality	1	0.802	0.794	0.731			78%
Brand leadership	1	0.780	0.750	0.714			75%
Perceived brand value	1	0.782	0.782				78%
Brand personality	1	0.834	0.834				83%
Brand organisation	1	0.662	0.771	0.658	0.685		69%
Brand differentiation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Each construct retained one factor after the principal component analysis was applied with Varimax rotation. The variance explained by each of the 7 constructs was at least 57%. This means that the retained factor for brand awareness explains 57% of variation; the retained factor for brand loyalty explains 57% of variation, perceived brand quality 78%, Brand leadership 75%, Perceived brand value 78%, Brand personality 83%, and Brand organisation 69%.

5.4.1.3 Correlation Analysis

In order to answer the first research question, “Is there a positive correlation between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement?” a correlation analysis was conducted between each of the eight corporate branding constructs and the 25 employee engagement attributes. The results are detailed below:

A) Brand awareness

Table 22 – Brand Awareness Correlation Analysis

	Brand Awareness		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.497	0.000	150
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.471	0.000	150
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.431	0.000	148
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.392	0.000	148
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.355	0.000	150
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.347	0.000	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.318	0.000	150
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.254	0.002	148
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.181	0.027	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.141	0.086	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.136	0.097	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.067	0.412	150

Table 22 reveals that brand awareness has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for three attributes: “In the last six months, has

someone at work talked to you about your progress?”, “In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?” and “Do you have a best friend at work?”. The three attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05.

B) Brand loyalty

Table 23 – Brand Loyalty Correlation Analysis

	Brand Loyalty		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.488	0.000	150
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.387	0.000	148
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.373	0.000	150
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.352	0.000	150
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.345	0.000	148
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.323	0.000	148
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.272	0.001	150
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.261	0.001	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.246	0.002	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.226	0.005	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.196	0.016	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.155	0.059	150

Table 23 reveals that brand loyalty has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for the attribute: “In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress” as the p-value is 0.059, which is above 0.05.

C) Perceived brand quality

Table 24 – Perceived Brand Quality Correlation Analysis

	Perceived Brand Quality		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.481	0.000	148
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.402	0.000	148
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.395	0.000	150
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.367	0.000	148
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.302	0.000	150
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.294	0.000	150
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.285	0.000	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.226	0.006	150
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.202	0.013	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.188	0.021	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.149	0.069	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.11	0.181	150

Table 24 reveals that perceived brand quality has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for the attributes: “In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?”, and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?”. Both attributes have p-values greater than 0.05.

D) Brand leadership

Table 25 – Brand Leadership Correlation Analysis

	Brand Leadership		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.391	0.000	148
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.382	0.000	148
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.336	0.000	150
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.312	0.000	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.306	0.000	150

Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.266	0.001	148
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.259	0.001	150
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.254	0.002	150
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.146	0.075	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.141	0.084	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.082	0.320	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.07	0.396	150

Table 25 reveals that brand leadership has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for the following attributes: “At work, do your opinions seem to count?”, “In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?”, “Do you have a best friend at work?”, and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?” which have p-values greater than 0.05.

E) Perceived brand value

Table 26 – Perceived Brand Value Correlation Analysis

	Perceived Brand Value		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.388	0.000	150
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.366	0.000	148
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.355	0.000	148
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.317	0.000	148
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.29	0.000	150
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.275	0.001	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.262	0.001	150
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.26	0.001	150
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.25	0.002	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.178	0.030	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.101	0.217	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.078	0.340	150

Table 26 reveals that brand value has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for the following attributes: “Do you have a

best friend at work?”, and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?”, which have p-values greater than 0.05.

F) Brand personality

Table 27 – Brand Personality Correlation Analysis

	Brand Personality		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.406	0.000	148
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.381	0.000	150
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.324	0.000	150
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.311	0.000	148
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.296	0.000	148
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.268	0.001	150
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.25	0.002	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.249	0.002	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.192	0.018	150
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.12	0.143	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.111	0.176	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.018	0.823	150

Table 27 shows that brand personality has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for the following three attributes: “At work, do your opinions seem to count?”, “Do you have a best friend at work?”, and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?”. All three attributes have a p-value greater than 0.05.

G) Brand organisation

Table 28 – Brand Organisation Correlation Analysis

	Brand Organisation		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.398	0.000	150
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.384	0.000	148

Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.356	0.000	148
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.323	0.000	150
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.271	0.001	150
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.267	0.001	148
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.223	0.006	150
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.186	0.023	150
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.15	0.067	150
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.139	0.091	150
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.101	0.220	150
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	0.045	0.589	150

Table 28 shows that brand organisation has significant positive correlation to all the employee engagement attributes except for four attributes: “In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?”, “In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?” “Do you have a best friend at work?”, and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?”. All four attributes have a p-value of greater than 0.05.

H) Brand differentiation

Table 29 – Brand Differentiation Correlation Analysis

	Brand Differentiation		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	0.333	0.000	149
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	0.276	0.001	147
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	0.247	0.002	149
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	0.238	0.004	147
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	0.161	0.052	147
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	0.160	0.051	149
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	0.149	0.069	149
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	0.106	0.197	149
Do you have a best friend at work?	0.104	0.207	149

At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	0.096	0.246	149
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	0.085	0.302	149
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	-0.016	0.848	149

Table 29 shows that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between brand differentiation, but more specifically the following attributes: “In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?”, “Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?”, “Is there someone at work who encourages your development?”, and “Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?”. The rest of the employee engagement attributes do not have a significant correlation to brand organisation as each attribute has a p-value greater than 0.05.

5.4.2 Research Question 2 – Do companies with a strong established corporate brand have employees with high engagement?

Each employee was asked close ended questions relating to employee engagement levels and the brand they work for. To answer the second research question the following brands were used in this study: Absa, BMW, KFC McDonalds and MTN. These brands were grouped together as strong brands. On the other hand Pep and Eskom were grouped together as other brands. Independent samples t-tests were then conducted to assess whether the strength of the brand affects employee engagement. The results are shown below:

Table 30 – T-Tests Regarding Brand Strength and Employee Engagement

Group Statistics					
Brand Strength		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-Value
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	Strong Brand	117	1.50	.611	.074
	Other Brand	33	1.76	1.001	
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	Strong Brand	117	1.74	.790	.553
	Other Brand	33	1.82	.584	
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	Strong Brand	117	1.97	.982	.762
	Other Brand	33	1.91	.805	
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or	Strong Brand	117	2.68	1.224	.231
	Other Brand	33	2.97	1.311	

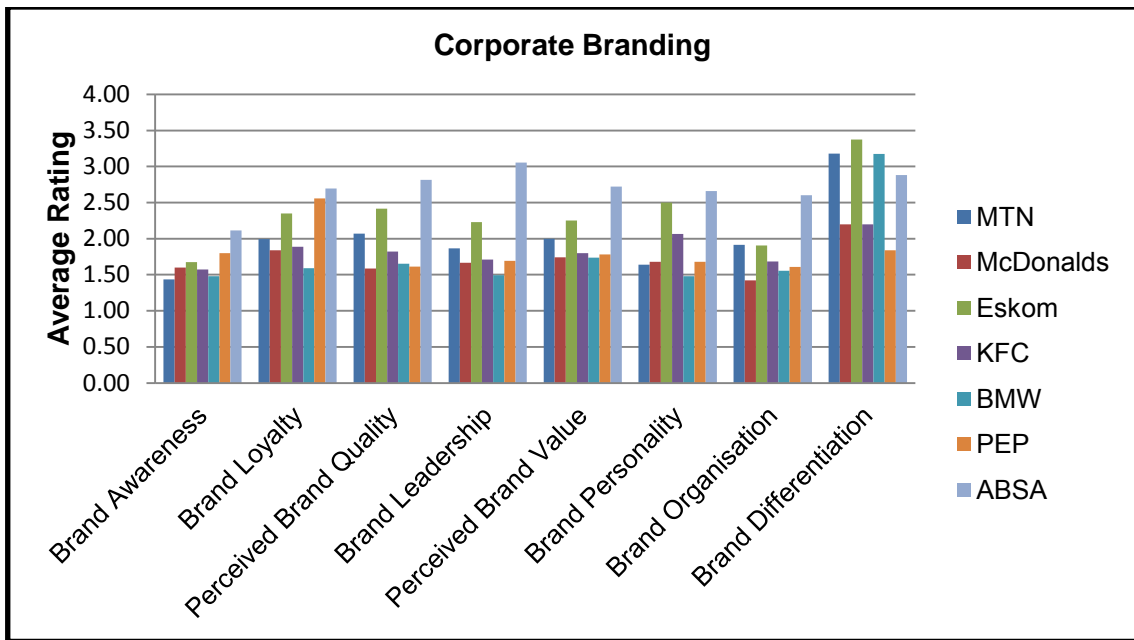
praise for doing good work?					
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	Strong Brand	115	2.35	1.085	.130
	Other Brand	33	2.03	.951	
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	Strong Brand	117	2.32	1.127	.725
	Other Brand	33	2.39	1.088	
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	Strong Brand	117	2.42	.985	.452
	Other Brand	33	2.27	.977	
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	Strong Brand	115	2.13	.864	.813
	Other Brand	33	2.09	.765	
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	Strong Brand	115	2.01	.874	.959
	Other Brand	33	2.00	.750	
Do you have a best friend at work?	Strong Brand	117	2.92	1.260	.265
	Other Brand	33	3.24	1.480	
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	Strong Brand	117	2.41	1.153	.557
	Other Brand	33	2.55	1.201	
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	Strong Brand	117	2.21	1.113	.994
	Other Brand	33	2.21	1.139	

