
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY IN CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **An assessment of the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

5 October 2012

DATE

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SUMMARY

This study focuses on the extent to which the various elements of corporate brand identity as identified in the literature are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. In doing so, a theoretical perspective is adopted for this study that borrows from both marketing communication and corporate communication theories.

Three data collection techniques – Q methodology, an online questionnaire and computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) – were used to determine to what extent these elements are perceived significant in corporate brand image formation among participants from 106 South African organisations across various business sectors. Four categories were identified to be perceived as significant for corporate brand image formation, namely transformational leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy, brand equity and employee orientation and mentorship.

To date, a comprehensive measuring instrument that theoretically includes all the corporate brand identity elements perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation has not been developed. Based on the research findings, the study aims to propose a theoretical framework for establishing a measuring instrument that includes all the corporate brand identity elements deemed significant in corporate brand image formation as perceived by South African organisations. The objective of providing a theoretical framework for establishing a measuring instrument is to enable organisations to assess the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among their stakeholder groups. The theoretical framework includes the four identified categories perceived as significant in corporate brand image formation. It indicates which of the corporate brand identity elements included in the four categories are perceived to be more significant in corporate brand image formation by South African organisations. In addition, it provides assumptions on how these corporate brand identity elements are perceived to work in synergy to enhance corporate brand image formation based on the research results.

KEYWORDS

Brand/branding

Brand identity

Brand image

Corporate identity

Corporate image

Corporate brand identity

Corporate brand image

Corporate brand identity elements

Corporate brand image formation

Corporate reputation

Factor

Q-factor analysis

Telephone interviews

Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI)

Q methodology

Q study

Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative research approach

Quantitative research approach

Mixed-methods research

Questionnaire

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The subject areas of this study are marketing communication and corporate communication, and focus on corporate brand identity and corporate brand image formation. As a result, a theoretical perspective is adopted for this study that borrows from both marketing communication and corporate communication theories. The study focuses on the extent to which the various elements of corporate brand identity as identified in the literature are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation in South African organisations across various business sectors.

Over the past two decades, the demands on organisations to distinguish themselves from competitors have increased substantially (Mukherjee & Balmer 2008:3). Researchers in marketing communication (for example Markwick & Fill 1997; Argenti 1998; Duncan 2003; Van Riel & Fombrun 2007; Kitchen, Kim & Schultz 2008; Schultz, Patti & Kitchen 2011) and organisational communication (for example Asif & Sargeant 2000; Cheney, Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh 2004; Cornelissen 2004; Cornelissen, Haslam & Balmer 2007; Cornelissen 2008) consider brand identity and brand image as fundamental issues across various business sectors as these contribute to enhancing the visibility and credibility of an organisation (Alwi & Da Silva 2008:217-218). In addition, various literature studies in corporate communication conclude that corporate brand identity plays a significant role in establishing a positive corporate brand image among stakeholders in order to create brand equity (for example, Farquhar 1989; Aaker 1991; 2010; Keller 1993; Melewar 2003; Nandan 2005; Alexander, Bick, Abratt & Bendixen 2009). The evidence on which these literature studies is based argues that a positive relationship exists between the performance of an organisation's brand and its ability to maintain brand equity (Park & Srinivasan 1994:271; Aaker 1996:110; Aaker 2009:144). Furthermore, if the corporate brand identity is held in high esteem by stakeholders, it can assist organisations in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. As such, if consumers value the corporate brand identity, it will contribute to a higher tendency among consumers to purchase products from a specific brand, resulting in higher levels of profitability (Alwi & Da Silva 2008:217-218). To compete effectively in a dynamic business environment, organisations must continuously discover new ways to maintain their competitive advantage. For this

reason, innovation in product and service offerings is a significant discriminator that enables organisations to retain and expand their customer base and increase their profit margins (Desai & Keller 2009:35).

In view of the role of an organisation's performance in brand equity, organisation managements have become increasingly aware of the importance of having a sound knowledge of the organisation's identity. Proper knowledge of the organisation's identity will enable organisations to manage their identity in order to secure a favourable image and reputation (Balmer 1995:29; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:51). Over the past decade, the significant role of branding and brand equity in enhancing the credibility of a brand's products and services has become almost axiomatic. It is no longer questioned whether a strong brand is important. Instead, research on branding and brand equity (for example, Simon & Sullivan 1993; Venkatesh, Azar & Fuller 2008; Anderson 2011) is now aimed at determining how much these are worth and the elements involved in creating and maintaining a brand (Spotts & Weinberger 2010:592).

In the constantly changing business environment in which organisations operate these days, it is essential that organisations determine the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation, since a favourable corporate brand image is a prerequisite for brand equity which can give an organisation a distinct competitive advantage (Alwi & Da Silva 2008:217-218). Furthermore, corporate brands serve as a way of differentiating organisations and creating stability and trust in increasingly competitive and turbulent markets (Kay 2006). The corporate branding process is aimed at establishing and maintaining a positive reputation and a favourable image among an organisation's internal and external stakeholders (Hawabhay, Abratt & Peters 2009:5) (see section 1.11 and Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.2). To achieve a favourable corporate brand image, organisations must determine the elements of corporate brand identity that contribute to corporate brand image formation and analyse the manner and extent to which each of these elements is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. Information on which elements are considered mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity will enable organisations to establish a positive corporate brand image, rather than merely focusing on selling products and services. These elements are described as mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity as they are considered essential elements of the corporate brand identity mix which are a prerequisite for effective corporate brand image formation (see Chapter 4, section 4.2).

However, one of the obstacles that could have a detrimental effect on corporate brand image formation is discrepancies that exist in the branding literature in the definitions for the concepts of brand identity and brand image from which corporate brand identity and corporate brand image formation respectively have evolved. Researchers and practitioners in the field of marketing communication have diverse opinions regarding the fundamental components that constitute brand identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.3) and brand image (see Chapter 2, section 2.6). Despite the large volume of literature dealing with these concepts, authors in the field of marketing communication fail to agree on ascribing a uniform meaning to brand identity and brand image. In addition, these specialists hold different viewpoints on the extent to which brand identity contributes to brand image formation (Balmer, Stuart & Greyser 2009). Upon closer investigation of the definitions of brand identity in order to determine its elements, it has become evident that in literature similar meanings are being assigned to the concepts of identity, image, reputation and personality (Kennedy 1977; Schultz & Ervolder 1998; Wei 2002). As a result of these inconsistencies, the exact meaning of these concepts remains unclear. Despite various significant contributions in earlier literature aimed at defining brand identity and brand image (for example Dowling 1988; Abratt 1989; the 1997 special issue of *European Journal of Marketing* [1]), these concepts are still being used inconsistently when theoretical frameworks are compiled or when the concepts are applied to an organisation's brand, its products and services. To date, no operational definition of corporate identity has been formulated that integrates all the elements of brand identity as discussed in the literature.

In addition, the concepts of brand identity and brand image are closely interrelated: brand identity comprises the visible and invisible elements used by an organisation to reflect its unique attributes to its various stakeholder groups. To manage the attributes which stakeholders associate with the brand, the organisation creates a brand positioning strategy in order to establish a favourable impression (Schultz 2005:183). The brand positioning strategy includes the use of tangible elements such as visual symbols, for example the brand's name, and intangible elements, such as employees' behaviour, that are communicated to internal and external stakeholder groups by means of various media (Garrity 2001:121). The impressions of the brand created in stakeholders' minds in this way are referred to as brand images and represent different audience perceptions and expectations about the brand (Nandan 2005:267).

In view of the diverse viewpoints on the exact meaning and application of the concepts of brand identity and brand image, organisations hold different perspectives on which elements constitute brand identity, resulting in misconceptions about the aspects that determine brand identity. In addition, many organisations do not fully recognise the extent to which their brand identity controls formation of their brand image. Organisations thus fail to comprehend the way in which their various stakeholder groups perceive the organisation and the elements that determine how their perception of the organisation is formed. In this regard, the current study contributes in the following ways:

- This study demarcates the many differences between the concepts of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the concept of brand, all its related components are discussed and defined with regard to brand, corporate image, reputation, brand image (see Chapter 2, sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6), corporate identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.2) and brand identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.3) in order to analyse the definitions and meaning of identity and image based on the multiple views on these concepts provided in the literature. A corporate brand identity and corporate brand image perspective, borrowing from two disciplines, is then adopted in the study, and the concepts of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image are explained in depth with regard to their meaning and content.
- The study indicates the elements that are perceived to be mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity as identified from its definitions and descriptions in the literature. An explanation is also provided of how these elements are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation as discussed in various academic publications.
- The research findings of the study clearly indicate which of the elements of corporate brand identity are perceived to contribute to a lesser or greater extent to the formation of corporate brand image in organisations. In this way, the study determines the relative importance of the various corporate brand identity elements in forming the anticipated corporate brand image among an organisation's stakeholders.
- Finally, based on the findings of this study, a theoretical framework is proposed for the development of a measuring instrument which can be used by organisations across various business sectors according to their needs. The theoretical framework provides for all the elements which the results of the study have proven to be perceived as mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity. The study was conducted among South African organisations across various business sectors. These findings

are extrapolated to the specific topic under investigation in this thesis, namely an assessment of the perceived role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. The purpose of these recommendations is to enable organisations to assess the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among stakeholder groups, as well as to determine to which extent there is a gap between its corporate brand identity and anticipated corporate brand image. In addition, the theoretical framework provides solutions for adjusting corporate brand identity in order to improve the organisation's corporate brand image among stakeholder groups.

1.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES PERTINENT TO THIS STUDY

Various previous studies are relevant to this study.

As Mouton (2001:180) comments, "a review of literature is essentially an exercise in inductive reasoning, where you work from a 'sample' of texts that you read in order to come to a proper understanding of a specific domain of scholarship". The purpose of the literature review for this study was to reflect all the theories, schools of thought and research findings pertaining to brand identity and brand image. Consequently, the literature review was conducted to provide different perspectives on the subject of brand identity and its role in brand image formation for compiling a Q sample that is broadly representative of the perspectives on these topics in the literature (MacLiam 2003).

In view of the fact that communication scientists perceive a positive brand image as a decisive factor in enhancing organisational competitiveness, this subject has emerged as a much debated topic in research over the years. An extensive literature search indicates that since the late seventies, eight studies were done on brand identity and brand image in various business sectors (Vardi 1979; Burgess 1990; Coop 2002, 2004; Ramdhani 2004 – in progress; Niemandt 2005; Han 2006; Rammile 2009). More recent postgraduate research studies on brand identity and brand image which are closest to the topic of this study include two dissertations (Niemandt 2005, Han 2006) and one thesis (Rammile 2009).

1.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose and objectives of this study are the following:

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the study is applied communication research to assess the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation by means of the following:

- To first explain brand identity and brand image from which the concepts of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image have evolved, and to clarify the differences between brand identity and brand image based on descriptions and definitions provided in the literature.
- To determine the perceived mandatory elements that constitute corporate brand identity by borrowing from both the corporate communication and marketing communication disciplines.
- To determine which of the elements of corporate brand identity as identified in the literature are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation.
- To relate the meaning of corporate brand identity as identified in the literature with how the concept is applied in practice.
- To determine if there are any additional corporate brand identity elements not indicated in the literature which organisations perceive to contribute to corporate brand image formation.
- To identify solutions for adjusting corporate brand identity elements in order to improve corporate brand image among organisations' different stakeholder groups.
- To make sound theoretical recommendations for the development of a measuring instrument that theoretically includes all the perceived mandatory elements for corporate brand identity.
- To discover new options for future research on the role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation.

1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are both exploratory and descriptive and are as follows:

- Descriptive objective – to identify and describe the corporate brand identity elements that are perceived to be mandatory and to contribute to corporate brand image formation.

- Exploratory objective – to explore the extent to which the perceived mandatory corporate brand identity elements are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation in organisations. An additional exploratory objective was to identify solutions for adjusting corporate brand identity elements in order to improve corporate brand image among the population's different stakeholder groups.

Priest (1996:9) defines an exploratory study as “inductive logic which involves reasoning from a specific case to a general theoretical conclusion”. An exploratory objective was appropriate for this study due to the ambiguity regarding the concepts of brand identity and brand image in the literature as explained in section 1.1. This creates a context for misinterpretation and potential confusion as the lack of uniform definitions results from the integration of diverse perspectives on these concepts within the various disciplines in the field of communication (Scheffer 2005:15). Furthermore, an exploratory study enables the researcher to gain new perspectives on the concepts of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image and how to manage these based on information obtained from practice (Melewar, Karaosmanoglu & Paterson 2005:66). Consequently, this study aimed to relate the meaning of corporate brand identity as described in the literature with how the concept is applied in practice. Since mainly a qualitative approach for this study was followed, the conclusions drawn cannot be generalised to the larger population. Instead, this study should rather be seen as discovering new options for future research on the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation.

Quantitative, descriptive research is associated with discovering answers that are statistically reliable and universally applicable. This type of research involves displaying answers by means of models and other forms of representations which provide conclusive answers (Littlejohn & Foss 2005:18-21; Fourie 2007:106-110). A descriptive study provides information that enables the researcher to describe the concepts of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image by identifying the elements that are perceived to be mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity and which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. Since the objectives of this study were both exploratory and descriptive, both a qualitative and a quantitative research approach was adopted. A more detailed explanation of these research approaches is provided in Chapter 6, sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2. These days, best practice in research methods often recommends a mixed-methods research design which integrates effective methods from different sources (Livingstone, Van Couvering & Thumim 2005). In this regard, Bryman, Becker and Sempik (2007:268) indicate that mixed methods can be used either in qualitative or

quantitative research. However, these authors also indicate that more recent investigations in which mixed methods are used have tended to combine qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

More recently, the advantages of a mixed-methods research design have been increasingly recognised by social science researchers (Boeije 2010:158). Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) define mixed-methods research as “research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry”.

Boeije (2010:158) identifies three mixed methods designs, but indicates that there are various possible combinations. These three designs are a sequential explanatory design, which is used for its explanatory capacities, a sequential exploratory design, which is used for its exploratory power and a concurrent triangulation design in which qualitative research support and cross-validate the quantitative research findings by providing different types of knowledge. Using techniques of data collection and data analysis alongside each other provides overlapping information, which enables the researcher to consider results from various perspectives (Ramchander 2004:108). Mixed methods research is discussed in more detail in chapter 6, section 6.5.

Since this study consists of both a qualitative and a quantitative component in which qualitative data were collected and analysed first, followed by quantitative data, a sequential exploratory design was used in this thesis (Pole 2007).

1.4 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THIS STUDY

In this section, the research paradigm for this study is discussed.

1.4.1 Research paradigm

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:19) explain that “the net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm or an interpretive framework”. The research approach is determined by the nature of the research enquiry as well as a set of beliefs and feelings about the world that guides the researcher to decide how these should be understood and investigated (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:19). Consequently, the three elements of a research paradigm that directly or

indirectly guides a researcher's work are methodology (the manner for acquiring knowledge), ontology (the researcher's perception of truth and reality) and epistemology (the knowledge about the truth or reality). In this regard, Plack (2005:224) explains that the three elements of a paradigm that directly or indirectly guides a researcher's work are ontology, epistemology and methodology. In essence, ontology constitutes "reality", while epistemology involves the relationship between the researcher and reality. Methodology refers to the techniques which the researcher uses to discover that reality.

The two most widely recognised research paradigms are positivism and interpretism. These two paradigms or research philosophies are often described as polar opposites. Between the positivist and interpretivist research paradigms, various other research philosophies exist, although these philosophies all rely on some principles of positivism or interpretism (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2008). In the case of the positivist paradigm, knowledge is generalised to a population by means of statistical analysis of observations made about reality and not according to theory (Fuglsang & Olsen 2004).

In contrast to positivism, the main principles of interpretivism are that research must be observed from inside through a person's direct experience rather than the observer (Blumberg et al 2008). Furthermore, the role of the scientist in the interpretivist paradigm is to "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:19). By its nature, interpretivist research promotes qualitative data in obtaining knowledge (Kelliher 2005:123-132) in which research follows a naturalistic approach (Creswell 2007:37; 78). In addition, qualitative research is aimed at explaining and understanding the specific individual case in a subjective, relativistic social world rather than an absolutist, external reality (Cohen et al 2007:8). Finally, in an interpretivist research paradigm, researchers use different criteria to evaluate their research results. Interpretivists judge their research results according to trustworthiness, which includes credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability. Gephart (1999) explains that the extent to which interpretive research can be regarded as trustworthy depends on whether another researcher can obtain similar findings when conducting research in the same field using the same type of strategies as the first researcher. The interpretivist research design is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, section 6.2.1.

Since positivism and interpretivism are regarded as polar opposites, these two research paradigms have diverse assumptions of reality and knowledge. As a result, positivism and interpretivism are based on their own ontological and epistemological assumptions that

contain differing ontological and epistemological views and methodological characteristics. These form the foundation of the particular research approach followed, as reflected in the researcher's methodology and methods.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions are discussed in the next section.

1.4.2 Ontological and epistemological assumptions

There are conflicting paradigmatic perspectives regarding what reality or ontology involves and, consequently, what knowledge or epistemological content constitutes.

Blaikie (2000 in Grix 2004:59) defines ontology as the study of "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, the units it comprises and how these units interact with each other." Consequently, the field of study of ontology focuses on the existence of something. Ontology refers to a person's view of reality and ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality, in other words *what is*.

The view of how knowledge is acquired is labelled epistemology. Crotty (1998:3) defines epistemology as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology". The field of study of epistemology is the knowledge of the existence of something. As a result, epistemology deals with the nature and forms of knowledge, and how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated – *what it means to know* (Cohen et al 2007:7). In this regard, epistemology is concerned with the nature of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known.

In the next section, the research methodology for the current study in relation to the ontological and epistemological position is explained.

1.4.3 Ontological and epistemological assumptions for the current study

In this section, the design of the research methodology is outlined in relation to the ontological and epistemological position of the interpretivist paradigm. The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism. Relativism refers to the perception that reality is subjective and therefore it differs from person to person (Guba & Lincoln 1994:110). Social realities are mediated by a person's senses. The interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism which is based on phenomena present in the real world. To experience a world is to actively participate in it and encountering it. Knowledge is gained through personal experience (Crotty 1998:42). Furthermore, the epistemological assumptions in

the interpretivist paradigm are value-related and findings are subjective (De Villiers 2005:11-13, 17).

It is important to put the research paradigm used in this study in context to avoid the drawback of many research projects pointed out by Evered and Louis (1981:386): often “the quality of a piece of research is more critically judged by the appropriateness of the paradigm selected than by the mere technical correctness of the methods used.”

The purpose of this study is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the corporate brand identity elements that are perceived significant in corporate brand image formation by exploring the interpretations of organisations across various business sectors on the elements that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent. As a result, the meta-theoretical paradigm adopted for this study is the interpretivist worldview. By embracing the interpretivist worldview, the researcher acknowledges that interpretive research is based on the perspective that the researcher can only obtain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon if the interpretations of that phenomenon are explained by people experiencing the phenomenon (Shar & Corley 2006:1823). This meta-theoretical paradigm assisted the researcher to conduct data collection in an interactive way, with the aim of understanding the subjective perspective of participants on how and why corporate brand identity contributes to corporate brand image formation. In this way, the interpretivist paradigm steered the researcher’s theoretical foundations to understand and interpret the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent from participants’ perceptions from their frames of reference and how they experience reality (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). As such, the research methods employed within the interpretivist paradigm were inductive or qualitative in nature, based on a sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design. Induction means that general conclusions are drawn from empirical facts (Andersen 2005). As a result, the research methods were oriented towards discovery and process; are concerned with generalisability to a lesser extent; have high trustworthiness and is aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the research problem in its unique context (Ulin, Robinson & Tolley 2004).

In the next section, the research problem, sub-problems and research questions for the current study are discussed.

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM, SUB-PROBLEMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research problem, sub-problems and research questions for this study are discussed below.

1.5.1 Research problem statement

The main objective of the current study was to indicate how and why the elements of corporate brand identity form part of the concourse for corporate brand image formation. In addition, recommendations were made for the development of a measuring instrument based on a sound theoretical framework which includes all the perceived mandatory elements of corporate brand identity. A measuring instrument would be a useful tool to enable organisations to assess the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among different stakeholder groups, as well as to determine to which extent there is a gap between its corporate brand identity and anticipated corporate brand image. In this regard, the main research problem statement for this study was as follows:

The purpose of this exploratory and descriptive study is to analyse the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements deemed mandatory in corporate brand image formation across various industries by means of a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design.

1.5.2 Sub-problems

The sub-problems for this study were the following:

- Sub-problem 1: Identification of the perceived mandatory elements of corporate brand identity.
- Sub-problem 2: Identification of the elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation.
- Sub-problem 3: Recommendations for an all-inclusive theoretical framework for the development of a measuring instrument to enable organisations to assess the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among stakeholder groups.

1.5.3 Research questions

In view of the sub-problems stated above, the following three research questions were identified:

- What are the perceived mandatory elements of corporate brand identity?

- Which elements of corporate brand identity are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation?
- Which corporate brand identity elements are perceived to be significant for inclusion in a measuring instrument to assess the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among an organisation's stakeholder groups?

The methodological research design used for this study to answer these research questions is discussed in the next section.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used for data collection and analysis in the current study was mainly exploratory in nature. In the case of exploratory or qualitative research, inductive research designs are used with the aim of investigating many cases in order to induce general patterns or relationships. The researcher's epistemological position was to ground the research in the social world of the social actors being investigated. Therefore, data collection and analysis focused on the participants' construction of reality, their experiences and knowledge concerning social action and their way of conceptualising and giving meaning to their social world.

