Gordon Institute
of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Exploring the impact of brand experience on satisfaction and loyalty in churches and religious organisations in Johannesburg.

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Student #: 15023771

A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

9 November 2015

ABSTRACT

To address declining membership, counter switching behaviours and heighten potential exit barriers, brand experience is considered as mediator of loyalty and satisfaction amongst churches in Johannesburg, South Africa and with the aim of influencing attachment decisions. Brand experience is considered to consist of five dimensions, encompassing a behavioural, emotional, intellectual, relational and sensory component.

The purpose of the research was to consider whether brand experience as mediator of satisfaction and loyalty is observed in the religious and church industry and whether it differs amongst specific churches. It also aimed to determine whether age, duration of membership, level of education or membership status is a mediating factor of these constructs.

By undertaking a quantitative explanatory study, 12 churches participated in obtaining 675 valid responses by means of an electronic survey to achieve the research objectives. Using the Brand Experience Scale, as developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) and enhanced to include a relational dimension as proposed by Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard (2013), 15 statements considered the five dimensions of brand experience, and ten statements evaluated loyalty and satisfaction perceptions.

It was found that brand experience as mediator of loyalty and satisfaction is observed within the religious industry and that it differs amongst churches. Age and membership status were shown to influence the constructs, whereas duration of membership or level of education was not confirmed.

The findings offer some recommendations for stakeholders that include church leadership, marketing practitioners, youth workers, arts practitioners, and teachers and educators to enhance the brand experiences of their offerings. Suggestions for future research are also set out.

KEYWORDS

Brand experience, Loyalty, Satisfaction, Brand attachment, Membership, Church marketing, Religious marketing

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 the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Ettienne Booysen

9 November 2015

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"It takes a village to raise a child" ~ African proverb

It takes a community of people to achieve or contribute anything of significance to society. This study is none the less so. It is with sincerest gratitude that the contributions of the following are highlighted.

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For their support, advice, assistance and offering access to their respective networks, I want to express my appreciation to: Sid and Ria Booysen, Michellé Cronjé, Noeline van Schalkwyk, Irene Botha, Vanessa Maritz, Johan Beukes, Stephan Joubert, Zander van der Westhuizen, and Janine and Gerry Couchman. A special note of thanks to Jean-Pierre Labuschagne from JPL Consulting for assistance with statistics, and Irene Botha from Graphiculture for editing and proofreading.

I would further like to recognise the GIBS-team that facilitated the learning and studies over the past two years, as well as the encouragement of my fellow 2014/15 Blue Group students.

A topic such as this encourages a critical and objective point of view towards a significant and age-old institution – the church. As such, my hope is that this study would contribute to the body of knowledge that shapes and informs this organisation, and through it – bring honour to its Creator.

DEDICATION

To Sid and Ria Booysen, who experienced first.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Declining church attendance and church switching behaviour, within the context of the experience economy, are the key considerations that drive this study, suggesting brand experience as a mediator of brand satisfaction, loyalty and attachment. This chapter expands on this problem, with the objective of determining the relationship between brand experience as a precursor to satisfaction and loyalty constructs in the religious arena, as well as exploring the applicability of the Brand Experience Scale (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen et al., 2013) as a tool to craft religious brand experiences. Past research, as well as the need for the current study, is highlighted, particularly as it pertains to the religious and South African application. Furthermore, the business and industry need for the study, as brand experience principles inform brand experience design in the religious sector, is investigated and discussed. A brief definition and introduction to brand experience is included, before leading into the next chapter that would examine existing literature.

1.1 Background to the research problem

The religious landscape, particularly as it pertains to the Christian church, follows a declining trajectory. Membership, attendance and participation levels in religious institutions are declining, not only internationally (Granger, Lu, Conduit, Veale, & Habel, 2014), but are evident in the South African context as well (Schoeman, 2014). This decline has been ascribed to a lack of interest from younger generations; increased opportunities for leisure associated with economic growth; perceived moral and ethical failures in faith-based organisations; a disillusionment with the value that is being provided (Granger et al., 2014); migratory and church switching tendencies (Schoeman, 2014); increased secularisation; less openness to the idea of church, churchgoing no longer being mainstream; or changing perceptions around church involvement (Barna Group, 2014c).

The future sustainability of a church is dependent on the churchgoer's contribution of funds, voluntary time and service; along with the application and integration of doctrine, values and beliefs (advocacy) into their lives (McAlexander, Leavenworth Dufault, Martin, & Schouten, 2014; Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). The lack of attendees and members makes the raising of

financial or material resources difficult, with the additional challenge of survival in the midst of rising costs (Abreu, 2006). Further contributing to this problem, is the increasing number of church leaders and pastors leaving the ministry, because they feel that their theological education was irrelevant or inadequate for the operational and functional role that society and the church required of them (Dreyer, 2015).

A 2015-study by the Pew Research Centre, considers the developmental prospects of religion by 2050 (Grim, 2015). Accordingly, it is suggested that Christianity would follow the same growth rate as the overall global population rate, with its largest share expected to be the sub-Saharan African region – representing about 40% of that religious grouping. Although Christians would remain the largest religious grouping, it is expected that Islam will nearly equal that by 2050. The religiously unaffiliated population are declining much faster than the global population growth rate. Hinduism is expected to maintain its current share of the world's population, whereas the growth of Buddhism and Judaism are slowing.

However, for the purposes of this study, only Christianity and religious organisations pertaining to the Christian faith are examined.

Approximately 81,2% of the South African population professes to be Christian (Pew Research Centre, 2012b). With a median age of 19, above the regional median age (18), the sub-Saharan area has the youngest Christian demographic in the world (Pew Research Centre, 2012a). However, in South Africa religiosity has declined from 83% (2005) to 64% (2012) (WIN/Gallup International, 2012), claiming that although still professing the faith, it does not necessarily involve religious practice.

The criteria for selection of faith are deeply personal, and similarly the choice of denomination or church selected to participate in. A plethora of factors influence such a decision ranging from commitment requirements, architecture, small group infrastructure, denominational affiliation, music choice, media application, and doctrinal content (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). The strictness of doctrine, cultural identity factors, demographic growth, religious ideologies, networks (denominations), and the recruitment activity of parishioners are also considered (Thomas & Olson, 2010). The role of function and form as precursor to such

decision has increased, while the role of doctrine has decreased (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012).

This suggests a greater emphasis on pull strategies rather than push strategies to increase membership – which implies the adoption of secularisation practices and the customisation of the spiritual journey, in contrast to blind adherence to doctrine and dogma. These suggest a provider of services that responds to the needs of people for social, moral, spiritual and private experiences (Gauthier & Martikainen, 2013). Push strategies entail tactics that take the product or service to the customer – suggesting a supply initiative and applicable to low brand loyalty categories. Pull strategies employ tactics that bring the customer towards the product or service – suggesting the influencing of demand – and are considered to be appropriate to products or services that enjoy higher brand loyalty (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

In South Africa, religious branding to a large extent is perceived to be denominational in nature. Considering metrics from the 2011 Census (Statistics South Africa, 2012), populations by religious groups with the highest amount of members were:

- Zion Christian Church – 4 948 455
- Roman Catholic Church – 3 151 791
- Dutch Reformed Church – 3 005 698
- Methodist Churches of South Africa – 2 925 556

Within these denominations, congregations are positioned on a continuum of conservative to progressive or liberal, based on their application of doctrine.

The rise of the megachurch, a church with more than 2 000 members, has introduced an alternative to mainstream and denominational congregations and has adopted numerous organisational practices, particularly those drawn from marketing, in an aim to create and build a brand of the service offering and experience it presents (Einstein, 2007; Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). Independent churches who have utilised above-the-line marketing strategies – as indicator of the adoption of business marketing practices – in the Johannesburg area, include Rhema Bible Church, Little Falls Christian Church, Gracepoint Methodist, Mosaïek, Rivers Church, Woord en Lewe and Alberton LewenSentrum.

A recent study has shown that “beliefs about God waver when brands take centre stage in individuals’ minds” (Cutright, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Shachar, 2014, p.183), particularly when the brand plays an instrumental role in self-expression (as opposed to utility) – a need that religion also satisfies (McAlexander et al., 2014). But, what if the beliefs about God, as exhibited by church affiliation or religiosity, could be considered to be a brand in itself? Abreu (2006) accordingly suggests that a brand, in the religious context, is comprised of elements such as message, ministers, volunteers, venue, programmes and activities.

However, research into the religious arena is complicated by the distressing response of consumers who perceive that certain marketing tactics are inappropriate for industries such as religious organisations (McGraw, Schwartz, & Tetlock, 2012).

However, alternatives from other fields that could impact satisfaction or loyalty behaviour should be considered to inform existing attraction and retention strategies of religious organisations.

With the advent and development of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) the potential value of brand experiences as currency and contributor to brand equity through brand satisfaction and brand loyalty constructs (Brakus et al., 2009), as well as to brand attachment (Japutra, Ekinci, & Simkin, 2014), seem salient. The manipulation of the dimensions that are instrumental to the crafting of such a brand experience would be beneficial to the marketer in whichever context or industry they might operate.

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) explain that whenever consumers seek out products or services, shop for them, receive assistance and consume them (that is, all touchpoints), a brand experience occurs; as well as when they are exposed to communications or advertising related to them. Therefore, a brand experience is a “subjective, internal consumer response (sensation, feeling, cognition) and behavioural response evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications and environments” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). They propose that brand experiences comprise four dimensions (sensory, cognitive/intellectual, behavioural and affective/emotional) and they developed a Brand Experience Scale measuring such through a 12-item questionnaire. Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard (2013) have argued for the

elaboration of the Brand Experience Scale to incorporate a relational/social dimension and suggested that it is imperative for application in a services arena. The services arena would include religious or faith-based organisations such as churches – as service entities endeavour to apply their resources for the benefit of others (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Furthermore, the importance of branding initiatives for non-profit organisations (such as churches) plays an instrumental role in increasing competence perceptions about the quality of such services (Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010).

Therefore, this study proposes that brand experience could be a significant 'pull-strategy' that could be employed by the church marketer to mediate loyalty and satisfaction in competing for the 'share of heart, clock and wallet' of the religious consumer, and would accordingly impact membership and attachment decisions.

1.2 Past research conducted

The Brand Experience Scale of Brakus et al. (2009) has informed and encouraged application in numerous studies and industries, including: fashion (Cho, Fiore, & Russell, 2015; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011); automotive and consumer electronics (Iglesias et al., 2011; Machado, Cant, & Seaborne, 2014; Tynan, McKechnie, & Hartley, 2014); telecommunication services (Nysveen et al., 2013); fast-moving consumer goods (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010; Zarantonello, Jedidi, & Schmitt, 2013); events (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013); healthcare (Kemp, Jillapalli, & Becerra, 2014); hotels and tourism (Manthiou, Kang, Sumarjan, & Tang, 2015); cosmetics (Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Hartmann, Diehl, & Terlutter, 2011); video games (Kwak, Clavio, Eagleman, & Kim, 2010) sporting events (Wong & Tang, 2015); and financial services (Petruzzellis, Romanazzi, & Tassiello, 2011).

The author has explored the studies citing the Brand Experience Scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009). Of the articles citing the work in question, the only work that seemed to be relevant to the religious arena referred to an investigation of the brand value of Halal (Wilson & Liu, 2010) and the value of meaningful advertising within a church context (Van Waart, Mulder, & De Hoochweg, 2009).

Within the South African arena, the most notable applications of the work by Brakus et al. (2009) was an intercept study in Vanderbijlpark aimed towards

investigating the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment, brand trust and brand satisfaction (Chinomona, 2013), and the evaluation of restaurant experience in Gauteng (Van der Walt, Greyling, & Kotzé, 2014).

1.3 Research need

As far as the author could ascertain, the application of the brand experience literature and scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009) has not been explored in the religious context, as it relates to the branding of churches. Due to the exploratory nature of the application of this scale within an industry it has not been investigated before, the scope of this study would be narrowed to churches situated in Johannesburg, South Africa.

A key offering shaping the brand of a church is entrenched in its weekly services. Such communal gatherings comprise numerous elements aimed towards adding spiritual value to both the individual and his or her community (Engelland, 2014; Granger et al., 2014). These elements include a sermon or message, arts like music or media, communication and marketing elements, as well as social benefit endeavours. The sum of the aforementioned contributes to the experiential nature of the industry in which churches function (Abreu, 2006). Collective forms of worship is considered to be the most powerful and transformative for it contributes to the creation of unity between individuals and the community and its role in inspiring social action initiatives (Culliford, 2010).

The secularisation (Cutright et al., 2014) and marketisation (McAlexander et al., 2014) trends that are influencing the religious market (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012) make the application of marketing theory to this sector (Kotler & Levy, 1969) of increasing importance for its future sustainability.

1.4 The research problem and this research study

The problem is that church memberships are declining, and this study aims to explore whether brand experiences, in an experience economy, can play a role to mediate loyalty, satisfaction and resultantly increase brand attachment towards such organisations.

This study investigated whether the brand experience dimensions proposed by the Brand Experience Scale (sensory, affective/emotional, behavioural and intellectual/cognitive) are relevant to religious institutions, whether the relational

component as suggested by Nysveen et al. (2013) is of significance to churches as an example of a service industry (Williams & Aitken, 2011), and whether such brand experience in a religious context, is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction and loyalty – and by implication, mediates brand attachment.

By making use of the Brand Experience Scale and determining its applicability to religious institutions in Johannesburg, the relevance of the brand experience construct to this industry could be identified, and possibly manipulated, to achieve increased customer loyalty, satisfaction and attachment. If individual churches could influence the dimensions of brand experience (emotions, senses, behaviour, intellect and relationships), it would mediate the loyalty and satisfaction that the religious consumer has towards the religious brand, which could be instrumental in brand attachment, as exhibited by church membership.

This study aims to affirm the application of the Brand Experience Scale to this industry, and to offer a meaningful contribution to the utilisation of brand experience literature and related principles to be incorporated into church operations, as a measure to turn the tide of declining church attendance. Furthermore, that such findings could offer a contribution to brand experience literature in the South African context.

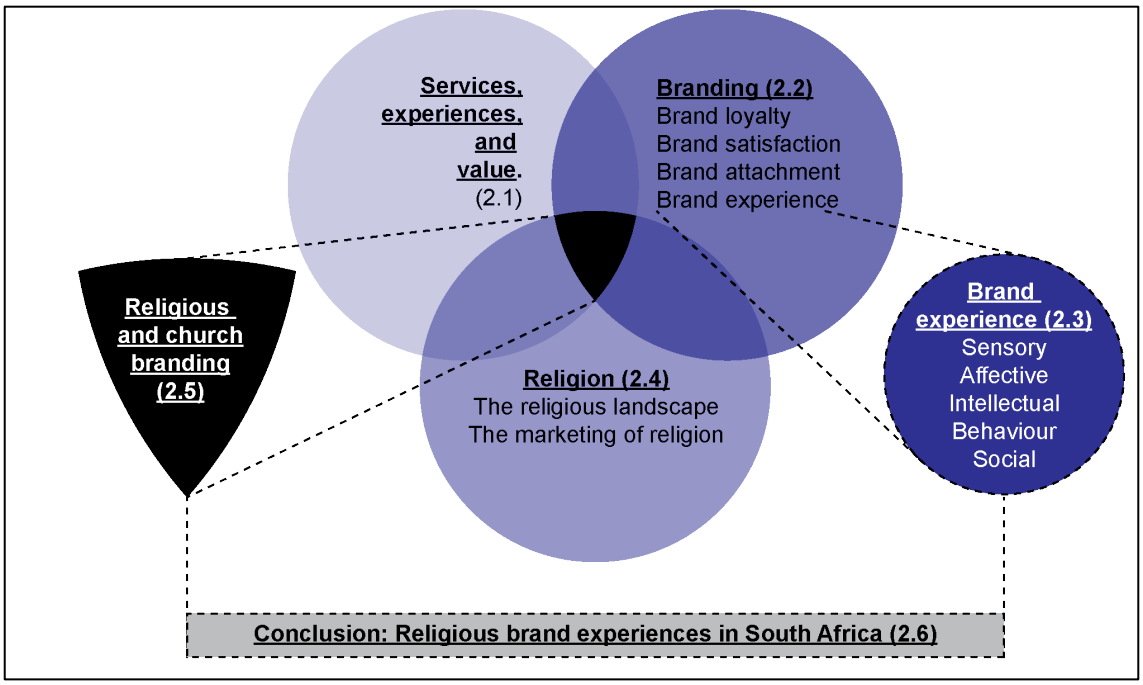
Therefore this research project asks: Could declining church membership be mediated by enhanced brand experience as precursor to satisfaction, loyalty and by implication attachment measures?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the publication of the seminal work by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) where the recognition of the experiential aspects of consumption were argued for, as well as the introduction of the concept, experience economy, by Pine and Gilmore (1998), the brand experience construct has risen in prominence, and has been explored in numerous industries, as discussed before (Section 1.2). As such, it can be argued that the construct would also be observable in one of the oldest of institutions, the religious organisation – such as a church or congregation.

The literature review set out in this chapter and graphically illustrated in Figure 1, discusses the construct of value within the services context, and how it is informed by the experience variable. Thereafter, the arena of branding is discussed, with particular emphasis upon variables such as brand equity, satisfaction, loyalty and attachment. This introduces a discussion of brand experience and its dimensions. Religion, church organisations and the landscape within which they operate are investigated in the section following. The integration of branding and religion would complete the review of existing theory and literature, with a particular emphasis on the South African arena.

Figure 1: Overview of the Literature Review



Therefore, in order to apply the brand experience literature to the religious environment, an understanding of some branding constructs is required, including brand, brand

experience and its impact on the concepts of satisfaction, attachment and loyalty. The creation of value in the services arena is investigated, and conclusions are drawn as to the applicability of brand and brand experience literature to religion and the religious landscape.

2.1 Services, experience and value

This section explores the service construct, how it relates to an experience environment and where value is centred in this arena.

2.1.1 A question of service

Vargo and Lusch (2008, p.28) describe services as "the application of one's resources for the benefit of another entity". Services are differentiated from goods by factors such as heterogeneity (related to the challenge of standardisation), inseparability (being produced and consumed at the same time), and perishability (unable to be stored), increased client-based relationships and customer contact (Nysveen et al., 2013). Additionally, the factor of tangibility of services when referring to the manufactured product, differs from goods, in that it involves people, it is more variable in nature and it extends over time (Schmitt, Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2015). Its promise of future satisfaction is a result of distinctiveness, performance, message consistency and affective appeal to consumers with the additional purchasing risk of possessing fewer cues to be evaluated by consumers.

This approach is juxtaposed to the goods-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), where value is manufactured for the point of exchange ('value-in-exchange'). Service-dominant logic (Williams & Aitken, 2011) proposes a focus on 'value-in-use' emphasising the role of the service provider. Adopting an even stronger customer-dominant approach, 'value-in-context' or 'value-in-experience' is suggested where the customer is afforded an even greater and active role.

Klaus and Maklan (2012, p.9) argue that "service experience is the new construct for service quality", and encompasses service encounters that precede or follow the experiences, addresses the emotional and functional dimensions of quality, as well as the social context of the consumer. As such it is formed across multiple channels.

The importance of brands within the services context is observed by the trust it builds between the consumer and the intangible deliverables of the organisation (Kemp et al., 2014). Resultantly branding is imperative for making service quality comparative, and highlights the crucial role that employees play to define trust and imbue meaning into the brand, endeavouring to improve the quality of the relationship as well as balancing interpersonal complexity (Nysveen et al., 2013). Therefore, customer-centric behaviour has as its aim the prioritising of the consumer's interest.

The perception that services are intangible, inseparable, heterogeneous and perishable applies to the context of a church and its services and, as such, the environment in which it takes place, serves as indicator of its quality as it pertains to image, purpose and nature (Van der Merwe, Grobler, Strasheim, & Orton, 2013).

The primacy of consumer value is a key differentiator of a megachurch and its aim of spiritually satisfying the needs of the consumer (Kinder, 2010). As mentioned before, megachurches are considered to be churches with a membership that exceeds 2 000 in number (Einstein, 2007). Six of the 12 churches considered in this study could therefore be described as megachurches. There is a lot of similarity between megachurches and the smaller congregations; differences observed relates to a larger contingent of younger people and singles, being wealthier and having higher levels of education represented in the congregation (Thumma & Travis, 2007). However, research suggests that church experiences do not differ based on the size of the church attended (Barna Group, 2012).

2.1.2 An understanding of value

The customer service experience could therefore be either a critical event that was encountered, or an imaginary one consolidating the experiential and perceptional aspects of value (Tynan et al., 2014). This agrees with the foundational premises of Vargo and Lusch (2008) highlighting the role of the customer as co-creator of value, the importance of being customer-oriented and relational, and that the beneficiary determines its value. Therefore, competitive advantage lies within the consumer and the addressing of their needs in pursuit of satisfaction (Baron & Harris, 2010), through "customer satisfaction engineering" as termed by Kotler and Levy (1969).

This suggests that one brand could be selected instead of another, based on the experiential benefits the consumer envisages it offers (Qader & Omar, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010).

The co-creation of value, where the consumer plays an active role in shaping his desirable outcome, can be supported by emotion-supporting encounters, cognition-supporting encounters and action-supporting encounters (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009). As such, these are suggestive of three of the dimensions – emotional, intellectual and behavioural – highlighted in this study, thus not including relational and sensory dimensions.

2.1.3 Defining experience

Experience could be defined as the "emotions provoked, sensations felt, knowledge gained and skills acquired through active involvement with the firm pre-, during and post-consumption" (Rageh Ismail, Melewar, Lim, & Woodside, 2011, p.208). Rageh Ismael et al. (2011) further highlights characteristics of experiences as being memorable, unique and extraordinary, sensorially engaging, customer-centric, subjective and emotionally evoking. Experiences can therefore be created by the consumer or developed by the organisation. However, it cannot easily be reproduced (Manthiou et al., 2015). These experiences can be positioned as being intense and deeply meaningful, or intentionally basic and elementary depending on the need or values of the consumer (Machado et al., 2014).

The 'value-in-experience' concept introduced earlier indicates that value, as it exists in the consumer's domain, is a function of experiences – through co-production, personalisation and engagement (Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014).

Consumer value entails an interactive relativistic preference experience determined by its position on a continuum of extrinsic/intrinsic, active/reactive, self-oriented/other-oriented, functional/instrumental, experiential/hedonic, symbolic/expressive and cost/sacrifice factors (Tynan et al., 2014), upon which religious organisational and denominational streams could also be positioned.

Experiences can be considered within four realms, as proposed by Pine and Gilmore (2011) and are based upon consumer participation and immersion/absorption dimensions. Figure 2 indicates these realms as entertainment, educational, aesthetic and escapist. As such, each realm offers an alternative as it relates to engagement and participation. Entertainment experiences (passive absorption) suggest activities like watching television or listening to music. Educational experiences (active absorption) represent activities such as visiting a hands-on exhibit at a museum or attending a class or lecture. Escapist experiences (active immersion) can be observed in activities such as skiing, motorsports or acting in a play. Finally, examples of aesthetic experience (passive immersion) are attending a live concert, a show or an art gallery. As such, from an experience design perspective, the considerations relating to entertainment experiences are factors that would increase fun and enjoyment dimensions. In the educational realm, information, knowledge and skills transfer are key drivers. To increase the escapist experience, immersion and active participation in crafting the experience are encouraged. As it relates to the aesthetic realm, an intentional effort is made to make the environment more welcoming, inviting and comfortable. If all four these experiences are represented, a significant synergistic effect can be observed, of which the most prominent example would be a theme park.

Churches have the potential to be positioned within a variety of these realms, based upon its service and worship gathering experience. That is, interactive, highly illustrative and engaging sermons can be indicative of an educational experience; whereas a strong music, arts and sensorial gathering could be more suggestive of an entertainment experience; or during times of participation, such as worship, an escapist experience. The architecture and design, such as stained glass windows or beautiful pieces of art, would encourage an aesthetic experience.

Therefore, idiosyncratic and meaning-laden experiences, such as those observed within a religious context, can impact value by either contributing to its formation, failing to create it or destroying it. Such value-creating interventions should have the aim of securing the position of the organisation and its brand within the mind of the customer and their consumptive behaviours – ensuring brand differentiation and consumer loyalty. In sum, it could be considered that

the fulfilment of the consumer's needs is akin to improving their quality of life (Baron & Harris, 2010; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010).

Pine and Gilmore (2011, location 542) highlight the key descriptors of economic growth outcomes as "commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences are memorable". Their argument is illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 3. They argue that economic value gets created as offerings progress from being undifferentiated commodities to differentiated and customised experiences targeted towards the need of the customer. Their model shows that there seems to be a degeneration of value as well in a reverse direction: as services become more commoditised they gain the characteristics of goods, and eventually everyday commodities. As such, the most economic value can be observed in staged, memorable, personalised experiences, leaving lingering sensations in the mind of the guest.

Figure 2: The experience realms (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

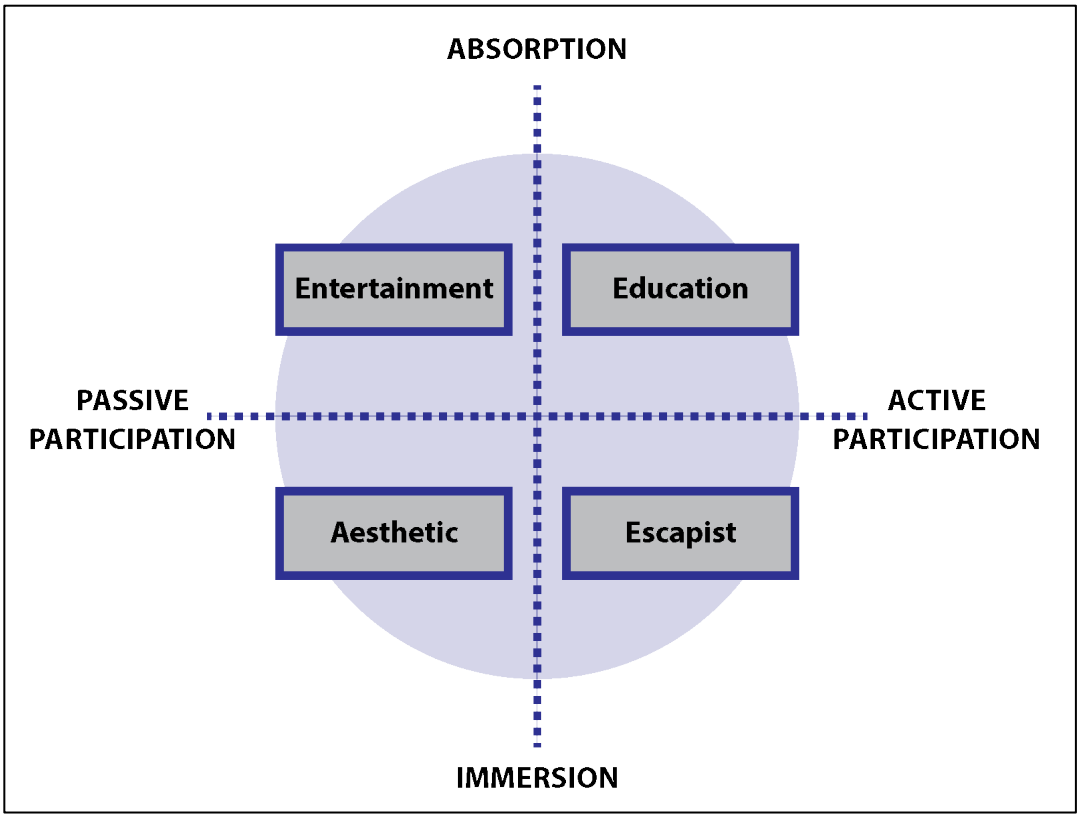
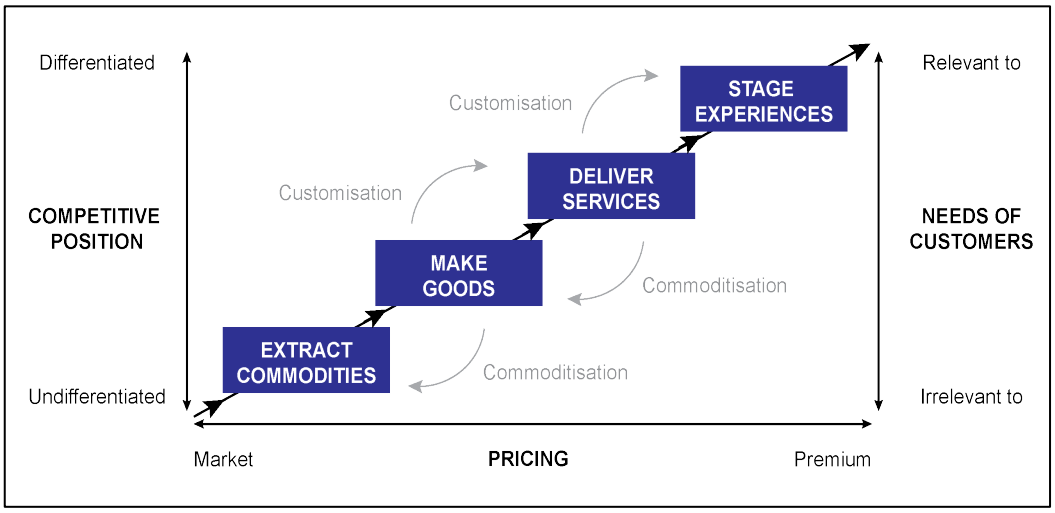


Table 1: Economic distinctions (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p.98)

Economic offering	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences
Economy	Agrarian	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economic function	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage
Nature of offering	Fungible	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable
Key attribute	Natural	Standardised	Customised	Personal
Method of supply	Stored in bulk	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over a duration
Seller	Trader	Manufacturer	Provider	Stager
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Factors of demand	Characteristics	Features	Benefits	Sensations

Figure 3: Progression of Value (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)



Overexposure to traditional marketing and media channels encourages the use of new and innovate ways to garner consumer attention. Along with the fierce competition that globalisation and market saturation brings, the inter-changeability of functional product benefits and society's increasing hedonistic lifestyles, make the differentiation that experiential marketing offers, imperative (Walter, Cleff, & Chu, 2013).

As such, experiential marketing mandates the involvement of the consumer by means of participation, and extends beyond the consumer's identified needs or wants (Machado et al., 2014). Japutra et al. (2014, p.249) describes involvement as "a state of mental readiness for a consumption object, decision

or action", and is affected by behaviours, feelings and the attainment of meaning and significance.

Zarantonello (2013) showed that persuasion in developed markets tends to be driven by experiential communication strategies, whereas emerging markets lean more toward functional communication strategies. This suggests that the South African context might be exposed to both these strategies, as affluent developed segments of society would be more receptive of experiential tactics, whereas resource-challenged segments would value tactics that highlight functional benefits.

In the following section, branding literature is reviewed, within the context of services and experiences.

2.2 Branding

Brands could be conceptualised as the sum of all perceptions and feelings of consumers associated with an entity name relating to a product or service, and includes its identity, as exhibited by packaging or logos, quality perceptions, performance, trust, as well as the emotions and values it represents (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). It is a mark of distinction that not only differentiates it from another, but can also serve a function of representation and ownership (Berthon, Pitt, Chakrabarti, & Berthon, 2011).

Apart from its differentiating characteristics, which could be functional, rational, tangible, symbolic, emotional or intangible (Kotler & Keller, 2012), they are "signifiers that transfer meaning … *and* may act as an informational cue, personal identity signal or cultural symbol" (Schmitt, 2012, p. 12). Brands represent a promise to consumers that the organisation will deliver, and it entails the building of trust, sameness and consistency that assist in managing consumers' perceptions (Hamzah, Alwi, & Othman, 2014; Iglesias et al., 2011; Kemp et al., 2014). It therefore imbues a product with an identity that exceeds its physical attributes or services (Einstein, 2011).

Brands are viewed as a multidimensional construct (legal instrument; logo; company; shorthand; risk reducer; identity system; image in consumers' minds; value system; personality; relationship; adding value; and evolving entity) that "matches a firm's functional and emotional values with the performance and

psychosocial needs of consumers" (De Chernatony & Riley, 1998, p.438). It not only serves a role of expression of intention for the creator or owner (firm), but also as interpretation of meaning for the consumer or audience (Berthon et al., 2011). This brand identity therefore relates to both the internal vision of the organisation, as well as the external perceptions of the consumer (Da Silveira, Lages, & Simões, 2013).

Therefore, on a personal and individualised level, brands play a role in "the constructing and expressing of the self, due to the distinctive images and personalities that they possess" (Cutright et al., 2014, p. 2210). The strategic application, association or utilisation of brands affords the consumer the opportunity to purposely represent their self-concept to others (Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014). As a consequence, they are "inherently part of our lives, and embracing them can create pleasurable and meaningful moments of happiness" (Schmitt et al., 2015, p.167).

Successful brands create brand equity, defined as the increased value premium of a product or service imbued with a recognisable brand, as opposed to a generic version (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Torres & Tribó, 2011). Increased brand equity facilitates the opportunity for successful brand extensions, resilience against competitors' promotional strategies, as well as heightening barriers for new competitive entrants into the market (Qader & Omar, 2013).

As such, the brand can effect persuasion and influence the consumption decision in a functional manner by means of features and benefits, or in an experiential manner evoking sensations, emotions and imaginations (Zarantonello et al., 2013). It transforms a commodity into a readily remembered named product with which the consumer has particular associations (Einstein, 2011).

Therefore, apart from the material dimensions brands may contain, they are instrumental in creating experiences for the consumer. Such experiences encourage the consumer to develop meaningful and emotional attachment to the brands, along with the enabling of expression of the consumer's personality (Schmitt et al., 2015). This further suggests that brand value imbued by the product or service, as well as the brand value imbued by the organisation (corporate brand value) are considered in consumer decisions, hence reflecting an influence of the organisation's reputation (Hamzah et al., 2014). Corporate

reputation refers to an evaluative judgment about a firm or organisation that is shared by multiple role-players or constituencies (Helm, 2011).

It could, therefore, be argued that the brand serves as an engagement mechanism with the aim of establishing a long-term consumer-brand relationship, as a key step in establishing brand equity (Kotler & Keller, 2012). This relationship has as main input brand experience, and exhibits brand loyalty as key output (Sahin, Zehir, & Kitapçi, 2011).

Within the context of this study, two measures used to evaluate the value entrenched within the brand, are the past-directed measure of satisfaction, and the future-directed measure of loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Sahin et al., 2011). Additionally, brand attachment as an outcome of brand experience (Japutra et al., 2014), is also considered and is briefly discussed:

2.2.1 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is a future-directed construct that relates to a "deeply-held commitment to rebuy or re-patronise a preferred product *or service* consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same-brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to switching behaviour" (Nysveen et al., 2013, p.410, italics added). Therefore, from a marketisation point of view, brand loyalty creates barriers to entry for competitors, offers predictability as well as demand security to the firm (Kotler & Keller, 2012), and is based on evaluative judgement (Japutra et al., 2014). It is suggestive of concepts of allegiance, preference and commitment (Sahin et al., 2011).

In Keller's (1993) consumer-based brand equity model, he elaborates on the effects of brand knowledge, brand awareness and brand image on brand equity – which occur through the development of consumer or brand loyalty, and is observed by the payment of a price premium or repurchase action (Cho et al., 2015).

Loyalty is deteriorated by increasingly undifferentiated offerings, low switching costs (So, Danaher, & Gupta, 2015), and low barriers of entry to newcomers. This deterioration is observed in the church context, as switching costs between churches are low, and the relative ease to start a church and thus enter the

market. It could further be argued that differentiation between churches is predominantly denominational in nature.

Iglesias et al. (2011) elaborate that situational exigencies like convenience and price do not drive true brand loyalty, because loyalty suggests that a resistance to switching is created. Resultantly, this has a positive effect on market share and justifies a premium for the increased value perception related to the product.