The results in Table 30 shows that there is no relationship between the strength of the brand and employee engagement since all the p-values of the t-tests are greater than 0.05 (the significance level).

5.4.2.1 Summed scale

A summated scale was calculated for each construct by finding the average of the items in each construct. The mean rating for the corporate brand constructs disintegrated by company are as shown in Table 31.

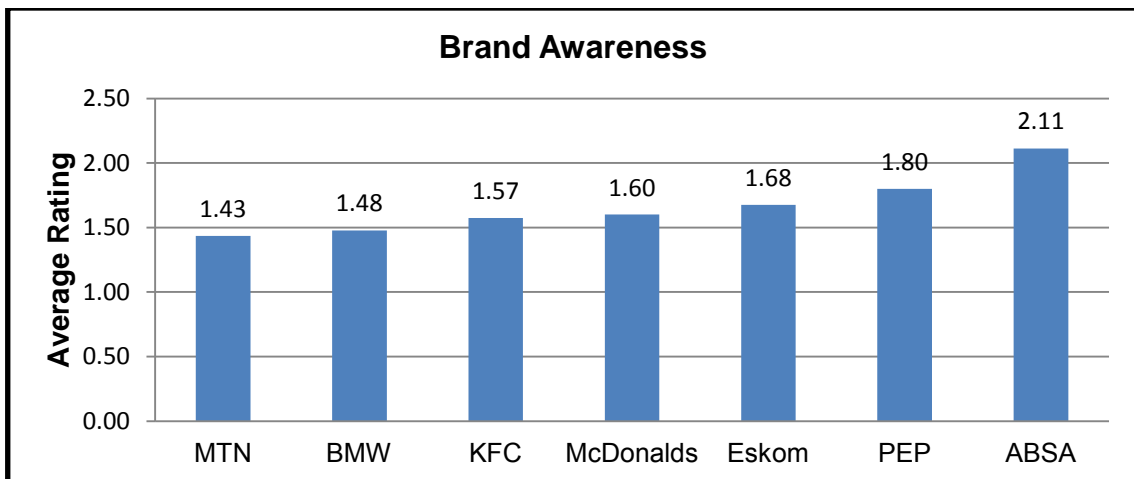
Table 31 – Corporate Branding Summated Scale



A) Brand awareness

Table 32 shows that MTN employees scored the best on brand awareness (1.43), followed by BMW (1.48) and KFC (1.57). The worst score was Absa, with a score of 2.11.

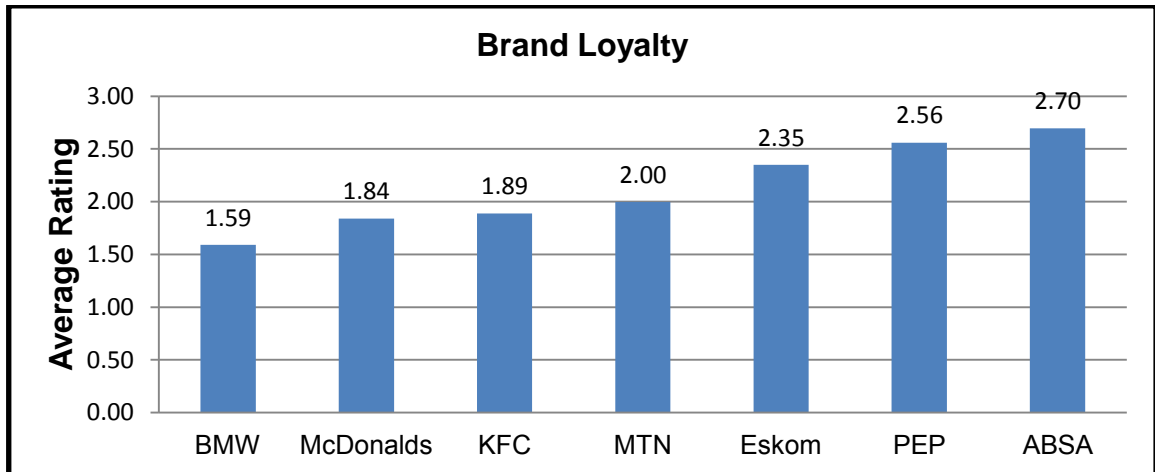
Table 32 – Brand Awareness



B) Brand Loyalty

BMW employees are the most loyal (1.59), followed by McDonald's (1.84). ABSA (2.70) holds the least loyal employees.

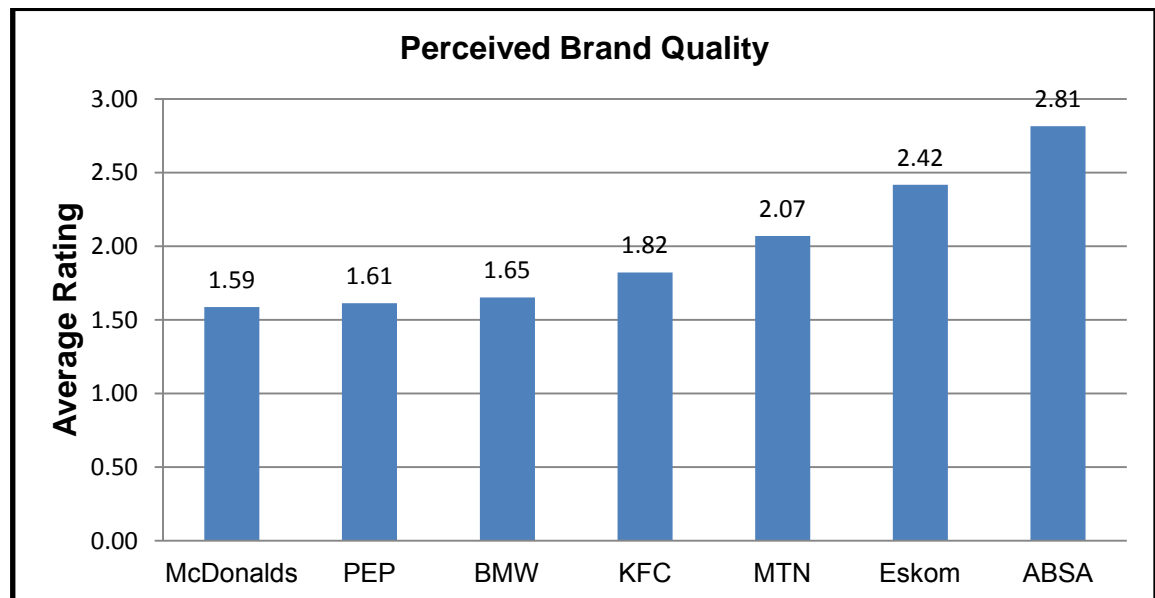
Table 33 – Brand Loyalty



C) Perceived brand quality

McDonalds had the best perceived brand quality (1.59) and Absa had the worst perceived brand quality.