The research methodology used in this study is explained below.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to relate the theory of corporate brand identity with how it is applied in practice. To this end, a sequential exploratory design was used in this thesis, since this study consists of both a qualitative and a quantitative component in which qualitative data were collected and analysed first, followed by quantitative data (Pole 2007). Two research methods were used, namely Q methodology as well as CATI. Three data collection methods were used to systematically collect and analyse empirical data. These included an online Q sort as primary source of data collection which was completed first by the participants, as well as two additional primary sources of data collection, namely a short online questionnaire comprising five open-ended questions, and an interview schedule consisting of 12 open-ended questions (see Chapter 6, sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 for a more detailed discussion). The online questionnaire and the interview schedule were additional primary sources of data collection and merely an exploratory tool, since the information obtained from the responses to the online questionnaire and CATI provided additional information from the participants who completed the online Q sort. Since the answers to the questions included in the questionnaire and CATI would provide contextual

clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study, including these as part of the measuring instrument was deemed a vital augmentation of the Q-sort data. The sequential exploratory mixed method research design enabled the researcher to use approaches that complemented each other and investigated different aspects of the research questions, resulting in well-founded conclusions from the data (Pole 2007). In this regard, Creswell (2005:65) maintains as follows: “The purpose of this method is to end up with valid and well-substantiated conclusions about a single phenomenon”. Therefore, sequential exploratory mixed-methods research was deemed appropriate for this study, since the results of different data collection techniques can disclose various diverse but also interlinking perspectives of a phenomenon, resulting in a condensed description of the topic under investigation (Boeije 2010:176) (see also Chapter 6, section 6.5 for a more detailed discussion of mixed-methods research).

Although Q methodology follows a quantitative research approach by using statistical techniques of Q-factor analysis (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7) to analyse and interpret the research results, the quantitative component is mainly exploratory in nature.

In the next section, the two research methods that were used in this study, namely Q methodology and CATI are explained.

1.7.1 Q methodology

Q methodology, which is labelled as Q study when referring to the online Q sort conducted in this study, was chosen as one of three primary research methods to meet the descriptive objective of this study. The descriptive objective of the study was to identify and describe the corporate brand identity elements that are perceived to be mandatory and to contribute to corporate brand image formation. One of the reasons for this choice is that Q methodology combines both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. In this regard, Hogan (2008:80) views Q methodology as a mixed method by explaining that it combines the subjective approach of qualitative research techniques following its assumptions and research logic with quantitative, mathematical techniques of factor analysis to identify underlying patterns in the data (Danielson 2009). Watts and Stenner (2005:69) refer to this as a qualiquantological approach.

Q methodology was selected as the main research method for this study instead of alternative research approaches, known as R methodologies, for a number of additional reasons. Firstly, Q methodology uncovers and identifies the range of opinions regarding a specific topic under investigation. Q methodology is useful in identifying shared features

and differences. In addition, it is useful for thematic identification and analysis (Shinebourne & Adams 2007a). Furthermore, it allows the researcher to construct broad categories or dimensions of the topic under investigation and to investigate the patterns and relations between and within these dimensions (Shinebourne & Adams 2007b). The cooperation and candidness of the participants included in the person sample determined the effectiveness of the Q study. Unlike other qualitative research techniques, for example focus group interviews, the number of uncertain responses is limited by the forced distribution of the statements in the Q sort. For this reason, Q methodology is considered an alternative and complementary method to qualitative research techniques, since it combines the subjective approach of qualitative research techniques with quantitative, mathematical techniques used in factor analysis.

Secondly, Q methodology is considered to be a useful research instrument for studying issues that are socially debated and contested. This research method was particularly relevant for this investigation of the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as viewed from the subjective viewpoint of participants included in the person sample. The most pertinent benefit of Q methodology to this study is that it allowed participants to express their subjectivity without confining them to a priori categories (Danielson 2009). In this manner, it enabled the researcher to explore highly complex and socially contested concepts and topics from the perspective of the individuals involved (Watts & Stenner 2005). Q methodology enabled the individual to observe and measure his or her own subjectivity without any norms or objective scales intervening. Consequently, the individual determines what is important, what his or her values are and what the themes should be, resulting in diversity in perspectives (Lister & Gardner 2006).

Brown (1999:3) distinguishes between facts (information) and opinion (communication). Facts (information) are objective and without self-reference, while opinion (communication) is subjective and requires self-reference. Facts can be proved or disproved, opinions are not subject to proof but are referential to the person who expresses it and only has value and meaning within the individual's frame of reference. Therefore, the purpose of this study was not to determine the number of participants who hold a specific perspective on the role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. Instead, the study aimed to reveal participants' subjective understandings of how and why the elements of corporate brand identity are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent. In this

manner, the researcher could sample the range and diversity of views expressed, instead of claims about the percentage of participants expressing the different views. Employees from different organisations in the product and services sectors have different understandings and definitions of which corporate brand identity elements are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent, and these different understandings were of interest for this study. As a result, the advantages of using Q methodology in this study are that this research method allowed the subjective beliefs and perspectives of the participants on how the various elements of corporate brand identity identified from the literature are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation to be revealed untainted by the researcher. In addition, the study was aimed at eliciting and describing a wide diversity of the different beliefs and perspectives on the topic under investigation, none of which was defined a priori.

Q methodology usually involves the following five phases (Gaebler-Uhing 2003:439; Stricklin & Almeida 2004):

- In the first phase, the researcher creates a comprehensive collection of statements that reflect the entire range of opinions regarding the topic from people included in the Q study, also known as a *concourse* (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7).
- Secondly, the researcher selects a sample of statements from the *concourse* which he or she develops to be more meaningful. These statements, referred to as the *Q sample*, represent various issues of the study topic (Prateepko & Chongsuvivatwong 2009:2) (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7).
- In the third phase, participants are selected from the people involved in the discourse and are asked to sort the sample of statements developed in phase two in their preferred order of importance on a large board, according to the condition of instruction. The third phase is also known as the *Q-sorting process*, which usually occurs in the presence of the researcher. Traditionally, Q sorting has been done by means of a manual, offline process. As a result of technological development such as the computer and online media, the Q-sorting process can now also be conducted electronically. An online Q-sorting tool provides an alternative method for performing the Q-sorting process in a more cost- and time-efficient manner, since a larger number of diverse participants can be obtained more cost-effectively (Hogan 2008:104).
- In the fourth phase, each participant's response pattern is entered and participants' sorting of statements is compared by means of Q-factor analysis of the $n \times n$ correlation matrix (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7).

- Finally, the results of the Q-factor analysis are analysed. A factor array, which provides a visual representation of the rank ordering of the statements for each factor, is generated and printed. These factor arrays are analysed in terms of consensual and divergent subjectivity in order to identify the similarities and distinguishing features (Gaebler-Uhing 2003:439; Stricklin & Almeida 2004) (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7).

For the purpose of using representative statements in the Q-sort phase of the Q study, the perceived corporate brand identity elements that contribute to perceived corporate brand image formation were grouped into three all-inclusive categories, namely the *transformational leadership and management* category, the *positioning and differentiation strategy* category, and the *brand equity* category. These categories were identified after a thorough literature review, as discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The Q study comprised 54 statements that were representative of these three categories (see Chapter 7, section 7.7 and Annexure A).

The first stage of data collection for this study involved an online Q sort. Participants were required to sort 54 statements on corporate brand identity by using a continuum of “most agree”, “neutral” to “most disagree” (see Chapter 7, section 7.7). The completed Q sort needed to reflect their personal view on how each statement included in the Q sample contributes to corporate brand image formation in their own organisation. In this regard, the completed Q sort explained the overall beliefs and opinions of the participants towards the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as well as the extent to which each of these corporate brand identity elements contribute to corporate brand image formation.

1.7.2 Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI)

In addition to Q methodology, computer-assisted telephone interviews were chosen as one of three primary research methods to meet the exploratory objective of this study. The exploratory objective of the study was to explore the extent to which the perceived mandatory corporate brand identity elements are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation in organisations. An additional exploratory objective was to identify solutions for adjusting corporate brand identity elements in order to improve corporate brand image among the population’s different stakeholder groups. In addition to the online questionnaire following the online Q sorts, interviewing participants telephonically after conducting their online Q sorts was an essential method of gaining supplementary information. Strydom (2002:213) explains that an interview is used to obtain alternative

perspectives on the research topic. Furthermore, an interview is a useful research instrument to confirm or reject the researcher's viewpoints on the topic being investigated.

For conducting CATI a computerised questionnaire is administered to respondents telephonically. The participants' answers are recorded directly into the computer's memory bank; as a result, interim reports and update reports on data collection or the research results are almost immediately available (Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:195; Malhotra 2010:212-213) (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.2). The qualitative insight obtained by means of CATI with participants provided more detailed information on the topic being investigated, which enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of why the participants conducted the Q sort in a particular manner (Hogan 2008:99).

1.8 SAMPLING PROCEDURE OR METHODS

In this section, the sampling procedure or methods for the online Q-sorting process, the CATI and the online questionnaire are explained in more detail.

1.8.1 Population for the online Q-sorting process

The first stage of data collection involved an online Q sort. Participants were required to sort 54 statements on corporate brand identity by using a continuum of "most agree", "neutral" to "most disagree". The completed Q sort needed to reflect their personal view on how each statement included in the Q sample contributes to corporate brand image formation in their own organisation (see Chapter 7, section 7.7). In this regard, the completed Q sort explained the overall beliefs and opinions of the participants towards the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as well as the extent to which each of these corporate brand identity elements contribute to corporate brand image formation.

In the Q study, the researcher wanted to capture the range of opinions present in a concourse. It was therefore critical to select participants who had different perspectives on the topic under investigation. Participants in the Q study were also included in the person sample because they had different and well-formed opinions. Participants who have well-formed opinions will more likely produce a realistic sort (Webler, Danielson & Tuler 2009:9).

The researcher selected a broad cross-section of organisations for inclusion in the person sample. The person sample was selected from a database provided by iFeedback Consulting cc consisting of employees from different positions and functional areas in South African organisations across various business sectors. To ensure an adequate

number of responses would be received, iFeedback Consulting cc identified 3,700 participants from the database based on a specific purpose, namely employees whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation. These included employees in a marketing or communication capacity in the respective organisations, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. In an attempt to increase the number of participants and to ensure that South African organisations from a variety of business sectors were included in the study, participants were selected from business sectors that are broadly representative of the product and services industries (see Chapter 7, section 7.7.1).

1.8.2 Sampling of organisations for the person sample

The study used an extensive person sample, because the researcher wanted to determine the variety of views on the different elements that are perceived to contribute to the corporate brand image formation of an organisation. In addition, the participants were requested to do the online Q sorting under an identical condition of instruction (see Chapter 7, section 7.7.3). This sampling method enabled the researcher to exhaust the full range of attitudes towards this topic across different industries.

Since mainly an exploratory, qualitative research approach was adopted a non-probability sample was used to select participants for the Q study. The non-probability sampling selected for the purpose of this study was purposive sampling (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.3.1 and Chapter 7, section 7.7.1). A purposive sample was specifically chosen, as it is not representative of the general population, but rather represents a specific portion thereof. An advantage of purposive sampling or known-group sampling was that the population selected for inclusion in the study had the specific qualities required to assist in the investigation. Purposive sampling is widely used in interpretive research where the intent is to seek understanding, not prediction. Participants were therefore selected based on their different experiences, opinions and attitudes towards the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. This is a common approach in qualitative research, and is also referred to as maximum variation sampling, because it can be used to tap into a wide range of attributes, situations or incidents within the boundaries of the research problem.

Moreover, by using purposive sampling the researcher ensured that groups and/or population parameters were represented in the sample. The researcher selected a broad cross-section of organisations for inclusion in the person sample. Of the 3,700 prospective participants, 118 participants from 106 organisations submitted a response to

the Q study, resulting in a 3% realised sample. The size of the person sample selected for this study is perhaps larger than the sample size suggested in the literature (Brown 1980b). However, a larger sample size was used for this particular study to ensure it reflected a diverse group of organisations, positions and functional areas (Melewar et al 2005:68). In addition, by using a larger sample size the researcher ensured that organisations from different sectors and a range of sizes were included in the sample (Melewar et al 2005:67). Using a larger sample size to conduct a Q study is not totally unusual and a number of past studies have done so, for example Hogan (2008).

The second and third stages of data collection involved an online questionnaire and an interview schedule. The purpose of the online questionnaire and the interview schedule was to gain additional information from the participants who completed the online Q sort. Since the answers to the questions in the online questionnaire and interview schedule would provide contextual clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study, these measuring instruments were deemed a vital augmentation of the online Q-sort data. For this reason, the online questionnaire and interview schedule served as secondary methods of data collection and merely exploratory tools with the purpose of investigating a variety of characteristics that could emerge as salient in relation to the perceived role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. These three data collection techniques are discussed in detail in Chapter 6, sections 6.4.1, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2.

1.8.3 Population for the online questionnaire

Since the purpose of the online questionnaire was to supplement the data collected by means of the online Q sort, the sample selected for completing the questionnaire was also the sample of participants who completed the online Q sort (see Chapter 7, section 7.7.1). The person sample selected for the Q-sorting process consisted of employees in South African organisations across various business sectors whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation. These included employees in a marketing or communication capacity in the respective organisations, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios.

1.8.4 Sampling for the online questionnaire

Since this online questionnaire constituted qualitative research, a non-probability or non-random method of sampling was used to select respondents for inclusion in the questionnaire. The non-probability sampling selected for the purpose of this study was purposive sampling, since this method attempts to represent a specific portion of the population, and the sample units were selected based on a specific purpose, in this case

respondents' specific qualities, experiences, opinions and attitudes towards the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation (Aaker, Kumar & Day 2007:394; Strydom & Delport 2002:334) (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.3.1).

1.8.5 Population for the CATI

Since qualitative research is time consuming and labour intensive, it is not feasible to include a large sample in the study. For this reason, only a small number of objects are studied intensively if a qualitative research method is used (Darlington & Scott 2002). Darlington and Scott (2002) maintain that qualitative research often gains validity at the expense of its ability to generalise the findings obtained from a small population to the general population. The population for the CATI consisted of the brand managers or senior brand managers of organisations with an established brand across various South African business sectors. Not all the brand managers and senior brand managers who participated in the Q sort agreed to be interviewed. Their reasons included time constraints as well as the organisation's policy on the non-disclosure of its intellectual capital. A sample of 10 brand managers or senior brand managers participated in the CATI.

1.8.6 Sampling for the CATI

Since interviewing is a qualitative research method, a non-probability or non-random method of sampling was used to select participants for inclusion in the interview. The non-probability sampling selected for the purpose of this study was purposive sampling, since this method attempts to represent a specific portion of the population, in this case the brand managers or senior brand managers of organisations with an established brand in various South African business sectors. Furthermore, the sample units are selected based on a specific purpose, in this case participants' specific qualities, knowledge, skills and expertise as brand managers or senior brand managers (Strydom & Delport 2002:334; Aaker et al 2007:394) (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.3.1).

The person sample for the CATI was selected from the person sample used for the online Q sort (see section 1.8.1). Of the realised sample of 118 participants in the Q study, 80 participants were brand managers and senior brand managers across various business sectors. These 80 brand managers and senior brand managers were also included in the person sample for the CATI. Telephone calls were made to these brand managers and senior brand managers to recruit them for participating in the CATI and to arrange a suitable date and time to conduct the CATI. To enhance participation and to establish the credibility and authority of the researcher, the purpose of the study was briefly explained, and the anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants were guaranteed.

Of the 80 prospective participants, a realised sample of 10 brand managers or senior brand managers (12.5%) was obtained to participate in the CATI.

1.9 ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Carson, Gilmore, Gronhaug and Perry (2001) indicate a number of strategies that researchers can apply when conducting interpretive, qualitative research to ensure the research findings represent the social world of respondents. Therefore, qualitative research is aimed at establishing trustworthiness. In the next section, trustworthiness and its dimensions are discussed. The measurement approach for Q methodology is discussed in a separate section, since it is dissimilar to the analytical approach used in qualitative research.

1.9.1 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

The interpretive paradigm differs from the positivist tradition with regard to fundamental assumptions, research purposes, and inference processes. Due to a lack of agreement mainly resulting from ontological and epistemological differences, researchers have little concern for validity tests of rigour in qualitative research. As a result, the conventional criteria for evaluating research results are not suitable in the case of the interpretive paradigm (Bradley 1993; Smith 2003). Instead, trustworthiness in qualitative research is evaluated on how the research findings meet four criteria (Lincoln & Guba 1985). These criteria are the following:

- Credibility (adequate and reliable representations of the construction of the reality studied)
- Transferability (the extent to which the working hypothesis or constructs can be used in other empirical contexts)
- Dependability (the extent to which the interpretations are constructed in a manner that avoids instability)
- Confirmability (the ability to track a researcher's interpretation construction based on the data and other retained records) (Lincoln & Guba 1985)

In view of these criteria, it can be concluded that the trustworthiness of interpretive qualitative research requires the researcher to have integrity, to follow a systematic research approach, while being well conversant with and trained in the chosen methodology and applying high degrees of reflection (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 1994). The four criteria of trustworthiness are explained in more detail in Chapter 6, section 6.5.4.1.

The measurement approach for Q methodology, namely validity and reliability, is discussed in the next section.

1.9.2 Validity and reliability in quantitative research

Validity and reliability are criteria used to evaluate the quality of research in the conventional positivist research paradigm. Delport (2002:166) indicates that validity deals with whether the data that are collected accurately reflects the subjects that are being studied. Reliability, according to the perspectives of Yin (2009:45) and Boeije (2010:169), refers to the extent to which independent use of the same measuring instrument consistently produces the same or similar results under comparable conditions. This implies that if the study were to be repeated, it would yield the same results as the first time.

In this study, trustworthiness, validity and reliability were attained in the following ways:

- Credibility was achieved by using more than one data collection technique, namely an online Q sort, an online questionnaire and an interview schedule. As indicated in section 1.7, a sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design was used in which qualitative data were collected and analysed first, followed by quantitative data. The quantitative data are primarily used to augment the qualitative data. This enabled the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the perceived role of the elements of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. Consequently, a sequential exploratory design enabled the researcher to draw conclusions which would otherwise not have been considered had the Q sort been used as the only source of data collection, since conclusions and recommendations could have been made on a limited interpretation of the data. In addition, a mixed-methods approach enabled the researcher to overcome the intrinsic weaknesses associated with the various data collection techniques (Williamson 2005:11; Hogan 2008:80). Furthermore, Q methodology provided a framework through a “distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles that, when conjoined with specialized statistical applications of correlational and factor analytic techniques, provides researchers with a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining subjectivity” (McKeown & Thomas 1988:7). In this thesis, the interpretive component of qualitative analysis was achieved by systematically examines participants’ different perspectives on the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation, none of which was defined a priori.

Employees from different organisations in the product and services sectors have different understandings of which corporate brand identity elements are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent. Using Q methodology in this study enabled the researcher to reveal a wide diversity of the different beliefs and perspectives on how the various elements of corporate brand identity identified from the literature are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. This enabled the researcher to investigate each participant's response patterns, rather than variables, in order to systematically identify groups of participants with common structures to their perspectives. Consequently, the results gained from Q-methodological research enabled the researcher to draw conclusions based on quantitative data according to the subjective opinions of participants included in the research (Hogan 2008:80).

- The sample selected for the Q study and CATI was also clearly defined by using purposive sampling to ensure credibility.
- In the case of the online questionnaire and interview schedule, credibility was attained by including questions which were broadly representative of the Q sample (see section 7.5). As a result, the questions dealt with all three of the identified all-inclusive categories and the dimensions constituting the respective categories (see Chapter 7, sections 7.5 and 7.6).
- Credibility was attained by conducting pre-testing of the online questionnaire and the interview schedule in a pilot study as the final step in order to refine these instruments and to test the questions for clarity, relevance, comprehension and accuracy. The purpose of the pilot study was also to ensure that the data would be as relevant and accurate as possible, the respondents included in the study would participate as fully as possible and the collection and problems with data analysis would be limited. Furthermore, the purpose of the pilot study was to obtain feedback on how to improve the methodology and research (see Chapter 7, sections 7.8.1.1 and 7.8.2.1).
- A preliminary set of 72 Q statements was drawn up based on the information obtained from the literature review. The credibility of the statements within the context of the scope of this study was attained by having the initial 72 statements for the Q study reviewed by two research and branding specialists prior to the finalisation of the statements (see Chapter 7, section 7.4).
- Once the review of the Q statements had been completed by the research and branding specialists, pre-testing of the revised Q statements was done in a pilot

study as the final step towards refining the Q statements, and to test the set of 54 Q statements as well as the instructions for clarity, comprehension and accuracy. The purpose of the pilot study was also to ensure that the data which were collected would be as relevant and accurate as possible, the respondents included in the study would participate as fully as possible and the collection and problems with data analysis would be limited (see Chapter 7, section 7.4.2). However, in Q methodology it is not assumed that an entity to be measured by means of a participant's Q sort exists independent of the measurement process. This means that perspectives from participants on the topic being investigated emerge as a direct result of the participant's interaction with the Q statements. Participants are actively reconfiguring meaning, resulting in new and often unforeseen perspectives as represented in their individual Q sorts. Thus, even if participants were to conduct the Q sort differently when the research is repeated, neither of the two emergent perspectives would be an incorrect representation of the participants' perspective as it existed at the time of the Q sort and under those specific circumstances (Stephenson 1983:75, 82; Hogan 2008:401).