Brand advocacy could also be a positive consequence of brand loyalty (Kemp et al., 2014) whereby the consumer offers favourable communication about or on behalf of the brand. Lowenstein (2011, p.112) defines brand advocates as consumers who "select a single supplier from among all those they might consider, giving that supplier the highest share of spend possible and informally (without any form of compensation) telling others about how positive the relationship is and how much value and benefit they derive from it". As such, it could be argued that brand experience can mediate brand loyalty to achieve brand advocacy or brand evangelism – to such an extent, that the greater the brand experience, the higher the level of loyalty displayed (Machado et al., 2014). As communication channel, brand advocacy is considered to be less biased and trust worthier, thus alleviating purchase anxiety (Kemp et al., 2014). This confirms the attitudinal and behavioural components exhibited in brand loyalty (Cho et al., 2015).

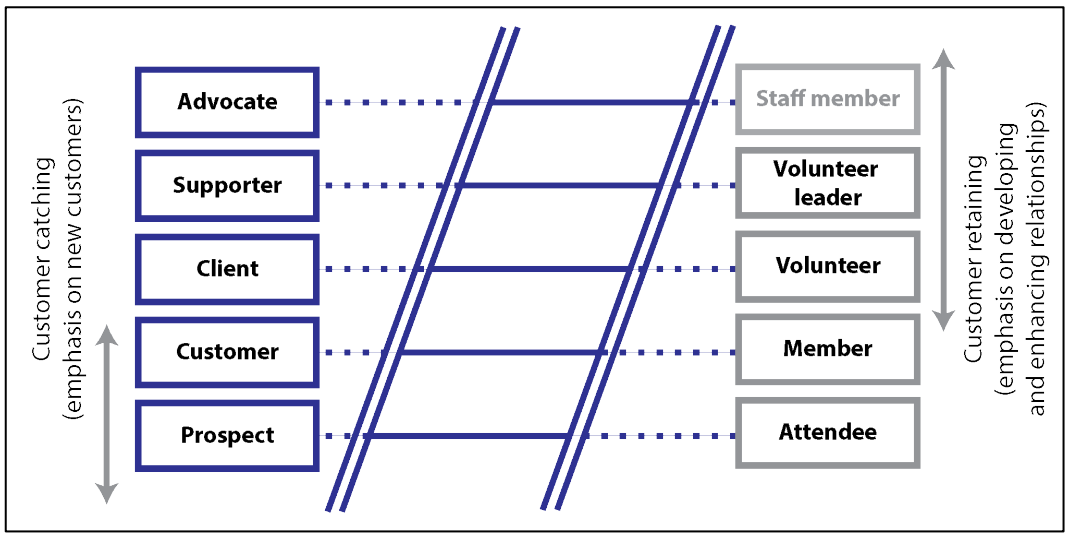
Marketing literature suggests the use of a loyalty ladder to classify consumers based on their level of loyalty and engagement (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 2013). Based on Christopher et al.'s work, Hanley (2009) highlights the path as moving from prospect to customer, to client, to supporter and finally advocates for organisation's products or services; and is graphically illustrated in Figure 4. Numerous iterations of such a ladder exist, adding or subtracting from the existing categories proposed (Banks & Daus, 2002; Narayandas, 2005; Raphel & Raphel, 1995).

Essentially these loyalty ladders suggest a marketing emphasis on gaining new customers in the initial stages, and an increased emphasis on developing and enhancing the relationships established with customers in the later stages. Also illustrated in Figure 4, its adaptation to a church context is shown. In this

context the loyalty progression could be expressed as migrating from attendee to accepting membership. Getting involved and volunteering of talents follows and grows to eventually taking on a leadership role as volunteer, where the responsibility for overseeing other volunteers is endowed. Many times, particularly in megachurches, such volunteer leader roles become indispensable to the organisation, and evolve into a paid staff member role.

Maddox (2012) states that within a church context, a worship experience emphasises comfort and familiarity that would appeal to the attendee. However, to achieve full membership, a ritual moment occurs which turns consumers into contributors and usually takes place as an indicator of commitment. They are then encouraged to engage in more challenging environments where they interact face-to-face with others and serve the needs of both the community and the church; and are then invited into deeper commitment towards the faith community and encouraged to share the responsibility of attracting new members. This affirms a model that would suggest a migration from attendee, to member, to volunteer, to volunteer leader, as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The relationship marketing ladder of customer loyalty (Christopher et al., 2013, as amended)



However, particularly in megachurches, it is observed that members exhibit multiple loyalties, participating in activities of other churches or religious initiatives where they are not considered to be members, as well; which results in a decline in active participation at the church where the person is considered to be a member at (Thumma & Travis, 2007).

Although brand attachment is discussed in a next section of this chapter (Section 2.2.3), it is important to indicate that brand loyalty and brand attachment are similar concepts, albeit that brand loyalty disregards affection, passion and self-connection (Japutra et al., 2014). Furthermore, loyalty suggests an attitudinal and behavioural dimension, as opposed to brand attachment or commitment, which is distinguished by an affective and cognitive dimension – and is exhibited by consumers who are less likely to switch brands (Sung & Choi, 2010).

2.2.2 Brand satisfaction

Brand satisfaction is a past-directed construct that relates to "a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under- or over-fulfilment" (Sung & Choi, 2010, p.1054) and, as such, occurs at a post-purchasing point (Japutra et al., 2014).

Satisfaction is correlated to the extent that the experience or relationship is pleasing or gratifying when compared to expectations, and results in a commitment towards the organisation or brand (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Torres & Tribó, 2011). In other words, it reflects a positive affective state as a result of a fulfilment of a desire (Bruhn, Schoenmüller, Schäfer, & Heinrich, 2012) and, as such, touches on the construct of customer delight, which is considered to be the affective dimension of satisfaction (Sahin et al., 2011).

Benefits of brand satisfaction include improved loyalty, decreased sensitivity to price fluctuations, increased engagement with positive word-of-mouth behaviours, lower volatility and risk – as this translate into cash flows and resultantly grow customer value. It also offers the added benefit of improving the bargaining power of the firm, as it negotiates with other stakeholders to lower costs, improve financial results or penetrate new markets. As such it assists in gaining loyalty, increases the willingness to pay a price premium and influences customer lifetime value (Torres & Tribó, 2011).

However, a pursuit of customer satisfaction could deteriorate shareholder value, if strategies aimed towards meeting the needs of the customer are prioritised above the outcomes required by other stakeholders (Torres & Tribó, 2011).

Within a church context, over-emphasised tactics aimed towards gaining new members could detract from energy deployed to retain existing church members and serving their needs.

A stakeholder worth mentioning is the employees or staff members of the organisation. Staff members play an important role in building the internal brand and influencing its corporate reputation, especially in interacting with customers. Employees, as an integral touchpoint with the consumer, particularly in service organisations, play an instrumental role to define trust and imbue meaning to a brand (Nysveen et al., 2013). Additionally, public perceptions of the employer, especially if reputable, can improve an employee's self-esteem and thereby an incentive to protect the organisation's good name is achieved. As such a good reputation not only plays a role in attracting employees, but also in retaining them. This supports the argument that satisfied employees create satisfied customers (Helm, 2011). It has been indicated that the brand of an organisation also informs the selection decision of the prospective employee, even more than the effects of salary, advancement opportunities or location (Rampl, 2014).

Consumption-related fulfilment could be experiential or materialistic in nature and offers both pleasurable and meaningful outcomes (Schmitt et al., 2015). It could also be described as an "affective summary response" (Iglesias et al., 2011, p.572) in relation to the organisation and its brand.

It has also been shown that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on brand equity (Torres & Tribó, 2011), and serves as an important antecedent to commitment and attachment to a brand (Sung & Choi, 2010).

In summary, satisfaction is an essential component and antecedent of loyalty, albeit not sufficient of itself (Sahin et al., 2011).

2.2.3 Brand attachment

Part of the value that a brand embodies is drawn from the meaningful and emotional attachment the consumer holds towards it. Brand attachment relates to the strength of the connection or bond that exists between the brand and the self (Beck & Dagogo-Jack, 2014). Resultantly, it is determined and informed by self-congruity (the extent to which the consumer's self-concept aligns with the image of the product or the service), experience (internal and behavioural

responses), responsiveness (interactions mediated by autonomy, relatedness and the competence the brand imbues), quality (perceived superiority or excellence), reputation (the output maintained throughout the brand's life) and trust (the reliance on a brand to perform as expected) – the sum of which leads towards the intention to recommend, purchase, revisit, its resilience to negative information and proclivity to engage in actions to defend the brand (Japutra et al., 2014). It is characterised "by deep feelings of connection, affection and passion" (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011, p.1053). As such, brand attachment can perform a buffering, self-affirming function or a remedying, socially fulfilling and supporting role in instances of social loss (Beck & Dagogo-Jack, 2014).

To emphasise – the individual's actual or ideal self-concept and its alignment with the perceived brand, image or values of the organisation, is a key determinant of brand attachment (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011).

Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) propose that antecedents of brand attachment include sentimentality or emotional memory; socialisation; traditional customer outcomes such as value, satisfaction and differentiation; superior marketing characteristics like product, pricing, location and service; as well as user-defined benefits which include sensory pleasure, self-oriented and social-oriented goals.

This construct predicts the consumer's intentions to perform difficult behaviours that could affect the consumer's personal resources like time, money, reputation; actual purchasing behaviours; as well as the decision-making relating to competing or substituting alternatives (Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010).

Brand attachment is considered to precede brand loyalty, in that affective and cognitive responses lead to attitudinal and behavioural responses (Whan Park et al., 2010). Therefore, without attachment, loyalty cannot be achieved. However, high levels of brand attachment, as driven by the consumer's social identity, can lead to oppositional brand loyalty and anti-brand actions towards competing brands (Japutra et al., 2014). Within the religious environment, these behaviours could be exhibited in moral outrage, where values are protected, or moral cleansing, where the moral identity is challenged, and the alleviation of disgust is pursued (McGraw et al., 2012).

The strength of such attachment could be mediated by brand experience – which, in turn, would be influenced by familiarity (the sum of direct and indirect experiences with the brand) and responsiveness (Japutra et al., 2014). Additionally, attachment exercises an influence on satisfaction, trust as well as commitment (Japutra et al., 2014).

2.2.3.1 Brand trust and brand authenticity

A related construct, that mitigates brand attachment, relates to brand authenticity and its influence on brand trust.

The opposing perceptions of 'real' and 'fake' are characteristic of post-modern markets, as exhibited by increased commercialisation, and an overflow of meaningless market offerings; therefore, brand authenticity is fundamental to achieving brand equity, status or managing an organisation's reputation in these environments (Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, & Grohmann, 2015; Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, & Farrelly, 2014). Resultantly, Gilmore and Pine (2007. p.5) state, "authenticity has overtaken quality as the prevailing purchasing criterion, just as quality overtook cost, and as cost overtook availability."

Brand authenticity is a positively connoted concept that suggests genuineness, agelessness, tradition, originality, substantiveness, uniqueness, truth, sincerity, innocence, heritage, legitimacy, naturality and honesty (Bruhn et al., 2012; Napoli et al., 2014). It incorporates dimensions of continuity, originality, reliability, naturalness, credibility, integrity and value symbolism (Bruhn et al., 2012; Morhart et al., 2015). Authentic brands are associated with high levels of credibility that reflects an ability and willingness to deliver on its promises (Morhart et al., 2015). Owners of such brands are considered to be motivated by integrity, moral virtue and a love of the product or service that supersedes an economic agenda (Napoli et al., 2014).

The purchase decision today is, therefore, informed by not only the benefits and values that the product embodies, but also the alignment with the values that the producing organisation stand for and is known for (Hamzah et al., 2014).

As such, brand authenticity has a significant influence on brand trust (Napoli et al., 2014), particularly as opportunities for meaning creation are pursued (Morhart et al., 2015). Brand trust refers to the customer's confident reliance on the organisation to deliver (Sahin et al., 2011).

Interestingly, brand experience is one of the strongest direct predictors (stronger than brand equity) of brand credibility – understood as the brand having the potential to deliver what is promised and being deemed trustworthy (Shamim & Mohsin Butt, 2013) – as well as of brand trust, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty (Sahin et al., 2011).

In the religious context the idea of staging experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011), might come across as being contrary to the authenticity that should be associated with a religious brand. Therefore, measures to ensure that the brand experience takes place in a manner that aligns with the organisation's values to convey a sense of brand authenticity is imperative. Therefore, Pessi (2013) suggests that authenticity occurs in churches as interplay between experiences, values and truth or clear standpoints.

2.2.3.2 The idea of membership

Schoeman (2014) defines church membership as the involvement at a particular religious organisation and highlights that, from the viewpoint of traditional mainstream Afrikaans churches, this is considered to be a believer's life-long faith commitment towards a church community. However, everyone does not share this exclusive membership understanding, and the phenomenon of church switching is indicative of that (Barna Group, 2014c).

It could be considered that an intention to recommend, purchase and revisit is often observed in activities like membership or loyalty programmes. Loyalty programmes or switching costs are measures that companies take to create or maintain repeat purchase incentives that would sustain profit and keep revenue streams consistent. It is, however, essential to exceed customers' expectations, as opposed to minimally meet those expectations, in order to effect attachment-inducing satisfaction (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011).

Because brand attachment serves as predictor of consumer behaviour, as it pertains to resource allocation of time, money and reputation (Whan Park et

al., 2010), within a church context, these are exhibited in participation actions like time, money and effort (Casidy, 2013; Hirschle, 2013). In essence, any such commitment or attachment behaviours are voluntary in nature, implying a voluntary commitment from the consumer to engage or continue in the relationship. Behaviours that support this statement include a willingness to sacrifice, foregoing alternatives for the good of the existing relationship, and the accommodation instead of retaliation when disillusionment or dissatisfaction occurs (Sung & Choi, 2010).

The construct of authenticity comes into play, when relating to the church and religious context, in as much as it refers to the traditional, historical, nostalgic and its heritage. In this context, to continue to be perceived as authentic, paradox needs to be negotiated in order to suspend disbelief (Napoli et al., 2014).

Therefore, it could be argued that a membership decision is inspired by satisfaction, leading to an attachment decision that suggests an increased level of loyalty. Hence, longevity and the resultant long-term decision inform a behaviour to remain aligned and committed to the brand (Morhart et al., 2015).

However, the pursuit of new potential customers (prospects) can counter the priorities of delivering to the needs of existing members who are positioned higher on the loyalty ladder (for example, clients, supporters or advocates). What constitutes satisfaction for one contingent could deteriorate the value perceived by another contingent, and hence an organisation's competitive advantage could be deteriorated because all stakeholders are not continually considered (Christopher et al., 2013; Torres & Tribó, 2011). This trend is observed in numerous churches, and is perceived to a be "back-door", where despite growth of membership as new members are welcomed, existing membership starts to wane and exit the church with little fanfare (Stanley, 2015).

Additionally, progress along the loyalty ladder assumes the progress of time. Upon first encounter with a product, the loyalty of an advocate cannot be achieved. It could therefore be implied that as the brand's identity as being authentic gets established, over time, so the loyalty exhibited would also be informed (Da Silveira et al., 2013). This suggests that the decision to continue

as a member for extended periods of time, exhibits loyalty. This could be indicated as the duration that a person has been a member of a church, for example.

The decision to become a member of a church, as interpreted by rational choice theory, is a function of the match between what the church produces, delivers on its values and that the needs and values of the prospective member/customer are met (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). This requires that the authenticity claims made by the church or organisation align with the experiences, expectations and desires of the consumer, as well as reflect their values and beliefs (Napoli et al., 2014).

Consequently, members would exhibit behaviours such as: positive word-of-mouth; as well as decreasing volatility for the organisation because of a committed core of consumers pooling resources related to time, effort and money in the context of anticipated cash flows. This makes the church or organisation less vulnerable to competitive pressures and allows opportunity for the development of innovative and risky strategies (Torres & Tribó, 2011).

2.3 Brand experience

As mentioned before, Brakus et al. (2009) hold that whenever consumers seek out products or services, shop for them, receive assistance, and consume them, a brand experience occurs; as well as when they are exposed to communications or advertising related to them. Therefore, it is a “subjective, internal consumer response (sensation, feeling, cognition) and behavioural response evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brands’ design and identity, packaging, communications and environments” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). Qader and Omar (2013) clarify that such stimuli could be tangible, emotional and symbolic and encompass colours, shapes, typefaces, background elements, slogans, mascots and characters.

Mediated by a number of interactions and touchpoints between the consumer and some part of the organisation (Nysveen et al., 2013), the consumer experience occurs when such interaction accesses the “lifeworld of the customer, which brings forward the processes of experiencing and perceiving aspects of value founded in the customer’s everyday lived experience. The customer service experience can be a lived critical event or even an imaginary event”

(Tynan et al., 2014, p. 1061). However, a motivational state, interest, personal connection or consumption is not presumed for a brand experience to occur; either directly or indirectly, expected or unexpectedly, positively or negatively, by consumers or non-consumers (Nysveen et al., 2013), regardless of it being short-lived or long-lasting (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). Therefore, a brand experience is not evaluative of the product, service or brand, – only a response to brand-related stimuli. This makes brand experience an antecedent to both brand attitude, defined as the complete assessment of a brand as a function of its benefits and attributes, and brand equity, explained as the increase in value that a brand offers to a product (Japutra et al., 2014; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013).

The experiences of consumers are where value is centred in (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Tynan et al., 2014), and therefore "the more a brand evokes multiple experience dimensions, the more satisfied a consumer will be with the brand" (Brakus et al., 2009, p.63). As such, the consumer is not only paying for the product or service, but also for the experience, as they see value in it (Machado et al., 2014).

This experience domain could be described as a "field of knowledge, activity and discourse that stimulates consumers to engage in purposeful interactions with a network of organisations and consumer communities that are collectively understood" (Baron & Harris, 2010, p.25) and therefore comprises multiple touchpoints with an organisation. Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013) argue that brand experience is a significant mediator in the development of brand equity in pre- and post-exposure settings, being both personal and memorable (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Shamim & Mohsin Butt, 2013). The brand experience is therefore not only informed by the core consumption experience, but also the anticipated and remembered consumption experience (Tynan et al., 2014).

The brand or service experience is directly linked to consumer purchasing behaviour by means of brand or customer loyalty, and indirectly by means of brand or customer satisfaction (Klaus & Maklan, 2012). Therefore, brand experience is considered to mediate not only loyalty and satisfaction (Brakus et al., 2009), but also brand knowledge (Manthiou et al., 2015), brand attitude and brand distinctiveness (Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014), consumer-based brand

equity (Shamim & Mohsin Butt, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010), brand attitude, brand relation, emotion and behavioural intention (Walter et al., 2013), brand trust and customer-brand relationship (Sahin et al., 2011).

2.3.1 The dimensions of brand experience

There are various models that aim to suggest the factors or dimensions that mediate brand experience. Walls (2013) highlights that there are challenges associated with determining which experience constructs and dimensions to utilise for which study, and is presumably due to the multidimensional nature of experience (Manthiou et al., 2015).

Klaus and Maklan (2012) propose that product experience, outcome focus, moments-of-truth and peace-of-mind are key determinants of the service experience perceptions as it informs satisfaction and loyalty. Roswinanto and Strutton (2014) hold that brand experience is preceded by functional and pragmatic constructs, such as, the attitude that is held towards the brand name, the connectedness with a celebrity endorser, the fit with the message, and visual imaging; and considers brand attitude and brand distinctiveness as consequences. Contextual, emotional, symbolic and non-utilitarian dimensions are highlighted as important aspects of the construct by Shamim and Mohsin Butt (2013), whereas Rageh Ismael et al. (2011) propose brand name, price, advertising, employees, servicescape, core service and word-of-mouth as the key predictors of such service or brand experience.

For the purposes of this study, the five dimensions suggested by Brakus et al. (2009) as expanded by Nysveen et al. (2013) will be considered, which are: Sensory, Affective or Emotional, Intellectual or Cognitive, Behavioural, and Social or Relational.

Based on their scores on these dimensions, five types of consumers are identified (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010), and include: hedonistic (sensory/affective), action-oriented (sensory/behavioural), holistic (high on all dimensions), inner-directed (sensory/affective/intellectual) and utilitarian (low on all dimensions) consumers. Unfortunately this typology does not take into consideration the relational dimension, and continues the authors' original viewpoint that a relational dimension is assumed within the other four

dimensions. This has been reframed since (Schmitt, Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2014).

The overall score on all five dimensions serves as an indicator of the extent to which the brand evokes experiences. The importance of the five dimensions, and the associated understanding of each could be explained as follows:

2.3.1.1 The sensory dimension

Touchpoints with consumers occur through multi-sensory stimulations on a visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile and gustative level (Schmitt, 2012; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). This could include the visual response to its logo, corporate colours, brand characters or verbal slogans. The sensory experience associated with a product or service shapes perceptions relating to its performance, the trust in the deliverable or outcome and the reputation of the organisation. The significance of this dimension is exhibited by the influence that aesthetic design has on differentiation, particularly as functional attributes like price and quality are becoming less important in differentiation strategies (Cho et al., 2015). Furthermore, sensory stimulants enhance the memorability of an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Also known as servicescapes and atmospherics (Rageh Ismail et al., 2011), this dimension is exhibited within a religious context by sensory influences such as architecture, décor and media utilisation (visual), music (auditory), structural finishes and aesthetic design (tactile). This could extend to the burning of incense (olfactory) or sacraments such as communion or catering decisions (gustative). The applications of the visual arts (stained glass windows, paintings, murals), as well as the performing arts (worship music, dancing, acting, readings), are some of the ways in which sensory experiences within a religious context could be observed. Arts, however, do not only appeal to the senses, but can create an emotive, sensual, spiritual, intellectual and social response (Walmsley, 2011).

New church architecture, which appeals to the sensory dimension, can be observed by churches such as Grace Family Church whose glass-fronted campus foyer in Umhlanga has a spectacular view of the Indian Ocean. Or Mosaïek in Fairland, who designed their campus in the style of a village square. An impressive new building has been constructed by NG

Moreletapark in Pretoria, which boasts a 7 000-seater auditorium, with cutting-edge technology and fittings. The high number of churches that employ a full-time music or worship pastor highlights the importance of the arts, and the sensory appeal that it adds to the experience of the service. Of the 12 churches participating in this study, nine has at least one person employed to fulfil this duty.

2.3.1.2 The affective/emotional dimension

The affective or emotional dimension relates to the feelings derived from interacting with a brand (Cho et al., 2015) and adds to the emotionally-based relationship between consumer and brand, as exhibited by resiliency and robust attitudes towards it (Kemp et al., 2014). This dimension encapsulates moods and emotions (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013) felt when considering the brand and could, for example, include positive affect exhibited as entertainment, joy, closeness or passion (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).

Similar to sensory stimulants, emotions experienced during consumption make the experience more memorable in the mind of the consumer (Iglesias et al., 2011). Therefore, attachment to a brand, that is emotional in nature, suggests that the consumer desires the value perceived to be maintained, making such consumers less expensive to retain or lose through service failures (Bolton, Kannan, & Bramlett, 2000). Trust is a critical variable to establish such affective commitment and attachment, and contributes to the consumer's sense of well-being and willingness to disclose personal information to maintain the relationship (Kemp et al., 2014), by enrolling, for example, in a membership or subscription initiative. The spectrum of this emotional dimension could even extend to an intuitive sense of fit (rightness or kinship) with the brand, going as far as to describe it as brand love (Batra et al., 2012).

The emotional dimension is exhibited by, for example, the care identified in problem-solving assistance, treating consumers with respect, paying attention to requests and personalised attention (Manthiou et al., 2015). For religious institutions, pleasurable emotions such as joy or celebration (like a wedding or child dedication), or comfort (such as offered during a funeral) are some of the emotional extremes exhibited within this environment.

Mosaïek, a church based in Fairland, has a dedicated experience design team that endeavours to craft sensory and emotional experiences in their service and gathering planning. The programming of the services considers the emotional progression that a churchgoer would experience throughout the service and a special consideration is given to transitions as well as alignment with the core message or scripture of the day (Mosaïek Gemeente, 2014).

2.3.1.3 The intellectual/cognitive dimension

This intellectual or cognitive dimension indicates the extent to which the brand inspires either convergent and analytical cognitive processing or divergent and imaginative thinking (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). It incorporates the evaluation of non-product-related attributes (like pricing), as well as functional (like safety) and symbolic (like prestige) benefits – albeit direct or indirect (Cho et al., 2015). This could be shaped by historical or present brand interactions or aspirational dreams. Such processing reduces risk and enhances performance expectations (Hsu & Cai, 2009), thus informing consumer engagement with the brand.

An appeal to the intellectual dimension can take place through, for example, surprise, intrigue, provocation, learning, or evoking curiosity (Manthiou et al., 2015).

The innate nature of religious doctrinal communication or principles informing decision-making and vocation are some of the elements that could trigger the intellectual dimension within a church or religious context. The message portion of a religious gathering usually appeals to this dimension, and serves to encourage the consideration of ways to apply values, beliefs and norms expressed to everyday life.

In South Africa, a number of churches offer some measure of education or development opportunities within the church, predominantly around Biblical practices or principles. Churches such as Northfield Methodist Church in Benoni and Mosaïek in Fairland have partnered with educational institutions whereby these courses or training endeavours are accredited and a formal degree could be obtained (Mosaiek Gemeente, 2015; Northfield Methodist Church, n.d.). The latter incorporates personality testing and profiling in many

of its spiritual growth courses and other educational endeavours with the aim of optimising customised learning and intellectual stimulation.

2.3.1.4 The behavioural dimension

The behavioural dimension of brand experience includes any actions motivated by the brand, as well as physical or bodily interactions with the brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). It is exhibited in frequency and quantity of current purchasing, or purchase intent (Cho et al., 2015). Such active or passive consumer participation influences the performance of the organisation (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). It can be observed where alternative ways of doing things are suggested, or when a product or service is used (Machado et al., 2014; Manthiou et al., 2015).

Within the religious context, behaviour changes could be observed as the joining of a religious institution, increasing loyalty and conformity as well as financial and voluntary time contributions to the organisation – which is inspired by a change in norms and values (Abela, 2014; Batra et al., 2012), hence influencing lifestyle.

Particular initiatives requiring action or physical participation in churches have to do with the volunteering of time and skills to disadvantaged communities. For example, Gracepoint Methodist Church in Lonehill has a number of projects where members of the community are encouraged to serve the poor, or support those in need ranging from a street school and prison ministry to serving meals and offering after-school care to children (Gracepoint Methodist, n.d.). Gracepoint Methodist Church, Northfield Methodist Church and Mosaïek are but a few of a number of churches in Johannesburg that facilitates a physical participation during services through, for example, lighting of a candle, writing on a piece of paper and nailing it to a cross or similar to appeal to the behavioural dimension of their church experiences. Many churches, like Alberton LewenSentrum, Northfield Methodist Church and Mosaïek also offer pre-marital counselling or courses whereby couples can undertake tests and facilitated discussions around personality, finances and sex.

2.3.1.5 *The social/relational dimension*

Although not included in the original work by Brakus et al. (2009), the incorporation of this dimension is suggested for service organisations by Nysveen et al. (2013) and is therefore discussed below.

"The inclusion of others is an important element for deriving happiness from discretionary spending" (Schmitt et al., 2015, p.168). This is further observed by the growing prominence of brand communities that exhibit a growth in emotional bonds offering help, support and recommendations in pursuit of shared or collective goals (Schmitt, 2012). Brand communities are defined as "a specialised, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among users of a brand" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p.412). Muniz et al. (2001) continue by highlighting that the identifying markers of community relate to shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility.

It is suggested that where others are involved in the experience, it impacts the consumer's opportunity to co-create value. Interaction with others, albeit other consumers or staff members, heightens a sense of personal relevance and connection with the experience (Minkiewicz et al., 2014).

Relational experiences could be experienced in the form of customer-to-brand or customer-to-customer interactions (Kemp et al., 2014; Schmitt et al., 2014; Tynan et al., 2014). Contributing to the experiential dimension of services, the role of consumer-to-consumer interactions adds value to the social benefits surrounding the deliverable, improved productivity as well as stabilisation (Baron & Harris, 2010). The effectiveness of social media is a reflection of the integration of experiencing and action, whereby the consumer is no longer a passive recipient of brand-related information, but an active processor (or creator) of information making it interactive and immersive, contributing to the effectiveness of social media (Schmitt, 2012).

Within churches, the value of community and belonging is innate to its functioning, exhibited by an emphasis on love and care towards others, and the acceptance of self. The formation of small groups within the larger church organisation body, is an intentional measure to increase the building of such relationship, further entrenching the consumer with the brand, and creating

increased barriers to exit from the community and, as such, the brand (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012).

In 2013, following the example of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago, AGS Woord en Lewe in Boksburg, Johannesburg allocated geographical regions (suburbs) to specific seating blocks in their 3 000-seater auditorium. An allocated staff member (pastor) oversees each of these seating blocks and intentionally engages with members seated in those areas. Life groups (small groups of people who gather weekly, predominantly for Bible study at someone's home) that are based within those regions, are encouraged to also be seated in these blocks. Hence, a greater sense of familiarity and community is established within this megachurch (Woord en Lewe Gemeente, n.d.). This further endeavours to create a platform for attendees or members to build and maintain social connections based on proximity. Most churches also offers a platform for interest groups to gather on a weekly or monthly basis, to encourage a sense of connection – topics could be around arts, cancer-support, substance abuse, parenting, education or sport.

An improved understanding of branding and services will inform its applicability to the religious arena as these constructs are considered within this context in the following section.

2.4 Religion

Religion is "an important means by which many individuals discover and reaffirm who they are, 'whose' they are, and where they belong in the world. It not only provides individuals with a purpose for their existence but also offers prescriptions for how to live and what goals to pursue. Religion allows people to experience identity that is connected to a higher power and a community of believers, and ultimately enhances individuals' feelings of self-worth" (Cutright et al., 2014, p.2210). Other characteristics include benevolence, opposing self-indulgent tendencies and self-regulation like pro-social behaviour and decreased substance abuse, and "offers society a public normative set of acceptable behaviours" (Swimberghe, Flurry, & Parker, 2011, p.24). It includes a belief in a supreme being, a common set of doctrines, ideals, moral values and principles, and the attendance of some formalised ceremonies (Granger et al., 2014). An early study (Worthington Jr. et al., 2003) proposed that religiosity be evaluated on dimensions like the authority of sacred writings, the authority that the

leadership exhibits and the degree to which the individual identifies with their religious group.

Religiosity and religious commitment are described as “the degree to which a person adheres to his or her religious values, beliefs and practices, and uses them in daily living” (Worthington Jr. et al., 2003, p.85). This earlier study was later supported and further expanded to show that religiosity exhibits both a cognitive as well as behavioural component – that is, intra-personal dimensions reflecting personal religious experience, and interpersonal dimensions reflecting the extent to which the practices of the doctrine is propagated (Swimberghe, Sharma, & Flurry, 2011).

A consumer’s self-description differentiates markedly between being spiritual instead of religious, whereas the latter articulates subscribing to a particular formalised religion (Granger et al., 2014). Furthermore, religion is differentiated from spirituality, in that religion describes a relationship with an institutionalised doctrine, whereas spirituality refers to “the feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviours that arise from a search for the sacred” (Worthington Jr. et al., 2003, p.84). The preference for the spiritual instead of the religious is indicative of an increase in privatised, personalised and customised experiences of religious authenticity in the midst of a consumer culture, with the aim of deriving more meaning (Gauthier & Martikainen, 2013).

Von der Ruhr and Daniels (2012) suggest a model of utility maximisation to explain personal and spill over benefits that may arise from participation in religious activities, such that ‘secular goods’ offer a personal benefit and ‘religious goods’ offer a public benefit. This implies a subsidisation by the church or religious institution to maximise the consumption of religious goods with the hope of increasing participation, attendance and membership. These deliverables could be classified as being either transcendent goods, referring to religious concepts such as afterlife or spiritual gifts, or immanent goods, which includes comfort, meaning and interpretation, and social integration. It is within the domain of immanent goods that increased competition with secular alternatives is observed (Hirschle, 2013).

Religious action that is extrinsically motivated endeavours to satisfy the consumer’s own needs, whereas intrinsically motivated religious action as a

manner of doing life indicates values that are integrated and internalised (Cooper & Pullig, 2013).

There exists an intuitive belief that a relationship exists between religiosity and ethical judgements, as many religions offer a set of moral and ethical guidelines to its followers (Cooper & Pullig, 2013). Additionally, religious institutions offer frameworks and contexts to settle existential questions, defining morality, provide mechanisms for improving social status as well as mediate family and social relations (McAlexander et al., 2014), and is observed in numerous contexts, which will now be discussed.

2.4.1 The religious landscape

Religion is an antecedent to culture, influencing managerial action – such as decision-making or the valuation of business (Engelland, 2014) – and consumer behaviour, such as doctrines prescribing food, clothing or entertainment consumption, which result in norms creation.

As it pertains to Christianity – devotional practice, attendance at church gatherings and communal experiences convey a worldview that shapes values and informs beliefs, which could affect product and brand preferences as well as social action and social change albeit radical or conservative (Engelland, 2014). Research suggests that religiosity declines as prosperity rises, suggesting that poorer people are more religious (WIN/Gallup International, 2012). However, Hirschle (2013) disagrees that religious values weaken with economic development. Instead, he suggests that the diminishing attendance rates are not correlated to a deterioration of belief, but instead suggests that increased income suggests a change in consumption patterns and the access to secular alternatives that fulfil the need previously addressed by churches. An American study found that despite an awareness of their very real spiritual needs, people were increasingly dissatisfied with the church's attempt to address them, and therefore they are turning elsewhere (Barna Group, 2014a). As secondary consequence, religious belief can decline because reduced church attendance decreases the influence of religion on the value creation of society.

When considering the condition of the religious landscape, the following insights are disconcerting. A 2012-study performed in the USA found that the

majority of people could not recall whether they had gained any new spiritual insight the last time they attended a church service (Barna Group, 2012). Older people report church experiences much more favourably than younger people, as it relates to sense of care felt, experiencing God's presence, the church's priority and endeavour in assisting the poor and being personally transformed (Barna Group, 2012). Church attendance is becoming more sporadic, as the self-description of attendees who consider themselves to be regular church goers have changed from attending church three or more times per month in 2004, to once every four to six weeks (Barna Group, 2014a).

When considering the youth, millennials or the next generation of attendees are considered to value church attendance least (Barna Group, 2014a). Millennials are persons born in the period 1977 to 2000, in the region of thirty years of age, and are usually the offspring of baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964 (Barna Group, 2015; Qader & Omar, 2013).

Church attendance patterns suggest that church involvement in childhood is high, but wanes with adolescence. Oftentimes adolescents and young adults leave the church, but towards their late thirties a small number of them return (Van der Merwe et al., 2013). The future sustainability of the church is dependent on the engagement achieved by the younger generation. To achieve brand loyalty in this generation is challenging, as these consumers are very aware and very suspicious of the intersection of consumer culture and the church, and have an expectation that the church should have more than a selling or marketing mandate (Barna Group, 2015). They have a preference for the straightforward, overtly Christian, as long as it is not too institutional or corporate (Barna Group, 2014b). Therefore, authenticity is very important, and transparency essential to this demographic. However, a recent study of South African youth suggests a more optimistic picture of the future of the church and its role in society, despite being cognisant of its shortcomings and failures (Van der Westhuizen & Nel, 2015). Their findings, as it pertains to persons aged between 16 and 35 attending predominantly Afrikaans churches, suggests that more than 80% attend church at least two times per month, 48% consider themselves to be more than attendees, and approximately 67% are satisfied with the church meeting their current needs. Other remarkable sentiments include 98% of respondents feeling that the church should be an active participant in their communities, 90% that the church should take a stronger

standpoint between right and wrong, and 89% that the church should be a welcoming space to bring unchurched or non-Christian friends.