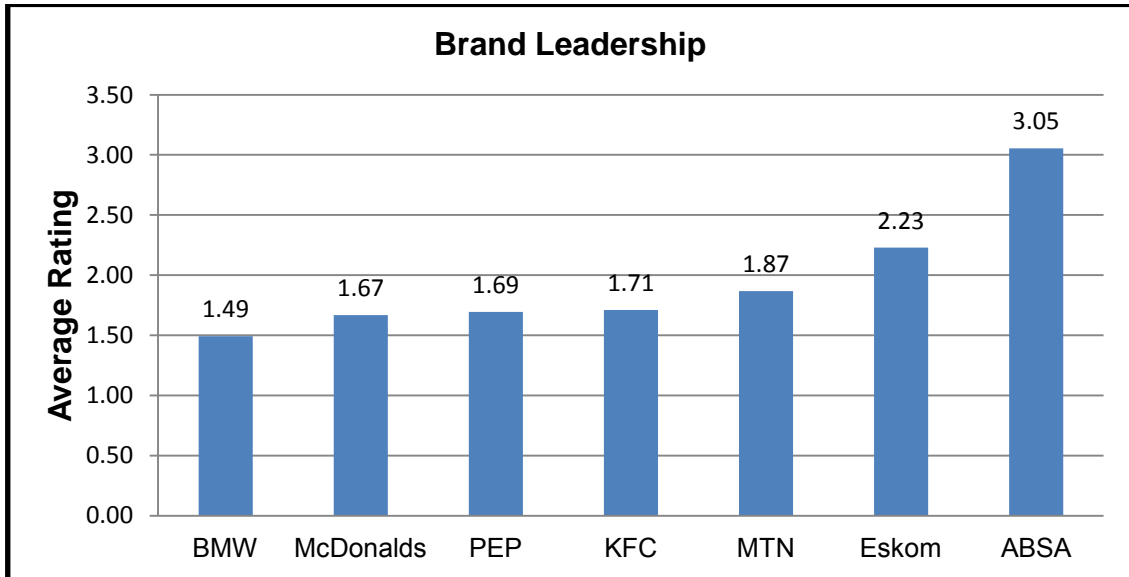
Table 34 – Perceived Brand Quality



D) Brand leadership

Table 35 explains brand leadership, BMW came first with a mean rating of (1.49) followed by McDonalds (1.67), Pep (1.69), KFC (1.71), MTN (1.87), Eskom (2.23) and last was Absa with a rating of 3.05.

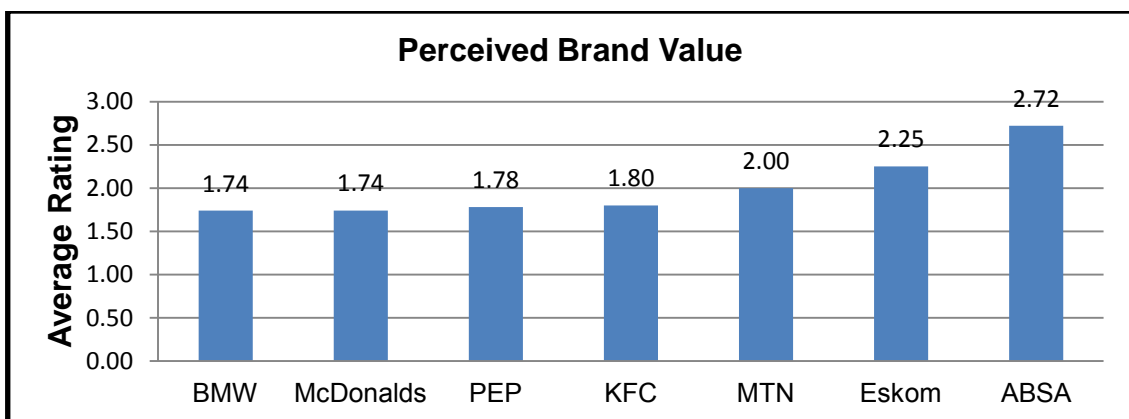
Table 35 – Brand Leadership



E) Perceived brand value

BMW and McDonalds had the best scores on perceived brand value both with mean ratings of 1.74. Absa had the worst rating at 2.72.

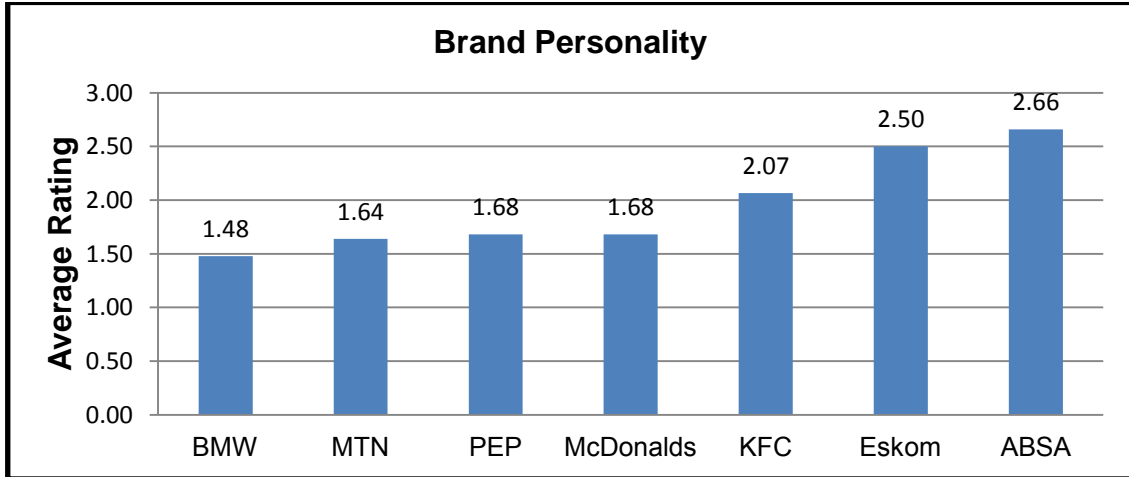
Table 36 – Perceived Brand Value



F) Brand personality

On Brand personality BMW was rated the best with a mean rating of 1.48, followed by MTN with a mean rating of 1.64, Pep and McDonalds were on third position with mean ratings of 1.68 apiece. The rest of the ratings are shown on the bar graph.

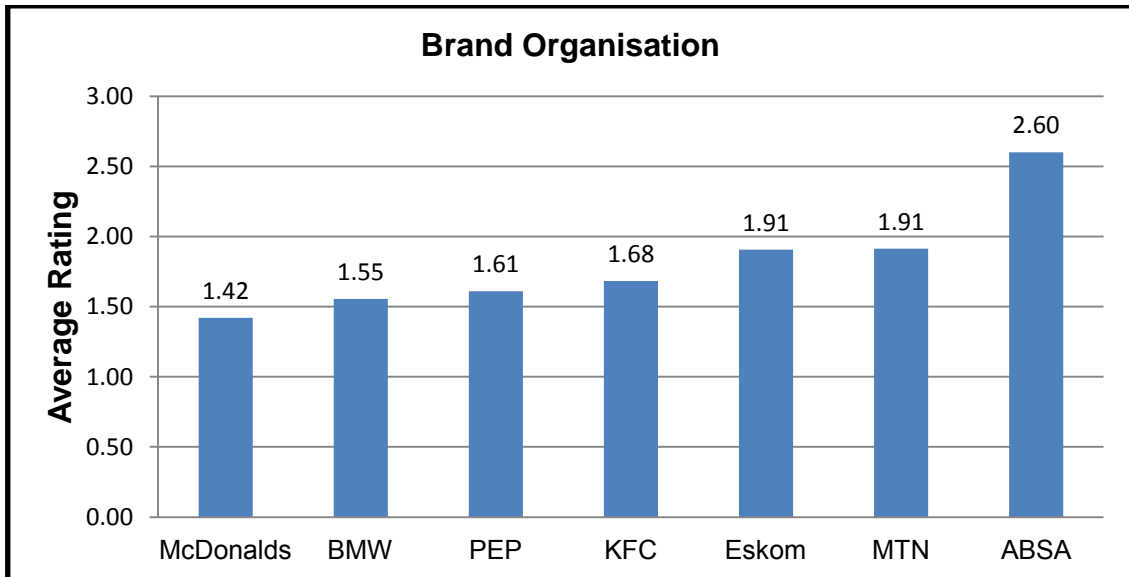
Table 37 – Brand Personality



G) Brand organisation

McDonalds had the best score on brand organisation and Absa had the worst score.