- The e-mail sent to prospective participants from South African organisations across various business sectors prompting them to participate in the research included a message to guarantee the anonymity and the confidentiality of the respondents. Assuring the prospective participants that the information provided would be used strictly for the purpose of the study encouraged them to give relevant, comprehensive information on the topic under investigation, hence reflecting as accurately as possible their organisation's view on the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. In this way, the researcher ensured the credibility of the research findings.
- Including organisations from one business sector only in the research could raise validity issues with regard to the transferability of the findings. As a result, organisations from different business sectors were selected to be broadly representative of the product and services business sectors.
- The e-mail sent to prospective participants from South African organisations across various business sectors prompting them to participate in the research included a message to guarantee the anonymity and the confidentiality of the respondents, which enhanced the credibility of the data collected. Assuring the prospective participants that the information provided would be used strictly for the purpose of the study encouraged them to give relevant, comprehensive information on the topic

under investigation, hence reflecting as accurately as possible their organisation's view on the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation.

- The research design was also aimed at pursuing an audit trail by indicating reliable, transparent and detailed methodological processes. Extensive access was given to all processes of documenting this study in the relevant appendices: data collection instruments, research methods, decisions and activities and analysed data. As a result of the detailed audit trail qualitative issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are enhanced which positions the study firmly beyond verisimilitude perceptions (Tobin & Begly 2004).
- Credibility was accomplished throughout the study by means of triangulation of the descriptions and interpretations. The width and depth of the study were enhanced by employing triangulation of various sources of data to achieve more richness of data. In addition, greater breadth of research was achieved by using a larger than usual P set for conducting the online Q sort.
- Confirmability was achieved by reading the responses entered into the computer in the case of the CATI to the participant to ensure the information entered is a correct account of the participant's response on each question in the interview schedule.
- Participants were required to use a forced-choice distribution for conducting the Q sort – a shape which requires the maximum number of discriminations between statements. In the case of a forced-choice condition of instruction, the researcher requires participants to place the Q-sort cards into a fixed number of categories or columns (ranking dimensions) within a distribution. The participants could be asked to sort the statements from those with which they agree most to those with which they disagree most. The number of items or objects that participants may place in the space provided for each card on the Q-sort diagram is determined by the researcher in advance. A forced-choice distribution yields more information while promoting higher test-retest reliability (Livson & Nichols 1956; Bracken & Fischel 2006:421). Although the forced-choice distribution is artificially selected, it tends to reveal stable preferences and prevents individuals from resorting to the tendency to rate more items positively than negatively (Brown 1985). The sorting of Q statements according to forced-choice conditions of instruction is more stable and discriminating. By following the forced-choice condition of instruction, the researcher is able to decrease responses by participants.

- In Q methodology, replicability is the most important type of reliability. According to Brown (1980a), a fundamental aspect of Q methodology is that only a limited number of distinct viewpoints exist on any topic under investigation. A well-structured Q sample containing the wide range of existing opinions on the topic will reveal these perspectives. This implies that, when administered to different sets of persons, the same condition of instruction leads to factors that represent similar viewpoints on the topic across similarly structured but different Q samples. Consequently, factorial results cannot be predicted (Prasad 2001).
- Content validity refers to the extent to which the measuring instrument(s) cover the entire field of interest that is being measured (Malhotra & Birks 2007:314). To ensure the best possible content validity, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to grasp the essence of the perceived role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation.
- In the case of the online Q sort, internal validity was attained by compiling the statements for the Q sample systematically following the comprehensive literature review to ensure they are broadly representative of the topic under investigation (see Chapter 7, sections 7.3 and 7.4). The number of Q statements was reduced based on the information obtained from the specialist review and a revised set of 54 Q statements was compiled according to the suggestions made by the research specialists. A structured Q sample technique similar to the process of stratified random sampling applied in survey research (Webler et al 2009:9) was used to include and exclude items in the final set of Q statements. In this study items were selected for diversity within their theoretical categories for inclusion in the final set of 54 Q statements. In the case of overlapping statements dealing with similar corporate brand identity elements, the statement that is most representative of the specific corporate brand identity element was included in the Q sample. In this way, the specialist review ensured that the statements included in the final Q sample were reasonably representative of the relevant topic under investigation. The process for revising and refining the Q statements is explained in detail in Chapter 7, section 7.4.1.
- The verification of the data obtained from the Q sort and the online questionnaire was done through interviewing brand managers or senior brand managers who have the required knowledge and expertise about the topic under investigation to gain their opinion on the topic, which further enhanced the reliability and validity of the research results (see Chapter 7, section 7.8.2).

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis for the online Q sort, the online questionnaire and the CATI is briefly discussed in the sections below (see Chapter 7, sections 7.10.2, 7.10.5 and 7.10.6 for a more detailed discussion).

1.10.1 Data analysis of the Q study

The data obtained from the Q sort were analysed by means of Q-factor analysis (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7 and Annexure G). PCQ for Windows, a Q-method software programme specifically designed for this purpose was used. Once the online Q sort had been completed, the data from the Q sorts of all the individual participants were anonymously coded and subject to Q-factor analysis in order to identify alternative patterns of response. After entering the data, the Q-method software completed a standard Q-factor analysis. The results of the data analysis are discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

1.10.2 Data analysis of the online questionnaire and CATI

In the process of data analysis of the online questionnaire and CATI, the researcher interpreted the data by means of a thematic analysis.

1.10.3 Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data for both the online questionnaire and CATI in order to gain an understanding of the underlying meaning of the content (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.5.2; Annexure H and Annexure I).

For the purpose of this study, the responses to the online questionnaire and interview schedule were analysed by means of an inductive thematic analysis at latent level following an essentialist framework to identify both common and distinct themes. The data analysis for the responses to the online questionnaire and interview schedule is explained in detail in Chapter 7, section 7.9.5 and 7.10.6.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

It is important to clarify key terms used in this thesis as follows:

Brand – a representation of tangible and intangible features that differentiate the organisation's products, and the values associated with the brand, thereby serving as mechanism used by organisations for achieving competitive advantage (Kumar 2003:58; Buckingham 2009:57). A brand is a multidisciplinary concept and is established by a

combination of strategy, structure, communication and culture aimed at conveying the organisation's advantages (brand identity) and how the customers perceive these advantages (brand image) (Ind & Bjerke 2007:24).

Branding – the methods employed by an organisation for positioning the brand in the market in order to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Balmer 2002a). Branding comprises corporate branding, product branding, services branding and emotional branding, and involves the incorporation of a unique mix of functional and emotional values into a brand (Ind & Bjerke 2007:24). These methods include offering high-quality products and services, marketing actions as well as the way in which an organisation's employees interact with different stakeholder groups (Vallaster & De Chernatony 2003:4; Csaba 2005:129; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007:57; Appel-Meulenbrock, Havermans, Janssen & Van Kempen 2010:47).

Brand identity – the brand's unique vision, aims and values, the needs it is fulfilling and its field of competence (Kapferer 2004; 2008).

Brand image – a construct that develops from how external constituencies perceive an organisation, based on the attributes which they subjectively associate with an organisation, its products and services and which are established in stakeholders' minds through planned or unplanned communication activities and employee behaviour (Nandan 2005:267).

Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) – a form of telephone interviewing by means of which a computerised questionnaire is administered to participants telephonically and their answers are recorded directly into the computer's memory bank, making interim reports and update reports on data collection or the research results almost immediately available (Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:195; Malhotra 2010:212-213).

Corporate branding – a more complex process than product branding which is aimed at managing the organisation's interactions with its various stakeholder groups by creating precedence over the products of competitors through an emphasis on the product's value-adding benefits (Schultz 2005:183). An organisation uses specific communication methods as part of its positioning strategy to establish its trademark as a symbol that represents a certain type of attitude, behaviour and lifestyle (Garrity 2001:121). Corporate branding communicates the extent to which the product meets the brand promise by satisfying the physical, emotional and other needs of potential buyers. As such, corporate branding is a business process which must be planned and strategically focused, and which must incorporate all divisions in the organisation (CoreBrand 2002:3).

Corporate brand identity – the tangible and intangible features that differentiate the organisation, its products and services based on the functional and symbolic value of a product or service which is established in consumers' minds through planned strategic communication and behaviour in order to position the brand favourably in the marketplace (Aaker 2004a; Blombäck 2005).

Corporate brand identity mix – the tangible and intangible associations transmitted to internal and external stakeholders through a combination of strategy, structure, communication and behaviour in order to position the organisation, its products and services favourably in the marketplace (Aaker 2004a).

Corporate brand image – the total set of perceptions which stakeholders form about a brand according to the unique functional and emotional attributes associated with the brand (Aaker 2011:49-51) and which results from the interactions of all stakeholders' impressions, experiences, feelings and knowledge (Kuusela 2003), based on the organisation's products and services, its management style, and how these are established in stakeholders' minds through planned or unplanned communication activities (Nandan 2005:267).

Corporate brand image formation – how external stakeholders' perception of the brand, its products and services and the extent to which these meet their functional and symbolic needs is constructed by means of corporate brand identity elements (Nandan 2005:267).

Corporate identity – the complete visual presentation of an organisation which embodies all the distinctly noticeable and quantifiable elements manifested in an entity's visual presentation, including its nomenclature, graphic design, interior design and architecture (Alessandri 2001:176; 2008).

Corporate image – the total set of perceptions, beliefs and impressions that an organisation creates in the minds of its stakeholders and publics by means of tangible identity elements (Topalian 2003:1120).

Interview schedule – provides topics or subject areas which the interviewer can use as a guideline to explore and ask questions in order to elucidate that specific subject (Patton 2002:343).

Mixed-methods research – an approach to theory and practice in which multiple perspectives from qualitative and quantitative research are considered. As such, mixed-methods research is a combination of ideas from qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007:112-113).

Online Q sort – a number of computer programs is available for conducting the Q-sorting process (Q exercise) electronically. The participants included in the research arrange selected statements about the concourse in their order of preference.

Product branding – involves the use of a number of tangible features, for example the product's appearance in respect of its physical form, packaging and labelling. Consumers come to associate all these features with the physical appearance of the brand (Simões & Dibb 2001:218).

Q methodology – a research method in which both quantitative and qualitative methods are combined to study the subjective opinions of human beings.

Q study – a data collection technique comprising the following five phases: collecting statements that will be used to examine the topic of investigation (Chinnis, Summers, Doerr, Paulson & Davis 2001:252); developing representative statements, also referred to as the Q sample; selecting participants to conduct the Q sort; data entry and Q-factor analysis; and analysing the results of the Q-factor analysis (Amin 2000:411).

Questionnaire – a number of questions which have been formulated to obtain the information required to achieve the objectives of a research project (Parasuraman 1986:341).

Q-factor analysis – the analysis done of the Q sorts is often called “inverted factor analysis”, because the normal data matrix is turned on its side (Webler et al 2009:43). As a result, the dataset is transposed or “flipped” so rows or cases become columns or variables (Baker, Thompson & Mannion 2006:14). A larger number of variables are reduced to fewer factors in order to reveal the latent structure of a dataset. In this regard, Q-factor analysis differs from factor analysis applied in R Methodological studies. In the case of Q-factor analysis, correlations between participants are factored, instead of variables. This determines whether a group of participants cluster together instead of a set of variables as is the case in R methodology (Hogan 2008:100). Q methodology uses inverted factor analysis or Q-factor analysis, which means that Q factors load on individuals rather than on tests.

Thematic analysis – a method of qualitative data analysis in which the researcher identifies, analyses and reports themes in data, and interprets the data in accordance with the identified themes (Braun & Clarke 2006; Casey & Murphy 2008).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher has taken note of the requirements stipulated in the Policy on Research Ethics (2007) of the University of South Africa. This thesis complies with the ethical standards and requirements stipulated in the Policy. The ethical procedures of this research were guided by the following established rules or protocols:

- **Confidentiality, anonymity and right to privacy**

The anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants were guaranteed. They were assured that their names as well as the names or addresses of their organisations would not be included in the research. In addition, participants were assured that information gathered through them would not become public or carelessly discussed, thereby violating their privacy.

- **Voluntary participation**

Prospective participants who were recruited for participation in the research were provided with information about the researcher, a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, and what participation would involve so they could take an informed decision whether they would be willing to participate in the research (see Annexure F, Figure 1).

1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The layout of the thesis is as follows:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the study that includes its background, purpose, relevance and research design. The various concepts that are often referred to in this thesis are also clarified.

CHAPTER 2: CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE

To explore the extent to which corporate brand identity contributes to corporate brand image formation among stakeholders, the concept of brand and all the related components are discussed. Therefore, the objective of this chapter was to evaluate the different meanings of the concepts of brand, corporate image, corporate reputation and brand image based on multiple perspectives in relevant literature. In order to distinguish clearly between these concepts, the researcher formulates clear, explicit definitions based on their multiple descriptions provided in the literature. In addition, the concepts of brand and branding are discussed and an explanation of the types of brands is given. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of brand image to indicate the role of brand identity and branding in creating a favourable brand image. At the end of the chapter the concept of

corporate brand image is adopted for the purpose of this study based on both corporate communication and marketing communication theory.

CHAPTER 3: CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY

In order to determine which corporate brand identity elements are deemed important for the formation of the corporate brand image among stakeholders, the concepts of corporate identity and brand identity first need to be explored. Since definitions of brand identity often refer to corporate identity, or the concepts of “identity”, “image”, “reputation” and “personality” are used interchangeably in the literature, the objective of this chapter was to evaluate the multiple views on the concepts of corporate identity and brand identity in the literature. The chapter reflects on these concepts by investigating them in terms of their similarities and differences, the elements that constitute corporate identity and brand identity and which are regarded mandatory to the concepts of corporate identity and brand identity, as well as the relative importance of these concepts in establishing the anticipated brand image among stakeholders. At the end of the chapter the concept of corporate brand identity is adopted for the purpose of this study based on both corporate communication and marketing communication theory. Furthermore, theoretically sound definitions of corporate identity and corporate brand identity are provided which were used as working definitions in this study.

CHAPTER 4: MANDATORY ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY

Each of the elements of corporate brand identity as identified from the numerous definitions of corporate identity and brand identity is explained in Chapter 4. Corporate identity elements are also included because a number of components and elements identified as elements of the corporate brand identity mix are rooted in corporate identity, from which the concept of brand identity has eventually evolved over the years. The objective of this chapter was to demarcate the corporate brand identity concourse for corporate brand image formation in order to compile representative Q statements for the Q study (see Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL CATEGORISATION OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY ELEMENTS

In this chapter, the elements of corporate brand identity are grouped into seven theoretical categories based on the perceived function of these elements in corporate brand image formation as identified from the literature review. The perceived role of each of these elements of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation as argued in various academic publications is explained in the context of these seven theoretical

categories. The objective of this chapter was to indicate that these elements form part of the discourse for corporate brand image formation.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 6, the research design for this study is explained from a theoretical perspective. The guiding research paradigm, which informed the research design, is also discussed. The two research methods that were used to determine the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation are discussed in detail, namely Q methodology (and its different phases), as well as CATI. This is followed by a discussion of the three data collection methods that were used to systematically collect and analyse empirical data. Finally, the data analysis methods are explained.

CHAPTER 7: DATA COLLECTION AND OPERATIONALISATION

In this chapter, the three data collection methods that were employed for data collection are explained. In addition, the operationalisation of the research is discussed, including the theoretical foundation on which the Q statements were based and issues related to trustworthiness, validity and reliability. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the data analysis methods which were used for this study.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 8 the findings of the study are discussed and explained in more detail. This is followed by a consideration of the strategy that was followed to analyse the data collected by means of the online Q sort, the online questionnaire and the CATI. The research findings were extrapolated to the specific topic under investigation in this thesis, namely the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation in various South African organisations. Furthermore, a revised categorisation is provided based on the research findings. The chapter concludes with an elucidation of the theoretical importance of the consolidated findings of this study in terms of perceptions of corporate brand image formation.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter 9, a theoretical framework is proposed for the development of a measuring instrument to assess the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation based on the consolidated findings for the study, followed by recommendations for testing the proposed theoretical framework. Finally, the chapter briefly considers the extent to which the objectives of the study were achieved as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, the extent to which corporate brand identity contributes to corporate brand image formation among stakeholders is explored. In this chapter, the different meanings are explained of the concepts of corporate image, corporate reputation, brand and brand image based on multiple perspectives in relevant literature, while clear, explicit definitions are formulated in order to distinguish between these concepts.

The concepts of brand and its constituencies as well as branding are discussed first. An explanation of the different types of brands is also given followed by a discussion of the concepts of corporate image and corporate reputation. Finally, the brand image construct is discussed, while at the end of the chapter the concept of corporate brand image is adopted for the purpose of this study based on both corporate communication and marketing communication theory.

2.2 THE CONCEPTS OF A BRAND AND BRANDING

The concepts of brand and branding are explained in this chapter, since branding at corporate level shows strong similarities with identity, image and reputation. The concepts of brand and branding are also discussed in this chapter to demonstrate that a brand acts as a kind of translation cipher, which, with the help of a unique brand name or symbol, reflects the performance characteristics and the quality of a product (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:39; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:74). Over the years, scholars have been attempting to clarify the components that constitute an effective and efficient brand management system. These components include topics such as brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand equity, brand extension, brand architecture and brand image (see Chapter 4, section 4.2) (Aaker 1996; 2002; De Chernatony 1992; 2006; Keller 2003). These multiple perspectives focus primarily on three requirements which successful branding must aim to achieve. Firstly, the brand must be able to differentiate itself from the competition (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:39). The brand must set the benchmark for acceptable service delivery by offering customers excellent, personalised service. Secondly, the brand must be held in high esteem, and thirdly, the brand is required to possess characteristics to which target customers can relate (Aaker 1996; 2002; Keller 2003; Blombäck 2009:244). This implies that strong brands serve as a decisive selling attribute for customers who

distinguish their product from equivalents based on unique and distinct characteristics. To achieve strong and favoured reputations, branding should be embedded in the strategic management of the entire organisation and should guide an organisation's activities in order to provide consistency by means of the connection between positioning, communication and employees' working style or behaviour. Therefore, how consumers perceive the brand is based on their holistic experience of the brand qualities. Consumers evaluate the attributes which they associate with a brand from their subjective viewpoint, and form a set of accumulated impressions of an organisation's products, services, communication activities and business practices.

In the next section, the brand concept, its constituencies, the elements associated with brands and the types of brands are discussed, followed by a discussion of the concept of branding.

2.2.1 Brand and its constituencies

The purpose of this study is to determine which corporate brand identity elements contribute to corporate brand image formation. It is thus essential to identify the components that constitute a brand and to differentiate between these components in terms of their unique qualities. In addition, a discussion of these components also provides insight into the type of brand adopted for this study.

2.2.1.1 Diverse explanations of the concept of a brand

According to De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998a) and De Chernatony (2006:286-296), definitions of the concept of a brand as published in more than 100 articles of an academic and business nature in the 1980s and 1990s can be grouped into 12 categories according to the themes or concepts the brand represents. These categories define the concept of a brand as follows: "Legal instrument", "Logo", "Company", "Shorthand", "Risk reducer", "Identity system", "Image in the consumers' mind", "Value system", "Personality", "Relationship", "Added value", "Evolving entity". The various conceptual descriptions that are often used inconsistently in the literature to explain the concept of a brand are essential in defining a brand as comprising a wide selection of characteristics. Furthermore, some definitions describe a brand based on the tangible elements associated with this concept, while other definitions refer to both tangible and intangible elements, indicating a varying degree of refinement in the definitions of the brand concept as used in the literature. Another important aspect that relates to the level of sophistication that distinguishes the various definitions of the brand concept is that they differ in terms of the extent to which customer-focus is included as a brand element in the definition. From

these contradictory definitions it appears that brand is viewed from two different angles (Ind & Bjerke 2007:120). In this regard, De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998b:431) explain that some definitions mainly focus on the approach of the organisation's "input", while others emphasise the approach of "output towards the consumer" which describes how consumers perceive the brand. In their quest to define the concept of a brand, the authors investigate its meaning as outlined by experts involved in branding decisions as business consultants. Their research results reveal the following: "All the themes from the literature review were mentioned" ... while "Value System", "Personality", "Image", "Logo", were most commonly mentioned. The brand was also perceived as "Risk Reducer", "Company", "Adding Value", "Shorthand", "Legal Instrument", "Identity", "Relationship", "Evolving", while additional themes mentioned by the executives were: "Positioning", "Vision", and "Goodwill". Table 2.1 below gives an explanation of the elements of brand and which of these elements are most commonly referred to in the definitions published in academic and business articles:

Table 2.1: Thematic or conceptual categories of brand as referred to in academic or business articles and by business executives

Number	Thematic or conceptual categories of brand
1.	Legal instrument
2.	Logo (most commonly mentioned by business executives)
3.	Company
4.	Shorthand
5.	Risk reducer
6.	Identity system
7.	Image in the consumers' mind (most commonly mentioned by business executives)
8.	Value system (most commonly mentioned by business executives)
9.	Personality (most commonly mentioned by business executives)
10.	Relationship
11.	Added value

Number	Thematic or conceptual categories of brand
12.	Evolving entity
Additional thematic or conceptual categories of brand identified by business executives	
13.	Positioning
14.	Vision
15.	Goodwill

Source: Adapted from De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley (1998b)

It is clear from the information provided in the above table and the literature that there is little agreement among theorists and scholars about a standard definition for the concept of a brand. From the evaluation of the various elements associated with the concept, it appears that the elements of brand identity and concepts such as brand identity, brand image, brand value, brand associations and brand positioning are all essential elements of corporate brand identity (see also Chapter 3).