The current Pentecostal and charismatic movements exhibit a high experiential dimension (Casidy, 2013), yet the religious landscape follows a declining trajectory in the developed world (Barna Group, 2014c), as well as in South Africa (Schoeman, 2014). A local study has suggested introducing sensory measures, such as servicescapes and atmospherics, to offer an appeal to South African youth within a church context (Van der Merwe et al., 2013). It is even suggested that institutional Christianity, referring to denominations that had not adapted to contemporary culture and the context of consumerism and marketing, has reached an end (Dreyer, 2015). Denominational loyalty is no longer the precursor for affiliation, but the belief that a particular church or congregation can make an important contribution to their spiritual quest and development (Schoeman, 2014).

2.4.2 The marketing of religion

Abreu (2006, p.140) verbalises the complexity that exists between marketing and religion as "the analysis, planning, implementation and control of programmes to better accomplish the relationship between the organisation and target groups, is merely a technique and can never substitute for a religious mission".

This could also relate to customer goodwill – an indicator of the positive regard of an organisation and its established reputation. Goodwill is a significant precursor to business and organisational welfare, and as such principles of marketing has extended to the religious paradigm as well – as suggested in an early work by Kotler and Levy (1969). This secularisation of religion deteriorates the extraordinary of the sacred, offering the opportunity for such consumers or congregants to seek elsewhere for significant encounters and experiences (Cutright et al., 2014; McAlexander et al., 2014). Considering the meaning that brands bring to the consumer and its impact on the self and identity, the value in transposing these constructs to the religious realm seems evident (Casidy, 2013).

Granger et al. (2014) highlight the competitive markets in which religious institutions, charities and the non-profit sector operate for share of wallet

(contribution/tithes), clock/time (volunteering) and mind/heart (priority/ behaviour), suggesting a marketisation of even the most traditionally sacred of institutions. It could be suggested that the "price" of a religious product is therefore constituted as "the time required to attend, effort required to fulfil church expectations such as service to others, and donations and tithing expected by the church" (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012, p.361). It suggests marketing religion as a form of commodity by encouraging the belonging and the active participation in a spirituality-based community. Such share of wallet (SOW) is considered an important measurement of behavioural loyalty, particularly in services as it refers to "percentage of overall business a customer assigns to one service provider … and naturally higher levels of SOW reflect higher levels of customer loyalty" (Baumann, Elliott, & Hamin, 2011, p.250).

The perceived benefits that the church seems to offer relate to spiritual benefits associated with a relationship with God, social benefits as indicated by the value of community and the network of relationships it offers, and purpose-in-life benefits which reflects meaning and significance (Casidy, 2013); however, connecting with God is considered to be the most important deliverable facilitated by churches (Barna Group, 2012).

Such marketisation of religion would necessarily empower consumers in pursuit of meaning and identity from said institutions, whereby congregants could be perceived as consumers of religion – religion being a constellation of products and services – and marketing tactics could improve decision processes relating to commitment and loyalty (McAlexander et al., 2014). Accordingly, these market forces would keep churches "healthy, innovative and responsive to the demands of consumers" (McAlexander et al., 2014, p.865) despite the perception that the profane taints the sacred. Marketing tactics usually have as its aim changing behaviour related to attracting members (conversion), increasing loyalty and retention, increasing participation, increasing conformity (religiosity), increasing belief in the religion, and financial support (Abela, 2014).

The market characteristics influencing the 'religious industry' imply not only competing with other churches for share of mind, wallet and clock, but also with secular activities that engender the benefits that could be derived from religious goods (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). By applying their consumer rights on

this market, the individual can 'shop' or switch between churches in the market as his or her preferences dictate.

This substantiates the supply-side theory of religion where churches operate in a spiritual marketplace (Einstein, 2007). On the other side, positioning the church within a services context highlights the user-driven nature of the unique demands of the consumer (Gauthier & Martikainen, 2013).

Adopting or 'acquiring' a religion entails an adjustment of worldview which is much more far-reaching than the acquisition of a product or service, as it tends to impact and transform ethical beliefs (Abela, 2014) and serves as an existential anchor (McAlexander et al., 2014). It offers an opportunity for the mutual and communal consumption of objects of worship by all members/ consumers (Swimberghe et al., 2011).

However, there is a high risk of offending consumers (and other stakeholders) with high moral standards (Hopkins, Shanahan, & Raymond, 2014). The perception exists that religious institutions should prioritise communal endeavours and obligations, and would respond negatively to overtly commercial market-pricing strategies despite documented strategic benefits of such activities, because it undermines the perception of the sanctity of the church (McGraw et al., 2012). Marketing endeavours by churches are often criticised, resulting in misinterpretation and considered to be manipulative, misused and distrusted and thus desacralising religion (Abreu, 2006).

It should be observed that many churches differentiate between membership counts and the number of people who actually attend gatherings, are engaged with the organisation and participating in its activities (Thumma & Travis, 2007). Especially in the South African context, and the churches participating in this study, a large difference exists between estimated membership, and estimated attendance at, for example, Sunday gatherings. Furthermore, denominational association tends to be downplayed in megachurches, in particular, and predominantly with the aim of attracting new attendees (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). This observation was also made in the current study undertaken, where denominational affiliation does not from part of the marketed brand (for example, Gracepoint forming part of the Methodist stable, Constantiakruin Gemeente,

forming part of the Dutch Reformed tradition, and Woord en Lewe being part of the Apostolic Faith Mission movement).

2.5 Religious and church branding

Numerous attributes offered by brands are entrenched in the understanding of religion, which encourages an investigation into the alignment of these constructs.

Churches and religious institutions are shown to make use of branding measures such as logo design, verbalising core values the organisations hold dear and offering identity platforms and guidelines for the communities that align with it.

A positive brand image or reputation of a church contributes to it having more committed members and less member-switching behaviour as other churches who do not have a positive perception associated with it (Casidy, 2013). Churches use positioning and targeting strategies to attract attendance, by either identification and differentiation strategies (Abreu, 2006).

Particularly in the megachurch context, it is observed that little is expected from new attendees in terms of either financial or time contribution – offering low entry costs; however, after the attendee has deemed the church a good fit, the expectation of commitment is increased (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). This suggests that once satisfaction occurs in the religious consumer, an expectation to increase their loyalty by means of commitment or attachment decisions.

At its core, brands and religion provide important models for intra-personal and interpersonal frameworks, as well as influencing consumptive behaviour. These intra-personal frameworks refer to meaning, aspirations and identity formation, whereas interpersonal frameworks appeal to social identity, social relationships and the need to belong (Swimberghe et al., 2011).

Webb (2012) found that worship music, number of services, content of sermons, evangelism initiatives, family and friends' membership, average age of the members of the congregation, church school and the ethnic composition of the church were key differentiators in attracting new members. Relating to the megachurch phenomenon, state-of-the-art worship services, an extended variety of activities, innovative ministries and the application of other marketing principles, are considered to be major contributors to its success (Kinder, 2010).

Kinder (2010, p.12) further suggests that the megachurch consumption experience is synonymous with brand experience, and ranges from "the aesthetic, affective, epistemic and generative to the hedonic, relational, and transformative" and therefore embodies its value proposition.

Megachurches, in particular, explore new ways of discovering meaning in religion, people's relationship with God and their sense of belonging. Creating welcoming environments that are conducive to participation as well as personal, emotional and individualised experiences pursue this, as it is understood that unsatisfied consumers would migrate to others spaces where satisfaction could be achieved (Gauthier & Martikainen, 2013). This is characteristic of consumers of religious products and services exhibiting religious switching behaviours (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012).

Each of the five dimensions of brand experience (sensory, intellectual, behavioural, affective and relational) is evident within the religious context, and it is suggested that it could mediate the brand experience of entities in this industry.

The construct of loyalty could, for example, be exhibited within a religious context, as word-of-mouth advocacy (described as 'testimony') comprising a vocalised belief in the institution, leadership or spirituality it represents (McAlexander et al., 2014). Satisfaction could be observed by the membership format exhibited by most churches, and the involvement behaviour it suggests is tantamount to focused activation regardless of situational or enduring duration (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry Jr., 1989). The outcomes of brand attachment, as could be influenced by brand experience, relate to the intention to recommend (advocacy), revisit (continued attendance), resiliency to negative information and defending behaviour – which could as easily apply to the church context (Japutra et al., 2014). However, Einstein (2011) suggests that an increase in non-denominational churches deteriorates the brand loyalty that could have been created by a denomination as a whole.

2.6 Conclusion: Religious brand experiences in South Africa

Within South Africa, the first megachurches made its appearance in the 1980's and associated with it, the embracing of marketing principles to aid in its growth, and align the agenda of the thousands of current attendees, and attracting new ones. In Johannesburg, these included Rhema Bible Church in Randburg (Liston,

2010; Rhema Bible Church, n.d.; Tolsi, 2009), and Christian Family Centre in Edenvale (Christian Family Church, n.d.; Joy! Magazine, 2010).

Denominationally, traction was only achieved in the 1990's as some of the Apostolic Faith Mission's churches ('AFM' or 'AGS') started to rebrand themselves, and thereby decreasing its denominational affiliation. For example, AGS Randburg, became Randburg Congregation and later Mosaïek (Mosaïek Gemeente, 2014), or AGS Parkrand, became Word and Life Community (Woord en Lewe Gemeente, n.d.).

The Dutch Reformed church followed suit, however the megachurch model was not achieved before the geographical boundaries of churches were done away with in 1994 (Schoeman, 2014), and churches such as NG Constantiakruin grew significantly in numbers. This church community also rebranded to Constantiakruin Gemeente. Marketing initiatives further led to a greater embrace of media platforms such as television, and most notable is Alberton LewenSentrum, a non-denominational megachurch with campuses across Gauteng, who – since its plant in 1999 – has become a significant voice in particularly the Afrikaans Christian demographic. Apart from its television programme, "Die Woord", the writings of lead pastor, Andries Enslin, is also available in both Christian and secular bookshops (Alberton LewenSentrum, n.d.).

At its core, both brands and religion (that is, religious brands) compete for share of mind, wallet and clock, exhibited as loyalty, satisfaction and attachment measures. In its pursuit of market share, it seems evident that brand experience models could be applied or tested in a religious context to improve brand attachment behaviours such as membership.

After consideration of the aforementioned literature and the highlighted constructs, this study aims to determine whether brand experience mediates satisfaction and loyalty within the church market as an industry. Furthermore, it would be considered whether such brand experience would differ amongst churches, before finally considering mediating factors to brand experience. This informs the research questions indicated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to investigate whether declining church membership can be mediated by brand experience, as precursor to satisfaction and loyalty, and its respective attachment inferences.

Making use of the Brand Experience Scale (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen et al., 2013), the relevance of the brand experience construct to religious organisations is explored. The emotional, sensory, behavioural, intellectual and relational dimensions of the brand are evaluated, and its impact on the loyalty and satisfaction experienced by the religious consumer explored.

Informed by the preceding chapters, this chapter highlights the research questions investigated. Research questions are considered to be "refined statements of the specific components of the problem" (Malhotra, 2010, p.84).

As such, the research questions first explore the applicability of the Brand Experience Scale from an industry perspective (a collection of churches), then on an organisational level (a single church), and finally from an individual demographical perspective (members or attendees of a church).

These comprise three primary research questions, with relevant secondary objectives indicated below:

3.1.1 **Research Question 1** – Do churches have brand experiences that mediate loyalty and satisfaction?

Secondary objectives relating to the primary objective of research question 1:

3.1.1.1 Research Question 1.1

Are the four dimensions suggested by Brakus et al. (2009) mediators of loyalty through brand experience within a religious context?

3.1.1.2 Research Question 1.2

Are the four dimensions suggested by Brakus et al. (2009) mediators of satisfaction through brand experience within a religious context?

3.1.1.3 Research Question 1.3

Should the social (relational) dimension suggested by Nysveen et al. (2013) be included as mediator of loyalty through brand experience within a religious context?

3.1.1.4 Research Question 1.4

Should the social (relational) dimension suggested by Nysveen et al. (2013) be included as mediator of satisfaction through brand experience within a religious context?

3.1.1.5 Research Question 1.5

Is the five-dimension model of brand experience a better indicator of loyalty and satisfaction, than the four-dimension model?

3.1.2 **Research Question 2** – Do brand experiences differ amongst churches?

3.1.3 **Research Question 3** – Are there demographic mediating factors to brand experiences, loyalty or satisfaction in churches?

Secondary objectives relating to the primary objective of research question 4:

3.1.3.1 Research Question 3.1

Is age a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

3.1.3.2 Research Question 3.2

Is level of education a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

3.1.3.3 Research Question 3.3

Is duration of membership a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

3.1.3.4 Research Question 3.3

Is role or membership status a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

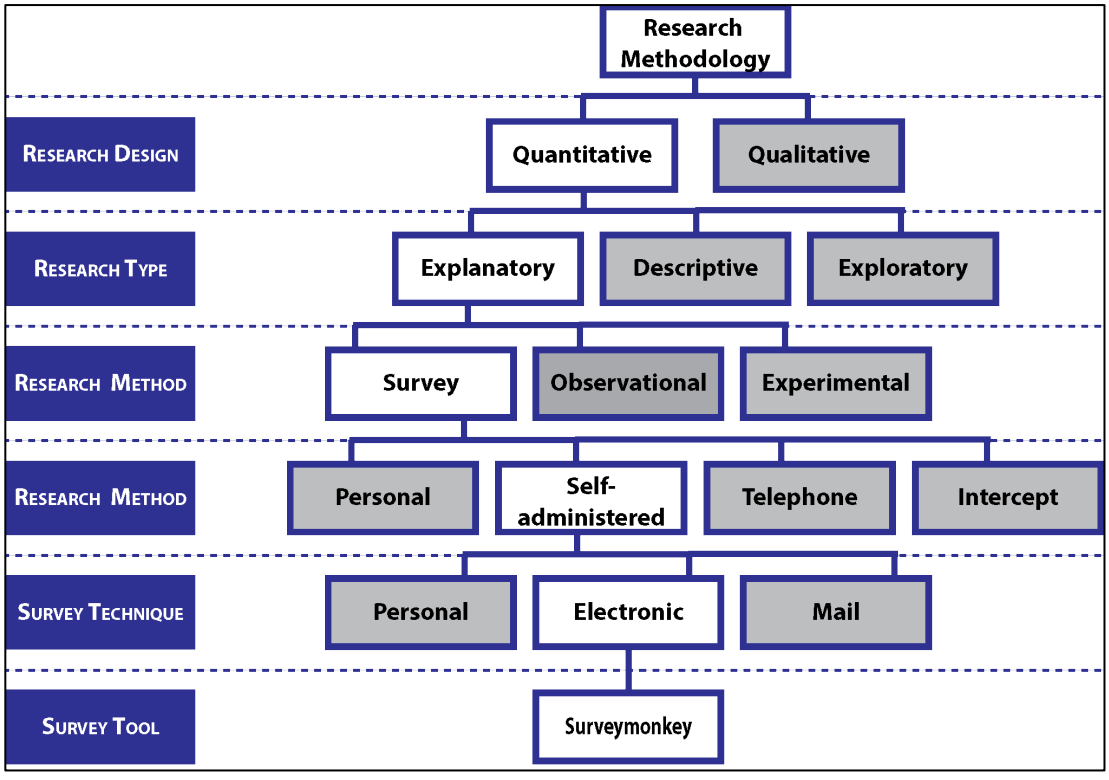
The research methodology undertaken to answer these research questions is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the light of research questions under consideration, as set out in Chapter 3, this chapter elaborates on the research methodology employed in this study. The research design and motivation for its selection is discussed, as well as parameters like scope, universe and population (churches), samples (churches and members), sampling methods used (purposive sampling), the sampling frame obtained (church membership roster) and an investigation of the measurement instrument, the Brand Experience Scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009). This chapter also discusses how data were analysed and the limitations that the decisions surrounding research methodology imbued on the study.

The study was explanatory in nature, which therefore informed the research design, sampling methodology and data analysis techniques utilised. A quantitative method of data collection was used, whereby a survey was distributed to members of a select number of churches. Figure 5 sets out an overview of the research methodology and what has been deemed appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Figure 5: Overview of Research Methodology (adapted from Malhotra, 2010)



4.1 Research design

The aim of the research was to investigate whether a brand experience mediates satisfaction and loyalty within a religious context, and would therefore improve brand attachment and hence church membership decisions. A research design refers to the framework employed to conduct the research, and sets out the particulars of the procedures required to obtain the information needed to attain the research objectives, answer the research questions or solve the research problem (Malhotra, 2010).

Due to the relational nature of the research (brand experience to loyalty and satisfaction), the study lent itself towards an explanatory research design. An explanatory study "focuses on studying a situation or problem in order to explain the relationship between variables" (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.113), in this case the relationship between the five dimensions and brand experience in a religious context, and such brand experience on loyalty and satisfaction in that environment. This study aimed to explore whether brand experience mediated loyalty and satisfaction in religious institutions. Malhotra (2010) suggests that such a design is conclusive in nature, which findings can be used as inputs into decision-making, and that its data analysis is quantitative in nature.

Quantitative research has as its aim the testing of hypotheses or answering specific research questions. Its main approach is to measure and test, and data collection is usually conducted in a structured manner. This method is either adopted in descriptive, explanatory/causal or confirmatory research designs (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2012).

This study, being both quantitative and explanatory, informed the use of a strategy utilising a questionnaire or survey as research instrument. A survey entails the collection of data from a large population in a structured manner (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), in this case by means of the Brand Experience Scale questionnaire; and aims "to elicit specific information from respondents" (Malhotra, 2010, p. 211). The questionnaire measures responses on a Likert scale, called the summated ratings method. It offers a numerical attitude scale with numbers associated to responses ranging from (1) unfavourable/strongly disagree to (7) favourable/strongly agree (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996). This study gathered ordinal data, by obtaining ranked categorical data according to preference measures. However, Norman (2010, p.231) argues, "Parametric

statistics can be used with Likert data, with small sample sizes, with unequal variances, and with non-normal distributions, with no fear of 'coming to the wrong conclusion'".

4.2 Scope, population and sampling frame

This study investigated the application of an existing model to a particular industry – being churches or religious institutions. It comprised a multi-phase sampling method (Section 4.3), and for each phase the population definition differed.

A population refers to the complete set of members of a group (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), or "the aggregate of all elements, sharing some common set of characteristics, that comprises the universe for the purpose of the research problem" (Malhotra, 2010, p.370).

In the first phase of the study, the population of the study was all Christian churches and religious institutions in Johannesburg (Section 4.3.1.1). In the second phase of the study (Section 4.3.1.2), the population was the total number of members of the particular church selected in the first phase.

To observe differences between churches (brands), multiple churches with their respective members were considered, and the population is estimated to be approximately 40 854 people as indicated in Table 2.

A sampling frame consists of a complete list all the members that form part of an entire population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). No sampling frame for the first phase of the study, comprising all churches and religious institutions in Johannesburg, was obtained. However, for the second phase of the sampling process, a sampling frame existed for most of the selected churches, consisting of the membership roster or database of the church under consideration. This roster usually contains information such as names, surnames, date of birth and contact information. These sampling frames are usually constructed by the voluntary submission of information by individuals accepting membership of the organisation, or the enrolment on a mailing list by frequent attendees.

Informed by the sampling frame, the scope of the study had as population/universe the complete list of members of the selected churches situated in Johannesburg.

The unit of analysis of the study refers to the subjects or groups being studied. Using a multi-phase sampling method (explained in the following section) the primary sampling units of this study were churches, and the secondary sampling elements were church members.

The nature of the sampling frame, as well as the subjects selected to complete this study, encouraged the use of a self-administered survey as the research strategy. The author was cognisant of the restraints associated with this strategy, like a lower response rate and the miscomprehension of the respondent of the questionnaire content (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The unit of analysis, which "indicates what or who should provide the data and at what level of aggregation" (Zikmund et al., 2012, p.118), was the individual respondent, albeit a member or attendee of a church or gathering.

4.3 Sampling

The sample relates to "a subgroup of elements of the population selected for participation in the study" (Malhotra, 2010, p. 371). Malhotra (2010) indicates that for a study that is exploratory in nature, such as this one – as it pertains to the application of an existing framework's relevance is investigated, and where the findings are considered to be preliminary in nature, – probability sampling may not be required. However, non-probability sampling does not allow for the projection of such results or findings on to a target population.

4.3.1 Sampling method

A multi-stage sampling method was utilised to identify and select the subjects and respondents for this study. The study by Brakus et al. (2009) entailed the nomination of a brand (phase 1) and then evaluating the brand experience associated with that brand in a consequent stage (phase 2). The two phases/stages for this study took place as follows:

4.3.1.1 *Phase 1: Purposive sampling, where sampling units are churches*

The churches participating in this study were selected in a purposive manner, which implies a non-probability sampling method whereby the researcher uses his or her judgment to select the sample members based on a number of possible premises. The premise of this study was based on a typical case or incident scenario where the sample aimed to be illustrative, albeit not statistically representative, of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Saunders and Lewis (2012) further explain that a non-probability sample refers to a sampling method used when a complete list of the population is not available, also noting that the chance that each member of the population has to be selected, is unknown.

The aim of this phase of the study was to gain access to a number of churches based within a geographical area (Greater Johannesburg); and a complete list of all churches, religious institutions and faith-based gatherings in Johannesburg (sampling frame), was not available.

Each church selected or nominated was considered to be a primary sampling unit. By making use of a purposive, judgment and non-probability sampling method, 15 churches (primary sampling units/brands) from multiple denominations were identified and approached to obtain permission to access a sample from each congregation (secondary sampling elements). Of the churches approached, 12 churches decided to participate in the study, and are indicated in Table 2 under Section 4.3.3.

4.3.1.2 *Phase 2: Purposive sampling, where sampling elements are the members of the church selected from Phase 1.*

After the pre-test of the survey was conducted, the participating churches committed on the following methods to obtain participants to the study, in order to invite a sample to evaluate the brand experience of that particular entity (participating church):

- All attendees of the church gathering or church service were invited to participate in the survey by means of completing a printed version of the questionnaire, or by accessing an electronic link to the survey published in a hand-out or church bulletin (Church A, Church B, Church D, Church I, Church K);
- An electronic link to the survey was distributed by the church to the entire congregation or membership roster (sampling frame) of the church – by

means of an email or text message – with an invitation to participate in the research (Church F, Church H, Church J); or,

- An electronic link to the survey was distributed, or hard copies were made available, to select forums, interest groups or volunteer groups within the church (Church C, Church E, Church G, Church L).

The aim of this stage of the study was to obtain respondents for the study that could evaluate the brand experience of the church they considered themselves to be a member of, thereby hoping to obtain findings that would corroborate or refute the research objectives – hence answering the research questions.

Therefore, the sampling method for church members was a purposive, judgment and a non-probability sampling method. The aforementioned was based on a typical case or incident scenario where the sample aimed to be illustrative, albeit not statistically representative of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.3.2 Sample size

The size of the total population (the sum of the members of all churches under consideration) was approximately 40 854 people. At a confidence level of 95% with 5% margin of error, the minimum suggested sample size that was pursued was 381 people. This was calculated by making use of the following formula:

$$Sample\ Size = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1+(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N})}$$

(SurveyMonkey, n.d.)

In this formula, *'N'* is the population size, '*z'* is 1,96 or the 95% confidence level, and '*e'* is the margin of error.

The size of the actual sample, based on the responses received were 675 observations, from at least 12 churches.

4.3.3 Responses obtained

An overview of the number of responses obtained from the 12 churches is set out in Table 2. An indication is also given about the number of people on their membership role, as well as their estimated Sunday attendance. The method in which the data was gathered is suggested in the final column, and discussed in Section 4.3.1.2 and Section 4.5.2.

Table 2: Data gathered and population parameters

Church	Estimated number of members	Estimated Sunday attendance	Number of respon-dents	Data gathering
Church A (AGS Weltevreden-park)	198	115	53	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Church B (AGS Westdene)	250	110	66	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Church C^ (Alberton Lewen-Sentrum)	10 000	4 480	97	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Church D^ (NGK Constantia-kruin)	3 453	700	28	Hard copies at gathering; invitation to online link published in handouts, then electronically captured
Church E (Doxa Deo – AGS)	600	150	16	Electronic link distributed to willing participants
Church F^ (Gracepoint Methodist Church)	4 900	900	54	Electronic link distributed to church database (about 4 300)
Church G (Kaleideo - AGS)	1 883	1 081	81	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Church H^ (Liberty Church)	2 770	2 556	56	Electronic link distributed to volunteer teams and life groups database

				(about 780)
Church I (NGK Andrew Murray)	500	95	54	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Church J^ (Northfield Methodist Church)	5 500	1 500	31	Electronic link distributed to data-base, posted on church social media page, and distributed to leader database
Church K (AGS Ruimsig Gemeente)	800	400	37	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Church L^ (AGS Woord en Lewe)	10 000	2 750	79	Hard copies distributed at gathering then electronically captured
Other	Unknown	Unknown	21	Electronic link
Missing	–	–	**2**	Not completed
Total	**40 854**	**14837**	**675**	

^ *Considered to be a megachurch, – as membership exceeds 2 000* (Einstein, 2007).

4.4 Research instrument

The research instrument (questionnaire) made use of a direct approach, in that the purpose of the study was not disguised and was disclosed to the respondents (Malhotra, 2010).

Malhotra (2010) further mentions advantages and disadvantages related to this method of enquiry; as well as implications for self-administered surveys. Advantages of making use of a survey include the simplicity to administer, code, analyse and interpret; the reliability of the data because of the limited alternative answers to questions; and therefore, the decrease in variability of responses that could be contributed by interviewer bias. On the other side, disadvantages relate to an unwillingness to provide desired information, which might be sensitive or personal in nature. Beliefs and feelings are difficult to articulate by means of a structured and fixed-alternative response; and, the effective way of wording questions are challenging. Furthermore, by making use of a self-administered process of completing the survey, challenges include a very low response rate, low to moderate control over sample respondents, and the limited ability to make

use of physical stimuli to enhance participation or completion. However, the perceived anonymity of the respondent is high, the potential for interviewer bias is almost non-existent, and the speed of completing the questionnaire is faster.

The research instrument that informed this study is the Brand Experience Scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009) and consists of a 12-item questionnaire, reflecting the four dimensions proposed by their study. Permission to make use of the questionnaire, conditional to acknowledgement, was received on 20 May 2015 in an email correspondence from Bernd Schmitt (Appendix A: Permission to use questionnaire).

4.4.1 Internal consistency

The Brand Experience Scale offers the following internal consistencies:

- The results set out in Table 3 were obtained when comparing the Brakus-study with the Nysveen et al. (2013) study, in terms of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a measure of internal consistency reliability. This is an indicator of whether the items or statements measure the same construct (Malhotra, 2010). The Nysveen study added additional questions to cover a relational dimension. (The coefficients achieved for this study are compared to these studies and set out in Table 13 in the following chapter.)

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Brand Experience Scale

	Brakus et al. (2009)	Nysveen et al. (2013)
Sensory dimension effect on brand experience	0,77	0,97
Affective/Emotional dimension effect on brand experience	0,74	0,92
Intellectual dimension effect on brand experience	0,79	0,86
Behavioural dimension effect on brand experience	0,72	0,86
Relational dimension effect on brand experience		0,92
Brand experience effect on loyalty	0,69	0,87
Brand experience effect on satisfaction	0,61	0,63
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation Estimate (RMSEA)	0,08	0,063
Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0,91	0,97

The comparative model fit (CFI) implies acceptable model fit between the actual results and the hypothesised model; and, the root mean square of error of approximation (RMSEA) explores the impact of sample size on the population estimates (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006).

The internal consistency of the current study, as compared to the two initial studies indicated above, is discussed in the following chapter, under Section 5.2.2.

4.4.2 The questionnaire

Each sampling element (sampled church member) was requested to complete a questionnaire, whether online (by electronic link) or a hard copy (printed version that was electronically captured). The questionnaire reflected a number of different response types.

Determinant-choice questions asked respondents to make a selection from a pre-populated specified list (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Supplied answer categories included the name of their church, the duration of their membership, a classification of their membership, their age, gender, level of education achieved and first language.

- **The name of their church.** The questionnaire entailed the evaluation of the brand of the church they considered themselves to be a member of, and such indication was required to identify possible variation between churches studied. This was asked to gather data to inform Research Question 2 (Do brand experiences differ amongst churches?).
- Other factors that could influence brand experience sentiments are identified, and gathered with the aim of addressing Research Question 3 (Are there demographic mediating factors to brand experiences, loyalty or satisfaction in churches?) to be used for analysis in the following chapter:
  - **Duration of membership.** It was proposed that the longer a respondent had been a member of the church, the higher their satisfaction or loyalty evaluation should be, as the decision to change church brand has not been effected.
  - **Classification of membership.** A self-descriptor where the respondents would describe themselves on a continuum ranging from attendee (no loyalty exhibited by membership acceptance), to volunteer leader (high loyalty and satisfaction indicator as it implies an enduring commitment and increased responsibility). Staff member was added as an additional category to identify possible loyalty or acquiescence bias.

- **Age.** The affinity to change, as well as alignment between generation and perceived importance of the five dimensions during life phase, was considered. Furthermore, the spread across the population and adequate representation of age groups was of importance.
- **Level of education.** This parameter was included to consider correlation between the intellectual/cognitive dimension and the brand experience profile of the church, as well as comprehension of the questionnaire.
- **Gender.** This question was included to track representation of both genders within the study; also to determine whether certain dimensions might be of greater importance to some genders.
- **First language.** This parameter hoped to identify representation of different race groups, as well as any bias that might have been the result of understanding related to words used within the questionnaire.

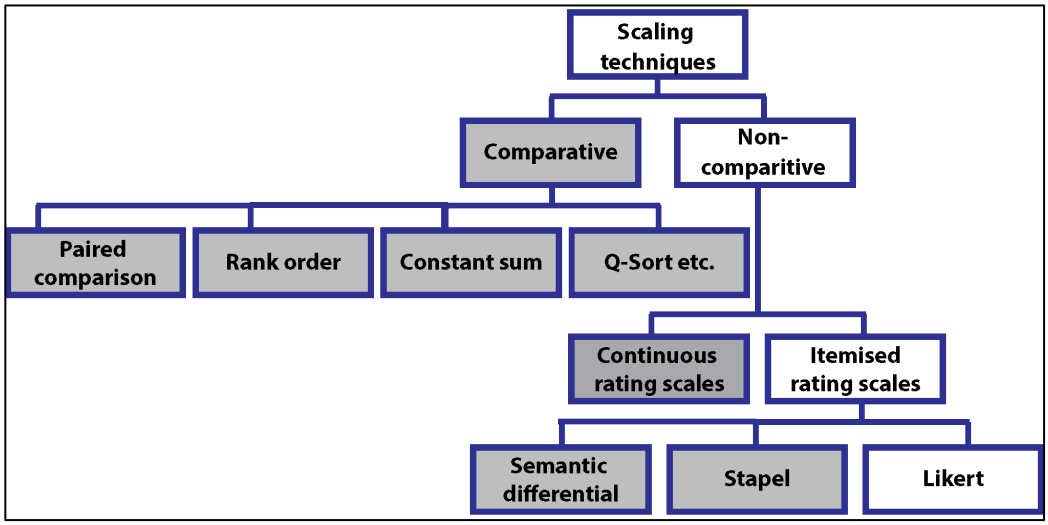
Fixed-alternative questions require respondents to choose from a set of predetermined answers" (Malhotra, 2010, p.211). Twenty-five Likert-style scale-response type questions were included. The respondent rated constructs (informed by the Brand Experience Scale) based on a continuum (1 to 7) to best express their sentiments regarding a particular statement or attribute (Burns & Bush, 2010). These scales are anchored, implying that primary descriptors are used at its extremes, and intermediary scale descriptors used for the numbers in between (Hair, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2006).

These questions were asked, to gather responses with the goal of considering Research Question 1 (Do churches have brand experiences that mediate loyalty and satisfaction?).

Figure 6 sets out the scaling techniques adopted for the purposes of this research study. A non-comparative scale refers to a method whereby each construct, statement or variable is scaled independently of the others in the set. Itemisation relates to the association of numbers or brief descriptors with each category, and is ordered as it pertains to the scale position – hence allowing the

respondent the opportunity to select the best description of the construct, statement or variable (Malhotra, 2010).

Figure 6: A classification of scaling techniques (Malhotra, 2010)



As it pertains to each Likert item, agreement or disagreement to each statement is indicated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Data obtained through these items are ordinal, however when these items are combined or summated a Likert scale is developed and can be treated as interval data, offering the benefits of characteristics of description, order and distance (Norman, 2010). A Likert scale further holds the advantage of being readily understood and thereby makes it easy to use. However, because each statement needs to be read carefully, it takes longer to complete. The scale used for this current study was balanced (equal number of negative and positive categories) and was non-forced, in that it included a neutral category, which could be considered as indicating that no opinion is held about the item, and therefore an odd number of categories were adopted.

The Brand Experience Scale utilised in this study was constructed making use of a Likert scale, and the statements pertaining to loyalty and satisfaction are also rated accordingly. Three statements on each of the dimensions (emotional, sensory, intellectual, relational and behavioural) are made, and five statements on satisfaction and loyalty, respectively. A concern around the combination of different dimensions into one construct, that is the five dimensions summated to reflect brand experience, was not observed in this study, as it has in another previous study (Walter et al., 2013).

4.4.3 Testing of questionnaire

The testing of the questionnaire on a small number of respondents, with the goal of making adjustments and improvements to the questionnaire, is conducted with the aim of identifying and eliminating potential difficulties and could be small, between 15 and 30 respondents (Malhotra, 2010).

The anticipated questionnaire (pre-test questionnaire) utilised for this study was pre-tested by means of an electronic platform (as the main study was anticipated to be undertaken in) to determine comprehension and understanding of the constructs, and was completed by 22 respondents, from eleven churches (four of which were part of phase one of this study). The ease of use, understanding and duration to undertake the survey were investigated, as well as an opportunity to make recommendations, or raise ambiguities.

A key concern raised from this test related to the language used in the Brand Experience Scale and its transference or translation to the church/religious environment. This resulted in the rewording of the questionnaire to increase understanding, as informed by the theories and definitions set out in Chapter 2. Furthermore, cognisant of the observations of Iglesias et al. (2011), it was decided to not make use of reverse coding or negative statements as it affected the reliability of the results. Such disruption in conversational conventions have an adverse effect on data quality and disrupts processing as it takes longer to answer questions if asked unconventionally, and such answers become unpredictable in that it generates thoughts that are not relevant to the question's topic (A. L. Holbrook, Krosnick, Carson, & Mitchell, 2000).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the pre-test questionnaire, and relating to the 15 statements evaluating brand experience, were 0,9318. The coefficient alpha ranges between 0 and 1, and any measure below 0,6 indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra, 2010). However, it should be noted that this number is influenced by the number of scale items, and could therefore be artificially inflated if redundant scale items are included.

The following amendments, as set out in Table 4, were made from the original questions in the reference studies (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen et al., 2013), based upon feedback from the pre-test questionnaire, before the final questionnaire was distributed. Such feedback related to comprehension of

constructs within the religious context, as well as the addition of the membership status parameter. This entailed the expansion of the verbal description used for each statement of some constructs. Additionally, the construct that each statement load upon is also set out in the table.

The 15 brand experience dimension questions, and the ten loyalty and satisfaction questions, were randomised based on an Excel "RANDBETWEEN" algorithm.