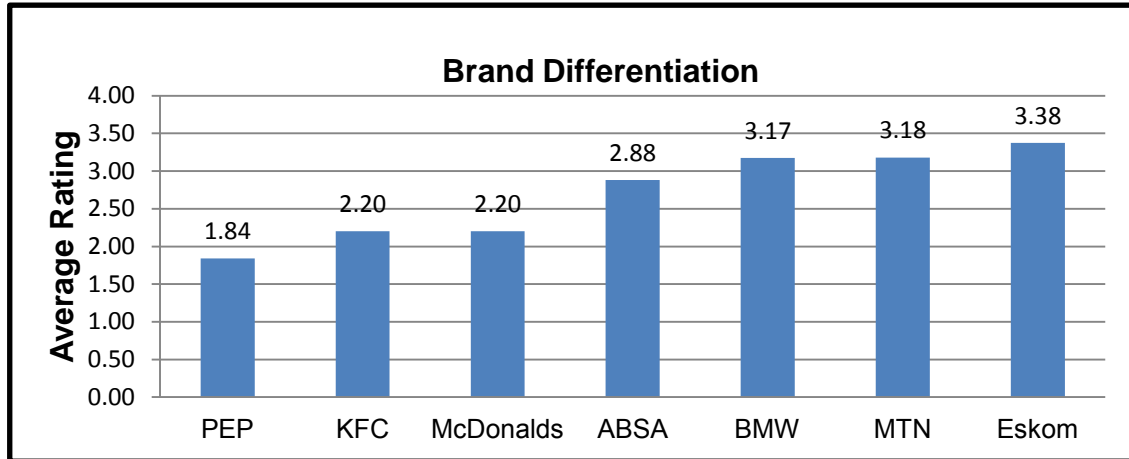
Table 38 – Brand Organisation



H) Brand differentiation

Pep was rated as the brand that was not different from its competitors with a score of 1.84. Eskom, MTN and BMW had scores greater than 3, hence the employees were disagreeing that they were the same as their competitors.

Table 39 – Brand Differentiation



5.4.2.2 T-Tests used to assess brand strength vs. employee brand perception

To answer this question the brands Absa, McDonalds, KFC, MTN and BMW were grouped together as strong brands. On the other hand Pep and Eskom were grouped together as other brands. Independent sample t-tests were then conducted to assess whether the strength of the brand affects employee brand perception. The results are shown below:

Table 40 – Brand Strength vs Employee Brand Perception T-Tests

Group Statistics					
Brand Strength		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Brand Awareness	Strong Brand	117	1.64	0.583	0.152
	Other Brand	33	1.77	0.407	
Brand Loyalty	Strong Brand	117	2.02	0.781	0.001
	Other Brand	33	2.51	0.671	
Perceived Brand Quality	Strong Brand	117	2.01	0.873	0.217
	Other Brand	33	1.81	0.662	
Brand Leadership	Strong Brand	117	1.98	0.899	0.150
	Other Brand	33	1.82	0.425	
Perceived Brand Value	Strong Brand	117	2.02	0.816	0.410

	Other Brand	33	1.89	0.647	
Brand Personality	Strong Brand	117	1.89	0.849	0.949
	Other Brand	33	1.88	0.613	
Brand Organisation	Strong Brand	117	1.85	0.771	0.100
	Other Brand	33	1.68	0.434	
Brand Differentiation	Strong Brand	116	2.78	1.224	0.010
	Other Brand	33	2.21	1.023	

The results show that employees are more loyal to strong brands as compared to other brands (p-value, 0.001). Employees also have a perception that other brands are basically the same as competing brands, but their perception differs with the strong brands (p-value, 0.010). There is however no difference on perceptions on all the other constructs.

5.4.3 Research Question 3 – Do demographical factors influence employee engagement?

5.4.3.1 Gender t-tests

Age, highest education and period of employment were not used because there were categories with very few cases. Independent samples t-tests were conducted on employee engagement attributes to assess whether engagement was dependent on the gender of the employee. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 41 – Gender T-Tests Conducted on Employee Engagement Attributes

Group Statistics					
Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-Value
Do you know what is expected of you at work?	Male	63	1.41	.496	.021
	Female	87	1.67	.831	
Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?	Male	63	1.76	.837	.979
	Female	87	1.76	.681	
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	Male	63	1.95	.941	0.992
	Female	87	1.95	.951	
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	Male	63	2.94	1.176	0.100
	Female	87	2.60	1.280	
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a	Male	61	2.39	1.005	0.265
	Female	87	2.20	1.098	

person?					
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	Male	63	2.52	1.148	0.075
	Female	87	2.20	1.077	
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	Male	63	2.48	1.030	0.344
	Female	87	2.32	.946	
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	Male	62	2.06	.721	0.485
	Female	86	2.16	.919	
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	Male	63	2.03	.861	0.758
	Female	85	1.99	.838	
Do you have a best friend at work?	Male	63	2.89	1.193	0.409
	Female	87	3.07	1.396	
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	Male	63	2.40	.993	0.688
	Female	87	2.47	1.274	
In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?	Male	63	2.37	1.248	0.172
	Female	87	2.10	1.000	

A significant difference exists if the p-value of the t-test is less than 0.05 (the significance level). The results in Table 41 show that the mean rating for males on the attribute “Do you know what is expected of you at work?” is significantly higher than that of females. On the rest of the engagement attributes, there are no significant differences by gender.

5.4.3.2 Gender vs brand perception T-Tests

Independent samples t-tests were conducted on brand perception attributes to assess whether brand perception was dependent on the gender of the employee. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 42 – Gender vs Brand Perception T-Tests

Group Statistics					
Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-Value
Brand Awareness	Male	63	1.5778	0.45453	0.070
	Female	87	1.7356	0.60501	
Brand Loyalty	Male	63	1.9968	0.74876	0.085
	Female	87	2.2201	0.79845	
Perceived Brand Quality	Male	63	1.9947	0.78172	0.727
	Female	87	1.9464	0.87290	

Brand Leadership	Male	63	1.8519	0.69953	0.218
	Female	87	2.0192	0.89408	
Perceived Brand Value	Male	63	1.9524	0.74981	0.587
	Female	87	2.0230	0.80662	
Brand Personality	Male	63	1.8333	0.71279	0.490
	Female	87	1.9253	0.86107	
Brand Organisation	Male	63	1.7857	0.62678	0.653
	Female	87	1.8391	0.77288	
Brand Differentiation	Male	62	2.9032	1.26374	0.030
	Female	87	2.4713	1.12930	

Only brand differentiation is dependent on gender since the p-value is less than 0.05. Female employees tend to agree that their company is basically the same as competing brands more than their male counterparts. There is no difference between the perceptions of males and females on all the other constructs.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of what relationship employee perception of a corporate brand have on employee engagement. The researcher conducted a quantitative study and distributed questionnaires to 150 employees across six organisations. The goal of the researcher was to answer three research questions and data was collected to assist with this process.

Data was collected and the results have been recorded in Chapter 5. The aim of Chapter 6 is to discuss the results and compare the findings to the literature. The discussion of the results has been divided up into three sections: demographics questions, employee engagement questions and corporate brand questions.

The literature review revealed that employee engagement, perception and corporate branding have been researched in the past by several researchers. The table below provides a summary of the literature reviewed for each topic.