2.2.1.2 Expansion of the concept of a brand and its elements

Up to the 1980s, the concept of a brand applied to product markets only. However, since the late 1980s the concept has expanded substantially from being a notion that could be easily defined into an abstract concept for which no precise definition exists. Over the past two decades, the concept of a brand has evolved from a symbol or name used to identify an organisation's product or service into a value-adding tool that organisations can apply to enhance the competitive advantage of its products and services in consumer and industrial markets.

The various perspectives on the purpose of a brand are discussed below. These are evaluated to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which corporate brand identity contributes to stakeholders' perception of an organisation.

a The brand as symbolic identifier of products, organisations and services

Traditionally, the concept of a brand is viewed from the sender's perspective and the meaning the brand is intended to evoke among consumers (Balmer & Gray 2003a:973). In this regard, the American Marketing Association (AMA) (1960:404), Aaker (1991:7), Rooney (1995:45), Van der Westhuizen (1998:6) and Keller (2003:3) describe a brand as

a name, symbol, sign, term, or design, or a combination of these visual elements which are used with the purpose of identifying an organisation's products and services in order to differentiate them from those of competitors. A brand refers to a set of meaningful, organised characters, images, or emotions with which consumers associate a specific symbol, organisation, product, service or location (Simeon 2006:464). Hatch and Schultz (2008:26) explain that the meanings reflected by brand symbols give brands economic value. Making optimal use of the meaning invested in brand symbols requires an understanding of how interpretation affects branding. This is referred to as the symbolic perspective. Furthermore, these authors define a symbol as any action, word or object that represents something else. A corporate brand is not depicted by one symbol only, for example a logo or a name, but is represented by a constellation of symbols. Gossen and Gresham (2002:1) add that apart from visual elements such as an icon, logo or word, aspects such as corporate worth and reputation are all associated with the concept of a brand. In view of these definitions it appears that traditionally, before the emphasis was moved towards brands and the brand building process, the sole purpose of brands was to serve as discriminators in the process of marketing products. Consequently, the traditional perspective views a brand as a mechanism displayed in visual form as a symbol or a name to distinguish the brand from its competitors.

b The brand as a representation of the brand properties for consumers

A second perspective on the purpose of a brand determines that the consumer uses the brand name as a piece of information to process details about the properties of a brand (Kapferer 2008:193-194; Davis, Golobic & Marquardt 2009:202). The consumer associates numerous attributes with the brand name, for example reliability, guarantee, quality, availability and advertising support. When a consumer recalls certain attributes about the brand and makes a purchase decision based on these attributes, the brand serves as a shorthand device, since these attributes are the first that come to mind when the specific brand name is called up in memory (Virgo & De Chernatony 2005:381). Therefore, the brand name is a visual means that enables consumers to make informed decisions when purchasing a product or service, based on their knowledge of the brand's qualities (Fioroni & Titterton 2009:57). This interpretation of the brand as representation of the brand properties provides an improved perspective upon the first view that regards the brand as a differentiating device, since it recognises how consumers integrate all the brand properties in their mind to form the brand entity. The properties of the brand are directly or indirectly implied in a coordinated manner through all the marketing activities initiated by the organisation.

c *The brand as a tool for creating the brand image*

In recent times, branding (see section 2.2.2) has come to be perceived as a tool for building the brand's image. In this regard, Kapferer (2008:182) as well as Kotler and Pfoertsch (2010:139) view the brand as a sign which organisations use to disclose the concealed properties of the product. Therefore, as explained in section 2.2.2.1, the brand is perceived as only part of the product, and the organisation's communication strategy must be aimed at exposing the qualities of the brand to consumers in order to create brand image.

Blombäck (2005:9) holds a similar view with regard to the role of branding in image formation. The tangible and intangible elements constitute the parts of an organisation's brand which the brand holder can manage. The visual features constituting a brand include an icon, name and logo, and are referred to as the brand elements. According to this perspective, brand symbols are a powerful aid in positioning a brand strategically, and maintaining its equity. Thus the purpose of the individual brand elements is to create an awareness of the brand among the organisation's target markets. Furthermore, brand elements provide a visual object which consumers can associate with a product or service in order to create specific perceptions and values about the particular product or service in consumers' minds (Ind & Bjerke 2007:124).

According to the above perspective a brand symbol is instrumental in positioning a brand strategically by revealing the brand's hidden qualities. However, although branding serves as a means of influencing consumer behaviour, branding is still perceived from the sender's point of view.

d *The brand as a combination of tangible and intangible elements to establish the distinct identity of products, organisations and services*

A review of recent publications on corporate branding (see section 2.2.2) indicates a shift in focus in the meaning of the brand. The historic view regards a brand as a combination of visual or tangible elements, for example the brand name and logo, referred to as the brand elements. According to the perspective outlined in recent literature, brand includes intangible elements such as the value-added benefits associated with a product, service, or organisation in addition to the tangible brand elements. Brand literature reveals that the definitions and descriptions of brand and branding also explain the methods that organisations use to differentiate their brand from competitors and/or to emphasise the benefits the consumer derives from selecting a specific brand over another. These include definitions and descriptions that emphasise a brand as an image in consumers' minds

(Martineau 1959; Keller 1993), brands as value systems (Sheth, Newman & Gross 1991), and brands as added value (De Chernatony & McDonald 1992; Doyle 1994). In this regard, Kumar (2003:58) describes a brand as a product, service or concept that possesses functional and emotional associations and benefits that are unique and relevant to the particular product or service offering. Ind and Bjerke (2007:24) add to these perspectives by describing branding as a concept of transformation. These authors maintain that branding serves as a mechanism for transforming products and services into an asset which consumers perceive to have added value. This transformation is effected by offering products and services that meet the emotional and functional needs of consumers. In order to meet consumers' emotional and functional needs effectively, the organisation must be able to understand and interpret the behaviour, attitudes and values of customers. The organisation must communicate the brand offer in terms of its emotional and functional benefits and deliver on its promises. In this regard, Hatch and Schultz (2008:29) explain that a corporate brand combines the following elements:

- Names, symbols and experiences
- A central idea or set of ideas
- Qualities, emotions, attitudes and style.

A corporate brand gives interpreters symbols to represent their own ideas, feelings, or experiences while associating them with the organisation which the brand represents (Hatch & Schultz 2008:29).

De Chernatony's *Atomic Model* (1993a; 1993b; 2006:286-296) characterises the brand in terms of nine most essential tangible and intangible elements. The model also depicts the relationship that exists between these elements. These nine elements are functional capability, symbolic feature, service, distinctive name, ownership, shorthand notation, legal protection, risk reducer and strategic direction. In addition, the exposition of brand elements as indicated in the *Double Vortex Brand Model* developed by De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998a) (see section 2.2.1) adds to the elements included in the *Atomic Model* (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley 1998a:1078).

Table 2.2 below gives an explanation of the elements included in the Atomic Model (De Chernatony 1993a; b; 2006:286-296) and the Double Vortex Brand Model (De Chernatony & Dall' Olmo Riley 1998a) respectively.

Table 2.2: Brand elements in the Atomic Model and the Double Vortex Brand Model

	MODEL	ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL
1.	<p>Atomic Model (De Chernatony 1993a; b; 2006:286-296)</p>	<p>Functional capability</p> <p>Symbolic feature</p> <p>Service</p> <p>Distinctive name</p> <p>Ownership</p> <p>Shorthand notation</p> <p>Legal protection</p> <p>Risk reducer</p> <p>Strategic direction</p>
2.	<p>Double Vortex Brand Model (De Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley 1998a)</p>	<p>Symbolic feature</p> <p>Service</p> <p>Distinctive name</p> <p>Ownership</p> <p>Shorthand notation</p> <p>Legal protection</p> <p>Risk reducer</p> <p>Strategic direction</p> <p>Brand vision, mission, values (additional element)</p> <p>Organisation’s heritage (additional element)</p>

	MODEL	ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL
		Stakeholder value (additional element)
		Naming policy (additional element)
		Crisp communicator (additional element)

Sources: De Chernatony (1993a; b; 2006:286-296); De Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley (1998a)

The information in the above table indicates that the additional elements included in the Double Vortex Brand Model of De Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1998a) are brand vision, mission, values (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4), the organisation’s heritage, stakeholder value, naming policy, and crisp communicator.

Moreover, De Chernatony (2006:40) proposes that a brand represents the personality of an organisation and its products and product group, since consumers’ perceptions of the brand are formed based on the tangible and non-tangible characteristics of the brand. Therefore, the author describes a brand as a product, service, person or place which can be recognised and which possesses supplemented qualities that add relevant, unique values which match consumers’ needs more closely. McQuiston (2004:348), quoting Ward, Larry and Goldstine (1999:88), views the brand concept and its associated values in a similar manner as De Chernatony (2006:40) by describing the concept of a brand as “... a distinctive identity that differentiates a relevant, enduring, and credible promise of value associated with a product, service, or organization and indicates the source of that promise...”. According to these descriptions, a brand represents a unique product, service, person, place or organisation and identifies the added value that is applicable, consistent and trustworthy. Furthermore, consumers associate the added value with the product, service, person, place or organisation to the extent that it meets consumers’ needs. According to Kapferer (2008:195), the concept of brand is not limited to the visual elements, but includes all vital tangible and non-tangible elements that constitute brand and contribute to establishing a specific meaning and purpose in the minds of consumers (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1).

e *The brand as a promise of consistent high-quality products and services*

Apart from the brand elements indicated in the descriptions and definitions of a brand in sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.2, De Chernatony and McWilliam (1989:160), Landor (2004 in Building Brands) and Kapferer (2008:194) identify another element of brands, namely the way organisations interpret and develop their brands in order to influence consumers’

perceptions of the brand. In this context, the brand name is used mainly as the device to help consumers recognise an organisation's products and services, and to associate the brand name with certain attributes that represent a specific level of quality (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.1). Although this view of a brand focuses on the role of quality in enhancing consumers' perception of a brand, it fails to recognise that the other elements which form part of the marketing mix fulfil a crucial role in establishing the brand in the consumer's mind. These additional elements of the marketing mix include communication to explain the added values and the implementation of business strategies such as pricing and channels of distribution to reinforce positioning of the brand in the relevant industry.

f *Brand as means of communicating its symbolic meaning and projecting consumers' self-image*

A sixth perspective on brands maintains that consumers choose brands according to the congruence between their self-image and the image they hold of a particular brand (Kapferer 2008:194). Products and brands have symbolic meanings that people have learned through their socialisation process. This perspective maintains that consumers view brands as having symbolic meaning which they value apart from the brands' functional benefits (Verma 2010:102). Individuals use brands as non-verbal communication devices. By using a specific brand, a person communicates the symbolic meaning of the brand, for example status. As a result, these symbolic meanings of the brand are associated with the personality and esteem of the individuals who use the brand, which enhances their self-image (Hitlin & Piliavin 2004:363; Batey 2008:14) (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1).

Although this perspective of brands is applied to a large number of products, De Chernatony and McWilliam (1989:163) believe that in certain cases brand preference is mainly determined by the functional purposes for which the brand is intended, rather than the symbolic meaning communicated through the use of the brand. Consumers purchase certain products with the sole purpose of benefiting from their functional properties, rather than using the brand to communicate the symbolic meaning associated with the brand in order to enhance the individual's self-esteem. Therefore, these authors hold the opinion that this interpretation of a brand is valid in the case of certain products, but cannot be applied consistently to all products.

g *An integrated understanding of brands*

An aspect that appears prominently in all definitions presented above is the element of added value which the organisation's products and services offer as represented by the

brand. According to the above definitions, a brand is now used in various contexts and perceived as including the additional values that are unique to or associated with the organisation and its products and services. According to this view, branding is increasingly considered in respect of how consumers perceive the brand based on the added values and functional benefits associated with the product, service or organisation. As such, consumers define brands in terms of who they are, strive to be and/or would like to be seen as (Balmer & Gray 2003a:973; Hitlin & Piliavin 2004:369). When branding (see section 2.2.2) is considered from the consumer's perspective instead of the sender's perspective, corporate brands are used as a tool to communicate the brand's values, often referred to as the brand's promise (see section 4.2.7) (Campbell 2002:208). This concept is also known as the "brand essence", or the "brand idea". An effective brand promise serves as a foundation to develop a powerful, convincing impression of a brand (Hollis 2008:15). As such, corporate brands serve as a means of differentiating the organisation from its competitors, and of enhancing the esteem and loyalty in which the organisation is held by its stakeholder groups.

Moreover, following Campbell's (2002:208) viewpoint on the brand promise, De Chernatony (2001a:5), Grimaldi (2003:1) and Buckingham (2009:57) postulate that a brand constitutes emotional and rational or functional elements. This perspective is supported by Kumar (2003:58), as indicated in section 2.2.1.2. Advertising is aimed primarily at establishing an emotional or symbolic meaning of a brand by creating a particular personality or character for the brand in consumers' mind. The objective of establishing a symbolic meaning of a brand is achieved by imbuing the brand with specific associations or values, as all great brands are associated with specific functional and symbolic values. The rational elements become apparent from what the brand is telling, doing, and showing in terms of the brand's functional performance and satisfying consumers' utilitarian needs. The content and the key message of the brand's communication, promise, and value offering are based on these rational elements and are the easiest part to be visually represented and measured (Grimaldi 2003:1). Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986:136) and Batey (2008:12) identify a third element of a brand, namely the experiential element, and explain that a brand with an experiential concept is designed to fulfil inner needs for stimulation and/or variety. Brands enable customers to efficiently recall the functional and emotional values associated with the brands in their minds (Martinez & De Chernatony 2004:39). Therefore, the resulting images assist customers in determining the factors that discriminate competing brands. In addition, De Chernatony (1999:158) states that in order to position a brand favourably in

consumers' minds, a unique mix of functional and emotional values should be incorporated into a brand. Advertising is not the only means of establishing such a unique mix, but this composition of values can also be observed in the way the organisation's employees interact with different stakeholder groups. As a result, the idea of unique selling point (USP) was established in terms of which the USP signifies the brand as representation of the brand properties and risk reducer (Schmitt 1999).

The above viewpoints on the elements that influence brand image formation demonstrate that a brand involves more than visual symbols, for example a name and a logo. Rather, a brand is regarded as a marketing tool that organisations can include in their business strategy in order to convey certain promises regarding the quality and value of their products or services. This implies that organisations focus on customers' ability to form opinions about the quality of products and services, and to make choices based on these perceptions. For this reason brand positioning should form an integral part of a brand in order to ensure its continued economic viability. To achieve this, an organisation's marketing strategy should include the use of visual symbols and elements such as the logo to draw consumers' attention to the fact that a particular brand exists. In addition, an all-inclusive communications approach should be followed in which visual symbols are used as one method to communicate the additional values of a brand to consumers as well as the extent to which its functional benefits meet consumers' needs. This will enable them to perceive and form certain impressions in order to determine their preference for a specific brand. In view of the above discussion it can be concluded that brand value should form an integral part of all branding and brand building initiatives.

De Chernatony and Christodoulides (2004:239) suggest another useful concept of corporate branding (see section 2.2.2.2) by using the Internet. These authors apply their viewpoint on brand as a combination of values that meet stakeholders' functional and emotional needs, as discussed in this section, to online and offline branding in the following way. They posit that a brand enables stakeholders to recognise a guarantee of satisfaction and unique experience. This perspective applies regardless of online or offline branding. With regard to online branding of corporate brands, the authors argue that the brand concept, which constitutes a product or service that possess functional and emotional benefits, remains the same. However, the element that may differ between online and offline branding, is its enactment, for example the effectiveness with which Internet users are navigated in an online environment, compared to the layout in a store or an offline environment. Furthermore, it could be argued that the rational and emotional benefits of a brand could include any association in respect of the qualities of the brand,

or that these benefits could be attributed to anything emanating from an organisation. These associations regarding the qualities of the brand can be indirectly related to the reputation of the organisation. In view of the above explanation, corporate brand identity relates to the distinct attributes with which consumers associate the organisation that manufactures the product or provides the service as a whole (Keller 2000).

2.2.1.3 Definition of a brand

The descriptions of a brand included in this study present a wide range of perspectives. According to a number of marketing communication scholars a brand is a combination of visual brand elements used by an organisation to distinguish the brand from its competitors. These visual brand elements include the name, symbol, design or packaging (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.1). However, according to Simões and Dibb (2001:217) the brand encapsulates more than a name given to a product. It is composed of a set of physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs. In this regard, Hammond (2008:14) describes a brand as a customer's total sensory experience of an organisation and the products and services it offers.

The various descriptions of a brand encompass diverse approaches. From these, an integrated definition can be formulated that indicates a brand's purpose to its owner, and considers how this purpose can be achieved by offering specific benefits to consumers. For the purpose of this study a brand is defined as follows:

A brand is a representation of tangible and intangible features that differentiate the organisation's products, and the values associated with the brand, thereby serving as mechanism used by organisations for achieving competitive advantage. A brand is a multidisciplinary concept and is established by a combination of strategy, structure, communication and culture aimed at conveying the organisation's advantages (brand identity) and how the customers perceive these advantages (brand image).

The above definition emphasises that a brand should be able to create a relevant and meaningful difference to customers measured against other competing alternatives, but it must also attract and involve the many different stakeholders having relations with the brand.

In the next section, the concept of branding, which includes product branding, corporate branding, internal branding, services branding and emotional branding, is discussed.

2.2.2 The concept of branding

Verma (2010:28) maintains that branding is aimed at adding an emotional meaning to a product or a service apart from its functional benefits in order to increase its value to customers and other stakeholders. In the next section, the shift in focus from product branding to corporate branding as a means to add an emotional association to an organisation's product or service is discussed. This is followed by an explanation of the corporate branding process. Internal branding, services branding and emotional branding are also briefly discussed.

2.2.2.1 The shift from product branding to corporate branding

In the mid 1990s a shift in focus in branding literature became evident. During this period, organisations gradually adapted their branding strategy to focus on corporate branding instead of product brands. In recent times, the role of corporate branding has emerged as a way to achieve the intended differentiation by relying on a different set of qualities to the more traditional use of product attributes. The emphasis of corporate branding lies in a collection of core values and beliefs that unite the entire organisation (Palazzo & Basu 2007:336). This tendency is ascribed to the increasing challenges with which organisations are confronted to maintain reliable brand discrimination despite homogenisation and global competition (Anisimova 2010:489).

2.2.2.2 The corporate branding process: strategic focus for clear brand positioning

Traditional models of brand management are based largely on the framework of selling tangible products. Traditionally, brand management in respect of products largely involved planned marketing communications and design, for example product and packaging. However, by following this practice the brand or product is usually detached from the organisation and individuals responsible for manufacturing, marketing and selling the brand. In the quest to create consumer value, branding has assumed a new dimension in the mid twentieth century. An important trend in contemporary marketing theory is a growing focus on corporate-level marketing rather than product-level marketing. The shift in focus further extends the conceptual meaning of brands and their purpose to organisations (Blombäck 2009:228-229). This shift in focus requires brand theory to become less production centred and to focus more on brand consumption. Production-centred brand theory is particularly concerned with the visual elements of design, advertising campaigns and logos, while consumption-centred brand theory focuses on the way in which consumers give meaning to and make use of a brand. It emphasises the

ways in which consumers are attracted to brands to shape and express their identities (Leitch & Davenport 2008:47).

The expansion of branding, also referred to as “the broadening of marketing”, has constituted a long-standing discussion within the field of marketing. As early as the 1960s debates started on how broadly marketing could be applied. A large number of authoritative figures in the field promoted a broad perspective on marketing, which meant that marketing was no longer being regarded as essentially a business subject dealing with market transactions. This change in perspective replaced the traditional view on marketing, and has now become relevant for all organisations with customers, an essential device with all their publics. Marketing is now regarded as a concept that applies to any social unit exchanging values with other social units. These values are not limited to economic and utilitarian values, but also include social and psychological values defined as symbolic values (Csaba 2005:129). Mukherjee and Balmer (2008:3) add to these perspectives by indicating that corporate branding involves conveying the brand’s values and identity in a cohesive manner according to a planned business strategy. Brand management requires an extensive approach which determines that advertising promotion, packaging and design should be consistent with the various brand components. The purpose of attaining consistency is to establish lasting value. If corporate identity is used in a consistent manner in the various forms of organisational communication, it contributes to establishing a positive perception of the organisation among public audiences (Kapferer 2008:280).

Typically, a corporate brand strategy is defined and controlled by an inside-out approach to brand development (Hatch & Schultz 2008) in which employees across all functional units are responsible for realising the corporate brand, along with the target groups which the brand aims to attract and engage. This process is required, since establishing a successful corporate brand results from the interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and the corporate images held by its stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1045). In this regard, corporate branding serves as the strategic focus for a clear positioning and it enables greater consistency in communication programmes (Gylling & Lindberg-Repo 2006:257-258; Hensley 2010). As such, a corporate brand positioning should be credible by reflecting an organisation’s distinguishing characteristics, durable in order to be maintained in the long term, meaningful in order to be valued by customers and stakeholders for its emotional qualities, profitable in order to be of strategic value to the organisation and to afford benefits to shareholders (“stockholders”), and responsible in order to accept liability for its broader corporate positioning strategy (Balmer 2010b:103).

Appel-Meulenbrock et al (2010:47) explain the contribution of corporate branding in distinguishing the organisation by stating that in competitive markets where product differentiation no longer serves as the only means of maintaining a trustworthy position in the market, organisations increasingly rely on strategies aimed at positioning the entire business, including its tangible and intangible elements, to enhance competitive advantage. This concept, which is referred to as corporate branding, is focussed at conveying the values and emotions symbolised by the organisation, and labelled the corporate brand. Moreover, Da Silva and Alwi (2008:119) emphasise the importance of understanding corporate branding; stating that a positive corporate brand enables organisations to achieve higher levels of performance, for example by increasing profitability through increased sales, without exuberating advertising expenditure.