Table 4: Questionnaire development and amendments

	Brakus (Brakus et al., 2009)	Nysveen (Nysveen et al., 2013)	Pre-test	Final	Construct
1	This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses	'Brand' makes a strong impression on my senses	My church makes a strong impression on my senses (hear, see, touch, taste and/or smell)	**My church makes a strong impression on my senses; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste.** *(e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)*	Sensory1
2	I find this brand interesting in a sensory way	Being a customer of 'Brand' gives me interesting sensory experiences	Being a member of my church gives me interesting sensory experiences (e.g. auditory, visually, aesthetically, olfactory, tactile)	**Attending my church gives me interesting sensory experiences; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste.** *(e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)*	Sensory2
3	This brand does not appeal to my senses *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*	'Brand' appeals to my senses	My church makes an appeal to my senses (hear, see, touch, taste and/or smell)	**My church makes an appeal to my senses; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste.** *(e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)*	Sensory3
4	This brand induces feelings and sentiments.	'Brand' induces my feelings	When I reflect on my church, it gives rise to feelings and sentiments.	**When I reflect on my church, I have feelings and sentiments.**	Emotional2
5	I do not have	I have strong	I have strong	**I have strong**	Emotional3

	strong emotions for this brand. *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*	emotions for 'Brand'	emotions about my church.	**emotions about my church.**	
6	This brand is an emotional brand.	'Brand' often engage me emotionally	My church often engages me emotionally.	**My church often engages me emotionally.**	Emotional1
7	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand.	I engage in a lot of thinking as a customer of 'Brand'	I engage in a lot of thinking as a member of my church.	**My church engages me intellectually.** *(e.g. – in an analytical, cognitive, clarifying, imaginative or evaluative manner)*	Intellectual1
8	This brand does not make me think *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*	'Brand' often challenge my way of thinking	My church frequently challenges my way of thinking.	**My church frequently challenges my way of thinking and influences my decisions.**	Intellectual2
9	This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem-solving	Being a customer of 'Brand' stimulates my thinking and problem-solving	Being a member of my church stimulates my thinking and problem-solving.	**Being a member of my church stimulates my thinking and problem-solving.**	Intellectual3
10	I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use this brand.	I often engage in action and behaviour when I use 'Brand's' services	I engage in actions and behaviour when I make use of my church's services.	**I engage in actions and behaviours when I make use of my church's services.** *(e.g. I participate in a physical manner by giving of my time, money, skills or talents)*	Behaviour1
11	This brand results in bodily experiences	'Brand' engage me physically	My church engages me physically (e.g. I participate in a physical manner).	**My church engages me physically.** *(e.g. I attend church frequently; I interact and participate in its activities and services)*	Behaviour2
12	This brand is not action oriented *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*	As a customer of 'Brand' I am rarely passive	My church is action oriented (e.g. My church influences how I behave and act)	**My church is action oriented.** *(e.g. My church influences how I behave and act)*	Behaviour3
13		As customer of	As a member of	**My church**	Relational3

		'Brand' I feel like I am part of a Community	my church, I feel like I am part of a community.	**makes me feel as if I am part of a community.**	
14		I feel like I am part of the 'Brand' family	I feel like I am a part of my church's family.	**I feel like I am a part of my church's family.**	Relational2
15		When I use 'Brand' I do not feel left alone.	When I make use of my church's services, I do not feel alone.	**When I make use of my church's services, I do not feel alone.**	Relational1
A	In the future, I will be loyal to this brand	I will be loyal to 'Brand' in the future	In the future I will be loyal to my church	**I will be loyal to my church**	Loyalty3
B	I will buy this brand again	I will keep on being a customer of 'Brand' for the next 6 months	I will continue to remain a member of my church	**I will continue to remain a member of my church**	Loyalty5
C	This brand will be my first choice in the future		My church will remain my first choice.	**My church will remain my first choice**	Loyalty1
D	I will not buy other brands if this brand is available at the store		I will not attend other churches, if I am able to attend my church.	**I will not attend other churches, if I am able to attend my church**	Loyalty4
E	I will recommend this brand to others	I will recommend 'Brand' to others	I will recommend my church to others.	**I will recommend my church to others.**	Loyalty2
F	I am satisfied with the brand and its performance	I am satisfied with 'Brand'	I am satisfied with my church and what it does.	**I am satisfied with my church and what it does.**	Satisfaction1
G	If I could do it again, I would buy a brand different from that brand *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*		If I have to choose again, I would decide to become a member of my church.	**If I have to choose again, I would decide to become a member of my church.**	Satisfaction3
H	My choice to get this brand has been a wise one	'Brand; has been a good choice	My choice to become a member of my church has been a wise one.	**My choice to become a member of my church has been a wise one.**	Satisfaction4
I	I feel bad about my decision to get this brand *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*	'Brand' has lived up to my expectations	I feel good about my decision to become a member of my church.	**I feel good about my decision to become a member of my church.**	Satisfaction2
J	I am not happy		I am happy with	**I am happy with**	Satisfaction5

with what I did with this brand *(Reverse coded and negatively worded)*		being a member of my church.	**being a member of my church.**

The final questionnaire utilised in this study is set out in Appendix B: Questionnaire.

4.5 Data gathering and analysis

Informed by the preceding considerations highlighted in this chapter, data were gathered in the following manner, remaining cognisant of the ethical considerations as set out, and analysed accordingly.

4.5.1 Ethical considerations

The interests of research participants are to be protected, in order for research to be conducted in an ethical manner (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). As such, a compulsory opening statement that requested agreement to continue with the survey was included. This statement informed the respondents of the purpose of the survey, its duration, their voluntary participation and the confidential nature of the study. Only participants older than 18 years of age could participate in the study.

Following the ethical clearance protocol proposed by the institution (Gordon Institute of Business Science), approval for the study was obtained on 28 May 2015. An amendment was made to the sampling methodology to increase the number of responses, and the approval for such was obtained on 13 July 2015 (Appendix C: Permission letter and ethical clearance).

4.5.2 Data gathering

To collect primary data (that is data not already obtained), numerous data collection instruments exist. As indicated before, the most suitable option for this study was a self-administered survey, where respondents could complete the questionnaire at their own pace and in privacy within a particular time period. This method encourages honest results, and data are gathered quickly and captured instantaneously, when an electronic link is used (Hair et al., 2006). The cross-sectional nature of the data gathering process involved the collection of information from the sample/s at a single moment and just once (Malhotra,

2010). This does, however, offer some advantage as to an improved indication of representation in sampling as well as decreased response bias, as opposed to a longitudinal design.

Twelve churches agreed to participate in the study, and through discussion with them three data collection processes were undertaken, dependent on the infrastructure available, preference or mandate of the church selected and was discussed in Section 4.3.1.2.

The online platform, Surveymonkey, was selected to capture all responses, as the author had used the platform before, and was familiar with its operation and considered it trustworthy.

Between 4 June and 2 August 2015, 692 responses were received by means of the aforementioned processes. A total of 17 responses were disqualified because the questions relating to the brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were not completed or an unwillingness to participate in the survey was indicated.

Therefore, 675 responses were considered for the purposes of this study, of these 652 responses were obtained from the 12 churches participating in the study, and 21 from other or not indicated churches – where participants were presumably visiting the participating church's gathering, or were part of the distribution platform used, like a mailing list. Two respondents did not indicate the church they consider themselves to be a member of, and is thus indicated as missing. The responses were gathered as set out in Table 2.

4.5.3 Data analysis

Malhotra (2010) highlights the importance of undergoing a data-preparation process, as informed by the research design, which entails editing or cleaning as well as coding. This enables the data to be presented in a format that could be analysed by software platforms such as Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). For the purpose of this study, SPSS v.23 was used for calculations, and SAS v.9.4 *Proc Calis* for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. A codebook, which refers to the variables in the dataset, was developed and is set out in Appendix D: Codebook.

4.5.3.1 *Data editing and cleaning*

Data editing entails the review of responses with the aim of increasing accuracy or precision of the data that is collected (Malhotra, 2010). The data cleaning required that some amendments to the data would be made, in particular with reference to church name and role definition.

A number of the churches represented, have multiple satellite campuses. In some of the responses obtained, these campuses were indicated as an "other" church category. In those scenarios, the data were amended to align with the overseeing church's name that was part of the study. For example, Pretoria LewenSentrum (PLS) is a campus of Alberton LewenSentrum, and was therefore reframed to be indicative of a response of Alberton LewenSentrum.

Additionally, with regards to the role definition, where respondents were asked to indicate their level of involvement with the church (staff member, volunteer leader, volunteer, member, attendee), the questionnaire allowed for multiple responses. Only the highest level of involvement criteria was incorporated. For example, if someone indicated they were a staff member as well as member, only the role of staff member would be acknowledged in the data, as it is suggestive of a higher level of commitment or investment in the organisation. Responses that indicated an "Other" option, related to either 'governing body', 'eldership' or 'lay leadership', for the purposes of this study, was considered as volunteer leadership, as it is implied that no formal remuneration is received by the service or the role.

Furthermore, responses in which only demographic questions were completed, and none of the construct questions relating to brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty answered, were removed, which amounted to 17 observations that were excluded from the study. This resulted in a total of 675 responses considered in analysis.

No reverse-coded or negative statements were included in the questionnaire, which would have required additional editing to align with the rest of the instrument. However, this did allow for the bias offered by respondents consistently marking one end of the scale, either acquiescence bias or central (in this case, positive) tendency bias.

Finally, missing data values were excluded from calculations and analysis, and such treatment is indicated in Section 5.2.1.

4.5.3.2 Statistics

Ratings obtained from the statements indicated on the Likert scale were given a numerical value of 1 to 7 (ranging from strongly disagree, to strongly agree). Analysis was done on a summated basis, where the statements related to a particular construct were summated for each respondent. Although the data gathered were ordinal, the summation of statements that comprises a specific construct (three for each of the brand experience dimensions, and five for satisfaction and loyalty respectively), by means of a Likert scale can be treated as interval, and therefore parametric statistics could be applied to the data (Norman, 2010).

Statistical techniques that was used to reduce the number of observed variables (responses) into a smaller number of latent variables (constructs) by examining the covariation between variables, are Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Schreiber et al., 2006).

4.5.3.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Factor analysis relates to procedures used to reduce data and assist summarisation of data, where a factor pertains to the underlying dimension that explains the correlation between variables. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) uses a basis of theory to suggest a model – theoretical relationships between observed and unobserved variables – and aims to confirm or reject the alignment of the data with the factors in the model proposed. Therefore CFA tests indicator variables to determine whether they load as expected on the selected factors (Malhotra, 2010). As such, the aim is to minimise the differences between the estimated (population) covariance matrix, and the observed covariance matrix (Schreiber et al., 2006).

4.5.3.2.2 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to estimate dependence relationships amongst a set of constructs represented by multiple measurement variables, and incorporates such into a model (Malhotra, 2010).

This method endeavours to identify paths between important variables in a measurement as well as a structural model, building on the findings generated by the CFA. The measurement model refers to a multivariate regression model that aims to describe the relationships between observed variables (factor indicators) and latent constructs (factors) (Schreiber et al., 2006).

As such SEM aims to determine the covariance or correlation between a number of variables, and aims to explain the variance with the model specified. Also known as covariance structure analysis, SEM is preferred to multiple regression analysis because the latter can only predict one construct at a time and not simultaneously, and joint correlations between predictor or observable constructs are not taken into account (Suhr, 2006).

This multivariate technique incorporates both observed variables as well as unobserved latent variables (constructs). It does require a sufficient sample size, estimated to have about 20 times the number of model parameters, which in this study is tantamount to a sample of 500 (Suhr, 2006). This study obtained 675 responses. Multivariate normality is assumed, and therefore Mardia's Multivariate Kurtosis test was conducted. If multivariate normality is not satisfactory, DWLS (Diagonally Weighted Least Squares estimation) should be used to also compensate for skewness in the study. DWLS uses the size of estimates as indication of the relationship between constructs, and do not make use of significance measures.

4.5.3.2.3 Summary

In the light of the preceding, the data analysis conducted, as well as the purpose of such analysis, are indicated in Table 5 and explained in the relevant sections in the following chapter. The decision criteria and level of significance are also indicated in this table.

Table 5: Overview of data analysis and statistics

#	Purpose	Data analysis and/or statistics
a.	Validity and reliability (Section 5.2)	• Cronbach's alpha coefficient • Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with Diagonally Weighted Least Square (DWLS) estimation • Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy • Bartlett's test of sphericity • Mardia's mutivariate kurtosis

		• Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) • Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) • Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA) • Comparative Fit Index (CFI)
b.	Descriptive statistics (Section 5.3)	• Frequencies • Valid and missing responses
c.	Research Question 1 Brand experience construct (with/without relational dimension) impact on loyalty and satisfaction (Section 5.4.1)	• Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Diagonally Weighted Least Square (DWLS) estimation • Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), • Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) • Path estimates • R-Square (Squared multiple correlations)
d.	Research Question 2 Brand experience between churches (Section 5.4.2)	• Associations and mean testing through Kruskal-Wallis mean test • Post-hoc Bonferroni tests • Spearman's coefficient
g.	Research Question 3 Mitigating influences on brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction (Section 5.4.3)	• Associations and mean testing through Kruskal-Wallis mean test • Post-hoc Bonferroni tests • Spearman's coefficient
h.	Decision criteria	All, except Spearman's Rho: • p-value of 0,05 at 95% confidence Spearman's Rho: significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

4.6 Reliability and validity

The reliability and validity considerations of the study are discussed next. Data analysis pertaining to such are indicated in Section 4.5.3.2 and the results discussed in the following chapter, under Section 5.2.

4.6.1 Reliability

According to Malhotra (2010), reliability indicates the extent to which consistent results are obtained, if repeated measurements are made. As such, it refers to the degree to which measurements are unaffected by changes or differences in respondents or conditions. For the purposes of this study, the internal consistency reliability was measured by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient as well as CFA, a technique employed to confirm if the factors or constructs, as well as the loadings of the variables, conform to the theory (Malhotra, 2010).

Zikmund et al. (2012) reiterates the importance of relevancy, accuracy and clarity in the questions posed to respondents, as any ambiguity or misunderstanding can jeopardise the reliability of the research. An effort to prevent some of these

pitfalls was undertaken by means of a pre-test questionnaire, where not only responses to the questions, but feedback around the understanding, descriptions, timing or intentions could be assessed.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the research instrument in the study is discussed in Section 5.2.2 and compared to the original studies by Brakus et al. (2009) and Nysveen et al. (2013). The values of an alpha coefficient ranges between 0 and 1, and any measure below 0,6 indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra, 2010). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the final questionnaire was considered satisfactory and the following results were obtained: the 15 statements relating to brand experience – 0,945, the five statements relating to loyalty – 0,871, and the five statements relating to satisfaction – 0,945.

4.6.2 Validity

Malhotra (2010) explains that validity relates to how differences in observed scale scores are indicative of true differences among the characteristics measured. This could be further differentiated as content validity, where the entire domain of the construct is adequately measured subjectively; criterion validity, where the scale performs in line with expectations of how other variables would reflect; and construct validity, where the construct being measured, is actually being measured. As such, the construct validity was strongly informed by the theory base considered for this study.

Generalisability refers to the extent to which findings observed in a sample, could be applied or extrapolated to be representative of an entire population (Malhotra, 2010). The generalisability of this study is decreased due to the limited number of churches participating in the study, and the selection of such sample units – which occurred in a judgment, purposive manner and thereby does not make it an adequate representation of all churches.

Missing data values were excluded from analysis, and such treatment is discussed in Section 5.2.1.

4.7 Assumptions

The researcher remained cognisant of the following assumptions pertaining to the study:

- Respondents were truthful in their responses and offered accurate reflections of agreement or disagreement with the statements indicated in the questionnaire.
- Respondents were not biased in their responses, offering a more favourable evaluation than their actual perceptions were.
- Respondents were not influenced by their perception around a business school evaluating the experience surrounding the brand in a church and religious environment.

4.8 Research limitations

The research methodology employed to conduct the study imbued some limitations on the findings. The electronic nature of the survey method, being online and distributed by email, limited the population to those having access to such means. The population suggested by the sampling frame considered members of a church, but the datedness of the church's database (or lack of maintenance) resulted in some obsolete data, for example, contact details or people who have chosen not to be members of the church anymore, as indicated by the number of respondents (21) who are not members of the 12 churches studied (Sampling frame error). Additionally, a large percentage of the respondents described themselves as being staff members or employees of the church brand considered, which is not representative of the population as a whole, albeit a person who chose to participate in the study from the invitation extended.

Racial and ethnic diversity of the sample was not achieved and, although it offered a suggestion of the churches observed, it is not representative of the community or region in which they are situated – as indicated by the low incidence of language diversity, and the high incidence of Afrikaans communities in the study – suggesting a stronger caucasian representation. The religious Christian landscape was therefore not adequately represented by the churches selected and did not include all geographies, ethnicities, languages, affluence or denominations that could be considered. Furthermore, the questionnaire was compiled in English, which might not have been the most proficient language of the respondent.

Furthermore, due to the sensitive nature of branding language within a religious context, some phrases had to be simplified or disseminated to enhance

understanding, without increasing resistance; these include terms like ‘branding’, ‘sensory experiences’ or ‘bodily experiences’. An adequate response rate was achieved, in the context of the larger population and study (between-church findings), but a low response rate (indicative of non-response bias) influenced the findings for within-church observations.

Potential sources of error further explain a variation between true construct perceptions and the observed responses obtained (Malhotra, 2010), and include:

- Random sampling error, where the responding sample offers an imperfect representation of the population (church) in question.
- Non-sampling errors considered, include:
    - Non-response errors, where sampling elements (church members) included in the sample did not respond. Although in most scenarios the entire population were invited to participate, an accurate representation of exactly how many chose to forego such participation is unclear.
    - Response errors, which suggest inaccurate answers, which could include misunderstanding of questions, or a bias to acquiesce and comply with expected perceptions.

Concerns around reverse-coded or negatively worded questions (Iglesias et al., 2011) were incorporated as discussed earlier (Section 4.4.3). This however introduced a form of central tendency and acquiescence bias where responses were leaning to the far right of the questionnaire; which was also the strongly agreeable side of the continuum, and critical evaluation of each statement by the respondent before rating, could be questioned.

Nysveen et al. (2013) raised concerns around the scale being a outcome-oriented measure, for a construct (experience), which is process-oriented. They also questioned the validity of affect-related self-reporting as it relates to experiences. Malhotra (2010) further highlights that cross-sectional studies such as this study, does not offer insights into detecting change or causality, which could impact accuracy.

Finally, the study aimed to observe whether a brand experience takes place within a church or religious organisation, but does not indicate whether such an experience is perceived as positive or negative. The study did not gather any

data pertaining to reasons or motivations for such brand experiences to occur, which could be beneficial in the long-term and also recommended for future research.

4.9 Conclusion and summary

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the research methodology exercised in order to achieve the research objectives set out in Chapter 3. The research methodology decisions applied are set out in summarised format in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of research methodology and design elements per phase

Design elements of research	Phase 1	Phase 2
Research design	Explanatory (To investigate whether brand experience and its dimensions are relevant to the church context.)	
Scope	Greater Johannesburg	
Population	Churches and religious organisations in Johannesburg	Members of a selected church (where the church is the primary unit)
Sampling frame	Unavailable	Membership roster or database of the church / The persons in attendance at gathering, forum or group.
Unit of analysis	Churches (Primary sampling unit)	Church members (Secondary sampling element)
Sampling method	Purposive, judgment, non-probability sample – Typical case premise	Purposive, judgment, non-probability sample – Typical or Incident case premise
Sample size	12 churches	675 responses
Research strategy		Self-administered survey: electronic/online or printed version
Time frame	Finalised on 8 July 2015	Completed on 2 August 2015

In the next chapter the results of the data gathered are analysed and discussed, in the light of the statistical and analysis protocols shown in Section 4.5.3.2. The results of this analysis will be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

The results that were obtained by means of the research methodology set out in Chapter 4, to answer the research questions identified in Chapter 3, are stated in this chapter. These results are discussed in Chapter 6.

This chapter highlights a description of the sample participating in the study, followed by validity and reliability indicators. Descriptive statistics pertaining to the demographic of respondents are then illustrated, before results pertaining to each of the three research questions are stated.

5.1 Sample description

Section 4.3 and Section 4.3.2 sets out the minimum sample size required as well as the methods to obtain such sample. Section 4.5.2 explains how the data were gathered and responses obtained.

As such, a total of 675 valid responses were obtained, of which 652 indicated membership of one of the 12 churches under consideration. Twenty-one responses indicated churches that were not part of these 12 churches, and for the purposes of this study, as such, were considered as a thirteenth church grouping, entitled “Other”. All participants were older than eighteen years of age. A detailed list of the respondents by church is set out in both Table 18 and Figure 9. The membership and attendee demographics, as well as the method in which data was gathered, were discussed in the preceding chapter, and indicated in Table 2.

5.2 Validity and reliability

An overview of salient statistics, as well as a consideration of the validity and reliability of such responses, follows in this section. Measures undertaken relating to data cleaning were discussed earlier (Section 4.5.3.1) and completed prior to the analysis done and discussed in this chapter.

As mentioned before, reliability (Section 4.6.1) reflects the extent to which consistent results are obtained if repeated measurements are made, and validity (Section 4.6.2) holds that differences in observed scale scores are indicative of true differences among the characteristics measured (Malhotra, 2010). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is indicated for the constructs in this study, and

confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to further investigate the validity and reliability of the study.

5.2.1 Valid and missing variables

An indication of missing responses, or incomplete surveys, is set out, as well as the number of responses obtained. Responses in which only demographic questions were completed, and none of the construct questions relating to brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty completed, were removed, which amounted to 17 of the 692 observations being excluded from the study. This resulted in a total of 675 responses considered in the analysis.

Table 7 reflects the responses obtained, and indicates the number of incomplete or missing responses pertaining to each of the demographical indicators.

Table 7: Valid and missing responses: Demographics

	Church Name	Member-ship	Role / Status	Age	Gender	Edu-cation	Lang-uage
Valid	673	669	669	671	668	668	673
Missing	2	6	6	4	7	7	2
Total	675	675	675	675	675	675	675
Missing	0,3%	0,9%	0,9%	0,6%	1,0%	1,0%	0,9%

Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10 reflect the responses obtained by each of the 15 statements pertaining to the dimensions of brand experience. The lowest number of responses were obtained for the variable “Intellectual2”, at 1,8%. All the rest of the variables obtained valid responses of 99,3% and above.

Table 8: Valid and missing responses:
Dimensions of brand experience (Behaviour and intellectual)

	Behaviour 1	Behaviour 2	Behaviour 3	Intellec-tual 1	Intellec-tual 2	Intellec-tual 3
Valid	673	674	675	670	663	673
Missing	2	1	0	5	12	2
Total	675	675	675	675	675	675
Missing	0,3%	0,1%	–	0,7%	1,8%	0,3%

Table 9: Valid and missing responses: Dimensions of brand experience (Emotional and sensory)

	Emotional 1	Emotional 2	Emotional 3	Sensory 1	Sensory 2	Sensory 3
Valid	674	670	673	670	672	670
Missing	1	5	2	5	3	5
Total	675	675	675	675	675	675
Missing	0,1%	0,7%	0,3%	0,7%	0,4%	0,7%

Table 10: Valid and missing responses: Dimensions of brand experience (Relational)

	Relational 1	Relational 2	Relational 3
Valid	672	673	674
Missing	3	2	1
Total	675	675	675
Missing	0,4%	0,3%	0,1%

Table 11 reflects the valid responses obtained by each of the five statements pertaining to the satisfaction construct. The lowest number of responses were obtained for the variable “Satisfaction5”, at 1,5%.

Table 11: Valid and missing responses: Satisfaction

	Satisfaction 1	Satisfaction 2	Satisfaction 3	Satisfaction 4	Satisfaction 5
Valid	668	666	666	670	665
Missing	7	9	6	5	10
Total	675	675	675	675	675
Missing	1%	1,3%	1,3%	0,7%	1,5%

Table 12 reflects the valid responses obtained by each of the five statements pertaining to the loyalty construct. The lowest number of responses were obtained for the variable “Loyalty2”, at 1,8%.

Table 12: Valid and missing responses: Loyalty

	Loyalty 1	Loyalty 2	Loyalty 3	Loyalty 4	Loyalty 5
Valid	667	663	666	667	666
Missing	8	12	9	8	9
Total	675	675	675	675	675
Missing	1,2%	1,8%	1,3%	1,2%	1,3%

The valid responses of all of the aforementioned variables suggest an acceptable level of valid responses and, as such, internal validity, and are included in the consideration of analysis of such constructs.

5.2.2 Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Validity evaluates the extent to which a conclusion that is drawn can be generalised to the entire population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Construct validity relates to the extent that a statement or measurement represents the construct it intends to measure. As such, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is employed to evaluate such in this study. Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a measure of internal consistency reliability, serves as an indicator of whether the items or statements measure the same construct under consideration (Malhotra, 2010).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the research instrument was calculated and compared with the results obtained in the original studies by Brakus et al. (2009) and Nysveen et al. (2013), as set out in Table 13.

Table 13: Cronbach's alpha coefficient as compared to this study

	Cronbach's alpha coefficient			
	Brakus et al. (2009)	Nysveen et al. (2013)	This study (2015)	
			Alpha	*Valid N*
Sensory dimension effect on brand experience	0,77	0,97	**0,795**	*664*
Affective/Emotional dimension effect on brand experience	0,74	0,92	**0,868**	*667*
Intellectual dimension effect on brand experience	0,79	0,86	**0,759**	*657*
Behavioural dimension effect on brand experience	0,72	0,86	**0,702**	*672*
Relational dimension effect on brand experience		0,92	**0,685**	*669*
Brand experience effect on loyalty	0,69	0,87	**0,884**	*665*
Brand experience effect on satisfaction	0,61	0,63	**0,914**	*660*
Total brand experience			**0,945**	*674*
Other indices				
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation Estimate (RMSEA)	0,08	0,063	0,08[#]	
Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0,91	0,97	0,95[#]	

[#]*Based upon the brand experience latent construct*

As stated before, the coefficient alpha ranges between 0 and 1, and any measure below 0,6 indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra, 2010). From the results indicated in the table, the lowest alpha coefficients related to the behavioural (0,702) and relational (0,685) dimensions of the instrument. The results obtained indicate an acceptable level of internal

consistency and, therefore, no items were removed. In other words, the statements used to evaluate each construct, did in fact relate to that construct.

A further comparison between the three studies are shown, as pertaining to the assessment of model fit by means of RMSEA and CFI. Based upon evaluative criteria of such indices (Schreiber et al., 2006), RMSEA should have a value between 0,06 and 0,08 to suggest good model fit. Therefore, all studies fall within the stated parameters. CFI should be greater than or equal to 0,9 to suggest good model fit. All the studies meet the proposed threshold requirement (Suhr, 2006).

5.2.3 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Factor analysis is used to identify latent (unobserved) variables that explain the differences between a larger set of observed (manifest) variables (Schreiber et al., 2006). As such, a factor is a latent variable that is considered to influence the manifest variable. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a multivariate statistical procedure, is utilised when theory substantiates or suggests what manifest variables influence a latent variable; thus, to test whether a pre-specified relationship exists (Malhotra, 2010). CFA assumes that a linear relationship, either by means of correlations or regression, exists among the constructs investigated. Therefore, CFA does not take consideration of independent or dependent variables, as it considers all simultaneously.

5.2.3.1 The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) indicates the appropriateness of factor analysis (values higher than 0,5 are appropriate), and Bartlett's test of sphericity is a test statistic indicating whether variables are uncorrelated to others within the population (Malhotra, 2010).

Each of the seven observed constructs are evaluated according to KMO and Bartlett's test and is set out in Table 14, along with an evaluative observation of its value and findings.

Table 14: KMO and Bartlett's of CFA constructs

	Behavioural	Relational	Emotional	Intellectual	Sensory	Loyalty	Satisfaction
KMO	0,598	0,660	0,717	0,689	0,699	0,854	0,898
Appropriate?	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Bartlett's							
Approximate Chi-square	460,51	327,92	1007,55	488,35	618,79	2807,53	2284,84
df	3	3	3	3	3	10	10
Significance	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Variable correlation in dataset	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*

From the above KMO values, it could be observed that that all constructs could be considered as at least 'mediocre', with loyalty and satisfaction being viewed as 'meritorious' and 'marvellous' respectively. As for Bartlett's, the significance indicates that there are correlations in the data set that deems it fit for factor analysis.

5.2.3.2 Skewness and kurtosis

Skewness refers to a characteristic of a distribution's symmetry around its mean, whereas kurtosis indicates the peakedness or flatness of the curve, as indicated by the frequency distribution (Malhotra, 2010).

Kline (2011) suggests thresholds of between -3 and +3 for skewness, and between -10 and +10 for kurtosis, to be considered as a multivariate normal distribution. As such, the variable "Loyalty2" falls outside the acceptable kurtosis frame. The skewness and kurtosis indicated for each variable are set out in Appendix E: Skewness and kurtosis of data. However, the multivariate kurtosis of the data obtained is indicated in Table 15.

Table 15: Multivariate kurtosis

Index	Value
Mardia's Multivariate Kurtosis	824,1939
Relative Multivariate Kurtosis	2,2210
Normalized Multivariate Kurtosis	278,3703

Mardia's Multivariate Kurtosis is a measure used to indicate multivariate normality, where "a large value of Mardia's measure relative to the expected value under multivariate normality suggests the presence of one or more … cases that are far from the centroid of all cases" (DeCarlo, 1997, p.298). Thus, indicating whether the tails are heavy or light when compared to those of the multivariate normal distribution.

For this study, being cognisant of the ordinal nature of data, as well as its skewness and kurtosis, the CFA was conducted making use of Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation.

5.2.3.3 Assessment of measurement model fit

Therefore, CFA was employed to determine whether the statements (items) in the questionnaire have a significant relationship on the theoretical constructs they intend to measure; in this study, the dimensions proposed by Brakus et al. (2009) and Nysveen et al. (2013) and their impact on satisfaction and loyalty is considered.

The theoretical constructs examined in this scenario comprised brand experience (consisting of five underlying constructs: emotional, sensory, intellectual, relational and behavioural dimensions), satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 16 indicates the coefficients that were calculated to evaluate the fit of the proposed measurement model, as it relates to the brand experience dimensions. Goodness-of-fit refers to the degree to which the observed and respondent data are predicted by the estimated model. Standardised Root Means Square Residual (SRMR) is a badness-of-fit indicator where lower values are desirable. Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) is a goodness-of-fit indicator, where higher values are desirable. As such, both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model, as it pertains to the construct of brand experience.

Table 16: Coefficients assessing measurement model fit: Brand experience

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	80		

Standardised Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0356	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model.
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9942	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model.

The constructs of loyalty and satisfaction are considered in Table 17 with the same indices. Similarly, both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model, as it pertains to the constructs of loyalty and satisfaction.

Table 17: Coefficients assessing measurement model fit: Loyalty and satisfaction

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	33		
Standardised Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0252	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model.
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9973	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model.

5.2.3.4 Path analysis, variances and graphical representation of model

The standardised results for path list, as well as variance and errors pertaining to the variables, are noted in Appendix F: CFA – Path list and variance parameters.

A graphical representation of the CFA, using DWLS of brand experience, is illustrated in Figure 7, and for loyalty and satisfaction in Figure 8. The latent variables are represented within a circle (behavioural, emotional, intellectual, relational and sensory), while the observed variables (for example, behaviour1, behaviour2 and behaviour3) are framed within a rectangle. The coefficient values, or path estimates, are reflected above the connecting line or path (for example, 0,47, 0,78 and 0,75). DWLS uses the size of estimates as an indication of the relationship between constructs and does not make use of significance measures. Unstandardised coefficients are indicated. The number indicated above each variable is an indicator of variance error.

Figure 7: Graphical representation of CFA model – Brand experience dimensions

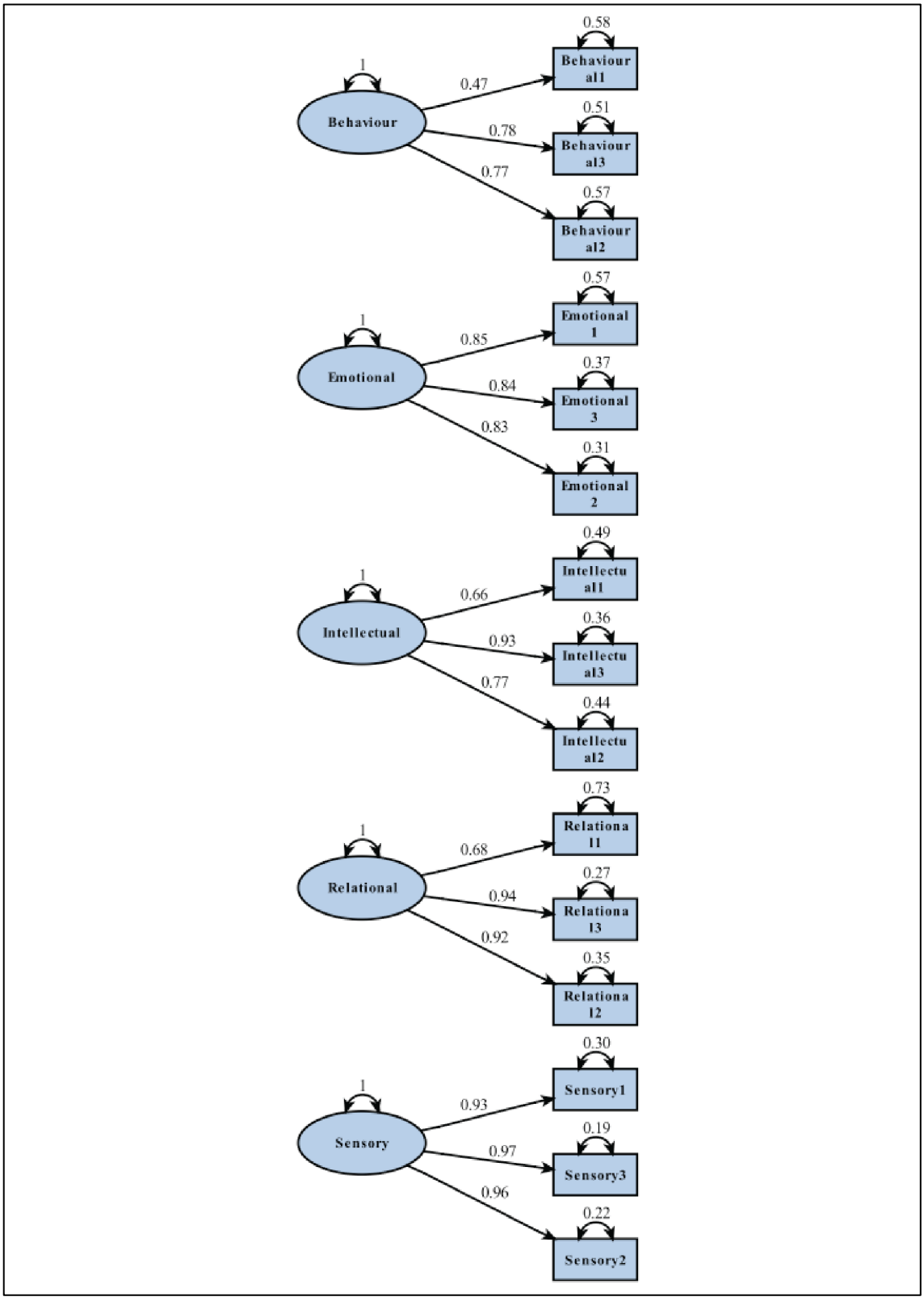
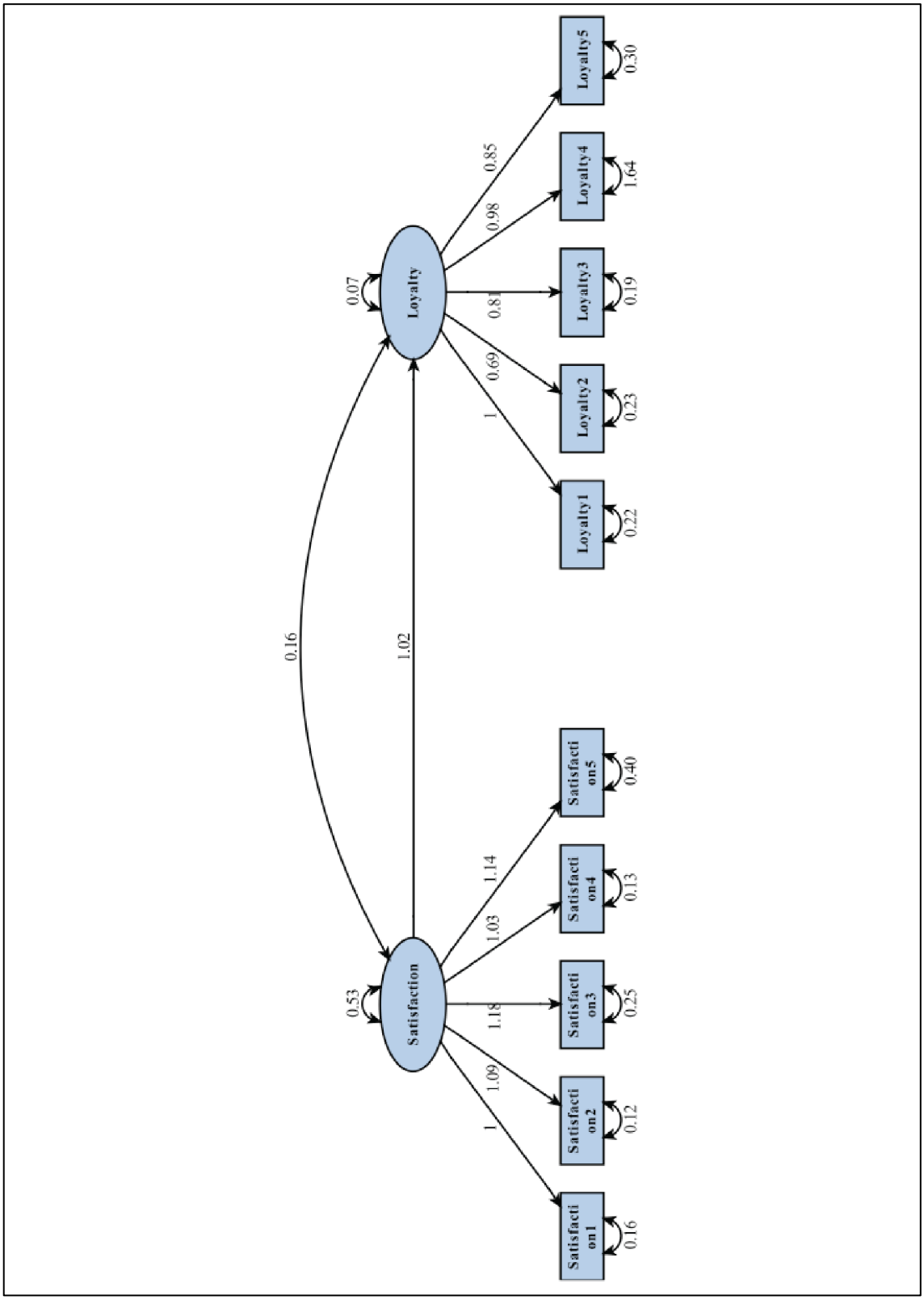


Figure 8: Graphical representation of CFA model – Satisfaction and loyalty



CFA aimed to confirm the proposed relationship that the observed variables (for example, Behaviour1, Behaviour2 and Behaviour3) are associated with the latent construct (Behaviour). Furthermore, the relationship between loyalty and satisfaction was also investigated and shows a path estimate of 1,02 of satisfaction on loyalty, and an error of 0,16 as indicated in Figure 8.