Table 43 – Previous Research Summary

Employee Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Attridge, 2009) • (Fleming & Asplund, 2007) • (Gallup, 2012) • (Guest, 2009) • (Konrad, 2006) • (Lockwood, 2007) • (Mcleod & Clarke, 2009) • (Thackray, 2001)
Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy, 2006) • (Burmamann & Zeplin, 2005) • (Dean, 2006) • (Tsang, Lee & Li, 2011)
Corporate Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Arruda, 2002) • (Bhattacharaya, Sen & Korschun, 2008) • (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010) • (Glavas & Piderit, 2009) • (Gronroos, 1988) • (Ketvirtis, 2012) • (Kotler & Keller, 2006) • (Mallon, 2012) • (Michalowicz, 2012) • (Performance Improvement Council, 2012) • (Tsang, Lee & Li, 2011)

The previous research discussed in the above table speaks about individual topics and does not integrate the findings of Chapter 5 with the literature reviewed. Therefore this chapter aims to link the findings of Chapter 4 with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

6.2 Research Questions

The researcher posed three research questions with the intention of gaining a better understanding as to what role employee perception of a corporate brand has on employee engagement. The primary objective of this section is to focus on the results from Chapter 4 and the literature in Chapter 2.

Research Question 1: Is there a positive correlation between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement?

Research Question 2: Do companies with a strong established corporate brand have employees with high engagement?

Research Question 3: Do demographical factors influence employee engagement?

6.3 Research Question 1: Is there a positive correlation between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement?

6.3.1 Corporate Brand

Corporate branding stresses the importance of employees' behaviours and attitudes and has given rise to internal branding and employee branding, as both emphasise the importance of aligning employees' beliefs and values with the corporate brand. Corporate branding concerns "the systematic planned management of behaviours, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of an organisation" (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). The corporate branding construct was further operationalised by means of a model with the key variables that make up the construct being depicted as: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation.

6.3.2 Brand Awareness

Section C comprised of five brand awareness questions: “the first brand that comes to mind”, “x company is a brand I am very familiar with”, “x company is a very popular brand”, “I know what x company stands for” and lastly, “I have an opinion about x company’s brand”. The brand awareness construct measured the ability of employees to recall the brand they work for in detail which assists with acquiring a product or service. Brand awareness involves brand recall and brand recognition; brand recall is the most important and occurs outside the organisation as opposed to brand recognition which happens inside the organisation (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

The results show that the mean value is 1.67 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees are brand aware. Arruda (2002) states that employees are exposed to the brand they work for and automatically become brand aware and absorb everything related to the brand. Once the brands objectives are discussed, employees will generate brand awareness. A good Brand Communications Programme consists of six steps (Arruda, 2002):

- i. **Brand Awareness** – Employees need to understand the organisation’s brand through a collaborative effort with the marketing department, human resource department and the operations team. The more employees become exposed to brand communication the more aware they will become.
- ii. **Education** – Deepen employees’ understanding of the brand by communicating brand values and qualities.
- iii. **Buy In** – Create brand objectives and goals for each employee.
- iv. **Actions** – Employees should participate in brand contests as this will encourage employees to take full responsibility of the brand. “This is where the true spirit of brand evangelism becomes evident”.
- v. **Results** – Show your employees the results of their actions, this will motivate them to rally to the cause. Strong brand equals more money.
- vi. **Recognition** – The best way to reinforce positive brand actions is to recognise and reward success.

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach’s alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach’s alpha test was conducted on brand awareness in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand awareness has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.790 which means that the five brand awareness questions have

good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand awareness. The results show that brand awareness has a variance of 57%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question. According to Table 22 brand awareness has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for three attributes: “In the last six months has someone at work talked to you about your progress?”, “In the last seven days have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?” and “Do you have a best friend at work?”. These three attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand awareness and employee engagement.

6.3.2 Brand Loyalty

Section C comprised of five brand loyalty questions: “the next time I use a company I intend to use my company”, “I was delighted with my last use experience with my company”, “my company is the only company brand I use”, “I would recommend my company to others” and lastly “I am willing to pay a premium for my company”. The brand loyalty construct measured employees’ commitment level to the brand they work for and their ability to repeat purchases over time.

The results show that the mean value is 2.13 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees are loyal to the brand they work for. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, employees are loyal because they want to build a sustainable relationship with their employer. The economic downturn may also be a result of employee loyalty as some companies refuse to recruit new employees to save costs, making it difficult for individuals to find a new position. Michalowicz (2012) states that employees are loyal due to three “secrets”:

- **Evaluate** – Employers need to recruit individuals who are naturally loyal. Loyalty cannot be taught and therefore it has to be present in the individual’s character. The seven organisations that took part in this study, must have recruited naturally loyal individuals, as employee loyalty was high across all seven organisations.
- **Reciprocate** – To encourage loyalty amongst employees, leaders need to be loyal to their employees and provide financial and non-financial rewards such as: respect and praise, employee of the month award, work flexibility and

listening to suggestions and feedback. The employee engagement questionnaire revealed that on average employees rated recognition, praise and feedback highly, which substantiates Michalowicz's argument that explains why employees are loyal.

- **Simplify** – Employers must remove all barriers that prevent employees from achieving goals and objectives. Employees that find it easier to get a job done are more loyal than employees that have many barriers. When asked the question “Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?” employees on average responded that they do have the correct material and equipment to do work right which explains why they are loyal to the brand they work for.

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach's alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted on brand loyalty in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand loyalty has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.788 which means that the five brand loyalty questions have good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand loyalty. The results show that brand loyalty has a variance of 57%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question, according to Table 23 brand loyalty has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for one attribute: “In the last six months has someone at work talked to you about your progress?”. This attribute has p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand loyalty and employee engagement.

6.3.3 Perceived Brand Quality

Section C comprised of three questions regarding the perceived brand quality of the company they work for, the questions that were asked were as follows: “in comparison to alternative brands my company has high quality service”, “in comparison to alternative supplier brands my company has consistent quality service”, and lastly “in comparison to alternative supplier brands my company is the best”. The perceived brand quality construct measured “intangible elements or simply a feeling towards a brand, which would not only be constrained within the performance, feature, price, and other quality dimensions of the brand” (Tsang, Lee & Li, 2011). Gronroos (1988) points out that when experience meets expectations, consumers tend to perceive the quality

of the brand to be good. This implies that organisations need to meet expectations whether it be consumers or employees as this will create a good perception about the organisation's brand.

The results show that the mean value is 1.99 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees perceive the quality of the brand they work for to be good. As discussed in the literature review, Mallon (2012) states that there are six tips that help with the disparity of the brand and how employees perceive the brand:

- **Audit Internal Communications** – Organisations need to align their communication material with their brand identity and promise.
- **Train Employees** – Educate employees once they are hired and reinforce the message throughout their journey.
- **Establish a Social Media Policy** – To prevent a branding crisis via social media, organisations need to establish rules and regulations regarding what is allowed to be shared with the public.
- **Regularity Reassess** – Organisations need to ensure that employees understand the brand and have the appropriate resources to deliver the brand promise.
- **Reward Performance** – Organisations need to reward employees that deliver the brand's promise to customers as this will create encouragement amongst employees.
- **Give Employees a Voice** – Employees should be encouraged to create new ideas on how to deliver brand communication messages. Employees feel a sense of belonging and importance when they get the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas.

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach's alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted on brand quality in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand quality has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.854 which means that the three brand quality questions have good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand quality. The results show that brand quality has a variance of 78%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question, according to Table 24 brand quality has significant positive correlation to

most employee engagement attributes except for four attributes: “At work do your opinions seem to count?”, “In the last seven days have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?”, “Do you have a best friend at work?”, and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?”. These four attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand quality and employee engagement.

6.3.4 Brand Leadership

Section C comprised of three questions regarding brand leadership. The questions that were asked were as follows: “in comparison to alternative supplier brands my company is growing in popularity”, “in comparison to alternative supplier brands my company is innovative”, and lastly “in comparison to alternative supplier brands my company is the leading brand”. The brand leadership construct measured three elements: innovation in comparison to competitors, popularity in comparison to competitors and lastly brand leadership in comparison to competitors.

The results show that the mean value is 1.96 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees believe the brand they work for has high leadership in terms of popularity, innovation and leadership. Brand leadership is therefore defined as managers that have distinctive talents that are focused on fulfilling “customers and investors” expectations. The leadership brand is entrenched into the culture of the organisation through its “policies and its requirements for employees” (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007). Building a leadership brand requires organisations to follow five principles (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007). The first principle is to set strategies that will meet the goals and objectives of an organisation and to recruit the correct employees. The second principle is to ensure that managers internalise high expectations that are perceived by customers. The third principle is to evaluate leaders according to external perceptions. The fourth principle is to provide leadership skills to leaders within organisations so that they can fulfil external expectations. The last principle states that organisations need to track the leadership brand over the long term (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007).