The shift in focus to corporate branding has been reflected in a range of academic disciplines. Although corporate branding is based on the field of marketing and its conception of branding, it includes principles and ideas from multiple disciplines. As a result, a more complete analysis of how corporate branding is applied should also focus on visual identity, organisational design and the influence of strategic management or corporate communications outside the corporate realm (Csaba 2005:130). The prime reason explaining the shift in focus seems to be the need for establishing a more integrated, dynamic understanding of the mechanisms which organisations use to communicate and engage in simultaneous relations with multiple stakeholder groups (Schultz 2005:29). Corporate branding, which focuses on values, relationships and culture, fulfils a more appropriate role than product branding, which emphasises product characteristics and advantages (Antorini & Andersen 2005:85). The most essential elements involved in a traditional branding strategy are brand architecture, brand positioning and product identity. Corporate branding, on the other hand, takes a broader, holistic approach. The concept of corporate branding is concerned with branding as a strategic force, relationships between strategic vision, organisational culture and stakeholder images, as well as brand alignment (Hatch & Schultz 2008:68). Therefore, although corporate branding is concerned with the matter of how to express the brand visually to external audiences (Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:153), it also includes a more extended scope, as organisations conduct business with different groups of internal and external stakeholders.

It follows that brand management engages the entire organisation, and in modern organisations supplying a range of products, the development of the corporate brand is a well-defined managerial commitment. Corporate branding is a more advanced practice

than product branding and, therefore, communicating the brand essence or the central idea of the organisation requires involvement of all internal stakeholders in the implementation process (Schultz 2005:183). The literature repeatedly emphasises the role of employees in corporate brand management. Internal branding serves as a means of having the branding concept adopted in the organisation to ensure employees deliver the brand promise to the external stakeholders (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng 2010:401). In this manner, internal stakeholders are given the opportunity to actively participate in co-creating corporate brand value. In doing so, these practices support broader brand alignment in the organisation (Järventie-Thesleff & Moisander 2010:4).

In addition, corporate branding enables employees to gain a better understanding of the type of organisation for which they work, and it provides insight about the desired styles of behaviour. Corporate branding involves multiple stakeholders interacting with the employees of the organisation (Gylling & Lindberg-Repo 2006:257-258; Hensley 2010). In this regard, Vallaster and De Chernatony (2006:762) emphasise the role of the organisation's leadership in facilitating internal branding by implementing initiatives to establish employee behaviour that is consistent with the organisation's anticipated brand identity. As such, corporate branding is a process aimed at turning the organisation into a brand and does not merely involve branding the organisation's products. Achieving the goal of turning the organisation into a brand is a challenging process that requires management to consider what the organisation represents and how to communicate the attributes of the organisation in the most effective way. Corporate branding is ultimately aimed at establishing a lasting and coherent identity among organisational members and a consistent image among external stakeholders by means of strategic, symbolic and social relations and interaction strategies (Fuglsang & Sundbo 2005). Rouleau (2005) as well as Stensaker and Falkenberg (2007) propose a multidisciplinary approach to corporate branding in terms of which corporate brand building is viewed as an initiative of strategic change which is co-created through the sense-making activities within the organisation and as part of collective managerial practices, rather than attributing the responsibility of corporate branding to individual employees (Schatzki 2006).

Following the above perspectives, Antorini and Schultz (2005:220) as well as Riesenbeck and Perry (2007:212) argue that in creating an innovative corporate brand, the emphasis is no longer restricted to a marketing and campaign perspective. Instead, corporate branding focuses on an integrated and cross-disciplinary perspective as it involves a number of organisational functions. As a result, the concept of corporate marketing has developed, resulting in the introduction and refinement of the corporate marketing mix.

According to Balmer and Greyser (2006), corporate marketing constitutes a philosophy rather than a function. Consequently, the elements of the corporate marketing mix should not be viewed as elements for coordination by an organisational department. Instead, these should be regarded as elements for instructing and communicating an organisation-wide philosophy. The six Cs of corporate marketing and the key questions that underpin each of them are as follows (Balmer & Greyser 2006):

- **Character**, which refers to the organisation's tangible and intangible assets as well as its philosophy, activities, and the markets it serves. (What we indubitably are.)
- **Culture**, which refers to the collective feeling among internal stakeholders resulting from the values, beliefs and stakeholders' perception of the organisation. (What we feel we are.)
- **Communication**, which refers to the media used to communicate with customers and other constituencies, with careful consideration of how word-of-mouth and media or competitor commentary may affect how the organisation, its products and services are perceived. (What we say we are.)
- **Conceptualisations**, which refer to stakeholders' perceptions of the corporate brand. (What we are seen to be.)
- **Constituencies**, which refer to meeting the wants and demands of stakeholder groups, while taking into consideration that customers may belong to different stakeholder groups. (Whom we seek to serve.)
- **Covenant**, which refers to the promise made by the corporate brand resulting in the expectations which stakeholders associate with the brand. (What is promised and expected.)

In view of the above discussion, corporate branding can therefore be regarded as a marketing tool used to convey a combination of symbolic meanings, values and images associated with the brand to distinguish the brand from its competitors in stakeholders' minds. It is also a management philosophy and an organisational tool applied to mediate corporate identity and to manage interactions and relations with multiple stakeholders (Jensen & Beckman 2009:471). In addition, corporate branding requires integration of internal and external communication, as well as conveying coherent messages across multiple channels and news media (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1045).

The above discussion reveals that corporate branding is a multidisciplinary approach which includes marketing, strategy, organisational behaviour and communications. Corporate branding strategies are applied with the purpose of reflecting an organisation's

most significant points of differentiation in order to achieve a competitive advantage. In this regard, Bick, Jacobson and Abratt (2003:842) define corporate branding as follows:

Corporate branding is a manifestation of the features that distinguish an organisation from its competitors. It is a reflection of the organization's ability to satisfy consumers' needs, namely: trust in the company to deliver a consistent level of product/service, quality of the product/service at a reasonable price and the reduction of risk of making an unwise purchase decision.

In addition, as a result of the extended scope of corporate brands relative to product brands in terms of the number of stakeholder groups involved and the use of the entire organisation to support the brand, corporate branding serves as an imperative strategic measure relative to the functional (marketing and sales) role accorded a product brand. The strategic importance of corporate branding does not only involve positioning of the organisation in the industry, but also requires internal arrangements, for example organisational structure, physical design and culture that support the meaning of the corporate brand (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1044-5), as is evident from Balmer's (2002a) complex definition (adapted from Balmer (2001a:281)) of corporate branding:

Corporate brands are characterised by their cultural, intricate, tangible and ethereal elements and demand total organisational commitment... This proposition may be viewed as a covenant with key stakeholder groups and networks. This covenant underpins organisational efforts to communicate, differentiate and enhance the brand in the minds of such groups. The organisation professes this covenant by means of a concerted communications message across multiple channels of communication. A corporate brand covenant requires senior management fealty and financial support.

The above definition (Balmer 2002a) indicates that corporate branding involves using corporate as well as marketing communication channels to communicate the values of the organisation to a network of internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, it reveals that corporate branding comprises more abstract attributes, is more complex and has a higher level of (social) responsibility, unlike product brands which consist of tangible features that are used to brand a product. Building a coherent corporate brand requires organisations to use a variety of communication media to enhance the brand among its target market and to distinguish it from competitors. This implies that all the facets of the corporate strategy must be communicated to the relevant target markets in order to reflect

the actual identity of the organisation. In this way, a coherent brand network will be established that does not contain contradictory elements. Using multiple channels to communicate consistent messages to an organisation's various stakeholder groups is discussed in various academic sources as total corporate communications (cf. Balmer & Gray 2003b; Balmer 1998; Balmer 2001a, b). This concept has been briefly referred to in sections 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.3. The total corporate communication mix constitutes an important difference between product brands and corporate brands and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3.

In view of this distinction between corporate brands and products brands it can be argued that corporate branding strategies must provide for the implementation of measures to ensure the product meets the brand promise by satisfying the physical, emotional and other needs of potential buyers. In addition to meeting the brand promise, corporate branding strategies must promote the valued relationship between stakeholders and the organisation. As such, corporate branding devotes greater attention to issues of ethical and social responsibility. In this regard, CoreBrand (2002:3) describes corporate branding as a business process which must be planned and strategically focused, and which must incorporate all divisions in the organisation. Therefore, corporate branding establishes the leadership, direction and clarity of purpose for the corporate brand, and as such requires a different management approach (Aaker 2004b:7).

Following the above discussion, corporate branding can be described as a systematic process in which integrated communication techniques play a fundamental role in creating alignment between messages communicated to internal and external stakeholders. Corporate branding involves total communications which include the use of visual brand identity elements, communication and strategy as a means of reinforcing the organisation's values, relationships and culture. In addition, corporate branding is a strategic asset which emphasises commitment from employees and functions at all levels in the organisation in the quest for on-going value creation. For this reason, brand management should be an innovative, strategic and holistic process that integrates cross-functional activities in the organisation in order to enhance stakeholders' perception of the brand value. Furthermore, corporate branding requires an integrated approach to brand management, based on the commitment of all members of an organisation to behave in accordance with the desired brand identity. This holistic approach to corporate branding is confirmed in the integrated definition that describes a brand as a tool for differentiating organisations in order to achieve competitive advantage. In addition, by viewing corporate branding as a holistic process, it is assumed that brands are created by establishing

synergy among all the elements in the marketing mix. Brands are positioned in the market according to a strategy that provides for benefit offerings which are distinct from competitor products and services.

2.2.2.3 Internal branding: aligning employee behaviour as a means to establish a strong corporate brand

Although internal branding is not the focus of this thesis, it is also briefly discussed for the sake of comprehensiveness. De Chernatony (2001b:17) points out that traditional approaches to brand building are primarily focused on the organisation's external stakeholders. According to Vallaster and De Chernatony (2003:4) as well as Punjaisri and Wilson (2007:57), researchers have recently started to focus on the imperative role of internal brand building as a strategic process comprising pre-determined measures to ensure employees' behaviour reflects the brand values. Employees whose behaviour is aligned with organisational values can contribute to obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage by having external stakeholders experience these values. This implies that employees demonstrate significant brand value and an organisation's leadership has a responsibility to deploy this opportunity (Hardaker & Fill 2005:375). Furthermore, Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) argue that employees' identification with the organisation is an essential prerequisite for corporate reputation. In addition, employees who identify with the organisation are more likely to demonstrate behaviour that supports the organisation's strategy and to act as brand ambassadors when engaging with the public. Wieseke, Ulrich, Christ and Dick (2007) reiterate the viewpoint that employees' behaviour towards customers is determined by the extent to which they identify with the organisation. Similarly, Edwards (2005) as well as Christensen, Morsing and Cheney (2008:70) hold the view that employees who strongly identify with the organisation act in its best interests and powerfully influence the extent to which customers view an organisation as customer oriented (Hurley & Estelami 2007). Furthermore, employees' identification with the organisation may also be linked to how favourably they believe customers, competitors and suppliers perceive the organisation (Carmeli, Gershon & Weisberg 2006).

The above discussion on internal brand building proves that establishing a strong corporate brand requires more than communicating the brand's relevance and worth to external stakeholders. Instead, organisations should decide what elements and ideas the brand represents and how to communicate these, preferably directly rather than indirectly, to internal customers, including employees, in words and images in multiple ways by means of a variety of communication channels. Communicating the meaning of the brand

across various media among internal stakeholders creates a sincere sense of shared understanding among internal customers, and encourages commitment to display behaviour that reinforces the brand values. The above statements emphasise the strategic importance of brands within an organisation, and include brands as part of an organisation's core values and identity. The perceived role of internal branding in corporate brand image formation is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2.

2.2.2.4 Services branding: a branding strategy based on internal marketing and human resource management

Although services are imperative for commercial purposes and brand-related strategy in services is becoming increasingly important, literature in the twentieth century focuses mainly on products rather than services. This tendency has been traditionally viewed as a "monolithic mass" (Turley & Moore 1995:49).

Although more recent literature focuses on services and services branding, there has been a lack of understanding of how services branding should be applied in practice (Devlin 2004). Branding literature maintains different perspectives as to whether the principles of branding and brand-building followed in the case of manufactured goods should be applied to services (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley 1999). Furthermore, literature dealing with services branding proposes that adjustments to the branding strategy are required to meet the requirements of services characteristics. Authors in the field of services branding maintain that the brand strategy for services brands must be adapted to provide for the particular services characteristics for example, intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability (Berry 2000). Despite this recent focus on services branding issues in the literature, the branding culture in service organisations, especially financial services, is particularly weak (Ries & Ries 2003).

Although many of the extant branding models (for example, De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley 1998; Keller 1998) are regarded to be applicable to both products and services, they have little relevance to services branding matters (see O'Cass & Grace (2003) for a recent review).

Traditionally, research on services branding focused mainly on the functional aspects of services in terms of services design and delivery. In more recent literature it is argued that services brands are constituted by both functional and emotional values (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley 1999; De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003), while emphasising physical evidence and process as a way of communicating values (Zeithaml & Bitner 1996). The literature also maintains that the organisation as brand or the

corporate services brand (which also implies the corporate image) is inherent to the branding strategy followed by the organisation (Balmer 1995, 2001). As a result, service organisations have increasingly used the communication channel to establish a distinct corporate image in order to position the brand and develop attractiveness among stakeholders. Moreover, it has been acknowledged that executing the services brand depends on the service rendered as well as the way it is rendered (O'Loughlin & Szmigin 2007:449).

In addition, the key role of employees' interaction with consumers in services brands has been widely proposed in the literature, and as a result internal marketing and human resource management are fundamental elements in creating and maintaining service brand values (De Chernatony, Drury & Segal-Horn 2003). In this regard, Wallace and De Chernatony (2009:86) indicate that in the case of service organisations, the organisation is the brand, while the core brand values represent the organisational values. This argument implies that when employees display the brand values through aligning their behaviour with the core values, customers' perception of the brand is enhanced (Yaniv & Farkas 2005; Kapferer 2008:104).

O'Loughlin and Szmigin (2007:449) apply the perspective of services branding to the financial services sector. In view of significant developments in the financial services sector, the increased instrumental approach of customers and the increasingly automated and commoditised nature of the financial services sector, these authors emphasise the necessity that financial services suppliers must identify and promote branding strategies and practices which are relevant, meaningful and practical within this volatile sector. As a result of the increasing commodification of the financial services sector and the resultant price-driven, opportunistic approach adopted by consumers, financial services providers must develop prominent brand propositions based upon attributes of importance and relevance to consumers. In this regard, it is argued that financial services providers must design and communicate their brand position with consumers' functional financial needs in mind. Suppliers are recommended to engage in dialogue with consumers in order to successfully identify current key financial brand values and appeals that are meaningful to customers, including functional criteria such as interest rates, convenience and appropriate access to services which will form the basis of branding strategy. To enhance customer-centric brand delivery, it is recommended that suppliers should invest in the continuous training, development and reward of their financial services employees, since they are central to delivering the brand promise. Financial services providers must adopt a

multidimensional financial services brand strategy which is based upon the promotion of appropriate functional values and delivered through a process-driven, customer-centred approach. This approach should help connect the services branding theory and the current reality of financial services branding practice (O'Loughlin & Szmigin 2007:449).

Despite the recognised importance of services branding, it remains an under-developed area of research and still warrants further academic attention.

2.2.2.5 Emotional branding as a means to create trust in the brand

Morrison and Crane (2007:410) suggest that strong service brands can be created by managing consumers' emotional brand experience. Gobe (2001) defines emotional branding as engaging the consumer at the level of senses and emotions; by constructing an intense, intimate emotional connection to the brand that goes beyond material satisfaction. Emotional branding is aimed at creating a holistic experience that results in an emotional fulfilment so consumers develop a unique trust in the brand. This concept transcends the simple approach of the emotional benefits derived from using the brand as commonly stated in the traditional branding literature. Offering an emotional branding experience is based on a coordinated and integrated organisational effort which does not only enhance customer satisfaction, but also ensures that a positive experience is derived from the brand consumption. Creating and controlling effective emotional branding experiences can result in service brand differentiation, consumer loyalty and an increase in sales (Gapper 2004:23).

In view of the above discussion on product branding, corporate branding, services branding and emotional branding, branding is defined as follows for the purpose of this study:

Branding is the methods employed by an organisation for positioning the brand in the market in order to achieve sustained competitive advantage. Branding comprises corporate branding, product branding, services branding and emotional branding, and involves the incorporation of a unique mix of functional and emotional values into a brand. These methods include offering high-quality products and services, marketing actions as well as the way in which an organisation's employees interact with different stakeholder groups.

The above definition implies that branding is the action whereby an organisation positions itself in the market by offering products and services that meet the functional and emotional (symbolic) needs of consumers. This is supported by consistency in the way

employees behave towards stakeholders as well as well-planned marketing strategies aimed at positioning the brand in terms of its functional and symbolic benefits.

2.2.2.6 Towards adopting a corporate branding strategy

In view of the above discussion, this study adopts a corporate branding strategy based on the perspective of Harris et al (in Xie and Boggs 2006:349) that “the assumption for creating a corporate brand is that a corporate brand will support all aspects of the firm and differentiates the firm from its competitors”. With regard to the aspects of implementing a corporate branding strategy, Hatch and Schultz (2003:1052) hold the opinion that corporate brand management takes place in relation to the interplay between vision, culture and image. Effective corporate branding is based on executing the values that enhance the brand’s competitive advantage as well as demonstrating a responsive attitude towards the organisation’s stakeholders. In this regard, corporate brands are more capable of enhancing the visibility, recognition and reputation of an organisation compared to product brands. In addition, a favourable corporate brand provides more opportunities for strategic or brand alliances (Xie & Boggs 2006:349). Building a coherent corporate brand requires organisations to use a variety of communication media to enhance the brand among its target market and to distinguish it from competitors. This implies that all the facets of the corporate strategy must be communicated to the relevant target markets, including employees, in order to reflect the actual identity of the organisation. If employees display the brand values through aligning their behaviour with the core values, customers’ perception of the brand is enhanced, which can contribute to obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage by having external stakeholders experience these values (Yaniv & Farkas 2005; Kapferer 2008:104). In this way, an emotional branding experience is offered based on a coordinated and integrated organisational effort which does not only enhance customer satisfaction, but also ensures that a positive experience is derived from the brand consumption. Creating and controlling effective emotional branding experiences can result in service brand differentiation, consumer loyalty and an increase in sales (Gapper 2004:23). As such, a coherent brand network is established that does not contain contradictory elements. Furthermore, a distinct corporate brand is better able to recruit and retain valuable employees. In view of the above explanation it can be concluded that a corporate brand enables the organisation to differentiate itself in the marketplace. Since product brands focus on customers, while a broader stakeholder base applies to corporate brands, a corporate brand is regarded as a means of instilling trust in extending the organisation’s product or service line (Balmer & Gray 2003a:985). In addition, although product branding is flexible

and enables organisations to position their products among consumers from different segments in different markets, high marketing costs are involved which may result in lower brand profitability. Moreover, strong brands resulting from an effective corporate branding strategy enhance consumer loyalty and make consumers less price-sensitive (Kay 2006:745). Hulberg (2006) provides further support for corporate branding by explaining its three main benefits as follows: firstly, corporate branding serves as a means of differentiation in that it distinguishes an organisation, its product and service offerings from those of competitors where consumers fail to see the differences. Secondly, corporate branding provides transparency to external audiences who demand access to the people behind the brand, their policy and principles. Thirdly, corporate branding saves cost by creating synergies between brands, instead of promoting a number of brands individually. Finally, a review of different recent research studies reveals that these days contemporary businesses advocate a corporate branding strategy (Makarychev, Kaufmann, Tsangari & Temperley 2011:191) in the emerging interactive and network-connected marketplace in order to develop shareholder value and increase the profit margin (Schultz & Kitchen 2004:347).

2.3 TYPES OF BRANDS

Following the discussion on brand and the concepts associated with a brand in section 2.2.1, a proper distinction between the different types of brands and their distinct features is necessary to determine their role in contributing to the corporate strategy.

Bergstrom, Blumenthal and Crothers (2002:134) indicate that various types of brands are differentiated in the literature, for example product brand, corporate brand, service brand, and employer brand, as postulated by King (1991), Ind (1998), Bickerton (2000) as well as Stuart and Jones (2004:85). However, Bergstrom et al (2002:134) do not fully acknowledge the distinction made between these types of brands. They maintain that despite the different techniques used by organisations for establishing corporate brands and product brands, all brands have a common purpose: to establish a unique and strong emotional bond with the target group, resulting in greater loyalty than would otherwise have been created.

2.3.1 The concepts of product brand, corporate brand and services brand

Stuart and Jones (2004:85) state that several authors distinguish between a corporate brand and a product brand based on their differences (King 1991; Ind 1998; Bickerton

2000). These differences explain how the corporate brand contributes to the corporate strategy compared to a product brand. In the next sections, product brands and corporate brands are discussed. The concept of service brand which is applied in business sectors is also explained.

2.3.1.1 The product brand: a physical object with functional attributes

Verma (2010:50) describes a product as a physical object, which possesses functional properties. In addition, Verma states that products have life cycles; as a result, a product is dynamic and may change over time. In addition, product brands are mainly aimed at targeting consumers and connect with consumers through a product or service offering with a definite product brand name.

Product brands stem from the disciplinary field of marketing; therefore, marketing communication is used to advertise product brands (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976). With regard to branding the organisation, Hatch and Schultz (2008) maintain that in the case of product brands, short-term approaches are followed, guided by advertising campaigns developed by marketers. In addition, consumers view the product brand and the organisation that created the product brand as two separate entities (Aaker 2004b:7).