5.2.3.5 Conclusion

An acceptable goodness-of-fit validates the proposed model, when compared to the studies considered in Table 13. Furthermore the relationships between the observed variables and the latent constructs, and model fit, are indicated in Table 16 and Table 17. Finally, Table 14 sets out the appropriateness of factor analysis.

5.3 Descriptive statistics

The demographics of the respondents are considered in this section.

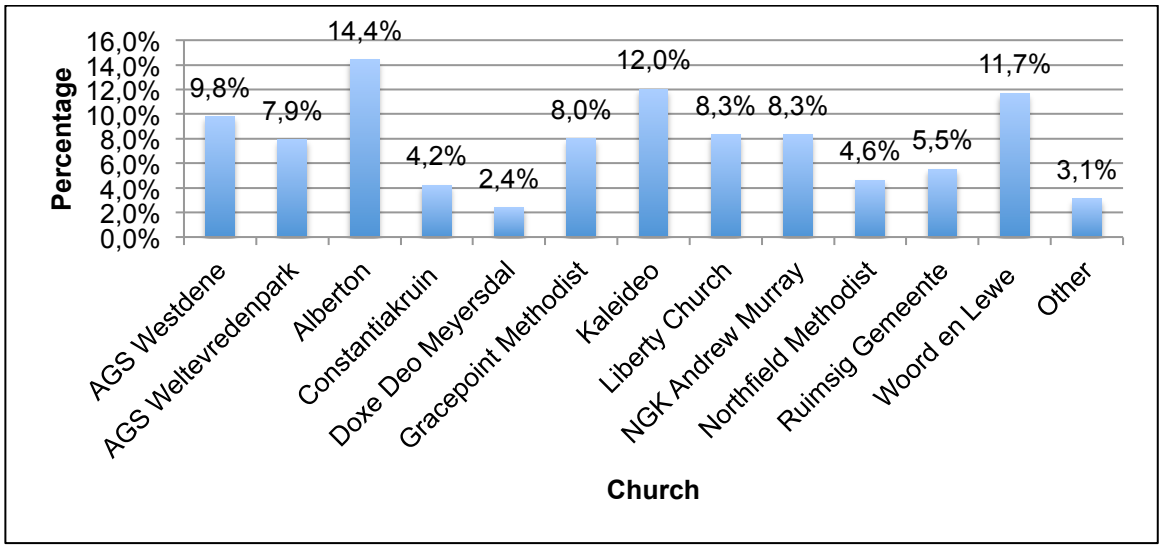
5.3.1 Respondents by church

The number of valid responses obtained from each church, as well as the respective percentages of total and valid respondents, is considered. This is a frequency distribution, where the number of responses associated with a variable is counted and expressed as a percentage (Malhotra, 2010). This is set out in Table 18 and illustrated in Figure 9.

Table 18: Respondents by church

		Frequency	%	Valid %
VALID	AGS Westdene	66	9,8	**9,8**
	AGS Weltevredenpark	53	7,9	**7,9**
	Alberton LewenSentrum	97	14,4	**14,4**
	Constantiakruin	28	4,1	**4,2**
	Doxa Deo Meyersdal	16	2,4	**2,4**
	Gracepoint Methodist	54	8,0	**8,0**
	Kaleideo	81	12,0	**12,0**
	Liberty Church	56	8,3	**8,3**
	NGK Andrew Murray	54	8,0	**8,0**
	Northfield Methodist	31	4,6	**4,6**
	Ruimsig Gemeente	37	5,5	**5,5**
	Woord en Lewe	79	11,7	**11,7**
	Other	21	3,1	**3,1**
	Total	**673**	**99,7**	100,0
Missing	System	2	0,3	
Total		**675**	**100,0**	

Figure 9: Respondents by church (%)



The average number of responses per church is 54 (excluding "Other" churches), and ranges from the smallest number of respondents received from the Doxa Deo Meyersdal community (2,4%, 16), and the highest from Alberton LewenSentrum (14,4%, 97). As such, the mean of responses received by church is 54 responses. The limited number of missing responses makes the dominant percentage of responses valid.

5.3.2 Other respondent demographics

The other demographical responses are set out the following section.

5.3.2.1 Duration of membership

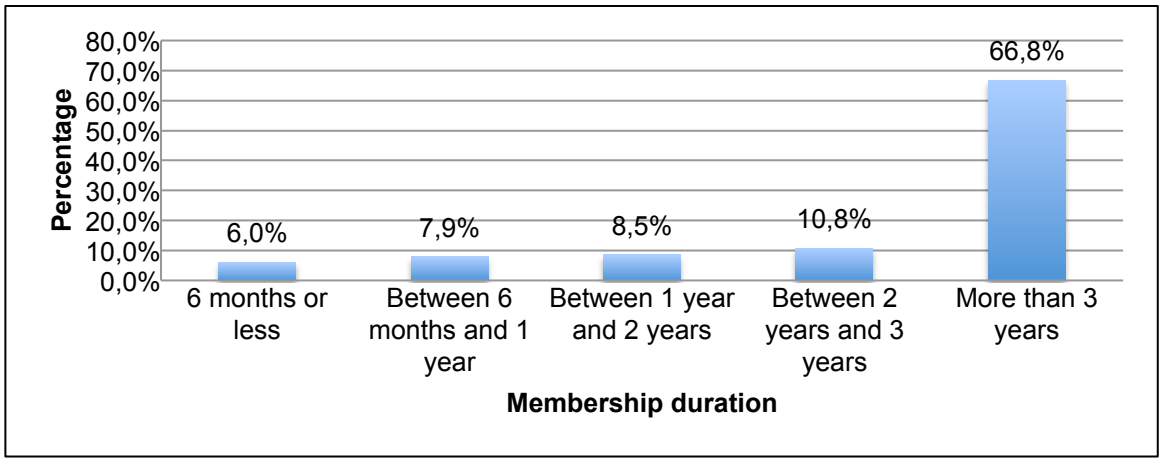
Table 19 and Figure 10 indicate the duration that respondents have been members of their respective churches. More than 66% of the respondents have been members of their churches for a period longer than three years. Only 6% of respondents were members of their churches for a period of 6 months or less.

Table 19: Respondents by duration of membership

		Fre-quency	%	Valid %	Cum-ulative %
Valid	6 months or less	40	5,9	6,0	**6,0**
	Between 6 months and 1 year	53	7,9	7,9	**13,9**
	Between 1 year and 2 years	57	8,4	8,5	**22,4**
	Between 2 years and 3 years	72	10,7	10,8	**33,2**
	More than 3 years	447	66,2	66,8	**100,0**

	Total	**669**	**99,1**	**100,0**
Missing	System	6	0,9	
Total		**675**	**100,0**	

Figure 10: Respondents by duration of membership (%)



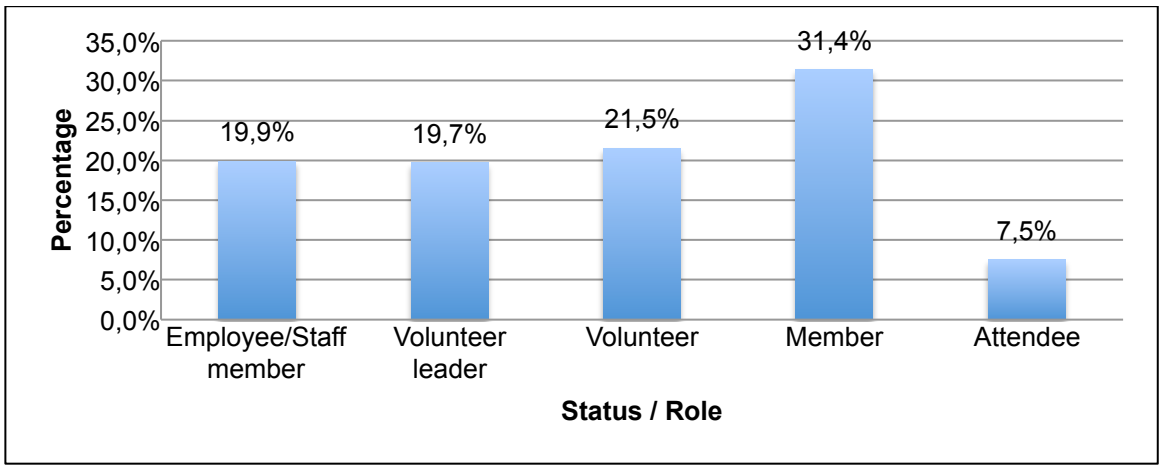
5.3.2.2 Role or status of membership

Table 20 and Figure 11 set out the number of respondents, as distributed by the role or status of their engagement with the church. Less than 8% of the respondents did not consider themselves to be a member of the church, and the churches under consideration employ approximately 20% of the respondents. Approximately 41% are serving in the church in a volunteer or volunteer leadership position. The remaining 31% respondents describe themselves as members of the churches.

Table 20: Respondents by role or status of membership

		Fre-quency	%	Valid %	Cum-ulative %
Valid	Employee/Staff member	133	19,7	19,9	**19,9**
	Volunteer leader	132	19,6	19,7	**39,6**
	Volunteer	144	21,3	21,5	**61,1**
	Member	210	31,1	31,4	**92,5**
	Attendee	50	7,4	7,5	**100,0**
	Total	669	99,1	100,0	
Missing	System	6	0,9		
Total		**675**	**100.0**		

Figure 11: Respondents by role or status (%)



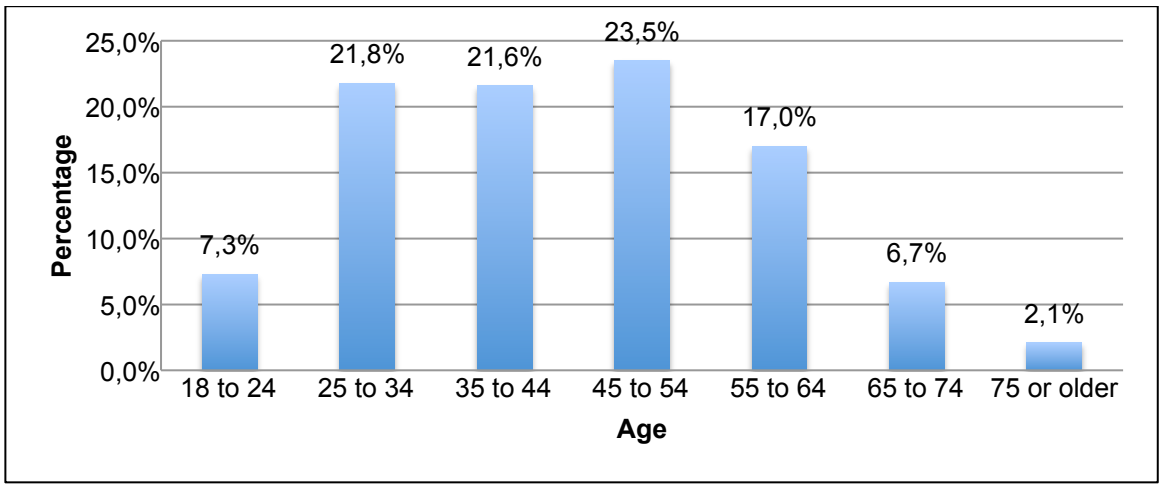
5.3.2.3 Age group

Table 21 and Figure 12 show the number of respondents, as distributed by age group. The lowest represented age groups in the study were those older than 65 years of age (8,8%, 59) and those younger than 24 (7,3%, 49). Consequently, more then 83% are aged between 25 and 64 years old. The highest number of responses was obtained from those aged between 45 to 54 years old at 23,5%. More than half (50,7%) of the responses were from those younger than 44. As such, 29,9% of respondents are considered to be millennials, being 34 and younger (Barna Group, 2015; Qader & Omar, 2013).

Table 21: Respondents by age group

		Fre-quency	%	Valid %	Cum-ulative %
Valid	18 to 24	49	7,3	7,3	**7,3**
	25 to 34	146	21,6	21,8	**29,1**
	35 to 44	145	21,5	21,6	**50,7**
	45 to 54	158	23,4	23,5	**74,2**
	55 to 64	114	16,9	17,0	**91,2**
	65 to 74	45	6,7	6,7	**97,9**
	75 or older	14	2,1	2,1	**100,0**
	Total	671	99,4	100,0	
Missing	System	4	0,6		
Total		**675**	**100,0**		

Figure 12: Respondents by age group (%)



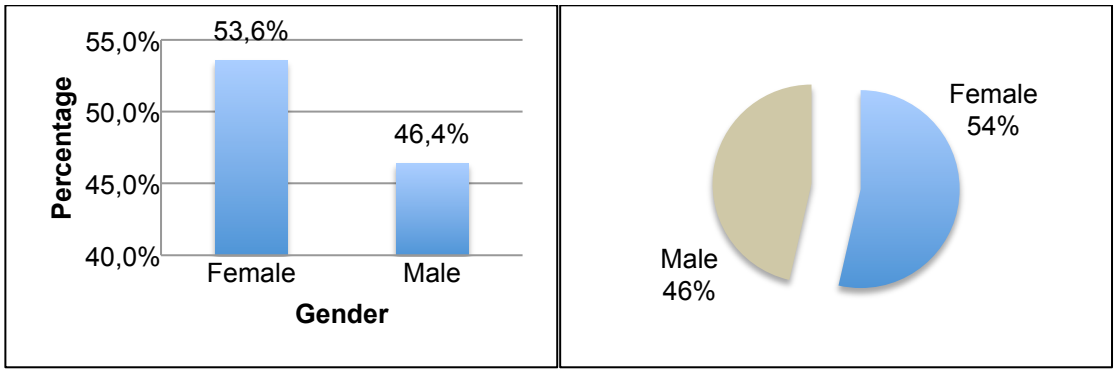
5.3.2.4 Gender

Table 22 and Figure 13 set out the gender of the respondents. At 54% of women and 46% of men, the responses were relatively equally distributed between male and female genders. One percent of respondents, however, declined to answer this question.

Table 22: Respondents by gender

		Fre-quency	%	Valid %	Cum-ulative %
Valid	Female	358	53,0	53,6	**53,6**
	Male	310	45,9	46,4	**100,0**
	Total	668	99,0	100,0	
Missing	System	7	1,0		
Total		**675**	**100,0**		

Figure 13: Respondents by gender (%)



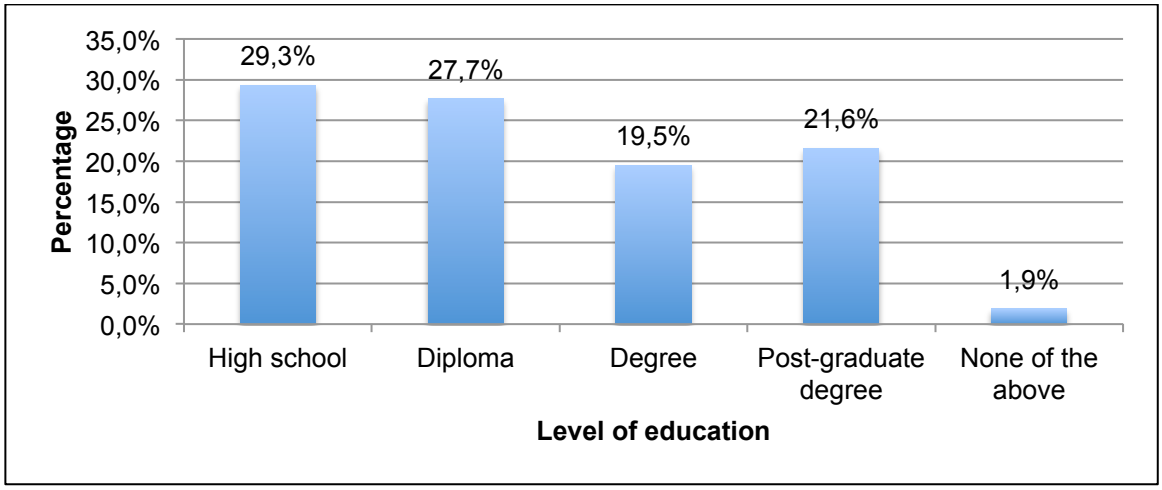
5.3.2.5 *Level of education*

Table 23 and Figure 14 demonstrate the responses indicating the level of education completed by respondents. The number of respondents with at least a high school level of education was 29%, the highest response category. Only 1,9% of respondents do not have at least a high school education. As such, 98,1% could be considered educated.

Table 23: Respondents by level of education

		Fre-quency	%	Valid %	Cum-ulative %
Valid	High school	196	29,0	29,3	**29,3**
	Diploma	185	27,4	27,7	**57,0**
	Degree	130	19,3	19,5	**76,5**
	Post-graduate degree	144	21,3	21,6	**98,1**
	None of the above	13	1,9	1,9	**100,0**
	Total	668	99,0	100,0	
Missing	System	7	1,0		
Total		**675**	**100,0**		

Figure 14: Respondents by level of education (%)



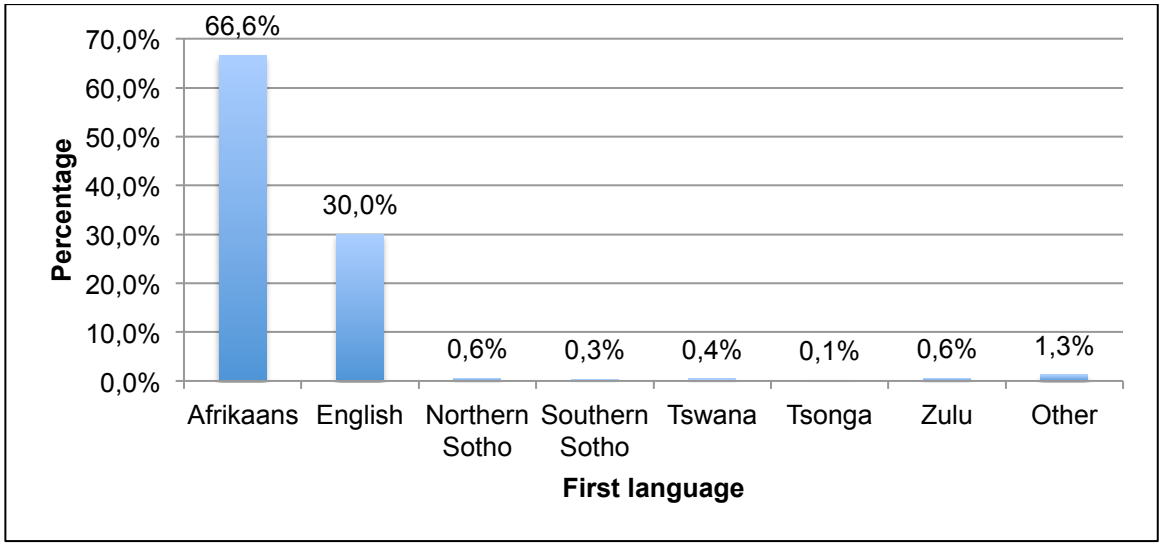
5.3.2.6 *First language*

Table 24 and Figure 15 reflect the first language of respondents. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated Afrikaans as their first language, and 30% were English. About 3,4% indicated other languages, apart from the two mentioned so far as their first language.

Table 24: Respondents by first language

		Fre-quency	%	Valid %	Cum-ulative %
Valid	Afrikaans	448	66,4	66,6	**66,6**
	English	202	29,9	30,0	**96,6**
	Northern Sotho	4	0,6	0,6	**97,2**
	Southern Sotho	2	0,3	0,3	**97,5**
	Tswana	3	0,4	0,4	**97,9**
	Tsonga	1	0,1	0,1	**98,1**
	Zulu	4	0,6	0,6	**98,7**
	Other	9	1,3	1,3	**100,0**
	Total	673	99,7	100,0	
Missing	System	2	0,3		
Total		**675**	**100,0**		

Figure 15: Respondents by first language (%)



5.3.3 Synopsis: Descriptive statistics

Based on the responses received, the largest proportion of the data was obtained from respondents who considered themselves to be members of the church in excess of three years (66,8%, Table 19). Additionally, a large proportion (19,9%, Table 20) is also staff members or employees of the churches. The age groups represented suggest that most responses (83,9%, Table 21) are aged between 25 and 64 years, and 29,9% of respondents being millennials. The gender representation is relatively even, with 46,4% males and 53,6% females participating in the study (Table 22). The level of education suggests that 98,1% of the respondents are literate, boasting at least a high school education (Table 23). The anticipated limitations, as set out in Section 4.8 as it pertains to languages and its implication on ethnicity, is indicated by

the dominant proportion of participants considering Afrikaans (66,6%) and English (30%) their first languages.

5.4 Research questions

Results that were obtained, as it pertains to the relevant research questions, are set out below. (The detailed path estimates for the SEM models under consideration, are set out in Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation.)

5.4.1 **Research Question 1** – Do churches have brand experiences that mediate loyalty and satisfaction?

The objective of this research question is to determine whether brand experience and its relationship with loyalty and satisfaction can be observed in religious institutions or churches.

An attempt is made to explain the interrelationships among the manifest variables (the five dimensions of brand experiences, loyalty and satisfaction) by an underlying common dimension, or factor (brand experience). Informed by the CFA conducted (Section 5.2.3), the relationships between constructs were further explored by means of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

SEM assumes multivariate normality, but due to the skewness and ordinal nature of the dataset, Diagonally Weighted Least Squares estimation (DWLS) is applied, where the size of estimates serves as indication of the relationship between constructs. DWLS does not make use of significance measures.

The SEM-model is over-identified thereby acknowledging that enough covariance information is available to estimate a set of structural equations. At least three observed variables for each latent construct exists.

The results relating to this research question are divided into seven parts, as the SEM-model considers:

- the effect of brand experience on loyalty, excluding the relational dimension;
- the effect of brand experience on satisfaction, excluding the relational dimension;

- the effect of brand experience on loyalty, including the relational dimension;
- the effect of brand experience on satisfaction, including the relational dimension;
- a comparison of the results obtained from the preceding;
- the effect of brand experience on loyalty and satisfaction, including and excluding the relational dimension; and,
- a conclusion is drawn from the above.

5.4.1.1 ***Research Question 1.1*** *– Are the four dimensions suggested by Brakus et al. (2009) mediators of loyalty through brand experience within a religious context?*

Through SEM the relationship between the latent construct variables, brand experience and loyalty, is investigated without the incorporation of the relational dimension.

The coefficients set out in Table 25 were calculated to assess the relationship between brand experience (excluding the relational construct) and loyalty. In this instance the objective was not centred on model fit, but rather on evaluation.

Table 25: Covariance structure analysis (SEM): Brand experience on loyalty without relational construct

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	113		
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0376	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9933	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model

The relationship between brand experience and loyalty without the relational construct considered in Table 25, suggests that both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model.

The path estimates for this model are indicated in Section G.1 (Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation). The estimate values indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct

modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct.

5.4.1.2 ***Research Question 1.2*** *– Are the four dimensions suggested by Brakus et al. (2009) mediators of satisfaction through brand experience within a religious context?*

This section explores SEM as it relates to brand experience and satisfaction, and is investigated without the incorporation of the relational dimension.

The coefficients set out in Table 26 were calculated to assess the relationship between brand experience (excluding the relational construct) and satisfaction. Again the objective was not centred on model fit, but on evaluation.

Table 26: Covariance structure analysis (SEM): Brand experience on satisfaction without relational construct

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	113		
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0371	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9939	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model

The relationship between brand experience and satisfaction, without the relational construct considered in Table 26, suggests that both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model.

The path estimates for this model are indicated in Section G.1 (Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation). The estimate values indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct.

5.4.1.3 ***Research Question 1.3*** *– Should the social (relational) dimension suggested by Nysveen et al. (2013) be included as mediator of loyalty through brand experience within a religious context?*

Through SEM the relationship between the latent construct variables, brand experience and loyalty, is investigated with the incorporation of the relational dimension.

The coefficients set out in Table 27 were calculated to assess the relationship between brand experience (including the relational construct) and loyalty. In this instance the objective was not centred on model fit but on evaluation.

Table 27: Covariance structure analysis (SEM): Brand experience on loyalty with relational construct

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	163		
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0395	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9928	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model

The relationship between brand experience and loyalty, incorporating the relational construct considered in Table 27, suggests that both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model.

The path estimates for this model are indicated in Section G.2 (Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation). The estimate values indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct.

5.4.1.4 ***Research Question 1.4*** *– Should the social (relational) dimension suggested by Nysveen et al. (2013) be included as mediator of satisfaction through brand experience within a religious context?*

Through SEM the relationship between the latent construct variables, brand experience and satisfaction, is investigated with the incorporation of the relational dimension.

The coefficients set out in Table 28 were calculated to assess the relationship between brand experience (including the relational construct) and satisfaction. Once again the objective was not centred on model fit but on evaluation.

Table 28: Covariance structure analysis (SEM): Brand experience on satisfaction with relational construct

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	163		
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0392	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9933	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model

The relationship between brand experience and satisfaction, incorporating the relational construct considered in Table 27, suggests that both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model.

The path estimates for this model are indicated in Section G.2 (Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation). The estimate values indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct.

5.4.1.5 *Comparison of the preceding four tests and calculations*

When the findings of the aforementioned are compared independently, it suggests that there is a better fit when the relational dimension is excluded. The variance error in this model also explains more of the variation than in the other where the relational dimension is included. However, the influence of

brand experience on loyalty as well as satisfaction has a stronger path estimate value when considered independently.

Table 29: SEM: Comparison – loyalty and satisfaction independently

Index or indicator	Value (excluding relational dimension)	Value (including relational dimension)	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)
Loyalty			
Model degrees of freedom	113	163	
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0376 *#	0,0395	≤ 0,08
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9933 *#	0,9928	≥ 0,95
Standardised path estimates			
Brand experience on loyalty	0,72499	0,72956 *#	
Brand experience on satisfaction	0,74572	0,75468 *#	
Variance error	0,47439 *#	0,46775	
Satisfaction			
Model degrees of freedom	113	163	
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0371 *#	0,0392	≤ 0,08
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9939 *#	0,9933	≥ 0,95
Standardised path estimates			
Brand experience on loyalty	0,72499	0,72956 *#	
Brand experience on satisfaction	0,74572	0,75468 *#	
Variance error	0,44390 *#	0,43046	

*# *Preferred values between figures compared*

Therefore, mixed results were obtained from the aforementioned and, consequently, satisfaction and loyalty are considered together in the following section, and its influence determined.

5.4.1.6 ***Research Question 1.5*** *– Is the five-dimension model of brand experience a better indicator of loyalty and satisfaction, than the four-dimension model?*

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation was used to determine the best model fit, whether it includes or excludes the relational dimension.

The coefficients set out in Table 30 were calculated to evaluate the goodness of fit of the relationship between brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty, with the inclusion of the relational dimension.

Table 30: Covariance structure analysis (SEM): Brand experience on loyalty and satisfaction with relational construct

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	265		
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0379	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9937	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model

The relationship between brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty incorporating the relational construct considered in Table 30, suggests that both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model.

The path estimates for this model are indicated in Section G.1 (Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation). The estimate values indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct.

Furthermore, the covariance of the errors of both loyalty and satisfaction of this scenario (including the relational component) is considered in Table 31. This suggests that there is a correlation between these two constructs that is not explained by the model. The error variance includes this unexplained covariance and could improve model fit.

Table 31: Standardised results for covariances among errors: Loyalty and satisfaction, including the relational construct

Error of	Error of	Estimate
Loyalty	**Satisfaction**	0,43400

The coefficients set out in Table 32 were calculated to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the relationship between brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty, but excludes the relational dimension.

Table 32: Covariance structure analysis – SEM
Brand experience on loyalty and satisfaction, excluding the relational construct

Index	Value	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)	Observation
Model degrees of freedom	201		
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0356	≤ 0,08	Do not reject the proposed model
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9943	≥ 0,95	Do not reject the proposed model

The relationship between brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty, excluding the relational construct considered in Table 32, suggests that both the SRMR and the AGFI values support the proposed model.

The path estimates for this model are indicated in Section G.2 (Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation). The estimate values indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct.

Furthermore, the covariance of the errors of both loyalty and satisfaction in this scenario (excluding the relational component) is considered in Table 31. This suggests that there is a correlation between these two constructs that is not explained by the model. The error variance includes this unexplained covariance and could improve model fit.

Table 33: Standardised results for covariances among errors without relational construct

Error of	Error of	Estimate
Loyalty	**Satisfaction**	0,44722

5.4.1.7 Conclusion

Taking cognisance of the determinations mentioned before, Table 37 illustrates a comparison between the indicators relating brand experience to loyalty and satisfaction simultaneously, including and excluding the relational construct. The path estimates relating to the five dimensions, loyalty and satisfaction constructs are also set out.

Table 34: SEM: Comparison – Loyalty and satisfaction simultaneously

Index or indicator	Value (excluding relational dimension)	Value (including relational dimension)	Criteria for good model fit (Schreiber et al., 2006)
Model degrees of freedom	163	265	
Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR)	0,0392	0,0379*#	≤ 0,08
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0,9933	0,9937*#	≥ 0,95
Covariance error	0,43400	0,44722*#	
Standardised path estimates			
Behaviour	*0,96918*	*0,96034*	
Sensory	*0,82853*	*0,81129*	
Intellectual	*0,96756*	*0,96259*	
Emotional	*0,99147*	*0,98477*	
Relational	–	*0,94479*#	
Loyalty	*0,72510*	*0,73039*#	
Satisfaction	*0,74848*	*0,75696*#	

 # Preferred values between figures compared

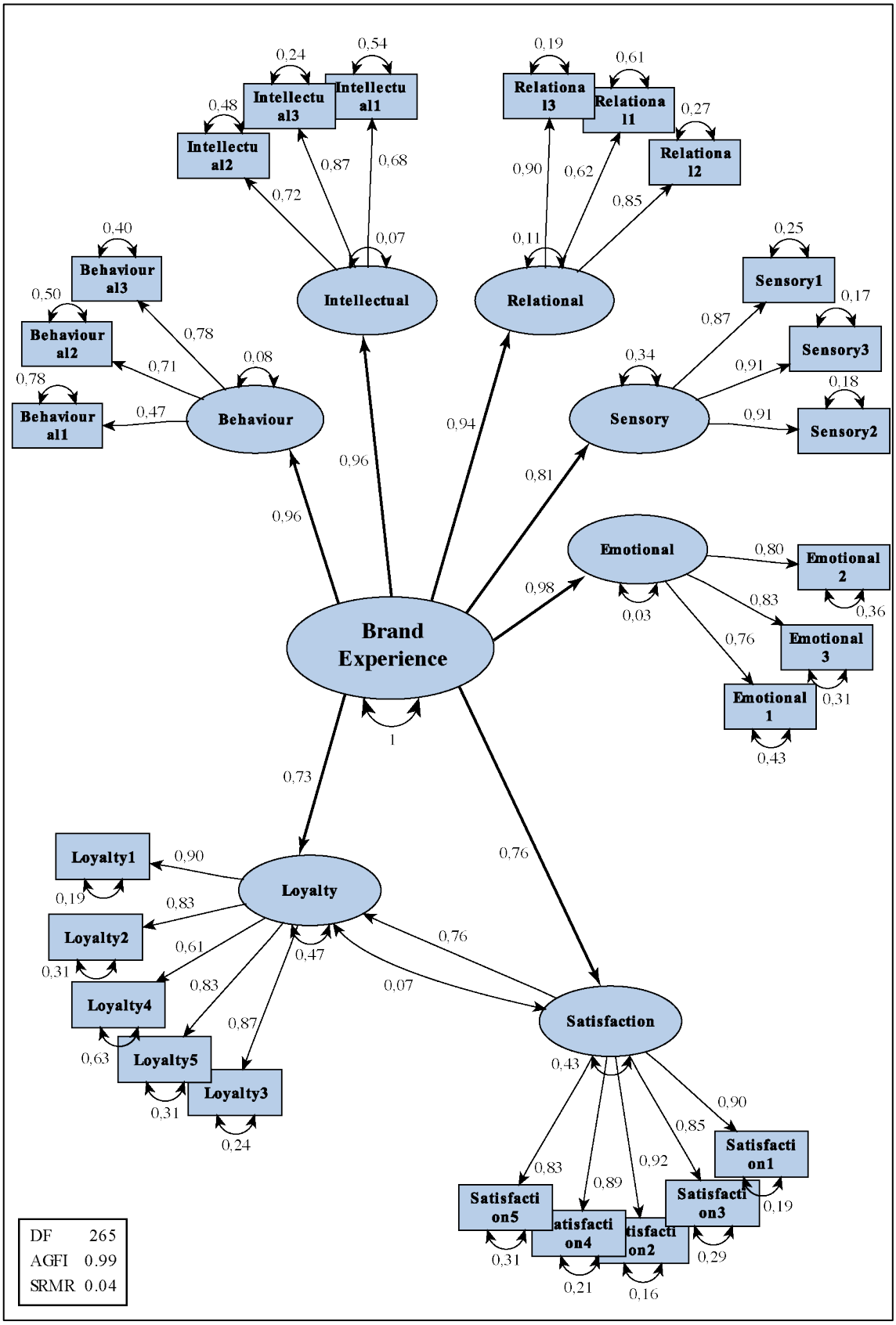
The results in Table 37 suggest that the model that includes the relational construct is preferred. The standardised path estimates, allowing for comparison to the model excluding the relational dimension, are also stronger in the model that includes the relational dimension, especially as it pertains to loyalty and satisfaction simultaneously through brand experience.