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach’s alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach’s alpha test was conducted on brand leadership in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand leadership has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.828 which means that the three brand leadership questions

have good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand leadership. The results show that brand leadership has a variance of 75%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question, according to Table 25 brand leadership has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for one attribute: “In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress”. The attribute has a p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand leadership and employee engagement.

6.3.5 Perceived brand value

Section C comprised of two questions regarding the perceived brand value of the company employee’s work for. The questions that were asked were as follows: “my company provides good value for money” and “my company is the leading brand”. The perceived brand value construct measured the added value endowed on products and services, reflected in how employees think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands for the firm (Kotler and Keller, 2009).

The results show that the mean value is 2.00 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees believe the brand they work for has high value. Respondents have high employee engagement levels which could have increased the value of the brand they work for. According to research done by the Performance Improvement Council (2012) engaged employees have enormous impact in positively affecting brand value. According to research done by the Gallup Organisation, strong brands with high employee engagement levels have 3.9 times the earnings per share compared to organisation with low employee engagement levels (Performance Improvement Council, 2012). Another study done by Towers and Watson indicates that employee engagement has a positive influence on financial performance; there is a 5.75% difference with regards to operating margins and 3.44% difference in net profit margins (Performance Improvement Council, 2012).

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach’s alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach’s alpha test was conducted on brand value in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand value has a Cronbach’s alpha

of 0.718 which means that the two brand value questions have good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand value. The results show that brand value has a variance of 78%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question, according to Table 26 brand value has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for two attributes: “Do you have a best friend at work?” and “Do you know what is expected of you at work?”. These two attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand value and employee engagement.

6.3.6 Brand Personality

Section C comprised of two questions regarding brand personality: “my company has a personality” and “my company is interesting”. The brand personality construct measured human attributes that are applied to a brand. Brand personality forms a competitive advantage within organisations by building trust, commitment and strong relationships between the organisation and the consumer (Sorensen, 2011). Jennifer Aaker identified five brand personality traits: (1) sincerity, (2) excitement, (3) competence, (4) sophistication, and (5) ruggedness.

The results show that the mean value is 2.00 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees believe the brand they work for has a strong personality. Corporate brand personality is about employee perception of the actions, words and values of an organisation and can be characterised into three attributes: affective (the “heart” of an organisation), cognitive (the “mind” of an organisation) and conative (the “body” an organisation) (Keller & Richey, 2006). These three attributes are distinctive personality traits that are used to guide employees within an organisation and influence how employees will view the organisation (Keller & Richey, 2006). With this said, the favourable response from the results may mean that all seven organisations used the three corporate brand personality attributes in order to alter employees’ perceptions about the brand they work for.

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach’s alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach’s alpha test was conducted on brand personality in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand personality has a

Cronbach's alpha of 0.799 which means that the two brand personality questions have good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand personality. The results show that brand personality has a variance of 83%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question. According to Table 27 brand personality has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for three attributes: "At work do your opinions seem to count?", "Do you have a best friend at work?", and "Do you know what is expected of you at work?". These three attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand personality and employee engagement.

6.3.7 Brand Organisation

Section C comprised of four questions regarding the brand's organisation. The questions that were asked were: "I would trust my company", "my company is a good corporate citizen", "my company is socially responsible" and lastly "my company cares about its customers". The brand organisation construct looked beyond the brand, a name, term, sign, symbol or design used to differentiate goods or services from competitors (American Marketing Association, 1960) and instead measured to what extent the organisation was socially responsible, its corporate citizenship and if the organisation cares for its customers.

The results show that the mean value is 1.81 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees believe the brand they work for has a strong organisational brand in terms of corporate citizenship, social responsibility and caring for its customers. According to research done by Bhattacharaya, Sen and Korschun (2008), corporate citizenship has a positive influence on employee engagement and in order to increase employee engagement levels organisations need to focus on improving corporate citizenship, caring for the well-being of an organisations stakeholders and the environment (Glavas & Piderit, 2009). The result reveal a favourable response which indicates employees from the seven organisations believe that their organisation has corporate citizenship, according to Ketvirtis (2012) the most important attributes of corporate citizenship as perceived by employees are energy efficiency initiatives, social innovation opportunities and employee charitable contribution matching programmes.

Three tests were conducted: a Cronbach's alpha test, factor analysis and correlation analysis. A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted on brand organisation in order to check the reliability of an ordinal scale. The results show that brand organisation has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.849 which means that the four brand personality questions have good internal consistency and reliability. A factor analysis determines the variance of brand organisation. The results show that brand organisation has a variance of 69%.

The last test done was a correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question, according to Table 28 brand organisation has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for four attributes: "In the last seven days have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?", "In the last six months has someone at work talked to you about your progress?", "Do you have a best friend at work?" and lastly "Do you know what is expected of you at work?". These four attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand organisation and employee engagement.

6.3.8 Brand Differentiation

Section C comprised of only one brand differentiation question. The question that was asked was: "my company is basically the same as competing brands". The brand differentiation construct measured the ability of the organisation to establish new market segments by providing new product offerings to consumers (Kotler et al., 2007).

The results show that the mean value is 2.69 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that within companies, employees believe the brand they work is the same as competing brands. The findings reveal that organisations lack differentiation, Aaker (2004) supports the findings by stating that organisations find it difficult to differentiate themselves from competitors because it is challenging to find appropriate features that add value to a brand and because it is costly to differentiate. The results reveal that the seven organisations can differentiate themselves further by offering a wide range of products and a variety of marketing variations, to increase sales and ultimately increase profitability (Kotler et al., 2007).

The Cronbach's alpha test and the factor analysis test could not be conducted on brand organisation as this construct only has one variable.

The only test that could be done on this construct is the correlation analysis which aims to answer the first research question, according to Table 29 brand differentiation has significant positive correlation to most employee engagement attributes except for three attributes: “Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?”, “Is there someone at work who encourages your development?” and lastly, “Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?”. These three attributes have p-values which are greater than 0.05. Therefore the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of brand differentiation and employee engagement.

6.3.9 Summary

Overall the corporate brand constructs received favourable responses from respondents within the seven organisations: Absa, BMW, Eskom, Pep, MTN, KFC and McDonalds. The research suggests that employees from the seven organisations perceive their corporate brand in a positive light compared to its competitors. The positive perception of the corporate brand results in high employee engagement levels. Therefore research question 1 indicates that there is a positive correlation between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement. Organisations need to focus on creating a well-established corporate brand as this will increase employee engagement levels.

6.4 Research Question 2: Do companies with a strong established corporate brand have employees with high engagement?

Section B comprised of 12 employee engagement questions developed by the Gallup Organisation. The 12 employee engagement questions from the Gallup Organisation (Thackray, 2001) are as follows:

Table 44: Employee Engagement Questions

No.	Employee Engagement Questions
1.	Do you know what is expected of you at work?
2.	Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?
3.	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?

4.	In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5.	Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?
6.	Is there someone at work who encourages your development?
7.	At work, do your opinions seem to count?
8.	Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?
9.	Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?
10.	Do you have a best friend at work?
11.	In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
12.	In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?

For the purpose of the study the seven organisations were split into two categories: “strong brand” and “other brand”. The “strong brand” category consisted of Absa, BMW, KFC, McDonalds and MTN. The “other brand” category consists of Pep Stores and Eskom. The results indicate that there is no relationship between the strength of the brand and employee engagement since all the p-values from the t-tests are greater than 0.05 indicating a favourable response. The findings of this research therefore indicate that the strength of a brand does not affect employee engagement.

In terms of how employees perceived the brand they work for, independent sample t-test was conducted to assess whether the strength of the brand affects employee perception. Out of the eight corporate brand constructs, only two constructs had a p-value less than 0.05 and the results show that employees are more loyal to “strong brands” as opposed to “other brands” and lastly employees perceive “other brands” to be the same as competing brands.