2.3.1.2 The corporate brand: adding symbolic meaning to a product's functional properties

A corporate brand has no material qualities and is made up of perceptions (Verma 2010:50). In this regard, a corporate brand differs from a product brand in that a corporate brand can encompass an expanded collection of associations. For example, a corporate brand may be more likely to initiate associations based on corporate credibility, people and relationships; and programmes and values; as well as on common products and their mutual attributes or benefits (Keller & Richey 2006:75). In view of the explanations of Verma (2010:50-51) as well as Keller and Richey (2006:75) presented above it can be concluded that the brand is a trademark that adds symbolic meaning to the product's functional attributes. Furthermore, the corporate brand embodies a "brand promise" (see section 4.2.7) which is made to the organisation's internal and external stakeholders and which is indicative of its values, culture, heritage, people and strategy. The extent to which the organisation and its stakeholders deliver on the brand promise largely determines the success and reliability of the corporate brand (Balmer & Gray 2003b). De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001:648; 2003) are of the opinion that if a brand promise is to be interpreted by the target audience, stakeholders' expectation of the brand and the extent to which consumers perceive the brand to deliver the promise must concur. In addition, Verma

(2010:50) states that corporate brands do not have life cycles and as a result remain constant.

Apart from the tangible and intangible features, two other specifying characteristics of the corporate brand are identified. These include the multiple stakeholders engaged in the brand as well as the various encounters and interactions of these stakeholders with the organisation (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976; Stuart & Jones 2004:85; Hatch & Schultz 2008:9). These stakeholders include organisational and community members, investors, partners, suppliers and other interested parties. In this regard, the corporate brand link the organisation's multiple stakeholders with the organisation's products and services by establishing a solid relationship with its stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1045).

Furthermore, corporate brands originate from multiple disciplines, in particular marketing, organisational behaviour, human resources strategy and communication and therefore corporate brands are marketed by means of primary, secondary and tertiary communication channels, also referred to as total corporate communications (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976) (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3). In addition, a corporate brand is permanently connected to the organisation and its products.

2.3.1.3 Service brands: brand differentiation requires a focus on consumers' holistic perspective of the brand

De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001:648) state that limited literature on services brands is available. From the limited number of academic works published on this topic it appears that in the case of services, the brand is increasingly considered as a promise (see section 4.2.7). Furthermore, De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001:648; 2003) posit that if a brand promise is to be interpreted by the target audience, stakeholders' expectation of the brand and the extent to which consumers perceive the brand to deliver the promise must concur. Different requirements apply for executing a services branding strategy, because services brands that aim to deliver the brand promise do not focus on consumers as their only group of stakeholders. Instead, successful services brands include the entire spectrum of stakeholders, especially employees, as opposed to classical product branding which assumes an internal system of delivery and quality control which consumers do not experience directly. By contrast, the value delivery system for services brands is visible to and can be directly experienced by external stakeholders; as such, it is subject to different levels of perceived quality. Moreover, consumers are active participants in the services branding process. De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001:648) point out that branding in

some services sectors is focused on the extent to which consumers are satisfied with the quality of service rendered.

The branding activity in services sectors involves recruiting employees whose values concur with the desired organisational culture and who are committed to behaving in a way associated with the brand promise. Sanghera, De Chernatony and Brown (2002:10) as well as Punjaisri, Wilson and Evanschitzky (2008:410) support this view by indicating that in the case of services brands, employees are primarily responsible for delivery of the brand promise, since they are the link between the brand and customers. As a result, services branding focuses on providing guidelines about how things are done within the organisation. In this way, services organisations encourage a culture that directs employees' behaviour so they will recognise how they should interact with consumers in order to differentiate the organisation from its competitors. Should an organisation fail to deliver on the brand promise over time, the development of customers' trust and commitment which are fundamental elements of a relationship will be adversely affected.

In view of the above discussion, Sanghera et al (2002:4) conclude that differentiation in the services sector can only be achieved by focusing on consumers' holistic viewpoint of the brand. This holistic viewpoint is based on how consumers experience the organisation throughout the entire process of consumer-provider interaction, including communication messages aimed at marketing the service brand.

Table 2.3 below gives a summary of the differences between corporate brands, product brands and services brands as discussed in this section.

Table 2.3: Differences between corporate brands, product brands and services brands

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CORPORATE BRANDS, PRODUCT BRANDS AND SERVICES BRANDS			
NUMBER	CORPORATE BRANDS	PRODUCT BRANDS	SERVICES BRANDS
1.	A corporate brand is created (Verma 2010:50); the corporate brand is a more abstract and complex concept, which makes building a coherent brand more difficult (Hatch & Schultz 2008; Verma 2010:50)	A product brand is manufactured (Verma 2010:50); and constitutes tangible features, for example the product's physical form, packaging and labelling, which are used to brand a product to create differentiation and which consumers come to associate with the brand (Hatch & Schultz 2008; Verma 2010:50)	

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CORPORATE BRANDS, PRODUCT BRANDS AND SERVICES BRANDS			
NUMBER	CORPORATE BRANDS	PRODUCT BRANDS	SERVICES BRANDS
2.	A corporate brand does not have a life cycle and remains constant over time (Verma 2010:50)	A product brand has a life cycle and may change over time (Verma 2010:50)	
3.	A corporate brand does not have material properties and adds value to the functional benefits of a product by providing symbolic meaning (Verma 2010:50)	A product brand is a physical object that possesses functional benefits (Verma 2010:50)	The brand is increasingly considered as a promise (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001:648; 2003)
4.	Various stakeholder groups are involved and various opportunities for contact and interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders exist (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976; Stuart & Jones 2004:85; Hatch & Schultz 2008:9)	Potential buyer is the only stakeholder involved and the point of sale is the brand's only interaction with the stakeholder (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1045)	Services brands include the entire spectrum of stakeholders, as opposed to classical product branding which assumes an internal system of delivery and quality control which consumers do not experience directly (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001:648; 2003) Consumers are active participants in the services branding process; branding in some services sectors is focused on the extent to which consumers are satisfied with the quality of service rendered (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001:648)
5.	Corporate brands originate from multiple disciplines (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976)	Product brands stem from the disciplinary field of marketing (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976)	
6.	Corporate brand values are usually developed from the values and preferences of the founders, owners, management and employees of the organisation (Hatch & Schultz 2008)	Product brand values tend to be planned according to marketing and advertising strategies (Balmer & Gray 2003a:976)	The value delivery system for services brands is visible to and can be directly experienced by external stakeholders and, as such, is subject to different levels of perceived quality (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001:648; 2003)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CORPORATE BRANDS, PRODUCT BRANDS AND SERVICES BRANDS			
NUMBER	CORPORATE BRANDS	PRODUCT BRANDS	SERVICES BRANDS
	Employees contribute significantly to transmitting the brand's values in the corporate branding process (Balmer 2001a, b)		Services organisations focus on providing guidelines to encourage a culture that directs employees' behaviour so they will recognise how they should interact with consumers in order to differentiate the organisation from its competitors (Sanghera et al 2002:10; Punjaisri et al 2008:410)
7.	A corporate brand is constantly connected to both the organisation and its products and, therefore, a different branding approach is required compared to product branding (Aaker 2004b:7)	Consumers view the product brand and the organisation that created it as two separate entities (Aaker 2004b:7)	Consumers have a holistic viewpoint of the brand based on how they experience the organisation throughout the entire process of consumer-provider interaction, including communication messages aimed at marketing the service brand (Sanghera et al 2002:4)
8.	The corporate brand contributes more significantly to the corporate strategy in terms of stakeholder value compared to a product brand as corporate brands have a greater scope than product brands (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1044-5) Corporate branding takes place at organisational level and is aimed at managing the organisation's interactions with its multiple stakeholders (Aaker 2004b:7)	Product brands have a restricted scope (Hatch & Schultz 2003:1044-5)	Different requirements apply for executing a services branding strategy, because services brands that aim to deliver the brand promise do not focus on consumers as their only group of stakeholders (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001:648; 2003).

Following the discussion in sections 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.3 on the concepts of corporate brands, products brand and services brands, different requirements apply for executing a branding strategy in each of these instances. In view of these requirements, this study adopts a corporate brand approach as explained in the next section.

2.3.1.4 Towards adopting a corporate brand approach

In view of the discussion on corporate brands, product brand and services brands in sections 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.3, this study adopts a corporate brand approach based on the perspective of Schultz and Kitchen (2004:348-349), who argue that in view of the expanding global systems in finance, logistics, communication, marketing and branding, the corporate brand is a more significant entity than its products and services. Corporate brands have value, since they convey a representation of strength, integrity and benefits to all stakeholders and interested parties. Consequently, this study adopts a total corporate communications approach (TCC) (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3) borrowing from both the corporate communication and marketing communication disciplines. Marketing communication or traditional communication programmes are inadequate for elevating the total meaning of a market-oriented organisation. In a TTC approach corporate communication and corporate branding efforts are directed towards external and internal stakeholders in a way that harnesses the individual brands and nurtures relationships with all stakeholders. The organisation's total meaning can only be conveyed and made relevant when its management, business partners, affiliates and employees have a sound understanding of the value of a totally integrated corporate marketing, communication and branding approach. In addition, the purpose of practising such an approach must be to put realism inside the organisation and to give it substance on which to build and operate. By following this principle, the organisation has a platform to proclaim its values, vision, mission and commitment internally and externally to the various stakeholder groups who have a relationship with it, or who might want to enter into a business relationship with it (Schultz & Kitchen 2004:349-350).

In the next section, the concept of corporate image is discussed.

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE IMAGE

The concept of corporate image forms the basis from which the concept of brand image has developed and expanded over the years. The evolvement of brand image from the concept of corporate image is evident from research conducted as early as the sixties by

Bristol (1960:13), who states that “the corporate image is nothing essentially new. It is in all essentials, merely the picture which your organisation has created in the minds of your various publics”. In Bristol's (1960:13) opinion, corporate image is not a newly invented concept. In essence, corporate image refers to the way internal and external stakeholders view an organisation. This perspective still applies five decades later: organisations select specific corporate marketing strategies to create a certain perspective of the organisation in stakeholders' minds, based on how they want the stakeholders to view the organisation (cf. Balmer & Greyser 2002, 2006).

2.4.1 Inconsistencies in the meaning of corporate image in literature

A comprehensive literature review on corporate image reveals that this concept poses multiple difficulties. These include the numerous and different meanings associated with corporate image as well as its negative associations. Furthermore, corporate image is difficult or impossible to control, since different stakeholder groups experience the organisation from their individual perspectives. As such, stakeholders have different expectations of the organisation. The extent to which an organisation meets these expectations influences the way stakeholders view the corporate image. In addition, in the early nineties corporate image was referred to as a synonym for concepts such as attitude, communication, message, belief, perception, cognition, credibility, relationship or reputation (Grunig 1993:124).

2.4.2 Perspectives on corporate image formation

As explained in sections 2.2 and 2.2.1, stakeholders' perception of the qualities of an organisation, referred to as the corporate image, is based on the extent to which an organisation meets their expectations. The process of creating this perception in stakeholders' minds by means of specific corporate marketing strategies is referred to as corporate image formation. The concept of corporate image and how corporate image is formed are explained by several theorists and scholars. For example, Dowling (1986) defines corporate image as follows:

[T]he set of meaning through which an object is known and through which people describe, remember and relate to it. That is, the net result of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about an object [company].

Similarly, Topalian (2003:1120) postulates that corporate image is the total set of impressions and expectations that an organisation creates in the minds of its stakeholders and publics. Hatch and Schultz (2003:1048) add to this perspective by defining corporate

image as “views of the organization developed by its stakeholders; the outside world’s overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media, the general public, and so on”. Furthermore, Veljković and Petrović (2011:78) explain that communication which takes place through the total set of organisational activities is made up of signals. The recipients of the communication reconstruct these fragments of information into a single, meaningful concept. This unified set of impressions is known as the corporate image.

Following the above viewpoints, Balmer and Greyser (2003:195-196) add that organisations have various target publics which each has a specific background. As a result, these stakeholder groups will have various objectives and therefore will interact with the organisation at different levels. Since the organisation interacts with diverse groups of stakeholders, it will not have a single, consistent image. Stakeholders’ image of an organisation is formed according to their exposures to the identity cues presented by the organisation. This implies that stakeholders will hold different images of the same organisation, as the circumstances under which individuals have contact with the identity cues vary. The psychological view of image concurs with the perspective postulated by Balmer and Greyser (2003:195-196). This school of thought on image formation postulates that individuals use their personal observations of reality or the symbols used in communication by another party to construct images and derive meaning from these images. Images are therefore regarded as mental ideas of reality based on visual, sensory, or spatial observation of identity cues presented by the organisation to construct reality. For this reason, an organisation has more than one image, since different people process the meaning of messages differently and, therefore, form different images of the same organisation.

Roper and Davies (2007:77) expand upon the above viewpoints of Balmer and Greyser (2003:195-196) by arguing that the most fundamental element in the corporate image formation process is an organisation’s internal stakeholders, for example its employees, and how they perceive the organisation. This viewpoint was first put forward by Kennedy (1977).

In view of the above perspectives on corporate image, Veljković and Petrović (2011:78) provide an all-inclusive description of this concept. According to these authors, corporate image is the result of the organisation’s product and service offering, its behaviour, attitudes (corporate culture) and corporate communications. In addition, corporate image is formed by the extent to which the organisation’s business practices support ecological

conservation and social welfare. All these aspects influence public perceptions on what the organisation represents, while different stakeholder groups hold different perceptions regarding the organisation's image. Corporate image comprises a cognitive (logical) component, which involves tangible elements such as observable product quality, packaging, colour, logo and symbols. In addition to the observable characteristics, image is also made up of a conative (emotional) component, which is revealed in its ability to induce a specific emotional state, for example excitement, among consumers. Furthermore, the corporate image is embedded in the organisation's history, beliefs and business philosophy, its employees, its ethical and cultural value system and the nature of its technology.

From these descriptions of corporate image, Brown (1997 in Balmer & Greyser 2003:174) concludes that the setting of corporate image and the consequences it holds for organisations are understood to a limited extent only. Since the image held of an organisation results from stakeholders' experiences of the organisation, it cannot be managed in a direct manner. Instead, organisations can only contribute to establishing a more favourable image by implementing strategies to manage the corporate identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.2). These strategies must be aimed at presenting tangible and intangible cues organised in a deliberate manner, in order to reposition or alter the image in the minds of stakeholders (Veljković & Petrović 2011:79-80).

From the above discussion on the concept of corporate image, it follows that this concept refers to the full spectrum of opinions, impressions and expectations which an organisation establishes in the minds of its stakeholders by means of specific cues. These cues are obtained from the total set of organisational activities and include tangible elements such as observable product quality, packaging, colour, logo and symbols. In addition to the observable characteristics, image is also made up of the organisation's history, beliefs and business philosophy and employees. The organisation's various audiences reconstruct these cues of information into a single concept, known as the corporate image. In this regard, a common element among the numerous perspectives on corporate image can be observed: image primarily relates to the overall impression that the organisation leaves in the public consciousness. Since an organisation has different groups of stakeholders, it will not have a single, consistent image.

As already mentioned, the literature review on the concept of corporate image reveals that the term is often used as a synonym for concepts such as corporate identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.2), reputation and personality. As a result, no standardised definition for

corporate image exists. Based on the above perspectives presented by scholars in the field, the concept of corporate image is defined and adopted as follows for the purpose of this study:

Corporate image is the totality of perceptions, beliefs and impressions that the public has about an organisation based on the manner in which an organisation presents itself by means of tangible identity elements.

The above definition implies that the public holds a specific opinion of an organisation based on the perceptions the organisation creates through visual demonstration.

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

Walker (2010) indicates that although the definition of the concept of corporate reputation has evolved over the years, “a definitive definition of the construct has yet to emerge in spite of numerous attempts to describe and integrate the definitions in use” (Lange, Lee & Dai 2011). Cretu and Brodie’s (2009:348) perspective on corporate reputation is based on a differentiation between the roles of corporate reputation and corporate image. According to these authors, image relates to perceived quality. Customers perceive the brand as part of the benefits associated with the offering. As a result, image is regarded as a primary determinant of perceived quality (Cretu & Brodie 2009:293). In contrast, corporate reputation impacts on customer value and customer loyalty. Consumers tend to view an organisation with a good reputation as more credible and trustworthy than an organisation with a poor reputation. In this regard, Ang and Wight (2009:21) state that a stable reputation mainly results if an organisation’s performance is consistent over time. This implies that while strong performance is critical to establishing a strong reputation, the organisation’s performance must be stable, and must be superior to that of competitors (Ang & Wight 2009:29). Therefore, corporate reputation influences the value customers perceive that they receive (Cretu & Brodie 2009:295). As such, corporate reputation results from consumers’ overall evaluation of an organisation based on how they experience the organisation’s products, services, communication activities and business practices over time (Bailey 2005). Aspects such as an organisation’s representatives and constituencies as well as its interactions with stakeholders also influence the corporate identity (Bartikowski & Walsh 2011). In essence, corporate reputation is a combination of stakeholders’ accumulated impressions over time of how well organisations respond to the demands and expectations of consumers (Nguyen & Leblanc 2001; Rose & Thomsen 2004).

Likewise, corporate reputation is a socially shared perception as an aggregated construct which becomes an individual's impression of how other people view an organisation. This implies that corporate reputation is a construed representation of an organisation's overall appeal when compared to competitors (Hansen, Samuelsen & Silseth 2008). Furthermore, Ruth and York (2004) view reputation as a perceptual depiction of an organisation's past actions and future prospects that are a representation of stakeholders' combined judgements or attitudes. Moreover, corporate reputation represents the complete set of affective or emotional reaction and involves the overall assessment of an organisation by its constituents (Caruana & Ewing 2010).

Walker (2010:370) extends and refines the definition of reputation by identifying five attributes of this concept: 1) corporate reputation is based on perceptions 2) of all internal and external stakeholders; 3) reputation is essentially comparative; 4) reputation can be based on positive or negative perceptions; and 5) reputation is constant and long lasting. The attribute listed in the last instance states that the full impact of an organisation's reputation is embedded in its persistence or enduring nature over time.

In view of the above descriptions of corporate reputation, it appears that although this concept lacks a precise definition, the various descriptions and definitions of corporate reputation have a number of elements in common. Corporate reputation refers to the overall assessment of an organisation by its constituents, which can comprise positive or negative impressions, and which is formed over time, based on an organisation's past actions and future prospects. Corporate reputation also involves the emotional reaction created in consumers' minds based on how well the organisation meets their expectations. A criterion for establishing a strong reputation is that the organisation's performance must be consistent and superior to that of competitors.

For the purpose of this study, corporate reputation is defined as follows:

A corporate reputation is the overall evaluation of an organisation's past performance, based on how internal and external stakeholders experience their interaction with the organisation, its communication and symbolism that provides information about the organisation's actions compared to those of its competitors.

The above definition implies that corporate reputation can be interpreted as stakeholders' impressions of an organisation that are formed over time, based on identity cues and previous business experiences with the organisation. As a result, the communication managed by the organisation is not the only factor affecting an organisation's reputation.

Instead, an organisation's reputation is also managed through the way it interacts with other stakeholders or audiences.

In the next section, the concepts of a brand and branding as well as the constituents of a brand are discussed.

2.6 BRAND IMAGE

From the discussion on branding and brand in sections 2.2 and 2.3 respectively, it is evident that the sustained competitive advantage of an organisation in the market is not exclusively determined by its brand. To achieve economic viability, organisations must manage their brands effectively by determining the elements represented by the brand, rendering brand identity, and defining brand uniqueness and equity in order to establish favourable perceptions of the brand in consumers' minds (brand image). As explained in the next section, brand image formation takes place when stakeholders form perceptions about a brand in memory according to the unique attributes which they associate with the brand based on all the beliefs, experiences, impressions, feelings and knowledge that individuals have about a brand, its products, services, communication activities and business practices (cf. Park et al 1986; Keller 1998; De Chernatony 2001a:5; De Chernatony & McDonald 2003:407; Grimaldi 2003:1; Kumar 2003:58; Nandan 2005:267).

2.6.1 The development of the concept of brand image

The concepts of brand, brand image and brand identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.3) developed from the concepts of corporate identity (see Chapter 3, section 3.2) and corporate image. According to the traditional viewpoint, the perspective on the brand was restricted to the visual features differentiating the brand which were used to create a brand image in the minds of the public (Keller 2003:3).

Over the years, this perspective on the concept of brand has changed. As from the early 1990s, literature published on this topic describes brand as a construct comprising tangible elements and intangible elements (for example, De Chernatony & McDonald 1994:18). Traditionally, corporate image served as a means to differentiate an organisation from its competitors in the minds of the target audience. Similarly, brand awareness is created among target audiences by means of the tangible and intangible elements of a brand. The perception of the brand created in this way is often referred to as a brand's image and is formed based on the different values or ideas with which a specific brand is associated (Hung 2008:239). This image is shaped through the

consumer's contacts with the brand and the brand elements (for example, Broadbent & Cooper 1987:3; Kapferer 1997:25).

More recently, scholars in the field of marketing and branding have come to disregard the perspective that describes brand image as the individual features of products. Instead, they adopt a viewpoint according to which brand image is referred to as the total set of impressions created in consumers' minds. These scholars also describe brand image in respect of how a particular brand is exposed to the market and the perceptions consumers form about the brand (Nandan 2005:267).

The series of associations created in consumers' minds is referred to as brand associations. In the late nineties, Keller (1998:2), and more recently also Tran and Cox (2009:139), described brand associations as "other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers".