Furthermore, the measure of variation in responses that is explained by the proposed model is indicated by the R-Square value in Table 35. For example, this suggests that the emotional construct explains the most of the variation in brand experience, at 96,98%, followed by the intellectual construct (92,66%) and the behavioural construct (92,23%). The relational construct renders an estimated 89,26% explanation of variation, whereas the sensory dimension explains the smallest percentage, at 65,82%.

Table 35: SEM: Squared multiple correlations, as relating to brand experience

Variable	Error Variance	Total Variance	R-Square
Emotional	0,02165	0,71606	0,9698
Intellectual	0,03052	0,41564	0,9266
Behaviour	0,01360	0,17493	0,9223
Relational	0,04695	0,43732	0,8926
Sensory	0,29640	0,86714	0,6582
Satisfaction	0,24025	0,56263	0,5730
Loyalty	0,44632	0,95669	0,5335

Figure 16: SEM model incorporating relational construct (standardised)



The comprehensive SEM model that incorporates the relational dimension of brand experience is illustrated in Figure 16, making use of standardised coefficients. The coefficient values indicate the strength of the relationships between all the latent constructs (path estimates) as well as the variance error observed relating to each observed and latent variable. Furthermore, the impact of satisfaction on loyalty is also observed.

The aforementioned results of this research question (Research Question 1: Do churches have brand experiences?) are discussed in Section 6.1.

5.4.2 **Research Question 2** – Do brand experiences differ amongst churches?

Research Question 2 aimed to determine whether there is a difference between the latent constructs on a specific and individual church level. To this end, the mean ranks for brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were considered, as grouped by church.

For mean testing, differences between the church groups were tested with a Kruskal-Wallis test, which is a non-parametric alternative to ANOVA. The Kruskal-Wallis test is used to compare mean rank, and the Chi-Square test statistic it renders, was used to determine the significance of the difference. As such, the hypotheses proposed were:

H_0: The mean ranks of the groups are the same.

H_1: The mean ranks of the groups differ significantly.

Where the p-value is below 0,05, using a 95% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

Table 36 illustrates the result of the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric mean test to detect differences in the evaluations between the different churches. Significant differences were observed between all latent variables and the different churches under consideration, as observed by the low p-value obtained. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected in that the mean ranks between the churches differ significantly.

Table 36: Kruskal-Wallis mean test: Church

	Kruskal-Wallis Chi-squared	Degrees of freedom	p-value	Criteria to reject H_0	Comment
Brand experience	43,840	12	0,000	p<0,05	Reject H_0
Loyalty	43,837	12	0,000	p<0,05	Reject H_0
Satisfaction	55,728	12	0,000	p<0,05	Reject H_0

To further explore the differences between churches, the individual churches were ranked according to mean ranks between all latent variables, and set out in Table 37. The table reflects the relationship between brand experience and the constructs of loyalty and satisfaction, as churches with high brand experience tend to have high scores on satisfaction and loyalty. For example Church B is in the first position when it comes to brand experience and satisfaction, or Church H, which scored third in brand experience and loyalty, are second in satisfaction. As such, it is suggested that each unique church brand experience rank offers a unique satisfaction and loyalty rank associated with it. The results also suggest a trend that higher rankings on brand experience are correlated to higher rankings in satisfaction and in loyalty, and that the inverse as it pertains to lower rankings, are also evident.

Table 37: Mean ranks of churches according to latent constructs

	Brand experience		Satisfaction		Loyalty	
	Position	**Mean rank**	***Position***	**Mean rank**	***Position***	**Mean rank**
Church B	*1*	395,18	*1*	381,75	*2*	384,71
Church A	*2*	383,81	*4*	351,35	*5*	352,46
Church H^	*3*	381,78	*2*	378,63	*3*	368,10
Church I	*4*	321,42	*5*	349,79	*4*	362,45
Church L^	*5*	309,51	*3*	375,15	*1*	390,44
Church C^	*6*	304,94	*6*	342,45	*6*	328,68
Church G	*7*	303,43	*8*	310,19	*8*	300,12
Church D^	*8*	291	*7*	314,85	*7*	318,13
Church E	*9*	289,30	*10*	261,93	*9*	297,59
Church F^	*10*	281,46	*9*	275,46	*11*	267,12
Church J^	*11*	264,78	*11*	260,72	*12*	242,45
Church K	*12*	227,44	*12*	260,23	*10*	267,96
Other	13	220,39	*13*	198,08	*13*	157,53

^ *Considered to be a megachurch, – membership exceeds 2000* (Einstein, 2007)

To this end, Spearman's Rho was calculated to determine whether a correlation between church rank and the latent constructs could be observed. Spearman's Rho is a non-metric correlation measure that relies on rankings to compute such correlation (Malhotra, 2010). As such, the coefficient as it pertains to

satisfaction, brand experience and loyalty was determined in terms of the churches represented, and set out in Table 38. Brand experience indicated a significant value and therefore suggests a correlation in the relationship between church brand and the experience thereof.

Table 38: Spearman's Rho – Church and the latent constructs

	Church name	Satisfaction	Brand experience	Loyalty
Spearman's Rho coefficient	1,000	0,075	0,145**	0,069
p-value		0,055	0,000	0,078
N	672	657	634	652

**Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)*

In conclusion to this section, the variation between churches as it relates to brand experience, is represented by the box plot in Figure 17. The coloured area indicates where the bulk of the data is located. The horizontal line within the coloured area is an indicator of where the median is situated. The wings indicate the spread of the remainder of the data. The small circles are indicative of outliers or extreme outliers (asterisks) along with the observation number (identifier) it relates to.

Similarly, the box plots as they relate to satisfaction and loyalty are shown in Figure 18 and Figure 19, respectively. The box plots also visually offer an indication of the skewness and kurtosis concerns that were raised earlier (Section 5.2.3.2).

Therefore, by making use of the Kruskal-Wallis mean test, determining mean ranks of the latent constructs per church, Spearman's Rho and illustrative box plots the relationship between the individual churches and the latent constructs were investigated.

The results of this research question (Research Question 2: Do brand experiences differ amongst churches?) are discussed in Section 6.2.

Figure 17: Box plot – Churches and brand experience (brandexp)

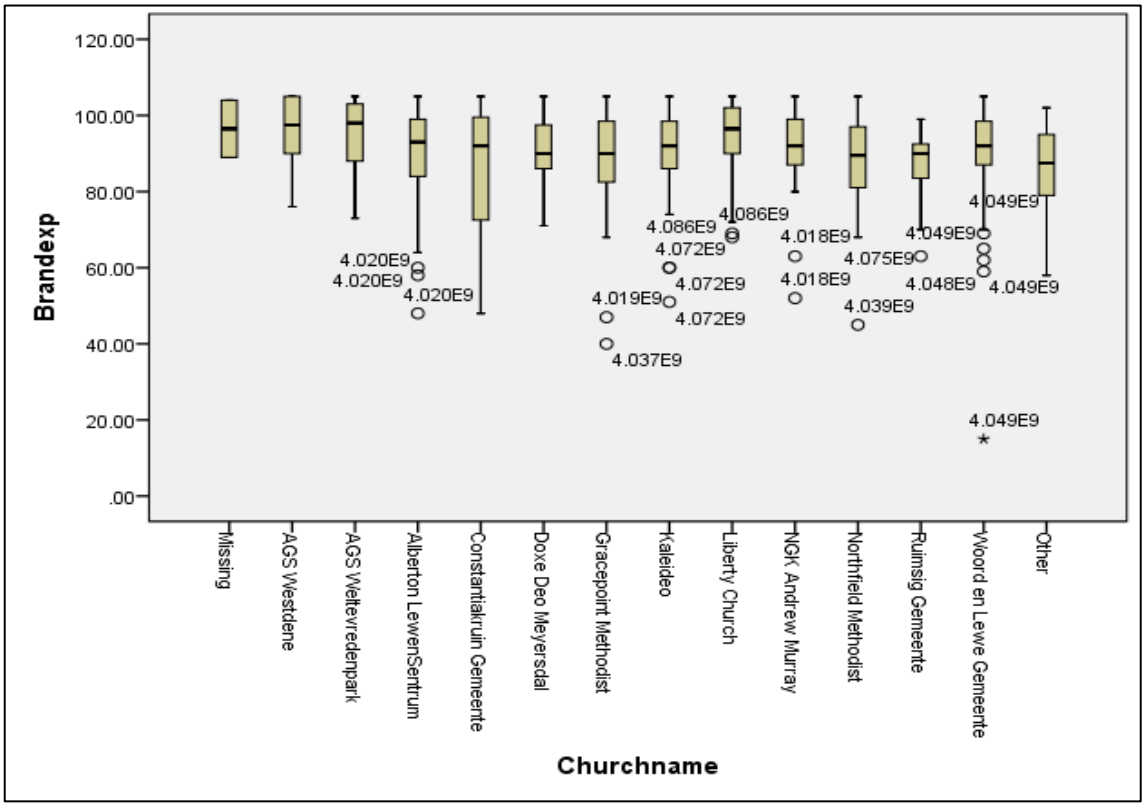


Figure 18: Box plot – Churches and satisfaction

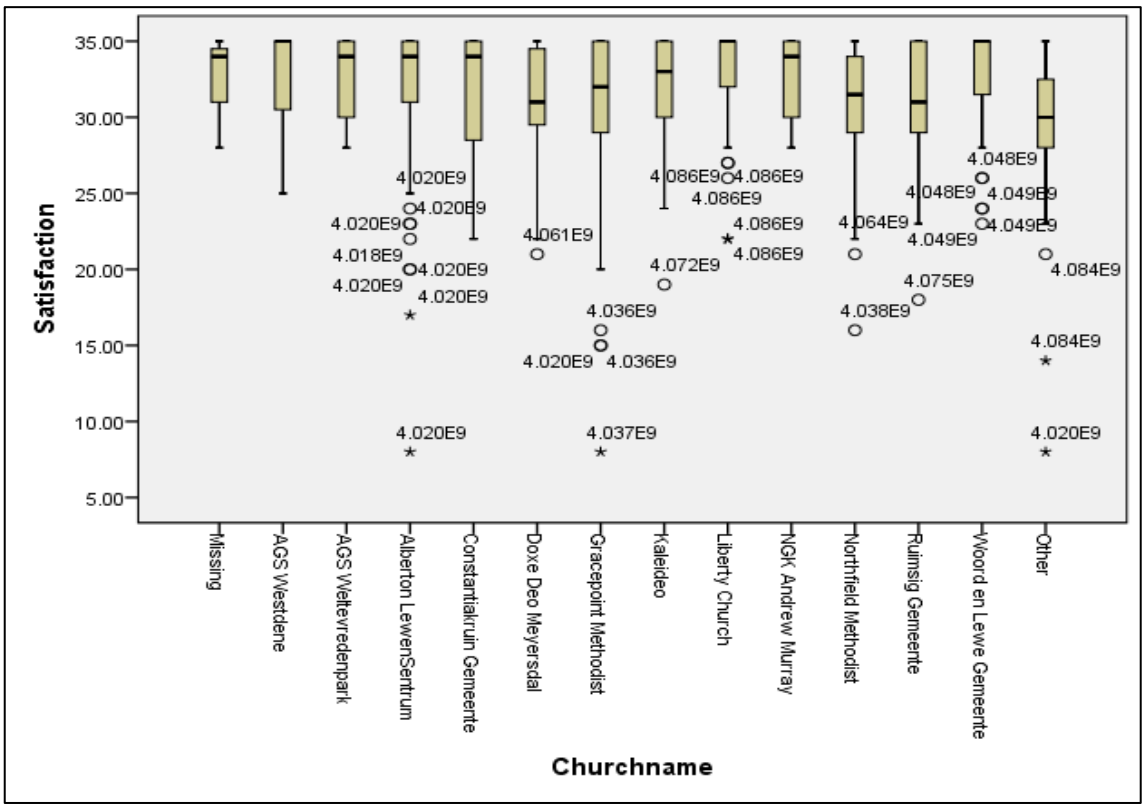
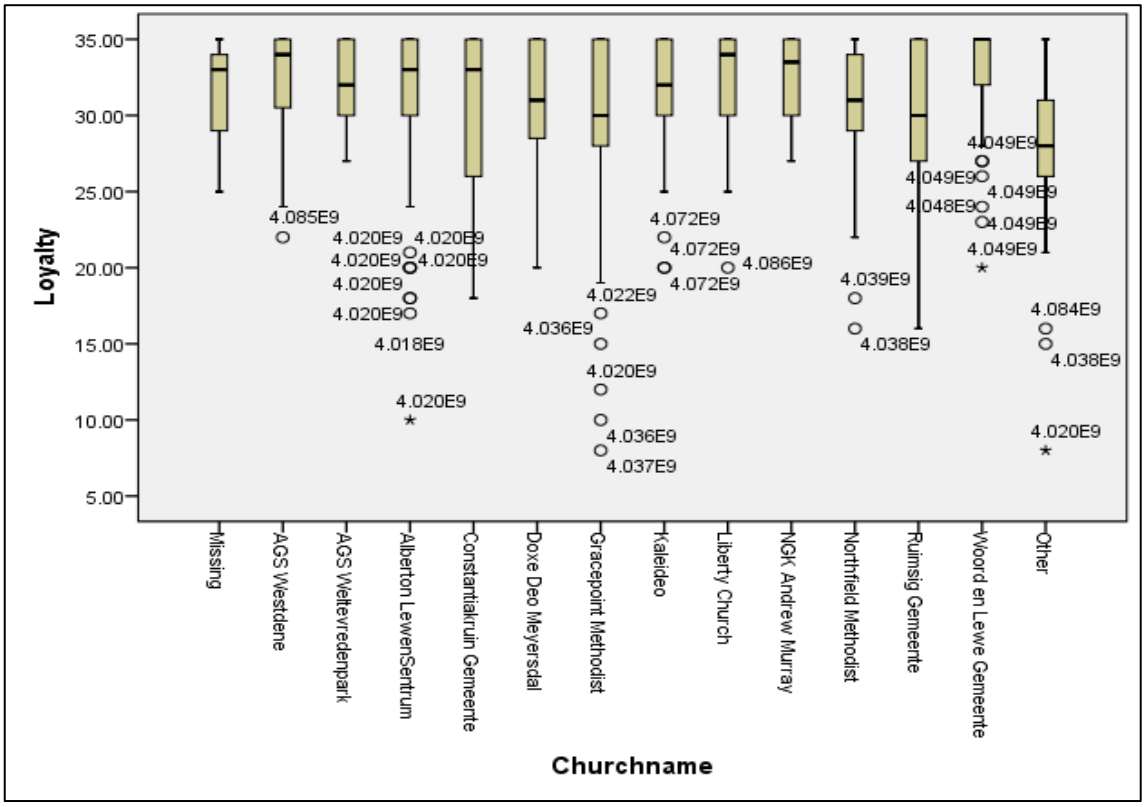


Figure 19: Box plot – Churches and loyalty



5.4.3 **Research Question 3** – Are there demographic mediating factors to brand experiences, loyalty or satisfaction in churches?

This research question seeks to determine whether demographic factors such as age, duration of membership, level of education or role status mediate any or all of the latent constructs of the study. Calculations pertaining to dynamics and factors within the industry were conducted through mean and association testing. The summed values of the different scales and variable items were used to conduct these tests.

For mean testing, differences between the demographic groups were tested with a Kruskal-Wallis test. This test compares mean rank, and the Chi-Square test statistic obtained was used to determine the significance of the differences observed. As such, the hypotheses proposed were:

H_0: The mean ranks of the groups are the same.

H_1: The mean ranks of the groups differ significantly.

In scenarios where the p-value is below 0,05, using a 95% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

If a significant difference is observed, further post-hoc tests are undertaken, by means of Bonferroni. Post-hoc tests refer to the analysis of the data after the completion of the data gathering with the aim of identifying patterns that were not specified *a priori,* before the data was gathered. As such, Bonferroni refers to a statistical test for multiple comparisons of a family of variables (Simes, 1986). Variation is considered to be significant at the 5% level of significance. Values that are close to the p-value are also considered as demographically relevant.

Furthermore, correlation between the mediating factors of age, membership duration, role status, level of education and church name/brand are also considered by means of Spearman's Rho. Spearman's Rho is a non-metric correlation measure that relies on rankings to compute such correlation (Malhotra, 2010). By using the ranks of the values, the strength of association is determined. This indicates whether there is, or is not a dependency between the variables measured. Furthermore, the sign of the relationship (positive or negative) can be used to indicate positive or negative association.

5.4.3.1 ***Research Question 3.1*** *– Is age a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?*

The first part of this research question aims to determine whether the age of the respondent has an effect on any of the latent constructs. As such, the mean ranks of brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were considered, and considered by age group.

Table 39: Kruskal-Wallis mean test: Age group

	Kruskal-Wallis Chi-squared	Degrees of freedom	p-value	Criteria to reject H_0	Comment
Brand experience	13,1725	6	0,04	p<0,05	Reject H_0
Loyalty	14,2397	6	0,03	p<0,05	Reject H_0
Satisfaction	15,2146	6	0,02	p<0,05	Reject H_0

The null hypothesis was rejected, because a significant difference in the mean ranks was observed. Hence post-hoc tests were undertaken to indicate which of the groups differ. In Table 40 the relationships between the various age

groups are compared, as it relates to brand experience, using Bonferroni. Cells highlighted indicate significant differences, for example: 65 to 74-year olds and 18 to 24-year olds differ significantly with a z-value of 3,011865 and a p-value of 0,0273 on brand experience.

Table 40: Comparison of brand experience by age group (Bonferroni)

	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74
25 to 34	0,936839 1,0000					
35 to 44	1,758058 0,8267	1,159116 1,000				
45 to 54	1,430326 1,0000	0,691183 1,0000	-0,492016 1,0000			
55 to 64	2,000743 0,4769	1,496893 1,0000	0,396307 1,0000	0,870011 1,0000		
65 to 74	3,011865 0,0273**	2,735153 0,0655*	1,939662 0,5504	2,292748 0,2296	1,612071 1,0000	
75 and older	1,850129 0,6751	1,474620 1,0000	1,026723 1,0000	1,217491 1,0000	0,857071 1,0000	-0,070517 1,0000

**Variation is significant at the 5% level of significance*
**Variation is evident of a difference close to the 5% level of significance*

Satisfaction was also considered in a similar manner, and yielded the results as set out in Table 41.

Table 41: Comparison of satisfaction by age group (Bonferroni)

	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74
25 to 34	-0,620833 1,0000					
35 to 44	1,279232 1,0000	2,680857 0,0771*				
45 to 54	1,431372 1,0000	2,933779 0,0352**	0,198013 1,0000			
55 to 64	0,608242 1,0000	1,657178 1,0000	-0,862967 1,0000	-1,064249 1,0000		
65 to 74	1,921030 0,7203	2,784059 0,0564*	0,974584 1,0000	0,851028 1,0000	1,549210 1,0000	
75 and older	1,308916 1,0000	1,770443 0,8049	0,675250 1,0000	0,597703 1,0000	1,039553 1,0000	0,077140 1,0000

**Variation is significant at the 5% level of significance*
**Variation is evident of a difference close to the 5% level of significance*

Loyalty was considered in the following table, and yielded the results as set out in Table 42.

Table 42: Comparison of loyalty by age group (Bonferroni)

	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74
25 to 34	-0,551115 1,0000					
35 to 44	0,791240 1,0000	1,921589 0,5739				
45 to 54	0,907433 1,0000	2,121958 0,3553	0,155302 1,0000			
55 to 64	0,810353 1,0000	1,861782 0,6577	0,062055 1,0000	-0,081745 1,0000		
65 to 74	2,151608 0,3300	2,122889 0,0188**	1,848716 0,6772	1,765587 0,8134	1,751832 0,8379	
75 and older	1,673374 0,9897	2,136934 0,3423	1,350673 1,0000	1,293387 1,0000	1,308307 1,0000	0,189362 1,0000

**Variation is significant at the 5% level of significance*

Spearman's Rho was calculated and shown in Table 43 to further investigate the relationship between age and the latent constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) of the study.

Table 43: Spearman's Rho – Age and the latent constructs

	Age	Satisfaction	Brand experience	Loyalty
Spearman's Rho coefficient	1,000	0,108**	0,120**	0,122**
p-value		0,005	0,002	0,002
N	671	656	633	651

**Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)*

The correlation between the latent constructs and age was deemed significant, as indicated by the low p-values obtained, and the positive value of the coefficient suggests a positive association between the constructs.

Therefore, by calculating the Kruskal-Wallis mean test, the Bonferroni post-hoc tests and Spearman's Rho, the relationship between age and the latent constructs was investigated. The aforementioned results, pertaining to age as mediating factor, are discussed in Section 6.3.1.

5.4.3.2 ***Research Question 3.2*** *– Is education a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?*

The mean ranks of brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were considered, and grouped by level of education as set out in Table 44.

Table 44: Kruskal-Wallis mean test: Level of education

	Kruskal-Wallis Chi-squared	Degrees of freedom	p-value	Criteria to reject H_0	Comment
Brand experience	7,5465	4	0,11	p<0,05	Do not reject H_0
Loyalty	3,8347	4	0,43	p<0,05	Do not reject H_0
Satisfaction	5,4694	4	0,24	p<0,05	Do not reject H_0

The null hypothesis is not rejected, as no significant difference is observed in the mean ranks of brand experience, satisfaction or loyalty when grouped by level of education.

Spearman's Rho was calculated and shown in Table 45 to verify the relationship between level of education and the latent constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) of the study.

Table 45: Spearman's Rho – Education and the latent constructs

	Education	Satisfaction	Brand experience	Loyalty
Spearman's Rho coefficient	1,000	-0,036	-0,039	0,044
p-value		0,361	0,331	0,258
N	668	654	632	669

The correlation between the latent constructs and level of education was not considered to be significant, as indicated by the higher p-values obtained.

Therefore, by calculating the Kruskal-Wallis mean test and Spearman's Rho, the relationship between level of education and the latent constructs was investigated. The aforementioned results, pertaining to education as mediating factor, are discussed in Section 6.3.2.

5.4.3.3 ***Research Question 3.3*** *– Is duration of membership a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?*

The mean ranks of brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were considered, and grouped by membership duration and are set out in Table 46.

Table 46: Kruskal-Wallis mean test: Membership duration

	Kruskal-Wallis Chi-squared	Degrees of freedom	p-value	Criteria to reject H_0	Comment
Brand experience	3,2866	4	0,51	p<0,05	Do not reject H_0
Loyalty	8,1138	4	0,09	p<0,05	Do not reject H_0
Satisfaction	4,4522	4	0,35	p<0,05	Do not reject H_0

The null hypothesis is not rejected, seeing that no significant difference is observed in the mean ranks of brand experience, satisfaction or loyalty when grouped by membership duration.

Spearman's Rho was calculated and shown in Table 47 to also investigate the relationship between membership duration and the latent constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) of the study.

Table 47: Spearman's Rho – Membership duration and the latent constructs

	Membership duration	Satisfaction	Brand experience	Loyalty
Spearman's Rho coefficient	1,000	-0,061	0,051	0,032
p-value		0,119	0,197	0,414
N	669	631	650	650

The correlation between the latent constructs and membership duration was not considered to be significant, as indicated by the higher p-values obtained.

Therefore, by calculating the Kruskal-Wallis mean test and Spearman's Rho, the relationship between membership duration and the latent constructs was investigated. The aforementioned results, pertaining to membership as mediating factor, are discussed in Section 6.3.3.

5.4.3.4 ***Research Question 3.4*** *– Is role or status a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?*

The mean ranks of brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were considered, grouped by role status and set out in Table 48.

Table 48: Kruskal-Wallis mean test: Role or membership status

	Kruskal-Wallis Chi-squared	Degrees of freedom	p-value	Criteria to reject H_0	Comment
Brand experience	51,288	4	0	p<0,05	Reject H_0
Loyalty	21,9817	4	0	p<0,05	Reject H_0
Satisfaction	34,3101	4	0	p<0,05	Reject H_0

Because a significant difference in the mean ranks was observed, and the null hypothesis rejected, post-hoc tests were undertaken to ascertain which of the groups differ. In Table 49 the relationships between the various role statuses are compared, as it relates to brand experience, using Bonferroni. Cells highlighted indicate significant differences, for example: Employee and Volunteer leaders differ significantly with a z-value of 3,868257 and a p-value of 0,0005 on brand experience.

Table 49: Comparison of brand experience by role or status group (Bonferroni)

	Employee	Volunteer leader	Volunteer	Member
Volunteer leader	3,868257 0,0005**			
Volunteer	2,909611 0,0181**	-1,002356 1,0000		
Member	2,140840 0,1614	-2,107475 0,1754	-1,032873 1,0000	
Attendee	-3,776296 0,0008**	-6,511567 0,0000**	-5,843267 0,0000**	-5,390134 0,0000**

**Variation is significant at the 5% level of significance*

Loyalty was considered in a similar manner, and yielded the results as set out in Table 50.

Table 50: Comparison of loyalty by role or status group (Bonferroni)

	Employee	Volunteer leader	Volunteer	Member
Volunteer leader	1,808216 0,3529			
Volunteer	1,770195 0,3835	0,061456 1,0000		
Member	2,466107 0,0683*	0,470702 1,000	0,546324 1,0000	
Attendee	-2,403711 0,0811*	-3,706523 0,0000**	-3,687124 0,0011**	-4,211767 0,0001**

**Variation is significant at the 5% level of significance*
**Variation is evident of a difference close to the 5% level of significance*

Similarly, satisfaction was considered next and yielded the results as set out in Table 51.

Table 51: Comparison of satisfaction by role or status group (Bonferroni)

	Employee	Volunteer leader	Volunteer	Member
Volunteer leader	2,221610 0,1315			
Volunteer	2,504817 0,0613*	0,250534 1,0000		
Member	2,686003 0,0362**	0,227280 1,000	0,046807 1,0000	
Attendee	-3,142778 0,0084**	-4,744456 0,0000**	-4,959694 0,0000**	-5,144081 0,0000**

**Variation is significant at the 5% level of significance*
**Variation is evident of a difference close to the 5% level of significance*

Spearman's Rho was calculated and shown in Table 52, to further investigate the relationship between role status and the latent constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) of the study.

Table 52: Spearman's Rho – Role status and the latent constructs

	Role status	Satisfaction	Brand experience	Loyalty
Spearman's Rho coefficient	1,000	-0,008	-0,065	0,006
p-value		0,829	0,104	0,875
N	669	654	632	669

The correlation between the latent constructs and role status was not considered to be significant, as indicated by the higher p-values obtained.

Therefore, by calculating the Kruskal-Wallis mean test and supported by the Bonferroni post-hoc tests a relationship is observed between the role status and latent constructs. Spearman's Rho did not, however, support this finding. The aforementioned results, pertaining to role or membership status as mediating factor, are discussed in Section 6.3.4.

5.5 Conclusion

The results that were obtained and illustrated in this chapter are discussed in the following chapter, in the light of the research questions stated in Chapter 3. As such the theory in Chapter 2 would also be considered and compared to the findings of the current study.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results obtained by this study, and which was set out in Chapter 5. This chapter is structured around the three primary research questions and compares the findings with the review of literature in Chapter 2.

6.1 Research Question 1 – Do churches have brand experiences that mediate loyalty and satisfaction?

To determine whether churches have brand experiences, and that such has a mediating effect on loyalty and satisfaction, the results from the data analysis will be discussed. Thereafter, the findings will be considered in the light of the existing literature relating to the topic, before finally a conclusion on such is made, or a contribution suggested.

6.1.1 Results from data analysis

In pursuit of answering this research question, to determine whether the constructs are relevant to the industry under consideration, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted, as set out in Section 5.2.3. The factors of the study were confirmed and indicated as the dimensions of brand experience (albeit behavioural, intellectual, emotional, sensorial and relational), loyalty and satisfaction. Table 14 confirmed that factor analysis was appropriate for this study by means of KMO rendering results that factor analysis was appropriate; and Bartlett's test of sphericity confirming that there is variable correlation in the dataset. The relationship between the five dimensions (and its 15 statements) and brand experience was considered in Table 16 and indicated index values of SRMR (0,0356) and AGFI (0,9942) that suggested acceptable model fit for the proposed study. Similarly, the ten statements pertaining to loyalty and satisfaction was investigated in Table 17 and indicated similar (SRMR: 0,0252 and AGFI: 0,9973)

Thereafter, the relationship between brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction was considered by means of a SEM model. In Section 5.4.1 numerous iterations were undertaken to determine whether the model used for this study should incorporate the relational construct, or exclude it, in the evaluation of brand experience. Different scenarios were investigated.

Firstly, Section 5.4.1.1 considered model fit where the relational dimension was excluded and its impact only measured upon the loyalty construct. SRMR (0,0376) and AGFI (0,9933) index values indicated an acceptable measure of model fit (Table 25).

Secondly, the same was done to measure the impact on the satisfaction construct (5.4.1.2). Again, index values obtained for SRMR (0,0371) and AGFI (0,9939) suggested that the model should not be rejected (Table 26).

Thirdly, the model fit was investigated where the relational dimension was included and its impact measured on the loyalty construct (Section 5.4.1.3). This yielded acceptable SRMR (0,0395) and AGFI (0,9925) index values, recommending that the model should not be rejected (Table 27).

Fourthly, the model fit where the relational dimension was included and its impact on the satisfaction construct measured, was investigated in Section 5.4.1.4. The SRMR and AGFI index values obtained from this working yielded SRMR (0,0392) and AGFI (0,9933) index values that suggested that the proposed model should not be rejected (Table 28).

The findings of the aforementioned were compared in Section 5.4.1.5. When the relationship between brand experience and loyalty, and brand experience and satisfaction was compared independently, mixed results were obtained as indicated in Table 29. As such, an improved model fit, based on SRMR and AGFI, was obtained for satisfaction and loyalty independently when excluding the relational construct. However, the path coefficients suggested a stronger relationship when the relational construct was included. This necessitated further exploration, and consequently satisfaction and loyalty were considered together in the following section (Section 5.4.1.6).

A study of a composite model, where the effect on satisfaction and loyalty was measured simultaneously, was conducted with the inclusion of the relational construct (Table 30) and without the relational construct (Table 32) as set out in Section 5.4.1.6. The results of these two models were compared in Table 34. A slightly better model fit was achieved when the relational dimension was included, with a SRMR value of 0,0379 (as opposed to 0,0392); an AGFI value of 0,09937 (as opposed to 0,9933); and a covariance error of 0,44722 (as opposed to 0,434).

When path analysis was conducted, the standardised relational path coefficient yielded a value of 0,94479, the loyalty path coefficient was 0,73937 (as opposed to 0,72510) and the satisfaction path coefficient was 0,75696 (as opposed to 0,74848). As such, with the inclusion of the relational dimension into the brand experience construct, the loyalty and satisfaction constructs could be better predicted.

The complete SEM model, incorporating the relational dimension, is illustrated in Figure 16. This figure also illustrates the correlating relationship that satisfaction has on loyalty, and the variance error estimated within each variable and construct that could account for a difference in the data.

With the relational dimension included in the brand experience construct, the squared multiple correlations (R-square) of the SEM model explained the following variations in brand experience: relational 89,26%, satisfaction 57,3% and loyalty 53,35%. It should, however, be noted that the lowest variation in brand experience is explained by the sensory dimension, at 65,82%.

6.1.2 Comparison to existing literature

The findings of this study support Brakus et al. (2009) in that brand experience is considered to be a mediator of satisfaction and loyalty – within the religious arena as well, even when the relational dimension is not included in the hypothesised model. As such, it is confirmed that churches do, in fact, have brand experience, as created by an emotional, sensory, intellectual and behavioural experience. All four these dimensions could be observed within a religious context, and is therefore essential to the formation of a brand experience within this environment.

However, findings also support the work of Nysveen et al. (2013), who argues for the inclusion of a relational construct in the brand experience literature, particular within a service organisational context. The improved model fit achieved, when incorporating the relational construct as dimension of brand experience, along with loyalty and satisfaction as simultaneous outcomes, supports this finding.

Early brand experience literature covered the relational component, but it was eventually removed when the Brand Experience Scale was developed, as it was considered to be encompassed by the other dimensions (Schmitt et al., 2014).

The original authors of the instrument (Schmitt et al., 2015) did highlight later that, by including others in a consumptive experience, is an important contributor to happiness, and the development of brand communities is a testimony to that (Schmitt, 2012). This current study, therefore, supports the argument for the inclusion of a relational dimension, as it pertains to service organisations – and, particularly, the religious organisational context.

As mediator of value entrenchment, the findings of this study relating to satisfaction and loyalty through brand experience, concur with the work of Klaus and Maklan (2012), who hold that such experience includes an emotional, functional and social context that is formed across multiple channels. Presumably the functional context could relate to the behavioural dimension in the current study, which observed that the three greatest contributors to brand experience is emotional, intellectual and behavioural, with the relational or social component coming in at a close fourth position – as indicated by the squared multiple correlations determined in Table 35. Therefore, within churches these contexts are also shaped across multiple channels where initiatives targeted towards the five dimensions craft the experience.

This study's findings further aligns with the thinking that co-creating value, as considered by the service experience, is influenced by emotion-supporting, cognition-supporting and action-supporting encounters as suggested by Payne et al. (2009). The co-creation process, as such, is understood as a participatory engagement between the brand, its representatives and other users and, as such, implies the relational-supporting offering that a social component can provide. This humanitarian component of value-in-experience, as articulated by co-production, personalisation and engagement, emphasises the importance of a relational dimension – and heightens the connection with the experience (Minkiewicz et al., 2014). This was supported in the current study by the impact on loyalty and satisfaction perceptions influenced by the relational and social observations.

The value of the contribution of the relational construct within the brand experience model of churches, supports the work of other authors as well. Webb (2012) highlights the importance of family and friends being church members as one of the key determinants of the membership decision of new attendees. The interactive relativistic preference experience model proposed by Tynan et al.

(2014) ascribes importance to the relational component – when considered on a continuum ranging from self-oriented to other-oriented – as an important factor by which an experience could be shaped or targeted towards. The high value ascribed to participation, albeit passive or active, in crafting experiences in the experience realms of Pine and Gilmore (2011), as well as the understanding that any marketing endeavours that are experiential in nature mandates the consumer's involvement by means of participation (Machado et al., 2014) could therefore be affirmed within this context.

Considering that brands play an important role in the construction and expression of self to others, the importance of the social context and the individual's social identity as shaped by their selections of brands associated with – and thus church membership and affiliation – are supported (Cutright et al., 2014; Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014). Therefore, such social dimension or relational construct's influence is crucial to how the brand is adopted or entrenched in the life of the consumer and its inclusion in the model seems imperative.

Relating to the church environment, the role of community and support during hardship is one of its core functions (Casidy, 2013), and this supports the idea that brands perform a buffering or remedying social and supporting function, particularly in instances of social loss (Torres & Tribó, 2011).

Some of the aforementioned studies (Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Payne et al., 2009) do not take cognisance of the contribution that could be made by the sensory dimension – and albeit its contribution in this study is the smallest of the five dimensions considered, its value remains meaningful, accounting for 65,82% of the variance in the experience associated with the brand.