6.4.1 Summary

Overall the strength of a brand does not positively affect employee engagement. The results reveal that all employees whether they were from “strong brands” or “other brands”, have high engagement levels.

6.5 Research Question 3: Do demographical factors influence employee engagement?

Section A of the questionnaire asked respondents questions regarding their gender, education qualification, and years employed at their current job. With regards to the respondent's gender, the results reflect that out of the 150 respondents, 87 respondents were female and the remaining 63 respondents were male. Based on the large sample size, generalisations and inference can be made that employees who work with customers were predominantly female.

There are slightly more women than men in service businesses and companies that require employees to communicate face-to-face with customers. The reason for this is that women possess social skills and qualities such as, "caring, communicating and making people feel good", and organisations now find these qualities highly important and therefore employ females to deal with customers (Belt, Richardson & Webster, 2002).

In terms of highest education qualification, the results in Table 6 reflect that the most respondents were individuals with secondary/high school qualifications. Only three respondents stated that they have a Master's degree which agrees with the literature that states that individuals refuse to study further due to the costs of purchasing a Master's degree and the time that it will take to complete a Master's degree.

The results from Table 7 – Years employed at current job, indicate the range as between 1 and 14 years, with the most common response being employed at current job between 1 to 3 years. 1% of respondents stated that they have been employed at their current job for 12 to 13 years which agrees with Kenny from Forbes magazine, as she states that the annual rate of turnover is about 15%, which is classified as normal and healthy and one does not need to worry (Schreiner, 2012).

Independent sample t-tests were conducted on employee engagement attributes to assess whether engagement was dependent on demographic factors. The results show that the only demographic factor that could be used was gender as the other demographic factors had very few cases. The results of the gender reveal that 11 employee engagement attributes had no significant difference by gender, the only attribute that had a significant difference was the attribute that asked respondents "Do you know what is expected of you at work?", males had a p-value that was significantly

higher than females. Therefore the research reveals that females know more regarding what is expected of them at work than males.

6.5.1 Summary

Overall demographic factors do not play a role in employee engagement.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Corporate branding was defined by Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng (2010) as “the systematic planned management of behaviours, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of an organisation”. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) state that: “employees have the potential to make or break the corporate brand”. It is therefore critical that every employee within an organisation understands what the corporate brand values stand for. This research investigated the impact of employees’ perception of a corporate brand on employee engagement. The research questions tested the correlation between employee engagement and corporate branding, the strength of a corporate brand on employee engagement and demographical factors that may impact employee engagement.

7.2 Managerial implications

The research findings have considerable impact on organisations, especially in human resources and marketing departments, which focus on improving employee engagement and corporate branding. The implications of this study are found within the discovery of the positive correlation between employee engagement and corporate branding. The research discovered that if employees have a positive perception about the corporate brand they work for, their employee engagement levels increase.

In terms of corporate branding, brand managers should focus on improving the underlying variable: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation to improve the corporate branding within organisations.

Brand awareness measures the ability of employees to recall the brand they work for in detail which assists with acquiring a product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Arruda (2002) states that once the brands objectives are discussed, employees will generate brand awareness. A good Brand Communications Programme consists of six steps (Arruda, 2002): brand awareness (employees need to understand the organisation’s

brand through a collaborative effort with the marketing department, human resource department and the operations team), education (deepen employees' understanding of the brand by communicating brand values and qualities), buy in (create brand objectives and goals for each employee), actions (employees should participate in brand contests as this will encourage employees to take full responsibility of the brand), results (show your employees the results of their actions, this will motivate them to rally to the cause) and lastly, recognition (the best way to reinforce positive brand actions is to recognise and reward success).

Brand loyalty measured employees' commitment level to the brand they work for and their ability to repeat purchases over time. In terms of the brand loyalty construct, the following three "secrets" can be used to increase brand loyalty (Michalowicz, 2012): Evaluate (employers need to recruit individuals who are naturally loyal), reciprocate (to encourage loyalty amongst employees, leaders need to be loyal to their employees and provide financial and non-financial rewards) and simplify (employers must remove all barriers that prevent employees from achieving goals and objectives).

Perceived brand quality measured "intangible elements or simply a feeling towards a brand, which would not only be constrained within the performance, feature, price, and other quality dimensions of the brand" (Tsang, Lee & Li, 2011). Mallon (2012) states that there are six tips that help with the disparity of the brand and how employees perceive the brand: audit internal communications, train employees, establish a social media policy, regularity reassess, reward performance and lastly, give employees a voice.

Brand leadership is defined in terms of the profitability of an organisation. Organisations that have a higher market share have higher profits. Leading brands also have lower costs due to the principle of economies of scale (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011). Burkitt and Zealley (2006, as cited in De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011) explored research regarding the characteristics of high performing brands and discovered that they all have three common characteristics: measure and evaluate marketing activities and outcomes, recruit and train individuals with analytical skills and lastly focus on business outcomes and link the data to common key performance indicators.

Perceived brand value is defined as, "the added value endowed on products and services, reflected in how consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands for the firm."

(Kotler and Keller, 2009). Organisations build brand equity by creating the correct brand knowledge structures with the right target market (Kotler & Keller, 2009). There are three main sets of brand equity drivers: brand elements (brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, spokespeople, slogans, jingles, packages and signage), the products and services and all the accompanying marketing activities and supporting marketing programmes and lastly, other associations indirectly transferred to the brand by linking it to some other entity (a person, place or thing).

Brand personality measured human attributes that are applied to a brand. Jennifer Aaker identified five brand personality traits that are essential for a brand: (1) sincerity, (2) excitement, (3) competence, (4) sophistication, and (5) ruggedness. Organisations need to create a long and lasting brand personality as it encourages brand loyalty from target customers (Lin, 2010).

Brand organisation looked beyond the brand, a name, term, sign, symbol or design used to differentiate goods or services from competitors (American Marketing Association, 1960) and instead measured to what extent the organisation was socially responsible, its corporate citizenship and if the organisation cares for its customers. Andriof, Waddock, Husted and Rahman (2002) state that corporate citizenship not only increases corporate reputation but also acts as a form of competitive advantage which benefits an organisation financially. In order to increase corporate reputation, organisations need to take part in five activities: “retain employees to avoid redundancies, assist in the development of employment programmes for the unemployed in the local region, focus on increasing the use of recyclable materials in their manufacturing processes, become industry leaders in developing environmentally sustainable business practices and lastly subsidise and maintain services to rural communities.”

Brand differentiation measured the ability of the organisation to establish new market segments by providing new product offerings to consumers (Kotler et al., 2007). Dibb and Simkin (1997) have developed a segmentation process that involves three stages: marketing analysis, strategy development and marketing programmes. When starting out the segmentation process, organisations need to establish clear objectives, as this will provide a clear direction of issues to be addressed and issues to be researched. The segmentation process is an ongoing cycle, which begins with the analysis strategic link, this link talks about marketing intelligence and states that individuals in charge of making strategic decisions should understand the marketing intelligence. The next link

is the strategic programme link, which states that organisations need to develop programmes that reflect the strategy and the appropriate target market. The last link is the programmes analysis link, which states that organisations should develop marketing programmes that not only fulfil marketing strategies but also change the status quo. The results will change consumers' perception and behaviour and therefore further research needs to be undertaken to monitor consumers and competitors (Dibb and Simkin, 1997).

7.3 Limitations of the research and suggestions for future study

This research on the perception of corporate branding and employee engagement was conducted within seven organisations, of which only two were categorised as “other brands” and the remaining five organisations were categorised as “strong brands”. This needs to be considered when generalising the results across other organisations, as only 33 respondents out of the 150 respondents were from “other brands”. Further the researcher made use of non-probability convenience sampling: all employees that were employed by the seven organisations, irrespective of their position within the organisation, were potential respondents.

This study has a geographical reach limited to Johannesburg, South Africa. The study was thus limited to 150 respondents. In terms of the research instrument, a self-selection bias may be present within this study as employees may feel strongly about the corporate brand constructs and employee engagement levels when measured in terms of the organisation they work for.