A number of scholars classify brand image associations into two concrete categories. These are *functional associations* and *emotional or symbolic associations* (Keller 1998; De Chernatony 2001a:5; De Chernatony & McDonald 2003:407; Grimaldi 2003:1; Kumar 2003:58). The first category of brand image associations, namely *functional associations*, refers to the physical, tangible features of a product. The category of *emotional or symbolic associations* comprises the intangible or non-physical features associated with a brand. The category of *brand image associations* reflects consumers' need for self-expression, social approval, or for enhancing their self-esteem (De Chernatony & McDonald 2003:407). Other authors (Park et al 1986; Keller 1998) propose a third category, defined as *experience*. The associations relate to the feelings consumers experience while using a product or a service and the stimulation of the satisfaction of inner needs (Park et al 1986). Keller (1993; 1998) includes a fourth category of associations, namely *brand conception*, which combines the entire impression of the brand, based on consumers' evaluation of the total set of brand aspects. The categories of *brand image associations* are reinforced in consumers' minds by means of marketing and advertising strategies to indicate the extent to which a brand meets basic consumer needs. These consumer needs are categorised in a similar manner than brand image associations and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, section 3.3.1 and Chapter 4, section 4.2.8.5.

Table 2.4 below explains the four categories of brand image associations as viewed by Park et al (1986), Keller (1998) and Aaker (2002).

Table 2.4: The four categories of brand image associations

Source	Category	Conceptions of brand image
Keller (1998); De Chernatony (2001a); De Chernatony & McDonald (2003); Grimaldi (2003); Kumar (2003)	Functional associations	Physical, tangible features of a product
Keller (1998); De Chernatony (2001a); De Chernatony & McDonald (2003); Grimaldi (2003); Kumar (2003)	Emotional or symbolic associations	<p>The intangible or non-physical features associated with a brand.</p> <p>Brand image is not a simple phenomenon of understanding, the organisation's communication activities affect how the brand is perceived. It refers to how consumers understand a complete brand collection, developed by an organisation.</p> <p>This category reflects consumers' need for self-expression, social approval, or for enhancing their self-esteem</p>
Park et al (1996)	Experience	The associations relate to the feelings consumers experience while using a product or a service and the stimulation of the satisfaction of inner needs.
Keller (1998)	Conception	Brand conception reflects associations made about the qualities of the brand in consumers' minds.

As is evident in the above table, brand image associations are classified into four categories according to their meaning, which is based on consumers' subjective perceptions of the qualities of the brand, as reinforced by the organisation's communication activities.

Although the categories mentioned reflect mainly earlier perspectives, these are still relevant, as is evident in Aaker's (2011:49-51) argument that brand associations are an important aspect of brand image formation that must be thoroughly accounted for in the development of a brand strategy. According to Aaker (2011:49-51), brand associations

have meanings that must be grouped. The organisation's brand positioning strategy must be developed based on the meanings of the brand associations in the various categories. The above statement confirms that well-positioned brands provide a set of strong associations.

In view of the above discussion on brand image and brand image associations, it can be concluded that scholars view brand image as a construct that develops from how stakeholders perceive an organisation, based on the attributes which they associate with an organisation and its products and services from their subjective viewpoint. These are established in stakeholders' minds through planned or unplanned communication activities and employee behaviour (Nandan 2005:267).

2.6.2 Towards adopting a corporate brand image perspective

As is evident from the literature review on the concept of brand image, the perspective on the concept of brand has changed over the years to include the total set of impressions created in stakeholders' minds. Following this viewpoint of scholars in the field of marketing and branding, this study adopts a corporate brand image perspective. In view of this perspective, corporate brand image formation involves a variety of aspects. A number of elements occur in the systemised descriptions of the concept of a brand as discussed in this chapter. In view of these distinguishing elements, the following definition of corporate brand image is adopted for the purpose of the study:

Corporate brand image is the total set of perceptions which stakeholders form about a brand according to the unique functional and emotional attributes associated with the brand and which results from the interactions of all stakeholders' impressions, experiences, feelings and knowledge, based on the organisation's products and services, its management style, and how these are established in stakeholders' minds through planned or unplanned communication activities.

From the above definition it can be concluded that the corporate brand image should conceptualise all stakeholders' beliefs about the brand based on their real experience, and must correspond to the brand understanding (Janonis & Virvilaitė 2007:81).

In view of the discussion on the concepts of brand, corporate image, corporate reputation and brand image it appears that these concepts are closely interrelated. In general, corporate image and brand image both refer to how stakeholders, specifically customers, perceive the corporate entity. As discussed in section 2.4, corporate image refers to the construct that develops from how an organisation reveals itself to stakeholders and the

public by means of tangible cues. The tangible cues include visible elements, for example the organisation's name, logo and colours. Corporate brand image, viewed from a corporate and marketing communication perspective, is a more comprehensive concept than corporate image, as is evident from the above definition. Corporate brand image relates to how all internal and external stakeholder groups perceive the entire brand proposition, which constitutes the organisation as well as its product and service offerings, communication activities and business practices over time, based on a set of associations created in stakeholders' minds. The various stakeholder groups evaluate the attributes which they associate with a brand, and ascribe a personality or image to the brand based on their subjective perceptions. It follows that corporate brand image is the perceptions about a brand held in memory by internal and external stakeholders and which are formed according to the unique attributes associated with the brand. Consequently, corporate brand image exists in the mind of all internal and external stakeholder groups who deal with the organisation in one way or another, and is the sum of the interactions of all the beliefs, experiences, impressions, feelings and knowledge that these individuals have about a brand. Corporate brand image, which constitutes stakeholders' accumulated impressions of an organisation based on how they experience the organisation's products, services, communication activities and business practices over time, results in a specific corporate reputation.

2.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the concepts of branding and brand were discussed and an explanation of the types of brands was given. The concepts of corporate image, corporate reputation and brand image were investigated, based on the differences, similarities and relationship between these concepts. This discussion revealed that discrepancies exist in the definitions for these concepts in the branding literature. Clear, explicit definitions were formulated based on the multiple descriptions of these concepts provided in the literature in order to clearly distinguish between them. At the end of the chapter the concept of corporate brand image is adopted for the purpose of this study based on both corporate communication and marketing communication theory.

For the purpose of this study, corporate image is defined as the construct that develops from how an organisation reveals itself to stakeholders and the public by means of tangible cues. Corporate brand image is regarded a more elaborate concept than corporate image. Corporate brand image relates to how internal and external stakeholders and customers perceive the entire brand proposition, which constitutes the organisation

as well as its product and service offerings, based on the unique attributes they associate with the brand. The corporate brand image, which constitutes stakeholders' accumulated impressions of an organisation based on how they experience the organisation's products, services, communication activities and business practices over time, results in a specific corporate reputation.

The definitions formulated for brand, corporate image, corporate reputation and corporate brand image were used as working definitions in this study. Since the purpose of this study was to determine which elements contribute to corporate brand image formation, it was essential to differentiate corporate brand image from related concepts in terms of its unique qualities. The definitions formulated in this chapter provide a means for differentiating between the concepts of brand, corporate image, corporate reputation and corporate brand image based on their constituencies, and to determine how these concepts apply to an organisation's brand, its products and services.

Chapter 3 focuses on corporate identity and brand identity and how these relate to brand, corporate image, corporate reputation and corporate brand image. A corporate brand identity perspective was adopted for the purpose of this study in order to identify the mandatory elements that constitute corporate brand identity. The objective was to demarcate the corporate brand identity concourse for corporate brand image formation to compile representative Q statements for the Q study.

CHAPTER 3: CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to exploring the extent to which corporate brand identity contributes to corporate brand image formation among stakeholders, the purpose of this thesis is also to determine which corporate brand identity elements are deemed important to form the corporate brand image among stakeholders.

In order to achieve this, in this chapter the concepts of corporate identity and brand identity first need to be explored in terms of their similarities and differences. This includes an examination of the various elements that constitute corporate identity and brand identity as part of the total corporate communication mix (see section 3.2.3.3). Corporate identity is discussed first, since it forms the basis from which brand identity has developed and expanded. Over the years, the concept of corporate identity has expanded to include brand identity. At the end of the chapter the concept of corporate brand identity is adopted for the purpose of this study based on both corporate communication and marketing communication theory.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE IDENTITY

Corporate identity has recently emerged as also a well-debated topic in the marketing literature (for example, Abratt 1989; Van Riel and Balmer 1997; Balmer and Greyser 2002, 2006) in addition to the corporate communication literature. Over the past five decades, the increasing volume of scholarly work on corporate identity has demonstrated the importance of gaining knowledge of and obtaining insight into this concept (Suvatjis & De Chernatony 2005; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006; Cornelissen et al 2007; Cornelius, Tassabehji & Wallace 2007; He & Balmer 2007a; Otubanjo & Melewar 2007; He & Mukherjee 2009). Earlier research on corporate identity has in particular shown the relevance for managing an organisation to establish a unique, distinct and coherent corporate identity in order to achieve a sustained competitive advantage (Abratt 1989; Van Riel & Balmer 1997; Balmer & Greyser 2002, 2006). Findings of this research have established corporate identity as a decisive element for strategic marketing or marketing at corporate level and thus augmented and refined the theoretical basis for later studies on corporate identity (Bick et al 2003; Brown, Dacin, Pratt & Whetten 2006). In addition,

these authors have also revealed the complexity and dimensions of corporate identity (Simões, Dibb & Fisk 2005; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006).

In the next section, the concept of corporate identity is considered from various different perspectives. A definition of corporate identity is then adopted for this study based on the literature review.

3.2.1 Discrepancies in the definitions of corporate identity in the literature

Regardless of the many studies about corporate identity, definitions and descriptions by theorists and scholars differ widely (Melewar & Jenkins 2002; Alkibay, Ozdogan & Ermec 2007:131; He & Balmer 2007a). According to Thomson (2005) this confusion of terminology results from the complexity and increasing multidisciplinary nature of corporate identity. Consequently, there is no definition of this concept that is universally recognised and applied among theorists and scholars (Thomson 2005). Earlier studies present ambiguous definitions of corporate identity; scholars rather promote concepts such as corporate image or corporate personality than identity. The concepts “corporate image” and “corporate identity” are also used interchangeably (Cornelissen & Harris 2001; Melewar & Wooldridge 2001:327). For example, Balmer (2001a:256) regards corporate identity as “an assembly of visual cues – physical and behavioural – by which an audience could recognise the organisation and distinguish it from others”. Balmer’s (2001a:256) statement implies that corporate identity is the composition of signs and signals in the form of physical objects or behaviour that can be visually observed. These visual elements enable an audience to recognise and identify the organisation, and to distinguish it from competitors in the industry. The author’s perspective implies that corporate identity constitutes the visual elements which an organisation uses in a strategic manner in order to position it favourably in the marketplace. Dowling’s (1993:104) view of communication strategies as a means of distinguishing an organisation concurs largely with that of Balmer (2001a:256), although Dowling (1993:104) describes differentiation by means of communication strategies as the corporate image. Dowling (1993:104) supports Balmer’s (2001a:256) argument by explaining that marketing communications “can be interpreted as an attempt by the organisation to project its ‘ideal self-image’ to both internal and external people”. In view of the definitions presented by Balmer (2001a:256) and Dowling (1993:104) in which corporate identity and corporate image are used as synonyms, these two concepts should be regarded as closely connected.

Although definitions of corporate identity presented in later years have evolved beyond the concept of a means of visual identity, these definitions still focus on qualities that are unique to the organisation and which stakeholders associate with the organisation. In this regard, Balmer and Gray (2003b:125) define corporate identity as “encompassing an organization’s distinctive attributes”. Melewar (2003:197) adds to this definition by defining corporate identity as “the set of meanings by which a company allows itself to be known and through which it allows people to describe, remember and relate to it”. Furthermore, Balmer (2010a:188) indicates that “corporate identity refers to those organisational characteristics that anchor an organisation in a given period of time” (Cornelissen et al 2007).

In addition to the distinct qualities of the organisation, Carroll’s (2002:558) perspective emphasises the dynamic nature of corporate identity by defining this concept as a “sustainable story” that is “...unique to the organisation that originates it and is not imitable by others”. This means that corporate identity is a set of distinct visual elements which characterises the organisation and its noticeable features and therefore cannot be copied by its competitors. While Gioia (2000:67) regards identity as stable, Carroll (2002:558) disagrees, since “[I]mage often acts as a destabilising force on identity, frequently requiring members to revisit and reconstruct their organizational sense of self”. Bick et al (2003:839) include elements of culture and strategy and how these are realised in the organisation’s product and service offerings in their perspective of what involves corporate identity. These authors define the concept as “the embodiment of the organisation. It is the communication (via visual and behavioural media) of the core values, philosophy and strategy of the organisation through the delivery of its products and/or services”.

In view of these contradictory perspectives, Bick, Abratt and Bergman (2008:12) as well as Berrone, Surroca and Tribo (2007) support the perspective of Gray and Balmer (1998) who argue that corporate identity can be defined as “the reality and uniqueness of an organization which is integrally related to its external and internal image and reputation through corporate communication”.

From the above definitions proposed on the concept of corporate identity it appears that corporate identity encompasses a variety of general activities aimed at positioning and differentiating an organisation, as is evident in the following definition proposed by Csordás (2008:19):

Corporate identity, which “grew out of a preoccupation in the design, marketing and corporate communications communities with the ways in which organisations present themselves to external audiences” (Cornelissen et al 2007:6), refers to “what an organisation is and what it stands for” (Van Rekom 1997; Van Riel 1995; Balmer 1995, 1998, 2001a; Dacin & Brown 2002; Topalian 2003; Cornelissen et al 2007). It is concerned with reality (Topalian 2003), culture, strategic vision (Melewar and Storrie 2001), an organisation’s strategy, history, business scope, products and services and its formal and informal communications (Balmer & Greyser 2003). It must be meaningful to all employees and others who come into contact with an organisation (Topalian 2003) and must be applied with “absolute rigidity”. (Daffey & Abratt 2002:91)

(This definition takes Irene Thomson’s definition as a basis: Thomson, I., PhD dissertation, Version 6 (preliminary version), January 2005. The author verified the content in the original sources.)

In the next section, the various elements of corporate identity as identified from the literature and the meanings associated with this concept are discussed.

3.2.2 Identifying the various meanings and elements of corporate identity in the literature

The initial analysis of the corporate identity concept provided by Balmer (1995) identifies seven schools of thought on corporate identity. Of these, three emphasise the strategic, cultural (behavioural) or promotional (corporate communications) nature of corporate identity. The remaining four focus on the role of graphic design in expressing the strategy, culture and communications of an organisation. Graphic design is also regarded as a means of ensuring that the organisation’s visual identity remains fashionable. Van Riel and Balmer (1997:341) combine the previous viewpoints to identify three elements, namely behaviour, communication and symbolism. This distinction is also acknowledged by Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:67-68). Balmer (2003) includes strategy, structure, communication and culture as part of the corporate identity mix, while acknowledging the role of stakeholders, reputations and the environment in the corporate identity management mix. In this regard, Otubanjo (2011:263) concludes that definite conceptualisation emphasises theories that promote the expression of an organisation’s personality in an unambiguous manner (for example, who/what the organisation is and what it does). This is done by using a combination of the elements that constitute the corporate identity mix. These elements include the corporate symbols, corporate

communications and behaviour. Symbols constitute the various visual signs, for example the name and logo used by the organisation to differentiate it from competitors. The concept corporate communications refers to the various communication channels which an organisation uses to convey information to internal and external stakeholders. Behaviour involves employees' conduct and how they act towards colleagues and external stakeholders in executing their daily duties. Therefore, organisations convey their unique qualities to stakeholders by using a combination of visual signs, communication media and employee behaviour.

In view of these diverse perspectives, a uniform definition of corporate identity is required that encompasses all its constituent elements as put forward by scholars in this field. In this regard, Balmer and Greyser (2003:42) suggest that identity must be regarded as a concept that occupies a *tripartite world: a triquadri orbis*, which they explain as follows:

- The first sphere of the tripartite world involves conceptualisation of corporate identity according to the restricted viewpoint of what was previously known as house style (visual identity). Previously, scholars referred to house style to indicate graphic design (now more commonly known as visual identity). The main purpose of visual identity is to align the organisation's communication and authenticity with its visual means.
- The second sphere relates to employees' identification with the organisation, which has resulted in the concept of organisational identity. This second domain aims to address the question "Who are we?". This is a particular matter of concern for scholars and specialists in the field of organisational behaviour who focus on creating a favourable organisational identity.
- The third sphere assumes a multidisciplinary character and relates to the unique qualities of the organisation. This domain is known as corporate identity and aims to provide a meaningful resolution to the question "What are we?". This represents a particular field of interest to scholars and theorists in the field of marketing communication and corporate communication who are concerned with promoting the corporate identity among the organisation's target audience.

The next three sections present a discussion of the various meanings that are associated with corporate identity as identified from the literature. These range from traditional perspectives, which regard corporate identity purely as a means of visual identification of the organisation, to a more integrated view of this concept. These sections provide an

overview of the origin and scope of the corporate identity concept in order to determine which elements constitute the corporate identity mix as identified in the literature.

3.2.2.1 Corporate identity as a means of visual identification of the organisation

Reference to the concept of corporate identity was first made in the 1950s (He & Mukherjee 2009:3; Powell, Elving, Dodd & Sloan 2009:442). In the early sixties, corporate identity was for the first time formally defined by Margulies in 1964, who described it as the element of an organisation's image that can be fully controlled by the organisation (Balmer & Greyser 2003:67).

Since that first attempt to describe the elements involved in corporate identity, extensive research on this topic has been reported in the literature. For example, Baker and Balmer (1997:366) support the first domain according to which identity is classified, namely visual identification, as also described by Balmer and Greyser (2003:42) as well as Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:63). These authors maintain that, traditionally, corporate identity was synonymous with organisational nomenclature, for example visual identification symbols, including an icon or logo and house style. In addition, Alessandri (2001:176; 2008) presents an operational definition of corporate identity, where the complete visual presentation of an organisation embodies all the distinctly noticeable and quantifiable elements of its identity. These elements include the organisation's name, logo, tagline, colour palette and architecture. In addition, the visual perspective is strongly incorporated into various corporate identity models (for example Balmer 1995; Melewar & Jenkins 2002; Melewar 2003; Suvatjis & De Chernatony 2005; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006) which support the significant role that visual elements play in corporate identity.

In view of Alessandri's (2001:176; 2008) description of corporate identity, Balmer (2001a:267) contends that due to the power of visual elements used to convey the attributes of an organisation, the role of non-visual senses has not been discussed in earlier literature on corporate identity and marketing communication. The role of non-visual senses is however explained by Balmer (2001a:267), indicating that visual presentation is dominating the other senses of sound, scent, taste and touch. In addition, Balmer (2001a:267) argues that the non-visual senses can be an equally persuasive means for conveying an organisation's identity. Practitioners such as Lindstrom (2005:69) support the perspective of Balmer (2001a:267), who reiterates that visual and non-visual senses serve a meaningful purpose in any form of communication.

In view of the above discussion it can be concluded that, traditionally, corporate identity has been considered in terms of how an organisation uses visual means to reflect its

current or aspirational identity to its stakeholders. In essence, the graphic design view of corporate identity focuses on the effective use of an organisation's trademark with the purpose of creating a favourable corporate image. However, although the visual identity of an organisation constitutes a fundamental component of a number of traditional corporate identity models, the viewpoint of a number of scholars and practitioners emphasises the need for a holistic sensory perspective which incorporates all five senses as part of the domain of corporate identity.

3.2.2.2 Corporate identity as a means of employees' identification with the organisation

An extensive body of literature supports the view that corporate identity comprises the visual identity elements of an organisation. In the early seventies, a number of authors pointed out that corporate identity encompasses other elements as well, including intangible elements apart from using the organisation's logo (King 1973:7). In recent years, the meaning and use of corporate identity within the design and public relations industry have expanded significantly. Scholars have increasingly agreed that identity is the embodiment of the organisation. As a result, corporate identity should reveal the unique characteristics of corporate personality derived from the behaviour of the organisation's various internal stakeholder groups (Balmer 2002b; 2008; Bick et al 2003:839; Melewar & Karaosmanoglou 2006; Bendixen & Abratt 2007:71; Cornelissen et al 2007; Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:64). In addition, corporate identity should reflect how employees associate themselves with the organisation (Balmer 1998; 2009:555; 2010a:190; 2011:1330).

A larger number of literature reviews dealing with corporate identity indicate the significance of establishing consistent employee behaviour. For example, Tosti and Stotz (2002:3) describe corporate identity as the experience customers have with the organisation and its products and services. These authors maintain that corporate identity involves all communication techniques and even behaviour demonstrated by internal stakeholders through which organisations communicate with the public, as communication techniques and employee behaviour create and leave an impression with key publics and stakeholders (Otubanjo, Amujo & Cornelius 2010). Bick et al (2008) add to this perspective by indicating that organisations that manage their corporate identity effectively during the communication process establish a favourable perception among multiple groups of the public. In this manner, the organisation creates awareness, trust and loyalty among target groups, which contribute to building a strong corporate brand.

This perspective regarding the meaning and use of corporate identity which ascribes a greater role to symbolism was pioneered by authors such as Van Riel and Balmer (1997:340). In the view of these authors, the role of symbolism is no longer restricted to its original purpose of enhancing organisational visibility. Instead, the application of symbolism has developed to fulfil a role in communicating corporate strategy. The concept of corporate identity is increasingly influenced by the perspective that organisations possess identifiable institutional traits. According to this identity paradigm, organisations are tangible and distinct entities that can be distinguished from other identity types (Balmer 2009:555).