The work of Cho et al. (2015) emphasises that the differentiation strategies relating to price and quality are decreasing in importance, as opposed to the influence that aesthetic design has on such. This highlights the importance of the sensory dimension, particularly as it pertains to the church context. The servicescape and atmospherics employed by churches, such as strategies pertaining to architectural and interior design, music choice and media application, are testimony to this, and its value and contribution to brand experience are observed.

When examining the emotional construct, considered to have the highest R-square value as indicated in Table 35, its influence is undeniable. The relationship that develops between a brand and its consumer is emotionally-based and exhibits resilient and robust attitudes to it (Kemp et al., 2014). Attachment motivated by emotions is enduring in nature, and has a significant impact on customer retention (Bolton et al., 2000). It is a significant contributor to making experiences memorable in the mind of the consumer (Iglesias et al., 2011). The significance of the emotions experienced within churches, particularly when offering a consoling or encouraging role, would therefore be very memorable and top-of-mind, which could contribute to the high value achieved by this construct. Literature pertaining to the application of emotional dimension to brand experience could therefore be considered in shaping such within a church organisation.

Highlighting the cognitive or intellectual dimension of brand experience within churches, the findings support the argument that brands could inspire different ways of thinking, albeit it convergent and analytical or divergent and imaginative (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). As such, certain churches associated with a Pentecostal or charismatic heritage, are considered to be reliant on more intuitive or inspirational thinking, as opposed to a protestant and evangelical branded church who are perceived to be more rational in approach. This is exhibited in the teaching and sermon styles that are stereotypical of its gatherings and services (Schwarz, 2001).

This current study would, therefore, also affirm the significance of the behavioural dimension of brand experience within churches, as it translates into transforming norms and values that influence lifestyle (Abela, 2014; Batra et al., 2012). This would be exhibited in doing things in a different manner, based upon teachings or guidance offered by the church, or when attending initiatives hosted by the organisation (Machado et al., 2014; Manthiou et al., 2015).

It is observed that brand experience in churches mediates loyalty as well as satisfaction behaviours. It could be argued that the loyalty created by brand experience would discourage switching behaviours in churches, encouraging membership growth or market share increases and an increased value perception (Iglesias et al., 2011). As such, the correlation between brand experience and loyalty in the religious market is shown and supports the findings

that the greater the brand experience, the greater the loyalty displayed (Machado et al., 2014).

When considering satisfaction, this current study affirms that when considering the positive experience of the consumer (as compared with the expectations), a pleasing and gratifying evaluation is made and therefore indicates a positive affective state as a result (Torres & Tribó, 2011). Furthermore, the finding supports previous work that highlights the fact that satisfaction is an essential component and antecedent to commitment, attachment and loyalty (Sahin et al., 2011; Sung & Choi, 2010; Torres & Tribó, 2011). As such, satisfaction is a precursor to loyalty, and therefore plays an influential role in loyalty behaviours and, hence, attachment decisions such a membership, or embarking on volunteerism opportunities.

6.1.3 Summary of results for Research Question 1

It has been shown that brand experience is a relevant construct as it pertains to the church arena. The religious 'industry' can be considered to exhibit brand experiences, and such impacts both satisfaction and loyalty behaviours.

When observing the roles that brands play in the crafting of self and social identity, organisations that have an influence in shaping moral values and norms could exhibit a significant and important influence in societal well-being. Therefore, the manipulation of brand experience, and the extent to which the consumer engages with it and integrates its characteristics could serve as moral development instrument in the hands of the church.

The relevance of brand experience to this industry would suggest a number of possibilities and manoeuvrable dimensions to enhance the loyalty and attachment behaviours that would translate into increasing membership, decreasing switching behaviours and heightening exit barriers. Practical implications of such will be discussed in the following chapter.

The findings highlighted the significance of the relational dimension of the model, but also suggest either an under-utilisation or lower influence of the sensory dimension on the brand experience of churches, which could be explored in a future study.

The findings also support the application of the Brand Experience Scale to this industry and would, therefore, encourage the use of brand experience literature and related principles to church operations, with the hope of turning the tide of declining church attendance.

Therefore, the results obtained from this study conclude that religious institutions or churches have brand experiences that mediate loyalty and satisfaction.

6.2 **Research Question 2 –** Do brand experiences differ amongst churches?

To determine whether individual churches have unique brand experiences, and that such have a mediating effect on their individual loyalty and satisfaction perceptions, the results from the data analysis will be discussed. Thereafter, the findings will be considered in the light of the existing literature relating to the topic, before finally a conclusion on such is made, or a contribution proposed.

6.2.1 Results from data analysis

The results obtained from the study that pertain to this research question, are set out in Section 5.4.2. The Kruskal-Wallis mean test was undertaken to determine whether there is a difference between the churches considered amongst the three latent constructs examined. The difference was found to be significant, as indicated by the low p-value obtained for the brand experience (0,000), loyalty (0,000) and satisfaction (0,000) constructs, as shown in Table 36.

Such differences were further explored by means of ranking each church according to the mean ranks of their latent constructs, and a unique result was determined for each participating church, as set out in Table 37. The results of which suggested that churches that ranked higher on brand experience, also tended to rank higher on satisfaction and loyalty as well, and vice versa. For example: Church B is in the first position when it comes to brand experience and satisfaction, and second in loyalty; Church H scored third in brand experience and loyalty, and second in satisfaction; or Church K ranked in twelfth position for brand experience and satisfaction, but tenth position in loyalty. The only church that ranked the same on all three constructs was Church C. As such, the correlation between the three constructs is evident and confirmed.

To further confirm the results, Spearman's Rho was determined and supported the notion that the brand experiences amongst churches do indeed vary (Table

38) with a coefficient of 0,145, which was considered to be significant on the 0,01 level (two-tailed). The difference between satisfaction and loyalty amongst churches, however, was not supported and not deemed significant in this test.

The brand experience (Figure 17), satisfaction (Figure 18) and loyalty (Figure 19) according to each church grouping were then visually illustrated by means of a box plot. The unique profile of each church under consideration was illustrated in this manner and offered a graphical comparison under each construct.

6.2.2 Comparison to existing literature

The differentiation amongst churches, based upon their brand experience, could be as a result of numerous factors. The Barna Group (2012) suggests that church experiences do not vary based upon the size of the church. This current study supports this finding, to the extent that it did not find that larger churches have better or worse brand experiences than smaller churches. Hence, the brand experience was not correlated to the size of the church under consideration.

It further concurs with the finding that a brand preference can take place based on the experiential benefits the consumer envisages it offers (Qader & Omar, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). As such, the brand experience, or experiential benefits, that are perceived by members of each church evaluated were considered to be uniquely associated with that church's brand. Hence, the suggestion by Walter et al. (2013) that experiential marketing offers differentiation capabilities to an organisation is also supported.

It could also be argued that the findings substantiate the thinking that the selection of a specific church by an individual is indicative of an alignment of the values between the parties and, as such, the brand perception of the church – and the belief that it would deliver on its promises (Hamzah et al., 2014; Sahin et al., 2011). It also indicates the attachment of the consumer to the brand, being the alignment of the religious consumer with the church's unique experiences, values, truth and standpoints (Pessi, 2013).

The differentiation between churches' brand experience is determined by the unique application of its five dimensions. However, the author remains cognisant of the varying interpretations of being a church (doctrines, values, rituals, ideals, formalities, ceremonies) and, therefore it influences how the dimensions are

exhibited and applied, which would necessarily shape its unique brand experience (Granger et al., 2014; McAlexander et al., 2014; Worthington Jr. et al., 2003).

As such, it could be proposed that there is a preceding construct that informs the brand experience of itself that relates to the fit of values or norms that also contribute to the brand distinctiveness of the brand, as held by Roswinanto and Strutton (2014). This alignment relates to the perceived authenticity of brand, and builds brand trust whereby the customer or church member can confidently rely on the church to not disrupt or conflict with his or her own value expectations, support or buffer during times of upheaval or tragedy and effect meaning creation (Morhart et al., 2015; Napoli et al., 2014; Sahin et al., 2011).

The unique contextual, emotional, symbolic and non-utilitarian factors, as suggested by Shahim and Mohsin Butt (2013), could serve as differentiators that further assist the positioning of the church within the religious market as a whole; thereby customising its brand experience to the needs of its society and its members.

This study's findings explain some of the variation between churches, and suggest that an individual can evaluate and switch between churches based on preference or alignment (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). Hence, the current study supports the argument that positioning and targeting strategies are used by churches, albeit through identification or differentiation (Abreu, 2006) and that unsatisfied attendees would migrate to other churches where satisfaction could be achieved (Gauthier & Martikainen, 2013). As such, not differentiating between churches' brand experiences would deteriorate loyalty and increase switching behaviours, as exit barriers would be considered to be low (So et al., 2015).

The findings serve as a reminder of the value that brands imbue to the consumer, as it pertains to the social identity or self-concept (Berthon et al., 2011; Cutright et al., 2014; De Chernatony & Riley, 1998; Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014), and that it remains influential in the membership decision relating to a specific church brand. Some people would experience a better fit with the brand profile of some churches, as opposed to others – and also as informed by the alignment to the church brand that best fits their perception of their ideal self, and its implied growth or development prospects (Schwarz, 2001).

6.2.3 Summary of results for Research Question 2

The findings of this research concluded that each church has a unique brand experience, and as such a unique impact on satisfaction and loyalty indicators. Therefore, churches can use targeting or positioning strategies to manipulate their brand experience to assist in differentiation or identification strategies.

This is observable in the continuum of styles church music exercised by the organisations under consideration, from organ and classical music or acoustic instrumentation to full rock band arrangements – thereby differentiating the sensory experience. This is also noted in the service style being more emotive in nature, or more intellectually stimulating. Some churches have a strong social upliftment focus and encourage different behavioural actions than ones that are more relationally or community focused. Underlying these, the interpretation of sacred texts, application of rituals and moral codes and the principles and policies of the governing bodies (like for denominations) are instrumental in laying down the parameters and boundaries of how such brand experiences are created.

This finding supports an urgency for churches to adopt branding practices, and particularly brand experience tools, to assist in shaping and differentiating itself from other churches or even secular alternatives. It further suggests that churches have a brand experience, albeit unintentional in nature, and that it should be managed to influence and affect satisfaction and loyalty behaviours with the hope of increasing membership, countering switching behaviours and make the offering so uniquely gratifying that the value of exit is deteriorated.

As such, it can be concluded that brand experiences differ amongst individual churches.

6.3 **Research Question 3 –** Are there demographic mediating factors to brand experiences, loyalty or satisfaction in churches?

The demographic variables such as age, level of education, duration of membership, and role or membership status were considered as mediating factors within the churches represented, and the following were observed.

6.3.1 **Research Question 3.1** – Is age a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

To determine whether churches' brand experiences (and loyalty and satisfaction perceptions) are mediated by the age of the individual, the results from the data analysis will be discussed. Thereafter, the findings will be considered in the light of the existing literature relating to the topic, before finally a conclusion on such is made, or a contribution suggested.

6.3.1.1 Results from data analysis

In Section 5.4.3.1 and Table 39 it is shown that age has a significant impact on brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction at a significance level of 5%, by means of the Kruskal-Wallis mean test, where the mean ranks were compared and the significance of their difference evaluated. The difference between the age group and its relationship with the latent constructs was deemed to be significant, as they obtained p-values of 0,04 (brand experience), 0,03 (loyalty) and 0,02 (satisfaction), hence rejecting the hypothesis that there is no difference between the considered groups.

Further exploration of differences between age groups and the latent constructs were conducted by means of post-hoc tests using Bonferroni and it is exhibited in Table 40 (Brand experience), Table 41 (Satisfaction) and Table 42 (Loyalty). Only some differences were observed between some of the age groups. For example, comparing the age group "65 to 74" with the group "18 to 24" on brand experience, a p-value of 0,0273 was rendered. Close to this p-value, the age group "25 to 34" when compared to the group "65 to 74" on brand experience, also merits consideration.

Additionally, the significance that there is a difference between the age groups on all constructs was further supported by determining the Spearman's Rho coefficient, which was deemed significant at the 0,01 (two-tailed) level (Table 43). P-values of 0,005 (satisfaction), 0,002 (brand experience) and 0,002 (loyalty) were obtained.

In all the aforementioned tests, all three constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) were significant, and therefore it suggests that all are mediated by age.

6.3.1.2 Comparison to existing literature

This finding supports the notion that the experiences and behaviours of consumers differ based upon their generation, albeit post-modern millennials or their modernist parents and grandparents (Morhart et al., 2015; Napoli et al., 2014). As such, the importance of certain dimensions (as components of brand experience) or evaluation of such differs by the age of the respondent. This would imply, for example, that some generations would ascribe more value to a dimension such as relational, where another would consider sensory or behavioural elements more important. It could also suggest that the criteria with which certain dimensions are evaluated are more stringent, based upon the age of the individual doing the evaluation. This affirms the prior work, which suggests a variation in how favourably, and satisfying an experience is evaluated, based upon the age of the respondent (Barna Group, 2012).

The importance and meaning ascribed to the value of church attendance are correlated to the generation represented (Barna Group, 2014a) and should be considered, as some generations are suspicious of consumer culture initiatives within a church context and consider it to not be aligned with its mandate and the associated brand authenticity expectations (Barna Group, 2015). This interpretation is reflected in the difference in loyalty and satisfaction constructs observed as mediated by age.

This further translates into migratory behaviours that inform church attendance patterns amongst children, adolescents, young adults and older adults (Van der Merwe et al., 2013), possibly also ascribable to the low representation of adults aged 18 to 24 in the current study (7,3%).

As such, age plays an important role when the individual decides to become a member of a church, and considers age – particularly the average age of the members of a community – as a determining factor (Webb, 2012).

Although the current study does not articulate the disparity or alignment between generations, it should be noted that despite perceived negative experiences of younger generations, the variation between age groups could also be ascribed to a younger generation being more optimistic and positive than other generations, which could support the recent work of Van der Westhuizen and Nel (2015).

6.3.1.3 *Summary of results for Research Question 3.1*

The aforementioned suggests that brand experiences should be targeted towards a generation and age group to influence optimal satisfaction and loyalty behaviours. A one-size-fits-all-ages approach would be detrimental to the building of attachment decisions, such as membership and service attendance.

This also suggests that some dimensions of brand experience could be more instrumental in achieving increased loyalty and satisfaction, based upon the age of churchgoers – but an endeavour to determine such is beyond the scope of this study.

An imperative factor that should be considered when appealing to the younger generation has to do with brand authenticity. Unless the brand is deemed to be authentic and true to what is supposed to be, it would not carry appeal for the post-modern religious consumer. Hence, the appeal of a church brand that reflects the vulnerability of the human condition in a non-superficial manner should hold more potential.

Therefore, this study has found that age or generation is a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction in a religious context.

6.3.2 **Research Question 3.2** – Is level of education a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

To determine whether the brand experience of the church, its loyalty and its satisfaction perceptions are mediated by the individual's level of education obtained, the results from the data analysis will be discussed. Thereafter the findings will be considered in the light of the existing literature relating to the topic, before finally a conclusion on such is made, or a contribution offered.

6.3.2.1 *Results from data analysis*

Section 5.4.3.2 and Table 44 considers the level of education and its relationship to the constructs of the study. It shows that the level of education does not have a significant impact on brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction at a significance level of 5%, by means of the Kruskal-Wallis mean test. P-values on all three constructs render a p-value that does not meet the

acceptance criterion, with values of 0,11 (brand experience), 0,43 (loyalty) and 0,24 (satisfaction).

To verify this finding, Spearman's Rho coefficient was determined and set out in Table 45. This test also did not find support for this research question at a significance level of 0,01 (two-tailed), as it rendered p-values of 0,361 (satisfaction), 0,331 (brand experience) and 0,258 (loyalty), which are not significant under the decision criterion.

These results suggest that the individual's level of education does not mediate any of the constructs of the study.

6.3.2.2 Comparison to existing literature

The finding achieved by the aforementioned does therefore not support the observation of Thumma and Travis (2007) who suggested that the level of education is higher in some churches based on the brand experience offered by them. The results of this study do not reflect any correlation between such and any of the constructs and could therefore not be verified by the literature explored.

6.3.2.3 Summary of results for Research Question 3.2

The aforementioned suggests that neither brand experience, satisfaction nor loyalty are mitigated by the level of education within the congregation. Those with high educational achievement are not more or less sensitive to brand, loyalty or satisfaction experiences and, therefore, initiatives targeting such might not hold promise in enhancing the attachment behaviours in the church.

As such, the appeal or relevance of the intellectual dimension as exhibited by, for example, sermon-style, based on level of education of the congregants could not be determined.

In conclusion, this study has found that the level of education is not a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction within a religious context.

6.3.3 **Research Question 3.3** – Is duration of membership a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

To establish whether the duration that the individual has been a member of a church has any effect on the brand experience of the church, or loyalty and satisfaction behaviours, the results from the data analysis will be discussed. Thereafter, the findings will be considered in the light of the existing literature relating to the topic, before finally a conclusion on such is made, or a contribution suggested.

6.3.3.1 Results from data analysis

Section 5.4.3.3 and Table 46 show that the duration of membership does not have a significant impact on brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction at a significance level of 5%, by means of the Kruskal-Wallis mean test. P-values on all three constructs render a p-value that does not meet the acceptance criterion, at values of 0,51 (brand experience), 0,09 (loyalty) and 0,35 (satisfaction). A hint towards loyalty is suggested by the low p-value obtained, but it falls outside the significance level selected.

To verify this finding, Spearman's Rho coefficient was determined and set out in Table 47. This test did not find support for this research question at a significance level of 0,01 (two-tailed), as the p-values obtained were 0,119 (satisfaction), 0,197 (brand experience) and 0,414 (loyalty).

None of the three constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) was significant and, therefore, it suggests that neither one is mediated by the duration of membership.

6.3.3.2 Comparison to existing literature

This finding of the study does not support the notion held by Grissaffe and Nguyen (2011) that membership or loyalty programmes are means to effect attachment-inducing satisfaction and repeat purchase incentive. This could presumably be due to the nature of the industry studied, being a church context as well as the high prominence of switching behaviour evident in this field. It also contradicts the prior finding that the longevity of a long-term attachment decision informs behaviour to remain aligned and committed towards a brand (Morhart et al., 2015).

The observations by Da Silveira et al. (2013) that a correlation between brand trust and loyalty exists, in that as brand trust develops over time, so loyalty should increase, is not substantiated by this study. A correlation between membership duration and loyalty was not found in this context, and could be a result of the skewness of the study, in that 66,8% of respondents had been a member of that congregation in excess of three years, and could hence influence the results obtained as insufficient variance was observed.

If the duration of membership does not affect loyalty and satisfaction experiences, it brings into doubt the customer lifetime value benefits for churches, as is expected from an increase in loyalty (Torres & Tribó, 2011), and might also be indicative of the trend of secularisation as significant encounters and experiences are not necessarily only within the domain of the church, but of secular institutions and initiatives as well (Cutright et al., 2014; McAlexander et al., 2014).

However, a study suggesting a change in thinking of church membership – that it does not imply exclusivity, and that it indicates high church switching actions – could be considered as a possible contributing factor to the current study's finding (Barna Group, 2014c).

The current study supports the understanding that a brand experience can occur whether such experience is short-lived or long-lasting, seeing that no correlation was identified between duration of membership or brand experience (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). As such, increasing loyalty and involvement behaviours are not influenced by duration of membership or participation (Belk et al., 1989).

Finally, when considering the relational dimension of a brand experience, an entrenchment of the customer with the brand is observed, suggesting a heightening of barriers to exit from the community and the brand (Von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). As such, the longer an individual has been a member of a church, the more entrenched such person should be with that community and barriers to exit be raised. Therefore, it was expected that the loyalty indicators should have correlated with the membership duration changes. This was, however, not supported by the findings of this study.

6.3.3.3 *Summary of results for Research Question 3.3*

The aforementioned findings suggest that neither brand experience, satisfaction nor loyalty are mitigated by the length of time that the churchgoer has been a member of the church.

Being a member of a church for an extended period of time did not significantly inform brand experience or loyalty and satisfaction behaviours. It also suggests that persons who have only attended or been members for a short period of time do not exhibit behaviours or perceive experiences meaningfully different from those who had been part of the church for longer.

As such, having been a member for an extended period of time, does not affect the brand experience of the consumer, nor translate into changes in satisfaction of increased loyalty behaviours. It could, therefore, be argued that extended membership duration is not conducive to increased loyalty practices that could be exhibited as brand advocacy or brand evangelism.

Therefore, this study has found that the duration of membership is not a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction within a religious context.

6.3.4 **Research Question 3.4** – Is role or membership status a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty or satisfaction in a religious context?

To ascertain whether the role of the member (albeit volunteer, volunteer leader or staff member) or the individual's membership status (albeit attendee or member) has a mediating influence on the brand experience perceptions, or loyalty and satisfaction behaviours, the results from the data analysis will be discussed. Thereafter the findings will be considered in the light of the existing literature relating to the topic, before finally a conclusion on such is made, or a contribution proposed.

6.3.4.1 *Results from data analysis*

Section 5.4.3.4 and Table 48 show that role or membership status has a significant impact on brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction at a significance level of 5%, by means of the Kruskal-Wallis mean test. According to this result, all three constructs (brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction) were significant and, therefore, it suggests that all are mediated by role or membership status.

The suggested relationship was further supported by the post-hoc Bonferroni tests that are illustrated in Table 49 (brand experience), Table 50 (loyalty) and Table 51 (satisfaction) and highlight some significant correlations. For example, the differences observed when comparing the 'Attendee' role with all other role or status groups on all constructs, at or close to the 5% level of significance, were meaningful. Significant differences were also evident when comparing the 'Staff member' role with the others.

The differences between roles and membership statuses were, however, not supported by the findings indicated in Table 52 by determining Spearman's Rho, which was not significant at the 0,01 (two-tailed) level. P-values that fell outside the decision criterion were obtained: 0,829 (satisfaction), 0,104 (brand experience) and 0,875 (loyalty). This test did not confirm that such a correlation exists.

Although the finding rendered mixed results, the literature suggests differences between the constructs as it pertains to changing roles or statuses, and would be explored next.

6.3.4.2 Comparison to existing literature

A correlation between roles and membership status and the constructs under consideration, is supported by the concept of a loyalty ladder (Banks & Daus, 2002; Christopher et al., 2013; Narayandas, 2005; Raphel & Raphel, 1995), suggesting that there are different levels of loyalty within a church context. As such, the differentiation between attendee, member and staff member seems evident from the tests undertaken, particularly as it pertains to brand experience.

This suggests an expected variation in the loyalty behaviours exhibited when comparing attendees, members, volunteers, volunteer leaders and staff members as proposed by Maddox (2012). The observation that megachurches employ staff members (albeit it full-time, part-time or contractually) to fulfil roles previously expected from volunteers could also be considered as a contributing factor to the variation in loyalty between these roles and statuses (Thumma & Travis, 2007). Japutra et al. (2014) states that attachment is an important precursor to loyalty and, as such, the loyalty differences between pre-membership and post-membership decisions support this observation.

When considering satisfaction, increasing commitment – as observed by progress along the loyalty leader – is a reflection of the satisfaction experienced when compared to expectations. Hence the variance of satisfaction – as engagement increases along roles or membership status – affirms such observations in previous literature (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Torres & Tribó, 2011).

The differences between the attendee status and all other roles further support the idea that satisfaction is an important antecedent to commitment and attachment, as exhibited by the decision to become a member influences brand experience and loyalty behaviours (Sahin et al., 2011; Sung & Choi, 2010).

The other observable variation between the role of staff member and all other roles, as it pertains to satisfaction in particular, encourages an investigation of the work of Helm (2011) as it relates to this industry; where the satisfaction of the employees influence the satisfaction of the customers. Although the scope of this current study only aimed to remark whether role status is a mediating factor as it pertains to the influence of brand experience on satisfaction and loyalty; it would be expected that a positive correlation would exist between the satisfaction of employees and those of consumers (members or attendees).

Finally, the brand experience differs significantly between roles, particularly staff, membership and attendees. As brand experience is informed by the dimensions encompassing relationships, emotions, senses, behaviour and thinking, it is suggested that there is variation amongst these as the role status changes or progresses. This affirms the suggestion that deepening levels of connection or affection would characterise membership attachment decisions, as held by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011). It also supports the concept that attachment encourages behaviours that affect personal resources like time and money – associated with volunteerism – and thereby would affect the brand experience variation along role status (Casidy, 2013; Hirschle, 2013; Sung & Choi, 2010; Whan Park et al., 2010).

The mixed results obtained from the study (Spearman's Rho versus Kruskal-Wallis) do, however, encourage further study to obtain clarity around this issue, and why such a disparity was observed.

6.3.4.3 *Summary of results for Research Question 3.4*

The findings of the current study suggest that as a churchgoer's commitment and attachment behaviours increase (from attendee, to member, to volunteer, to staff member), their brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction behaviours should change.

It could be argued that as the individual progresses along the loyalty ladder, he or she would be more willing to sacrifice time, money and skills. These skills would by definition be offered voluntarily, and could eventually progress to leading a team of volunteers in the field under consideration. Therefore, at a higher level along the ladder, the individual would be in a leadership role where brand experience could be directly influencable which could influence satisfaction with and loyalty to the church brand.

The aim should, therefore, remain to progress attendees along the loyalty ladder, as it seems to have a positive effect on desirable outcomes of improved satisfaction and loyalty, which would influence brand equity by definition. By crafting scenarios and giving prominence to them, where the benefits of improved attachment status are highlighted and encouraged, could be beneficial to the church. Empowering such individuals to co-create the brand experience for other church members could also hold promise.

Therefore, this study has found that role or membership status is a mediating factor to brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction within a religious context.

6.3.5 Summary of results for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 has identified that role and membership status, as well as age, are mitigating factors of brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction. The duration of membership and the level of education do not seem to be significant mediators of the latent constructs.

6.4 Conclusion

The results obtained from the study were discussed in this chapter, as it pertains to the three research questions under consideration.

Firstly, it was found that brand experience as mediator of loyalty and satisfaction is relevant to the church industry and religious organisations. It is also suggested

that the social and relational dimension of brand experience be included when considering such within the religious environment. It was also substantiated that satisfaction is a precursor to loyalty within the religious arena.

Secondly, the findings established that brand experience differ between one church and the next. This suggests that the dimensions could be manipulated within a specific church to better effect loyalty and satisfaction, by means of differentiation.

Finally, the findings determined that age and role/membership status are mediating factors in evaluating brand experience and its impact on loyalty and satisfaction. However, the findings did not identify duration of membership or level of education as significant mediators of such relationship.

In the following chapter, the impact of these findings are discussed as a measure to address the declining membership problem and switching behaviours that have become prevalent within the church context and religious market.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Informed by the preceding, this chapter reiterates the problem the study aims to address, clarifies the principal findings of the study and suggests implications that it has on both academia and managerial practitioners. Limitations that informed or restricted the study are set out and avenues for future research are proposed.

7.1 The problem reconsidered

The study aimed to seek a possible solution or tool to affect the problem that churches and religious institutions experience as it pertains to declining church membership and increased switching behaviours that influence church attachment decisions. International evidence to this declining trajectory is evident (Granger et al., 2014), but also within the South African context (Schoeman, 2014).

Despite the fact that 81,2% of the South African population professes to be Christian (Pew Research Centre, 2012b), and sub-Saharan Africa boasting the youngest Christian demographic in the world (Pew Research Centre, 2012a), the South Africa religiosity has declined from 83% (2005) to 64% (2012) (WIN/Gallup International, 2012), claiming that although still professing the faith, it does not necessarily involve religious practice.

The decline has been ascribed to a number of factors, amongst others a lack of interest from younger generations, increased opportunities for leisure associated with economic growth, perceived moral and ethical failures in faith-based organisations, a disillusionment with the value that is being provided by churches (Granger et al., 2014); migratory and church switching tendencies (Schoeman, 2014); increased secularisation, less openness to the idea of church, churchgoing no longer being mainstream, and changing perceptions around church involvement (Barna Group, 2014c). However, the church as organisation cannot remain sustainable without the churchgoer's contribution of funds, voluntary time, skills and service (McAlexander et al., 2014).

If the attachment decisions of churchgoers could be influenced, the declining trend might be halted or turned around. Therefore, a mitigator of satisfaction and loyalty was investigated, being brand experience. Brand experience comprises five dimensions, which include a relational, intellectual, behavioural, emotional

and sensory component as per the model suggested by Brakus et al. (2009) and Nysveen et al. (2013).

This study aimed to test the application of this model and its constructs within the religious industry, church organisations, and consider some mediating influences thereupon.

7.2 Principal findings

Three research questions aimed to determine: whether brand experience as mediator of loyalty and satisfaction is observed in the religious or church industry; whether such brand experience differ amongst churches; and, to consider a limited number of mediating factors on such brand experience.

7.2.1 Brand experiences, as observed within the church industry, mediate satisfaction and loyalty.

The study determined that brand experiences do occur within the religious market and that such are influenced by all five dimensions of brand experience, being intellectual, behavioural, sensory, relational and emotionally.

Brand experiences can, therefore, be used as an important lever to mitigate satisfaction and loyalty, and thereby influence attachment decisions. As such, it could attract new members, decrease switching behaviours or heighten exit barriers.

The significance of the relational dimension was highlighted, by comparing the model of Brakus et al. (2009) to the enhanced model proposed by Nysveen et al. (2013), and the latter was indicated as a better indicator of loyalty and satisfaction than the prior within this context.

The findings further suggested either an under-utilisation or lower prominence of the sensory dimension within the religious context. Also, that the emotional dimension seems to be the greatest contributor to brand experience.

Brand experience literature would, therefore, be relevant to the religious industry and, as such, could be a valuable tool to manage and create satisfaction perceptions and encourage loyalty behaviours.

7.2.2 Brand experiences, and its influence on loyalty and satisfaction, differ between churches.

Each church has a unique brand experience that exhibits a unique influence on satisfaction and loyalty behaviours. This encourages the use of targeting and positioning strategies in which the brand experience would be customised to better align with the prospective church member or the audience that is to be reached. This offers a valuable contribution as differentiation strategy for churches.

Whether such brand experience is intentional or not, it remains a contributor to loyalty and satisfaction. This research, however, recommends that the strategic management of a church's brand experience could be beneficial in building and maintaining membership growth.

7.2.3 There are some mitigating factors that influence brand experience, satisfaction and loyalty.

Four mediating factors relating to brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction were considered, being: age, level of education, duration of membership and role or membership status. Age and membership status was found to be salient factors.

7.2.3.1 Age

A difference between age groups and their experience of brand, loyalty and satisfaction was observed. This could be considered as an important targeting lever, where brand experiences with specific age markets could be identified and pursued. Such customised brand experiences could positively influence attachment behaviours that could affect membership and attendance.

Customised brand experiences could target specific age groups, emphasising dimensions that have a stronger appeal to particular generations. The relevancy or prominence of brand experience dimensions per age group was not investigated in this study, albeit its influence is confirmed.

7.2.3.2 *Role/Status*

This study confirmed that increased levels of attachment, represented by higher levels along a loyalty ladder (from attendee, to member, to volunteer, to volunteer leader, to staff member) also influence the brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction of the churchgoer. Such progress along the ladder correlates with an increase in 'consumer spending' of time and skills (volunteerism). When the churchgoer reaches volunteer leadership or the status of staff member, the individual would be imbued with the ability to be instrumental in crafting the brand experience of others.

Progress or migration along the loyalty ladder is, therefore, beneficial to the church organisation, and would assist in entrenching the brand experience of the community. The loyalty and satisfaction behaviours of churchgoers are also correlated to their membership role or status.

7.2.3.3 *Other*

The research did not confirm whether duration of church membership or the level of education of the churchgoer has an impact on brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction. This contradicts the literature pertaining to these factors, and could be due to the limits imposed by the sample, or the skewness of the data obtained.

7.3 Implications for stakeholders

The findings of the current study offer a number of possibilities and implications for both academia, management and relevant practitioners, which will be discussed next.

7.3.1 For academia

This study affirms the application of the Brand Experience Scale on the religious context, and supports its applicability to churches. As such, the scales of Brakus et al. (2009), as enhanced by Nysveen et al. (2013), could be utilised and consistently applied within this industry.

A lack of credible academic literature relevant to branding within the church context, especially in South Africa, was observed. Although other research

endeavours have pursued the application of brand experience literature to South Africa, none was done in the religious context.

Furthermore, as far as the author could ascertain, other research pursuits have aimed to address the declining membership problems that South African churches face (Dreyer, 2015; Schoeman, 2014; Van der Merwe et al., 2013), but have not delved into branding literature to do so. It should however be remarked that Van der Merwe et al. (2013) did endeavour to address the declining church membership problem by investigating what could be considered to be the sensory dimension and its influence on young people – which offers a limited view of the possibilities that brand experience might offer.

7.3.2 For management

The findings of this study offer a number of recommendations to different stakeholders, and are discussed in Section 7.3.2.1 to Section 7.3.2.5.

The application of brand experience principles to a religious context or church arena could influence how a number of activities could be reshaped, as well as influence the strategy and manner in which things are done. Some of the stakeholders are considered next.

7.3.2.1 Church leaders, management and strategists

It has been shown that brand experience mitigates satisfaction and loyalty, and that such brand experience could be manipulated and leveraged to improve loyalty and satisfaction and, hence, attachment decisions like membership and increased exit barriers.

As such, the church leadership has the opportunity to intentionally engage with the five dimensions of brand experience to improve such in their communities. An improvement on any of the dimensional constructs would result in an increase in satisfaction and loyalty, in that the brand experience informs such.

Consumerism, and its influence on the secularisation of religion is a reality. It is imperative for the church organisation to embrace practices that would address some of these needs in their constituents without compromising on the importance of authenticity, particularly relevant to younger generations.

The intentional management and strategising around the brand experience of the church could be an important tool to enhance relevance.

Brand experience offers a unique differentiation and identification strategy, where the needs and preferences of the religious consumer could be appealed to in a specific manner. For example, encouraging and marketing social upliftment initiatives would highlight the behavioural dimension of the individual church brand experience, as it encourages action and functional ways of doing things. As such, intentional offerings creating customised brand experiences targeting a younger demographic, as well as offerings that target an older demographic, would hold promise for the organisation.

Furthermore, development tactics and strategies that encourage a migration along the loyalty ladder could be implemented to further enhance the desired behaviours. This could relate to offering more volunteer opportunities, or platforms where volunteer leaders can take ownership of initiatives instead of church staff.

A recent development in the church context relates to the creation of faith communities that is not perceived as being a traditional church, with an informal and alternative offering that embraces experiential initiatives, examples of which are 3rdplace and the Icon Tribe (eKerk, 2014).

7.3.2.2 Marketing managers

This study verifies the brand experience construct in another industry (churches), adding robustness to its model. Hence, marketing managers, both inside and outside the church, can apply the principles it introduces to better shape their marketing offering, decisions and strategies to enhance satisfaction and loyalty of its consumers. As such, a heightened awareness that brand of the church or organisation is not only limited to the materials distributed or messages communicated, but extends to the interactions between staff, ambassadors and clientele; elements of surprise, challenge, position or statement that could encourage intellectual activity; invitation to action that encourages behavioural change taking the form of interactive endeavours or integrated learning that adapts lifestyle; or affective appeal aiming to evoke emotions ranging from joy to sympathy. The sum of the aforementioned can fall within the domain of the brand manager or marketing

practitioner charged with building the brand equity of the church or organisation.

The importance of the emotional dimension, and the underutilisation of the sensory dimension could add valuable materials to the marketer's arsenal; to not shy away from the affective or to employ creativity and arts to a greater extent.

7.3.2.3 Youth workers

The significance of age group and the appeal that brand experience have on them, are particularly relevant to those engaging with millennials or the younger generation. As such, offerings targeted towards this demographic should be customised to target them on all dimensions of brand experience. In particular, the work of Van der Merwe et al. (2013) highlights the influence that manipulation on the sensory construct would have on the attachment behaviours of a younger demographic. This study has verified that brand experience differs along age group metrics.