Future research should investigate what brands in South Africa are least preferred according to consumers, as there is little research in this field. In order to make an effective comparison between “strong brands” and “other brands”, future research should improve the response rate of “other brands” or less preferred brands in South Africa and have an even split between the two categories.

7.4 Summary

Corporate branding was described as “the systematic planned management of behaviours, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of an organisation” (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). This study focused on identifying if employee perception of a corporate brand could

positively affect employee engagement. The research discovered that if organisations develop a well-established corporate brand in terms of brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand leadership, perceived brand value, brand personality, brand organisation and brand differentiation, employee engagement levels will positively increase and ultimately improve employee performance and attitudes, which will enhance the firm's competitiveness and minimise absenteeism and employee turnover.

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9. APPENDICES

Section A and B of the questionnaire is the same throughout all seven organisations, the only difference is Section C of the questionnaire, as it has been specifically tailored to each organisation.

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ABSA

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CORPORATE BRAND QUESTIONNAIRE

CONSENT LETTER

My name is Candice Mann; I am conducting research on the relationship between employee perception of a corporate brand and employee engagement. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to answer. Your participation will help the researcher identify how perceptions of a corporate brand impacts employee engagement. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Be assured this study is for research purposes only and your response will remain confidential. At no time will you be asked to purchase anything, and no one will contact you as a result of your participation. If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below.

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Section A

Please select only ONE answer which is the most accurate and please fill in an answer where provided.

Demographic Questions

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 19 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 +

3. What is your highest educational qualification?

- Secondary / High School
- Diploma
- Degree
- Masters Degree

4. How long have you been employed at your current job?

- 1 – 3 years
- 4 – 5 years
- 6 – 7 years
- 8 – 9 years
- 10 – 11 years
- 12 – 13 years
- 14 + years

Section B

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Do you know what is expected of you at work?					
2.	Do you have the material and equipment you need to do your work right?					
3.	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?					
4.	In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?					
5.	Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?					
6.	Is there someone at work who encourages your development?					
7.	At work, do your opinions seem to count?					
8.	Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?					
9.	Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?					
10.	Do you have a best friend at work?					
11.	In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?					
12.	In the past year, have you had the opportunities at work to learn and grow?					

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of a bank, the first brand that comes to mind is ABSA					
2.	ABSA is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	ABSA is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the ABSA brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the ABSA brand					
6.	The next time I use a bank, I intend to use ABSA					
7.	I was delighted with ABSA during my last use experience					
8.	ABSA is the only banking brand I use					
9.	I would recommend ABSA to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for ABSA					
11.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, ABSA has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, ABSA has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, ABSA is the best					
14.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, ABSA is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, ABSA is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, ABSA is the leading brand					
17.	ABSA provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use ABSA over competitors					
19.	ABSA has a personality					
20.	ABSA is interesting					

21.	I would trust ABSA					
22.	ABSA is a good corporate citizen					
23.	ABSA is socially responsible					
24.	ABSA cares about its customers					
25.	ABSA is basically the same as competing brands					

APPENDIX 2: SECTION C OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MTN

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of a telecommunication provider, the first brand that comes to mind is MTN					
2.	MTN is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	MTN is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the MTN brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the MTN brand					
6.	The next time I use a telecommunication provider, I intend to use MTN					
7.	I was delighted with MTN during my last use experience					
8.	MTN is the only telecommunication brand I use					
9.	I would recommend MTN to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for MTN					
11.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, MTN has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, MTN has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, MTN is the best					

14.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, MTN is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, MTN is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, MTN is the leading brand					
17.	MTN provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use MTN over competitors					
19.	MTN has a personality					
20.	MTN is interesting					
21.	I would trust MTN					
22.	MTN is a good corporate citizen					
23.	MTN is socially responsible					
24.	MTN cares about its customers					
25.	MTN is basically the same as competing brands					

APPENDIX 3: SECTION C OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MCDONALDS

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of a fast food, the first brand that comes to mind is McDonalds					
2.	McDonalds is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	McDonalds is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the McDonalds brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the McDonalds brand					
6.	The next time I have fast food, I intend to buy McDonalds					
7.	I was delighted with McDonalds during my last use experience					
8.	McDonalds is the only fast food brand I buy					
9.	I would recommend McDonalds to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for McDonalds					
11.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, McDonalds has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, McDonalds has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, McDonalds is the best					

14.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, McDonalds is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, McDonalds is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, McDonalds is the leading brand					
17.	McDonalds provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use McDonalds over competitors					
19.	McDonalds has a personality					
20.	McDonalds is interesting					
21.	I would trust McDonalds					
22.	McDonalds is a good corporate citizen					
23.	McDonalds is socially responsible					
24.	McDonalds cares about its customers					
25.	McDonalds is basically the same as competing brands					

APPENDIX 4: SECTION C OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KFC

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of a fast food, the first brand that comes to mind is KFC					
2.	KFC is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	KFC is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the KFC brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the KFC brand					
6.	The next time I have fast food, I intend to buy KFC					
7.	I was delighted with KFC during my last use experience					
8.	KFC is the only fast food brand I buy					
9.	I would recommend KFC to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for KFC					
11.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, KFC has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, KFC has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, KFC is the best					

14.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, KFC is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, KFC is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative fast food brands, KFC is the leading brand					
17.	KFC provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use KFC over competitors					
19.	KFC has a personality					
20.	KFC is interesting					
21.	I would trust KFC					
22.	KFC is a good corporate citizen					
23.	KFC is socially responsible					
24.	KFC cares about its customers					
25.	KFC is basically the same as competing brands					

APPENDIX 5: SECTION C OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ESKOM

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of an electricity provider, the first brand that comes to mind is Eskom					
2.	Eskom is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	Eskom is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the Eskom brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the Eskom brand					
6.	The next time I use an electricity provider, I intend to use Eskom					
7.	I was delighted with Eskom during my last use experience					
8.	Eskom is the only electricity provider brand I use					
9.	I would recommend Eskom to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for Eskom					
11.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Eskom has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Eskom has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Eskom is the best					

14.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Eskom is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Eskom is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Eskom is the leading brand					
17.	Eskom provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use Eskom over competitors					
19.	Eskom has a personality					
20.	Eskom is interesting					
21.	I would trust Eskom					
22.	Eskom is a good corporate citizen					
23.	Eskom is socially responsible					
24.	Eskom cares about its customers					
25.	Eskom is basically the same as competing brands					

APPENDIX 6: SECTION C OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PEP

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of a retailer, the first brand that comes to mind is Pep					
2.	Pep is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	Pep is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the Pep brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the Pep brand					
6.	The next time I use a retailer, I intend to use Pep					
7.	I was delighted with Pep during my last use experience					
8.	Pep is the only retailer brand I use					
9.	I would recommend Pep to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for Pep					
11.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Pep has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Pep has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Pep is the best					

14.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Pep is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Pep is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, Pep is the leading brand					
17.	Pep provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use Pep over competitors					
19.	Pep has a personality					
20.	Pep is interesting					
21.	I would trust Pep					
22.	Pep is a good corporate citizen					
23.	Pep is socially responsible					
24.	Pep cares about its customers					
25.	Pep is basically the same as competing brands					

APPENDIX 7: SECTION C OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BMW

Section C

Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in the columns provided.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	When I think of a car, the first brand that comes to mind is BMW					
2.	BMW is a brand I am very familiar with					
3.	BMW is a very popular brand					
4.	I know what the BMW brand stands for					
5.	I have an opinion about the BMW brand					
6.	The next time I buy a car, I intend to use BMW					
7.	I was delighted with BMW during my last use experience					
8.	BMW is the only car brand I use					
9.	I would recommend BMW to others					
10.	I am willing to pay a premium for BMW					
11.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, BMW has high quality service					
12.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, BMW has consistent quality service					
13.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, BMW is the best					

14.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, BMW is growing in popularity					
15.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, BMW is innovative					
16.	In comparison to alternative supplier brands, BMW is the leading brand					
17.	BMW provides good value for money					
18.	There are reasons to use BMW over competitors					
19.	BMW has a personality					
20.	BMW is interesting					
21.	I would trust BMW					
22.	BMW is a good corporate citizen					
23.	BMW is socially responsible					
24.	BMW cares about its customers					
25.	BMW is basically the same as competing brands					