7.3.2.4 Arts practitioners

The deployment of arts has a unique opportunity to not only appeal to the senses, but it can create an emotive, sensual, spiritual, intellectual and social response (Walmsley, 2011). As such, arts practitioners – especially those within the church context – have a meaningful contribution to make in influencing and crafting the brand experiences of the arenas they operate in. This could be observed as the style and selection of music in worship services, or background music in venues, the architecture or interior design employed in relevant consumer-facing spaces, or challenging or surprising churchgoers or guests by controversial or encouraging expressions that align with the brand and message of the organisation. Thereby, arts practitioners have access to manipulating the sensory, emotional and intellectual dimensions of brand experience. Recent movements in the arts also encourage a participatory, co-creation process that would address the relational dimension of the experience, as exhibited by experimental theatre initiatives such as Blue Man Group and Fuerza Bruta.

7.3.2.5 *Preachers, teachers and educational practitioners*

The memorability that is associated with experiences offers an excellent learning opportunity for those involved in training and education initiatives. Pine and Gilmore (1998) highlighted that the nature of the experiential offering is memorable, and proposed the idea of educational experiences as being active absorption. The brand experience construct further enhances this understanding, in that it offers educators the opportunity to develop a personal brand, or educational institutions an organisational brand, informed by how its dimensions are applied. Apart from visual aids to assist in learning, the value of discussion (relational dimension), challenging questions (intellectual dimension), emotional stories (affective dimension) or practical and functional tools (behavioural dimension) has the potential to greatly enhance such transformative communication. Role models in the religious field include Rob Bell, Erwin McManus or Brené Brown.

7.4 Limitations of the research

As mentioned before (Section 4.8), a number of limitations on this research and its findings exist, that hampers its relevancy or applicability to a larger population. As such, the generalisability of this study is decreased due to the limited number of churches participating in the study, and the selection of such sample units, which occurred in a judgment, purposive manner, which does not make it an adequate representation of all churches.

Further to the limitations set out in Section 4.8, the following is worth reiterating and highlighting:

- The study focuses on observations in Christian religious organisations (churches), and does not include other faiths or religions in its scope.
- The study aimed to observe whether a brand experience takes place within a church or religious organisation, but does not indicate whether such an experience is perceived as positive or negative. The study did not gather any data pertaining to reasons or motivations for such brand experiences to occur, which could be beneficial in the long-term.
- A large percentage of the respondents described themselves as being staff members or employees of the church brand considered, which is not representative of the population as a whole, albeit a person who was part of the population to which the invitation was extended. This could contribute to some of the skewness of the results obtained.

- Racial and ethnic diversity of the sample was not achieved and, although it offered a suggestion of the churches observed, it is not representative of the community or region in which they are situated – as indicated by the low incidence of language diversity, and the high incidence of Afrikaans communities in the study – suggesting a stronger caucasian representation. The religious landscape was, therefore, not adequately represented by the churches selected and did not include all geographies, ethnicities, languages, affluence or denominations that could be considered. This reinforces the fact that the findings of the study cannot be generalised.
- Potential sources of error further explain a variation between true construct perceptions and the observed responses and include:
    - Random sampling error, where the responding sample offers an imperfect representation of the population (church) in question.
    - Non-sampling errors considered, include:
        - Non-response errors, where sampling elements (church members) included in the sample did not respond. Although in most scenarios the entire population was invited to participate, an accurate representation of exactly how many chose to forego such participation is unclear.
        - Response errors, which suggest inaccurate answers, which could include misunderstanding of questions, or a bias to acquiesce and comply with expected perceptions.
- Nysveen et al. (2013) raised concerns around the scale being a satisfaction outcome-oriented measure, for a construct (experience), which is process-oriented. They also questioned the validity of affect-related self-reporting as it relates to experiences. Malhotra (2010) further highlights that cross-sectional studies, such as this study, do not offer insights into detecting change or causality, which could impact accuracy.
- Finally, the study aimed to determine whether the brand experience literature and model fit a particular industry (religious organisations) and pertain to specific organisations within that industry (churches). As such, the questionnaire was directed to people who are already members of a church (exhibiting satisfaction and loyalty behaviours) and a positive and correlated result was expected. The high proportion of respondents that have been members for longer than three years also suggest this, as unsatisfied or disloyal members would not have remained members for

that long. This contributes to the skewness of the dataset. A consideration for future research would be to offer contrasting or comparative brands to obtain a distribution that could be considered to be more normal.

7.5 Suggestions for future research

The study identified a number of gaps in existing academic literature that could be completed by future research endeavours, especially as it pertains to branding and marketing literature in the South African religious environment. Furthermore, building on the findings of this research, other research avenues are also set out below.

- Elaborating upon the typology framework of brand experience (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010) to incorporate a relational dimension and its application within the church context.
- Exploring experiential strategies that could be adopted within the church context and eventing arena to fine-tune brand experiences and target different generations.
- The role of church employees, especially as pertaining to the referential power construct and its influence on brand experience.
- The co-creation of value in the brand experience within the religious context
- Comparing brand experience cross-culturally and cross-denominationally and investigating its impact on satisfaction and loyalty.
- The deployment of brand experience initiatives within the South African educational and academic environment.
- Exploring whether the brand experience construct and outcomes apply to other religions and non-Christian religious organisations.
- Exploring antecedents to brand experience in religious organisations, building on the work of Roswinanto and Strutton (2014), as it could relate to brand authenticity, self-congruence, meaningfulness, social identity and personal experience.

7.6 Conclusion

Declining church membership, switching behaviours and low barriers to exit are some of the problems highlighted in this study. This motivated the research to investigate whether a brand experience could mediate satisfaction and loyalty within a religious context and, hence, improve brand attachment and church membership decisions.

The study found evidence that brand experiences mediate loyalty and satisfaction within the church arena; that there are significant difference in the brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction amongst the churches considered; and that age of churchgoer as well as membership status mediate brand experience, loyalty and satisfaction in this context.

Implications for academia as well as practitioners were suggested, as well as avenues highlighted for future research building on the findings of this study.

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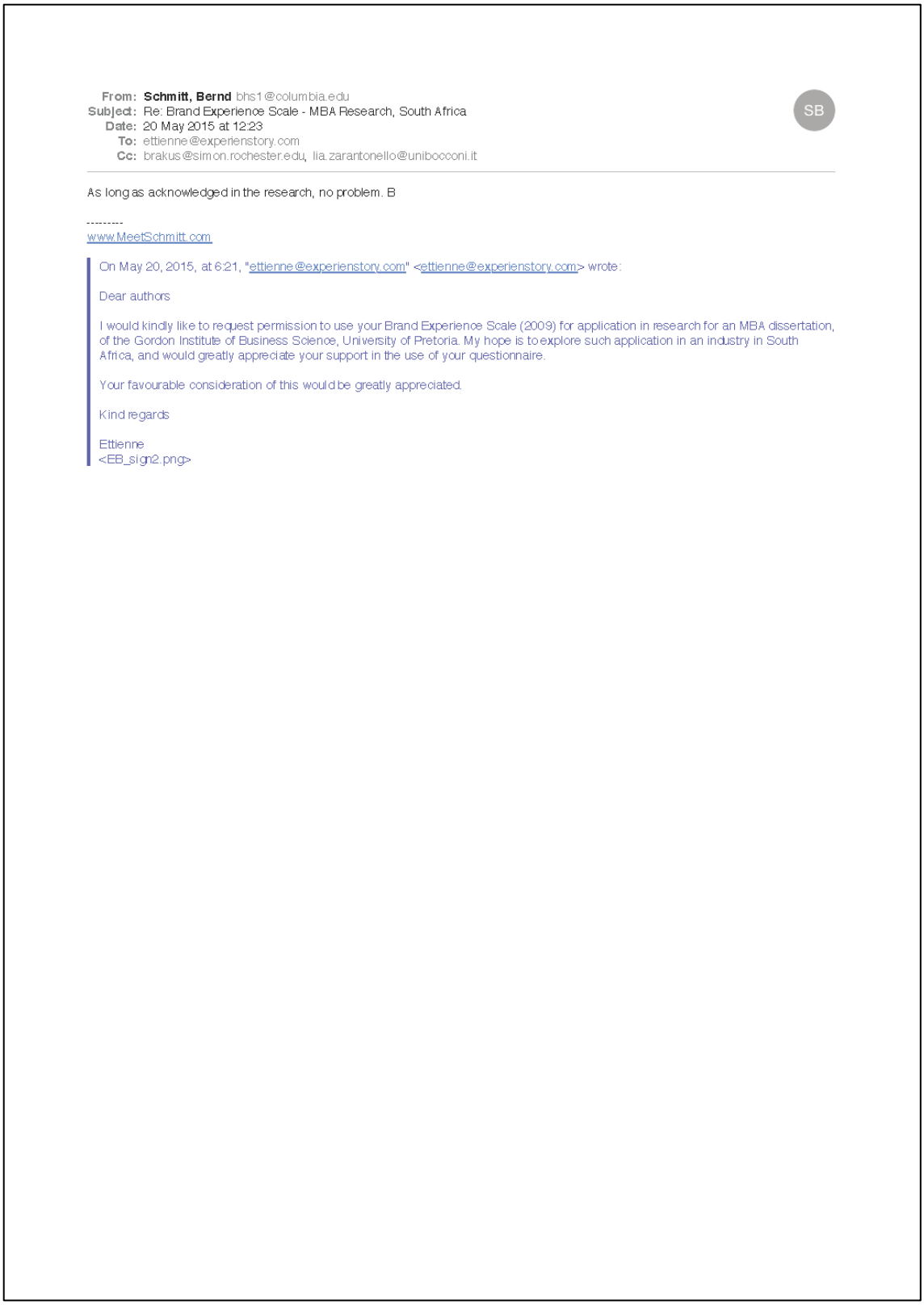
APPENDICES

A. Appendix A: Permission to use questionnaire

Permission was obtained from one of the authors of the original study (Brakus et al., 2009)



From: **Schmitt, Bernd** bhs1@columbia.edu
Subject: Re: Brand Experience Scale - MBA Research, South Africa
Date: 20 May 2015 at 12:23
To: ettienne@experienstory.com
Cc: brakus@simon.rochester.edu, lia.zarantonello@unibocconi.it

SB

As long as acknowledged in the research, no problem. B

---
www.MeetSchmitt.com

> On May 20, 2015, at 6:21, "ettienne@experienstory.com" <ettienne@experienstory.com> wrote:
>
> Dear authors
>
> I would kindly like to request permission to use your Brand Experience Scale (2009) for application in research for an MBA dissertation, of the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. My hope is to explore such application in an industry in South Africa, and would greatly appreciate your support in the use of your questionnaire.
>
> Your favourable consideration of this would be greatly appreciated.
>
> Kind regards
>
> Ettienne
> <EB_sign2.png>

B. Appendix B: Questionnaire utilised in study

The final questionnaire employed in this study, is indicated here.

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Perceptions pertaining to the church I attend

1. An introduction to this survey.

This is a survey to conduct research around the sum of perceptions and feelings associated with an organisation. To that end you are requested to reflect upon the church you consider yourself a member of, and complete this survey. This would increase the understanding around the experience of such an institution, and should take approximately 5 minutes. Please note that your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be treated as confidential by both the researcher and the organisation that oversees such (The Gordon Institute of Business, University of Pretoria).

By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research and that you are older than 18 years of age. Should you have any concerns, please contact the researcher or study supervisor:

Researcher:
Ettienne Booysen
083 266 6036
ettienne@experienstory.com

Supervisor:
Ricardo Machado
012 429 4020
machar@unisa.ac.za

* 1. Do you accept the above and wish to continue with this survey?

- ○ I wish to participate in this survey
- ○ I DO NOT wish to participate in this survey

1

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University of Pretoria

Perceptions pertaining to the church I attend

2. General information

2. Which church do you consider yourself to be a member of?

- ○ AGS Westdene
- ○ AGS Weltevredenpark
- ○ Alberton LewenSentrum
- ○ Constantiakruin Gemeente
- ○ Doxa Deo Meyersdal
- ○ Gracepoint Methodist
- ○ Kaleideo
- ○ Liberty Church
- ○ NGK Andrew Murray
- ○ Northfield Methodist
- ○ Ruimsig Gemeente
- ○ Woord en Lewe Gemeente
- ○ Other (please specify)

3. How long have you been a member of your church?

- ○ 6 months or less
- ○ Between 6 and 12 months (1 year).
- ○ Between 12 months (1 year) and 24 months (2 years)
- ○ Between 24 months (2 years) and 36 months (3 years)
- ○ More than 36 months (3 years)

4. I would describe my status with regards to my church as:

- ☐ Employee / Staff member
- ☐ Volunteer leader
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ Member
- ☐ Attendee
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2

5. What is your age?

- ○ 18 to 24
- ○ 25 to 34
- ○ 35 to 44
- ○ 45 to 54
- ○ 55 to 64
- ○ 65 to 74
- ○ 75 or older

6. What is your gender?

- ○ Female
- ○ Male

7. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- ○ High school
- ○ Diploma
- ○ Degree
- ○ Post-graduate degree
- ○ None of the above

8. What is your first language?

- ○ Afrikaans
- ○ English
- ○ Northern Sotho
- ○ Southern Sotho
- ○ Tswana
- ○ Tsonga
- ○ Xhosa
- ○ Zulu
- ○ Other:

3

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University of Pretoria

Perceptions pertaining to the church I attend

3. Multiple dimensions

9. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	*Somewhat disagree*	**Neutral**	*Somewhat agree*	**Agree**	*Strongly agree*
I engage in actions and behaviours when I make use of my church's services. *(e.g. I participate in a physical manner by giving of my time, money, skills or talents)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I make use of my church's services, I do not feel alone.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church engages me intellectually. *(e.g. – in an analytical, cognitive, clarifying, imaginative or evaluative manner)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I am a part of my church's family.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church often engages me emotionally.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I reflect on my church, I have feelings and sentiments.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church makes a strong impression on my senses; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste. *(e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church engages me physically. *(e.g. I attend church frequently; I interact and participate in its activities and services)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attending my church gives me interesting sensory experiences; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste. *(e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church frequently challenges my way of thinking and influences my decisions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church makes an appeal to my senses; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste. *(e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have strong emotions about my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church makes me feel as if I am part of a community.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Being a member of my church stimulates my thinking and problem-solving.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church is action oriented. *(e.g. My church influences how I behave and act)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

4

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Perceptions pertaining to the church I attend

4. Considering my church

10. Please indicate the extent of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	*Somewhat disagree*	**Neutral**	*Somewhat agree*	**Agree**	*Strongly agree*
I am happy with being a member of my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My church will remain my first choice.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good about my decision to become a member of my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will recommend my church to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I have to choose again, I would decide to become a member of my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will be loyal to my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My choice to become a member of my church has been a wise one.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will not attend other churches, if I am able to attend my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will continue to remain a member of my church.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my church and what it does.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

END OF SURVEY:
Thank you for your participation.

5

C. Appendix C: Permission letter and ethical clearance

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Dear Mr Ettienne Booysen

Protocol Number: **Temp2015-00838**

Title: **Exploring the impact of brand experience on satisfaction and loyalty in churches and religious organisations in Johannesburg.**

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been APPROVED.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards,

GIBS Ethics Administrator

D. Appendix D: Codebook

A codebook was compiled to assist in the data analysis of the study, and is set out hereafter.

D.1 Demographical codes

Participation	
1	Choose to participate
2	Decline to participate

Church name		
1	Church B	AGS Westdene
2	Church A	AGS Weltevredenpark
3	Church C	Alberton LewenSentrum (ALS, PLS, VLS, WRLS, OLS)
4	Church D	Constantiakruin Gemeente
5	Church E	Doxa Deo Meyersdal
6	Church F	Gracepoint Methodist
7	Church G	Kaleideo
8	Church H	Liberty Church
9	Church I	NGK Andrew Murray
10	Church J	Northfield Methodist
11	Church K	Ruimsig Gemeente
12	Church L	Woord en Lewe Gemeente
13		Other

Membership duration	
1	6 months or less
2	Between 6 months and 1 year
3	Between 1 year and 2 years
4	Between 2 years and 3 years
5	More than 3 years

Role/Status	
1	Employee/Staff member
2	Volunteer leader
3	Volunteer
4	Member
5	Attendee

Age	
1	18 to 24
2	25 to 34
3	35 to 44
4	45 to 54
5	55 to 64
6	65 to 74
7	75 or older

Gender	
1	Female
2	Male

Education	
1	High school
2	Diploma
3	Degree
4	Post-graduate degree
5	None of the above

First Language	
1	Afrikaans
2	English
3	Northern Sotho
4	Southern Sotho
5	Tswana
6	Tsonga
7	Xhosa
8	Zulu
9	Other

Age	
1	18 to 24
2	25 to 34
3	35 to 44
4	45 to 54
5	55 to 64
6	65 to 74
7	75 or older

All of the following are indicated as:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

D.2 Dimensions of Brand Experience codes

Construct	Statement
Behaviour1	I engage in actions and behaviours when I make use of my church's services. (e.g. I participate in a physical manner by giving of my time, money, skills or talents)
Relational1	When I make use of my church's services, I do not feel alone.
Intellectual1	My church engages me intellectually. (e.g. – in an analytical, cognitive, clarifying, imaginative or evaluative manner)
Relational2	I feel like I am a part of my church's family.
Emotional1	My church often engages me emotionally.
Emotional2	When I reflect on my church, I have feelings and sentiments.
Sensory1	My church makes a strong impression on my senses; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste. (e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)
Behaviour2	My church engages me physically. (e.g. I attend church frequently; I interact and participate in its activities and services)
Sensory2	Attending my church gives me interesting sensory experiences; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste. (e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)
Intellectual2	My church frequently challenges my way of thinking and influences my decisions.

Sensory 3	My church makes an appeal to my senses; through what I hear, feel, see, smell or taste. (e.g. music, media, architecture, design, etc.)
Emotional3	I have strong emotions about my church.
Relational3	My church makes me feel as if I am part of a community.
Intellectual3	Being a member of my church stimulates my thinking and problem-solving.
Behavioural3	My church is action oriented. (e.g. My church influences how I behave and act)

D.3 Satisfaction and loyalty codes

Construct	Statement
Satisfaction1	I am happy with being a member of my church.
Loyalty1	My church will remain my first choice.
Satisfaction2	I feel good about my decision to become a member of my church.
Loyalty2	I will recommend my church to others.
Satisfaction3	If I have to choose again, I would decide to become a member of my church.
Loyalty3	I will be loyal to my church.
Satisfaction4	My choice to become a member of my church has been a wise one.
Loyalty4	I will not attend other churches, if I am able to attend my church.
Loyalty5	I will continue to remain a member of my church.
Satisfaction5	I am satisfied with my church and what it does.

E. Appendix E: Skewness and kurtosis of data

Skewness refers to a characteristic of a distribution's symmetry around its mean, whereas kurtosis indicates the peakedness or flatness of the curve, as indicated by the frequency distribution (Malhotra, 2010). Table 53 indicates the skewness and kurtosis values of each variable, as it refers to each statement indicated in Section D.2.

Table 53: Skewness and kurtosis of variables

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
Behavioural1	6,32955	0,89815	-1,85873	**4,73854**
Behavioural2	6,12987	1,08021	-1,71221	**3,62589**
Behavioural3	6,03734	1,06240	-1,52748	**3,16282**
Emotional1	6,01461	1,11666	-1,55422	**2,95766**
Emotional2	6,10552	0,99930	-1,38975	**2,56172**
Emotional3	6,08442	1,04501	-1,49873	**2,97348**
Intellectual1	6,12662	0,95434	-1,58409	**3,65101**
Intellectual2	6,03084	1,00762	-1,47783	**3,47093**
Intellectual3	5,91396	1,10021	-1,28427	**2,11664**
Loyalty1	6,33766	1,08782	-2,30504	**5,99145**
Loyalty2	6,53247	0,83359	-2,69698	**10,22404**
Loyalty3	6,44968	0,91103	-2,30327	**6,34508**
Loyalty4	5,67695	1,59507	-1,31196	**0,96998**
Loyalty5	6,38799	0,97803	-2,41980	**7,31721**
Relational1	6,16883	1,05956	-2,08542	**5,71936**
Relational2	6,19968	1,10169	-2,09234	**5,55137**
Relational3	6,17532	1,06310	-1,81244	**4,10860**
Satisfaction1	6,47240	0,83182	-2,44606	**8,41733**
Satisfaction2	6,45455	0,87115	-2,32511	**7,03877**
Satisfaction3	6,41883	1,00886	-2,61782	**8,16431**
Satisfaction4	6,48701	0,84574	-2,45897	**8,18480**
Satisfaction5	6,27922	1,03278	-2,13379	**5,92000**
Sensory1	6,03734	1,07608	-1,59040	**3,26053**
Sensory2	6,03409	1,07165	-1,59492	**3,35220**
Sensory3	5,93831	1,05896	-1,36854	**2,73361**

Kline (2011) suggests thresholds of between -3 and +3 for skewness, and between -10 and +10 for kurtosis for normality. As such, the variable "Loyalty2" falls outside the acceptable kurtosis frame.

F. Appendix F: CFA – Path list and variance parameters

The estimate values in the tables below indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct. Exogenous variables refer to constructs that influence other constructs that are studied and not influenced by other factors in the model (Suhr, 2006).

The tables below (Table 54 to Table 57) set out the estimate values as it pertains to each variable and the construct it loads upon, as well as the respective error upon each of such.

Table 54: CFA: Standardised results for path list: Brand experience dimensions

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural1	0,52230
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural2	0,71252
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural3	0,73773
Relational	===>	Relational1	0,62101
Relational	===>	Relational2	0,84257
Relational	===>	Relational3	0,87388
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86265
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,89731
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91264
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,68471
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,75540
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,84061
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,74781
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,83087
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,81130

Table 55: CFA: Standardised results for variance parameters: Brand experience dimensions

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Behaviour	1.00000
	Relational	1.00000
	Sensory	1.00000
	Intellectual	1.00000
	Emotional	1.00000
Error	Behavioural1	0,72720
	Relational1	0,61434
	Intellectual1	0,53117
	Relational2	0,29008
	Emotional1	0,44078
	Emotional2	0,30965
	Sensory1	0,25583
	Behavioural2	0,49231
	Sensory2	0,19483

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
	Intellectual2	0,42937
	Sensory3	0,16710
	Emotional3	0,34180
	Relational3	0,23634
	Intellectual3	0,29338
	Behavioural3	0,45576

Table 56: CFA: Standardised results for path list: Loyalty and satisfaction

Path			Estimate
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty1	0.90053
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty2	0.81363
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty3	0.87670
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty4	0.59889
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty5	0.83362
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction1	0.87919
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction2	0.91791
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction3	0.86354
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction4	0.89977
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction5	0.79456
Satisfaction	===>	Loyalty	0.76055

Table 57: CFA: Standardised results for variance parameters: Loyalty and satisfaction

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Satisfaction	1,00000
Error	Satisfaction1	0,22703
	Loyalty1	0,18904
	Satisfaction2	0,15745
	Loyalty2	0,33800
	Satisfaction3	0,25431
	Loyalty3	0,23140
	Satisfaction4	0,19041
	Loyalty4	0,64133
	Loyalty5	0,30507
	Satisfaction5	0,36867
	Loyalty	0,07434
Exogenous	Loyalty	1,00000
Error	Satisfaction	0,22827

G. Appendix G: SEM model using Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimation

The estimate values in the tables below indicate the magnitude of change on the latent construct modelled for a single unit change in the variable, conditional on all other variables in the equation. Hence, the greater the estimate value, the greater the impact effect on the dependent construct. Exogenous variables refer to constructs that influence other constructs that are studied and not influenced by other factors in the model (Suhr, 2006).

G.1 SEM: Relationships between constructs, excluding the relational construct

The following tables (Table 58 to Table 63) indicate the values calculated, when not taking the relational dimension of brand experience into consideration.

Table 58: SEM: Standardised results for path list:
Brand experience on loyalty excluding the relational dimension

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural1	0,46820
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural2	0,69391
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural3	0,76696
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86430
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,90293
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91232
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,67059
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,74890
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,86592
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,75571
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,80560
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,81762
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty1	0,89278
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty2	0,82577
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty3	0,85089
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty4	0,63462
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty5	0,81655
Brandexp	===>	Behaviour	0,96284
Brandexp	===>	Sensory	0,83543
Brandexp	===>	Intellectual	0,96173
Brandexp	===>	Emotional	0,98602
Brandexp	===>	Loyalty	0,72499

Table 59: SEM: Standardised results for variance parameters: Brand experience on loyalty excluding the relational dimension

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Brand experience	1,00000
Error	Behavioural1	0,78079
	Intellectual1	0,55030
	Emotional1	0,42890
	Emotional2	0,35101
	Sensory1	0,25299
	Behavioural2	0,51849
	Sensory2	0,18473
	Intellectual2	0,43915
	Sensory3	0,16767
	Emotional3	0,33149
	Intellectual3	0,25019
	Behavioural3	0,41178
	Loyalty1	0,20295
	Loyalty2	0,31811
	Loyalty3	0,27598
	Loyalty4	0,59726
	Loyalty5	0,33325
	Behaviour	0,07295
	Sensory	0,30206
	Intellectual	0,07508
	Emotional	0,02776
	Loyalty	0,47439

Table 60: SEM: Standardised results for path list: Brand experience on satisfaction excluding the relational dimension

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural1	0,47018
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural2	0,68903
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural3	0,77277
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86083
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,90279
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91501
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,67388
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,74167
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,86320
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,75626
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,79606
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,82483
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction1	0,89539
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction2	0,91141
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction3	0,84508
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction4	0,87838
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction5	0,81825
Brandexp	===>	Behaviour	0,96473
Brandexp	===>	Sensory	0,83401
Brandexp	===>	Intellectual	0,97233
Brandexp	===>	Emotional	0,98656
Brandexp	===>	Satisfaction	0,74572

Table 61: SEM: Standardised results for variance parameters:
Brand experience on satisfaction excluding the relational dimension

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Brand experience	1,00000
Error	Behavioural1	0,77894
	Intellectual1	0,54589
	Emotional1	0,42808
	Emotional2	0,36628
	Sensory1	0,25896
	Behavioural2	0,52524
	Sensory2	0,18498
	Intellectual2	0,44992
	Sensory3	0,16276
	Emotional3	0,31965
	Intellectual3	0,25489
	Behavioural3	0,40282
	Satisfaction1	0,19828
	Satisfaction2	0,16933
	Satisfaction3	0,28584
	Satisfaction4	0,22845
	Satisfaction5	0,33047
	Behaviour	0,06930
	Sensory	0,30443
	Intellectual	0,05458
	Emotional	0,02670
	Satisfaction	0,44390

Table 62: SEM: Standardised results for path list:
Brand experience on satisfaction and loyalty excluding the relational dimension

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural1	0,45057
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural2	0,68952
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural3	0,78247
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86456
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,90541
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91197
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,66923
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,72987
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,87685
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,76213
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,78827
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,82890
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty1	0,89431
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty2	0,83471
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty3	0,86261
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty4	0,61700
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty5	0,82398
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction1	0,89048
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction2	0,91328
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction3	0,84697
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction4	0,88385
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction5	0,81757
Brandexp	===>	Behaviour	0,96918
Brandexp	===>	Sensory	0,82853
Brandexp	===>	Intellectual	0,96756

Path			Estimate
Brandexp	===>	Emotional	0,99147
Brandexp	===>	Loyalty	0,72510
Brandexp	===>	Satisfaction	0,74848

Table 63: SEM: Standardised results for variance parameters: Brand experience on satisfaction and loyalty excluding the relational dimension

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Brand experience	1,00000
Error	Behavioural1	0.79699
	Intellectual1	0.55214
	Emotional1	0.41915
	Emotional2	0.37864
	Sensory1	0.25254
	Behavioural2	0.52456
	Sensory2	0.18024
	Intellectual2	0.46729
	Sensory3	0.16832
	Emotional3	0.31292
	Intellectual3	0.23113
	Behavioural3	0.38774
	Satisfaction1	0.20705
	Loyalty1	0.20022
	Satisfaction2	0.16592
	Loyalty2	0.30326
	Satisfaction3	0.28264
	Loyalty3	0.25591
	Satisfaction4	0.21881
	Loyalty4	0.61932
	Loyalty5	0.32105
	Satisfaction5	0.33158
	Behaviour	0.06069
	Sensory	0.31353
	Intellectual	0.06384
	Emotional	0.01698
	Loyalty	0.47423
	Satisfaction	0.43979

G.2 SEM: Relationships between constructs, including the relational construct

The following tables (Table 64 to Table 69) indicate the values calculated, when taking the relational dimension of brand experience into consideration.

Table 64: SEM: Standardised results for path list: Brand experience on satisfaction including the relational dimension

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behaviour1	0,48669
Behaviour	===>	Behaviour2	0,70631
Behaviour	===>	Behaviour3	0,76483

Relational	===>	Relational1	0,61336
Relational	===>	Relational2	0,85151
Relational	===>	Relational3	0,88544
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86282
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,90320
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91240
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,68147
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,73287
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,85923
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,75265
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,80910
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,82707
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction1	0,90810
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction2	0,91478
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction3	0,84185
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction4	0,88235
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction5	0,82935
Brandexp	===>	Behaviour	0,96188
Brandexp	===>	Sensory	0,81641
Brandexp	===>	Intellectual	0,96736
Brandexp	===>	Emotional	0,98327
Brandexp	===>	Relational	0,93607
Brandexp	===>	Satisfaction	0,75468

Table 65: SEM: Standardised results for variance parameters: Brand experience on satisfaction including the relational dimension

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Brand experience (brandexp)	1,00000
Error	Behaviour1	0,76313
	Relational1	0,62379
	Intellectual1	0,53561
	Relational2	0,27493
	Emotional1	0,43352
	Emotional2	0,34536
	Sensory1	0,25554
	Behaviour2	0,50112
	Sensory2	0,18423
	Intellectual2	0,46291
	Sensory3	0,16753
	Emotional3	0,31595
	Relational3	0,21599
	Intellectual3	0,26172
	Behaviour3	0,41504
	Satisfaction1	0,17535
	Satisfaction2	0,16318
	Satisfaction3	0,29129
	Satisfaction4	0,22146
	Satisfaction5	0,31218
	Behaviour	0,07479
	Sensory	0,33347
	Intellectual	0,06422
	Emotional	0,03319
	Relational	0,12377
	Satisfaction	0,43046

Table 66: SEM: Standardised results for path list:
Brand experience on loyalty including the relational dimension

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural1	0,48536
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural2	0,71017
Behaviour	===>	Behavioural3	0,75987
Relational	===>	Relational1	0,62589
Relational	===>	Relational2	0,84663
Relational	===>	Relational3	0,88952
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86490
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,90388
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91064
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,67875
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,73964
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,86182
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,75157
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,81824
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,82081
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty1	0,89746
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty2	0,82447
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty3	0,86230
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty4	0,62277
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty5	0,82742
Brandexp	===>	Behaviour	0,96086
Brandexp	===>	Sensory	0,81751
Brandexp	===>	Intellectual	0,96002
Brandexp	===>	Emotional	0,98498
Brandexp	===>	Relational	0,93556
Brandexp	===>	Loyalty	0,72956

Table 67: SEM: Standardised results for variance parameters:
Brand experience on loyalty including the relational dimension

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Brand experience (brandexp)	1,00000
Error	Behaviour1	0,76443
	Relational1	0,60827
	Intellectual1	0,53930
	Relational2	0,28322
	Emotional1	0,43514
	Emotional2	0,33049
	Sensory1	0,25194
	Behaviour2	0,49566
	Sensory2	0,18300
	Intellectual2	0,45294
	Sensory3	0,17074
	Emotional3	0,32627
	Relational3	0,20875
	Intellectual3	0,25727
	Behaviour3	0,42259
	Loyalty1	0,19456
	Loyalty2	0,32024
	Loyalty3	0,25643
	Loyalty4	0,61216
	Loyalty5	0,31538

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
	Behaviour	0,07675
	Sensory	0,33168
	Intellectual	0,07837
	Emotional	0,02981
	Relational	0,12472
	Loyalty	0,46775

Table 68: SEM: Standardised results for path list:
Brand experience on loyalty and satisfaction including the relational dimension

Path			Estimate
Behaviour	===>	Behaviour1	0,46567
Behaviour	===>	Behaviour2	0,70608
Behaviour	===>	Behaviour3	0,77718
Relational	===>	Relational1	0,62413
Relational	===>	Relational2	0,85475
Relational	===>	Relational3	0,89773
Sensory	===>	Sensory1	0,86536
Sensory	===>	Sensory2	0,90609
Sensory	===>	Sensory3	0,91034
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual1	0,67554
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual2	0,72347
Intellectual	===>	Intellectual3	0,87159
Emotional	===>	Emotional1	0,75779
Emotional	===>	Emotional2	0,80222
Emotional	===>	Emotional3	0,83162
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty1	0,89914
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty2	0,83221
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty3	0,87111
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty4	0,60848
Loyalty	===>	Loyalty5	0,83221
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction1	0,90175
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction2	0,91655
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction3	0,84540
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction4	0,88844
Satisfaction	===>	Satisfaction5	0,82839
Brandexp	===>	Behaviour	0,96034
Brandexp	===>	Sensory	0,81129
Brandexp	===>	Intellectual	0,96259
Brandexp	===>	Emotional	0,98477
Brandexp	===>	Relational	0,94479
Brandexp	===>	Loyalty	0,73039
Brandexp	===>	Satisfaction	0,75696

Table 69: SEM: Standardised results for variance parameters:
Brand experience on loyalty and satisfaction including the relational dimension

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
Exogenous	Brand experience (brandexp)	1,00000
Error	Behaviour1	0,78315
	Relational1	0,61046
	Intellectual1	0,54364
	Relational2	0,26939

Variance Type	Variable	Estimate
	Emotional1	0,42575
	Emotional2	0,35645
	Sensory1	0,25115
	Behaviour2	0,50145
	Sensory2	0,17899
	Intellectual2	0,47659
	Sensory3	0,17128
	Emotional3	0,30842
	Relational3	0,19407
	Intellectual3	0,24034
	Behaviour3	0,39599
	Satisfaction1	0,18685
	Loyalty1	0,19155
	Satisfaction2	0,15993
	Loyalty2	0,30742
	Satisfaction3	0,28531
	Loyalty3	0,24117
	Satisfaction4	0,21068
	Loyalty4	0,62975
	Loyalty5	0,30743
	Satisfaction5	0,31376
	Behaviour	0,07774
	Sensory	0,34181
	Intellectual	0,07343
	Emotional	0,03023
	Relational	0,10737
	Loyalty	0,46653
	Satisfaction	0,42701

H. Appendix H: Turnitin submission report

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18**A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.** 9 **November** 2015 **i ABSTRACT**

To address declining membership, counter switching behaviours and heighten potential exit barriers, brand experience is considered as mediator of loyalty and satisfaction amongst churches in Johannesburg, South Africa and with the aim of influencing attachment decisions. Brand experience is considered to consist of five dimensions, encompassing a behavioural, emotional, intellectual, relational and sensory component. The purpose of the research was to consider whether brand experience as mediator of satisfaction and loyalty is observed in the religious and church industry and whether it differs amongst specific churches. It also aimed to determine whether age, duration of membership, level of education or membership status is a mediating factor of these constructs. By undertaking a quantitative explanatory study, 12 churches participated in obtaining 675 valid responses by means of an electronic survey to achieve the research objectives.

101**Using the Brand Experience Scale,** as **developed by Brakus, Schmitt** and **Zarantonello (2009)**