Otubanjo et al (2010) add to the perspectives of Tosti and Stotz (2002:3) as well as Van Riel and Balmer (1997:340) by describing corporate identity as the planned presentation of an organisation's internal personality (Otubanjo & Melewar 2007), corporate culture, business behaviour, and structure and strategy (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006) to stakeholders. Corporate identity is a self-presenting phenomenon that reveals information about what the organisation represents to stakeholders by means of symbolism, communication and behaviour (Korver & Van Ruler 2003).

In view of this description it can be concluded that corporate identity is communicated formally and informally to internal and external stakeholders. Formal or planned corporate identity communications involve the strategic presentation of corporate identity (Alessandri 2001) or of the organisation's personality by means of the corporate identity mix to a variety of stakeholders (Alessandri 2001; Balmer 2002b; Melewar & Jenkins 2002; Korver & Van Ruler 2003; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006; Otubanjo & Melewar 2007). Informal or unplanned corporate identity communications display the unintended, nondeliberate and unconscious presentation of corporate identity which takes place primarily through employee behaviour (Moingeon & Ramanantsoa 1997). In view of this perspective of corporate identity, it can be argued that an organisation's products and services communicate its culture in both tangible and intangible ways.

The above perspectives on corporate identity as a means of employees' identification with the organisation reveal that organisations use symbolism, communication and behaviour to disclose information about what the organisation represents to its stakeholders. This implies that symbolism serves the purpose of communicating corporate strategy in addition to enhancing the organisation's visibility by using tangible brand elements. In this manner, an organisation's products and services communicate its culture in both tangible

and intangible ways. A well-defined corporate communications strategy which reflects the philosophy, purposes and intentions of the organisation to customers and stakeholders can create a coherent, unambiguous image of the organisation among stakeholders.

3.2.2.3 Corporate identity as a multidisciplinary perspective on the distinct attributes of the organisation

From the early 1990s, the concept of corporate branding has become increasingly prominent. Scholars in the field of marketing communications have developed a growing interest in the concept of corporate identity. Since then, various literature reviews have been published on this topic with the aim of apprehending the various characterisations which constitute corporate identity (Balmer 1995, 1998, 2001c; Van Riel & Balmer 1997; Alessandri 2001; Cornelissen & Harris 2001).

The most commonly noted identity mix which still reflects a multidisciplinary approach with regard to corporate identity is presented by the German authors Birkigt and Stadler (1986). This identity mix comprises the elements of personality, behaviour, communication and symbolism and is supported by other theorists (Balmer 2001a:261). Birkigt and Stadler (1986) define corporate identity as follows:

Corporate identity is the strategically planned and operationally applied internal and external self-presentation and behaviour of a company. It is based on an agreed company philosophy, long-term company goals, and a particular desired image, combined with the will to utilise all instruments of the company as one unit, both internally and externally.

(Birkigt & Stadler 1986, quoted in Van Riel 1995:30)

Olins (1989; 1995 in Balmer & Greyser 2003:54) adopts a multidimensional approach based on corporate identity elements identified by several authors in this field over the years. From these perspectives, Olins deduces that corporate identity describes the character, distinctiveness and individuality of the organisation. Corporate identity articulates who and what the organisation as an entity is, what the organisation does and how the organisation does it. In addition, corporate identity is linked to the way an organisation conducts business and the strategies followed by the organisation (Balmer 2009:551-552).

The Anglo-German consultancy Henrion, Ludlow and Schmidt developed an identity mix that offers a more comprehensive scope on the concept of corporate identity (Schmidt 1995). This elaborate identity mix comprises products and services, corporate culture,

corporate behaviour, communication and design as well as market conditions and strategies (Baker & Balmer 1997:367; Balmer 2001a:261; Balmer & Greyser 2003:38).

Melewar and Navalekar (2002:97), Cornelissen and Elving (2003:116) as well as Eren and Karul (2004:2) present more comprehensive definitions by describing the corporate identity construct as the establishment of a distinct and coherent image of an organisation by means of a well-defined strategy. This image is communicated to stakeholders in a consistent manner through symbolism, planned communication and behaviour (the corporate identity mix). Furthermore, Melewar and Wooldridge (2001:328) argue that corporate identity incorporates a large number of components which become observable as an organisation executes its combined strategies. Therefore, corporate identity could be interpreted as a strategic presentation of the organisation's vision and mission at corporate level. The strategic presentation of the vision and mission is integrated with the strategies employed by an organisation in its operations or production. Corporate identity also involves the marketing communication strategy and marketing mix used by an organisation to determine the product or service brand. Finally, corporate identity comprises an organisation's human resource strategy which affects the organisation's performance with regard to the manner in which the products or services are delivered (Melewar & Wooldridge 2001:328).

In view of these perspectives it can be argued that corporate identity serves as a means of conveying an organisation's character to different audiences. Furthermore, the nature of the specific characteristics that constitute corporate identity will have a beneficial impact on performance if these attributes are endearing to the internal audiences of the organisation and to external audiences with stakes in the organisation.

The strategic school holds a similar perspective to corporate identity than the organisational studies perspective. This school of thought focuses on the most essential idea which the organisation aims to convey, the "self-descriptors/identity claims used by an organization for purposes of specifying what is most central to the organization that is also most enduring (continuous) and/or most distinctive about the organization" (Whetten & Mackey 2002:410). Vella and Melewar (2006) describe corporate identity as being established in the concepts of strategy, structure and culture. The perspective of the strategic school claims that an organisation selects specific visual elements to depict the attributes that it values most. These particular visual elements are regarded a fundamental, inseparable component of the organisation, used to distinguish the organisation from its competitors. In creating identity, organisations establish a cognitive

design of what their most distinct attributes and business objectives are (Simões et al 2005:155). Employees' identification with the organisation can be described as a system of social identification. Identity can manifest in the organisational climate and mission and in the values and shared beliefs held among the organisation's internal stakeholders. Therefore, corporate identity represents the all-inclusive set of beliefs that stakeholders hold about what is central, enduring and distinctive in an organisation (Simões et al 2005:156).

In view of the perspectives on corporate identity as outlined above it can be concluded that these authors adopt a strategic, managerial and multidisciplinary approach to the concept of identity. Corporate identity therefore constitutes a variety of cues used in a coherent manner to convey the character of the organisation to the target audience in order to enable them to recognise the organisation and distinguish it from competitors. This approach is also followed by scholars studying identity from an organisational behaviour perspective. A similar approach is followed by scholars who incorporate multiple perspectives on identity, acknowledging the identity's roots in organisational behaviour, marketing communication, corporate communications and graphic design.

Balmer's research (2001a:286) takes a different approach to corporate identity by focusing on four multiple identities that define and characterise an organisation. However, a criticism of the earlier model is that the distinction made between perception and communication is not well defined (He & Balmer 2005). As a result, a fifth and sixth form of identity have been added to later versions of Balmer's model (AC³ID), namely the conceived identity, which "refers to the perceptions held of the organization by internal and external stakeholder groups and networks" (Balmer & Stuart 2004:5) and the covenanted identity, which "refers to the covenant (promise) that relates to the corporate brand". In addition, the models propose that actual identity (what the organisation is at present) is largely a result of corporate ownership, organisational policies, organisational structure, business activities and markets covered, the services offered, and the personalities and working characteristics of chief executive level managers (Balmer et al 2009). It also refers to the "values" that are held by organisational members – both employees and management, and how these are displayed.

The six identity types proposed by Balmer (2001a:286) include the following:

- The **actual identity**, which constitutes internal values, organisational activities, behaviour, positioning, market scope and performance;

- The ***communicated identity***, which consists of the various messages that are transmitted by the organisation by means of primary, secondary and tertiary communication channels, also referred to as total corporate communications (see section 3.2.3.3);
- The ***conceived identity***, which comprises the images, representations and the reputation of the organisation as viewed by stakeholder groups and networks;
- The ***ideal identity***, which is aimed at positioning the organisation optimally in a given time frame;
- The ***desired identity***, which constitutes the vision as formulated by the corporate and the management board; and
- The ***covenanted identity***, which constitutes the implied promise which is linked to the corporate name and/or logo.

Balmer's (2005a) most recent identity construct comprises seven identity types, namely actual, communicated, conceived, covenanted, cultural, ideal and desired identities (Balmer 2005a).

Van Riel and Balmer (1997) hold a similar view to Balmer (2001a:286) by presenting an interdisciplinary paradigm which extends the scope of the corporate identity concept beyond the elements comprising the corporate identity mix (see section 3.2.2.1). Van Riel and Balmer (1997:341) maintain that the actual and desired corporate identity can be aligned by organising the elements of the corporate identity mix which comprises symbolism, communication and behaviour. By developing a strategic plan for managing these three elements of the corporate identity mix, the gap between the actual and desired corporate identity can be narrowed. The interdisciplinary paradigm proposed by Van Riel and Balmer (1997) puts greater emphasis on organisational culture, corporate strategy, corporate communication and integrated communication, as opposed to the more restricted scope of authors who fail to include the corporate strategy as an essential part of corporate identity.

In view of the above discussion it appears that the concept and elements of corporate identity have mainly developed along confined, vertical and disciplinary schools of thought. Moreover, with the exception of authors such as Birkigt and Stadler (1986), Schmidt (1995), Melewar (in Melewar et al 2005:62), Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006:848), Zinkhan, Jaiskankur, Anumpam and Hayes (2001:54) and Cornelissen (2001:71), little research has been done in developing a multidisciplinary, holistic perspective on corporate identity. In this regard, Balmer (2001a:265) indicates that the

business identity mixes formulated by Birkigt and Stadler (1986), Schmidt (1995), Melewar (in Melewar et al 2005:62), Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006:848), Zinkhan et al (2001:54) and Cornelissen (2001:71) clearly demand the need for adopting a broader, multidisciplinary approach to this concept.

3.2.3 A multifaceted approach towards corporate identity

Earlier studies on corporate identity failed to develop a structure according to which the different disciplinary paradigms on corporate identity could be orchestrated into a meaningful whole. In Balmer's view (2001a:286), the lack of alignment between the disciplinary paradigms may result in discordance in the messages conveyed by the individual elements that constitute corporate identity. To overcome this shortcoming, Balmer (2001a:262-263) presents a perspective on corporate identity and its constituent parts that differs from that of other scholars in this field. Firstly, Balmer (2001a:262-263) argues that the corporate identity mix should be aligned with a number of important findings from a literature study which he conducted on corporate identity and according to which he has developed a new corporate identity mix comprising structure, strategy, communication and culture. Secondly, Balmer (2001a:262-263) proposes a corporate identity management mix as a different approach for managing the corporate identity. According to this approach, the corporate identity management mix consists of the corporate identity mix which is augmented with three new elements, namely environment, stakeholders and reputations (Balmer 2002b:23).

Balmer's (2003:308) new definition, which accommodates a more elaborate view, offers a multidisciplinary approach on corporate identity. Balmer (2003:30) also indicates that this concept should be understood from how it is experienced by the different stakeholder groups:

An organization's identity is a summation of those tangible and intangible elements which make any corporate entity distinct. It is shaped not only by the actions of corporate founders and leaders, by tradition and the environment, but also by the mix of employee values and affinities to corporate, professional national and other identities. It is multidisciplinary in scope and is a melding of strategy, structure, communication and culture...

(Balmer 2003:308)

The most fundamental aspect that differentiates Balmer's (2002) corporate identity mix from the former mix is the reduced significance of symbolism. The role of symbolism in the corporate identity has been reduced, since Balmer (2002b) maintains that graphic design

was used as the dominant element to affect corporate change in the past. Furthermore, the revised corporate identity mix includes a number of elements such as cultural history and strategy, as mentioned by Van Riel and Balmer (1997), which extend the former corporate identity mix. Balmer (2002b) indicates that multiple identities and multiple subcultures exist in an organisation. As a result, an organisation will never be able to manage its identity completely. The author also points out that the corporate identity mix cannot reflect every nuance of the mix. To overcome this limitation, key components can be identified in the corporate identity mix to provide a coherent, meaningful expression of the extent of the domain.

Today, multiple meanings are associated with the concept of corporate identity (Balmer 1995, 2008; Cornelissen et al 2007; He & Balmer 2007b). However, two main perspectives dominate this field of study. Corporate identity involves an organisation's inherent features as well as the use of graphic design to communicate the organisation's actual or desired identity to stakeholders. The perspective of corporate identity which involves an organisation's inherent features applies to more recent scholarly work in this domain. The use of graphic design to communicate the organisation's actual or desired identity to stakeholders underpins a large volume of the work undertaken by practitioners (Balmer 2009:551).

In the next section, Balmer's (2001a) corporate identity mix is discussed. It includes strategy, structure, communication and culture, while acknowledging the role of stakeholders, reputations and the environment in the corporate identity management mix. The corporate identity mix proposed by Balmer (2001a) provides an elaborate perspective on the elements constituting the corporate identity mix as proposed by earlier studies on corporate identity. As a result, Balmer's (2001a:286) corporate identity mix creates alignment between the disciplinary paradigms on corporate identity, thus establishing congruence in the messages conveyed by the individual elements that constitute corporate identity.

3.2.3.1 Strategy

Balmer (2002b) describes strategy as a product of consciously planned policies developed by senior management. Strategy encapsulates the following:

- The vision or mission of management (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.1), which includes the essence and extent of corporate activities and corporate philosophy. Balmer (1995) views the corporate mission and philosophy as the embodiment of the core competencies of an organisation, the organisation's values, as expressed

by the corporate owner or its management board, as well as the organisation's position in the market.

- The corporate strategy process (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.8) comprises different aspects which Higgins and Bannister (1992), as referred to by Markwick and Fill (1997), suggest may influence the strategic credibility of an organisation.
- The level of performance of an organisation's products and services as well as the organisation's financial results (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.8).
- The corporate architecture (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.1).
- The nature of corporate ownership (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.2).
- The set of organisational values that direct the organisation's performance (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.1).

3.2.3.2 Structure

According to Balmer (2002b), the structure of an organisation is a core aspect that determines an organisation's identity. Furthermore, the relationships between the parent organisation and its subsidiaries or business units also influence an organisation's identity (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.5).

3.2.3.3 Communication

Balmer and Gray (2003b:125) propose a corporate communication mix which includes management and employee behaviour, product performance as well as word of mouth and commentary by the media or competitors. This perspective has resulted in the concept of total corporate communications (TCC) which is also embedded in The Strathclyde Statement (Balmer 1995; Balmer & Greyser 2006:735; Brexendorf & Kernstock 2007:33). In addition, Balmer and Greyser (2003:144) also point out that consistency in vertical as well as horizontal corporate communications must be maintained. Vertical congruence is established by using multifaceted communication channels, while horizontal congruence in corporate communication is achieved over time. As indicated in section 2.2.2.2, the total corporate communication mix constitutes an important difference between product brands and corporate brands. According to Balmer and Gray (2003b:125), total corporate communications comprise the following three types of communication forms:

- **Primary communication**, which refers to how product or service performance, organisational policies and employee behaviour affect the organisation's communication with its stakeholders. If applied correctly and monitored continuously,

primary communication can contribute to establishing a positive image of the organisation. As such, primary communication is a fundamental principle for developing a strong reputation (see also Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.2).

- **Secondary communication**, which includes the organisation's strategy for planned communication. This includes the organisation's "formal" communications policies that use traditional communication channels such as advertising, public relationship as well as visual identification systems (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2 and Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.2). In addition, the Mount Vernon Report (2006:1) indicates that over the years marketing communication mix elements such as direct marketing, advertising and public relations have been increasingly used in combination with electronic communication tools such as the Internet in order to create an integrated means to influence consumers' purchasing behaviour.
- **Tertiary communication**, which consists of the effects of third-party communication, including word of mouth, media interpretation and competitor communication. This form implies communication that cannot be directly controlled by the organisation (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2 and Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.2).

In view of these three types of communication forms, Markwick and Fill (1997) conclude that stakeholders' image of an organisation is not based exclusively on impression of the corporate identity. Furthermore, Einwiller and Will (2002:101) indicate that environmental factors such as the actions of competitors and developments in the specific industry or business sector also influence the corporate image. Various authors appear to have a holistic view of corporate communications. For example, Bernstein (1986:118) as well as Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:65) state that organisations are communicating consciously or unconsciously to all their target audiences all the time. For this reason, an organisation must view communications from a holistic perspective, since all communication that takes place between the organisation and its stakeholders creates impressions. Stakeholders' image of the organisation is based on the impressions formed in this way.

As indicated in section 3.2.2.1, the traditional view of corporate identity as explained in practitioner literature dealing with public relations, graphic design and advertising indicates that the organisation's name, logo and tagline constitute the corporate identity. The purpose of corporate communications is to reflect the elements of an organisation's identity to establish stakeholders' image of the organisation based on how they perceive the characteristics of the organisation. By using the corporate identity consistently in all

communication channels, for example marketing and advertising, the corporate identity is believed to affect the public's perception of the organisation. This implies that organisations use corporate advertising to influence stakeholders' perception and to create a more realistic awareness of the organisation in the marketplace. In addition, more and more organisations realise that they can position their product and service offerings, divisions or subsidiaries globally in a way that reflects a uniform identity of the organisation. This view of communications extends beyond the fields of advertising and marketing to include the broader sphere of corporate identity, visual identity and corporate visual identification systems that are used to position organisations as a single entity. Establishing the corporate identity successfully requires positioning of the organisation at all levels of communication (Balmer 1995; Melewar & Saunders 2000; Alessandri 2001). Positioning an organisation's products and services by means of communication as well as the perceived role of communication in corporate brand image formation is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.

In view of the belief of Bernstein (1986:118) as well as Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:65) that communication requires a holistic perspective, Balmer (1998:989) indicates that the elements comprising the traditional marketing mix (also referred to as the 4 Ps), could be extended to 10 Ps by applying the basic marketing communication mix principles to organisations as a total entity (He & Mukherjee 2009:4). This ensures all applicable elements are included in the marketing mix which must be coordinated when marketing is applied at corporate level. A successful marketing campaign is aimed at implementing a strategic, targeted and integrated approach in order to communicate core messages to its various target markets. The integration of all the marketing communication mix elements into all of an organisation's communication functions is referred to as integrated marketing communications (IMC). This includes an interconnected process that emphasises the delivery of uniform and coordinated messages across all marketing communication functions (The Mount Vernon Report 2006:2) (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2). Recently, Balmer added an eleventh element to the marketing mix so as to provide for the corporate brand, as a large number of organisations function as corporate brands (Balmer 2006:7). Balmer (1998; 2006:8; 2011:1339) explains the 11 Ps that constitute the marketing mix as follows:

- ***Philosophy and ethos***, which refer to all the factors in primary communication that explain the organisation's core ideologies, the reason why the organisation

operates as a business entity, and the principles according to which the organisation conducts business.

- **Personality**, which refers to the mix of ideologies present within the organisation, including organisational beliefs, ideas, principles and opinions, and which are necessary to integrate the corporate philosophy and ethos.
- **People**, which recognises employees as part of the corporate communication mix, for example internal communication and behaviour towards employees and how these affect external stakeholders, a concern with Total Quality Management (TQM) (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2) and the importance of attracting and retaining high-quality personnel.
- **Product** (product and services), which refers to what an organisation makes or does (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2).
- **Price** (product and services), which involves the amount consumers pay for its products and services, including the elements that add value to the products and services as well the element of goodwill in the valuation of its corporate and product brands, employee remuneration and share price (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.6.1).
- **Place** (market behaviour, and product and services), which includes distribution channels, an organisation's relationships with distributors, logistics, etc. (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.6.1).
- **Promotion** (market behaviour), which refers to the visual identity and corporate symbolism applied by the organisation as well as its branding architecture (monolithic, endorsed, branded) (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.1).
- **Performance**, which refers to how key stakeholders regard the organisation's performance in relation its philosophy and ethos compared to the performance of competitor organisations.
- **Perception**, which includes questions relating to corporate image (the picture which stakeholders form of the organisation in their minds) and corporate reputation (the extent to which stakeholders value the organisation's attributes). It also involves consumers' perception of the country of origin (national identity), industry sector (generic identity) and main activity/ies of employees (professional identities).

- **Positioning**, which involves behaviour towards employees, employee behaviour towards other stakeholders, and non-market behaviour (size, geographical coverage, product and service range). An organisation is positioned in the minds of important stakeholders in relation to competitors in the market and in relation to a variety of communication channels.
- **Promise**, which refers to the expectations which the corporate brand is required to meet as viewed from stakeholders' perspective, and the promise which the corporate brand undertakes to fulfil as viewed from the organisation's perspective.

Buendia and Meljoun (2006:11) apply the following elements of the 11 Ps to secondary communication:

- **Philosophy and ethos**, as depicted by the organisation's visual identification systems.
- **Personality**, as depicted by the organisation's visual identification systems.
- **Promotion**, for example advertising and sales, promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing and visual identification systems.
- **Positioning**, by means of communication and visual identification systems.

Tertiary communication involves the following elements of the marketing mix proposed by Balmer (1998; 2006:8; 2011:1339):

- **Philosophy and ethos**.
- **Performance** (competition - communication and "spin").
- **Perception** (word-of-mouth communication, interpretation by the media and "spin") (Buendia & Meljoun 2006:11).

3.2.3.4 Culture

This part of the corporate identity mix involves the most fundamental elements of an organisation's corporate identity as culture provides the context in which employees interact with each other and other stakeholder groups (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4). These essential elements comprise the mix of subcultures that exists in the organisation. Furthermore, the strength of these subcultures depends on the extent to which employees are attracted to them. They may comprise corporate, national, regional and professional subcultures. In addition, organisational subcultures may reflect the philosophy of past, present and future leadership styles and philosophies (Balmer & Wilson 1998; Balmer 2002b; 2006:9).

a **Environment**

Balmer and Gray (2003b:127) identify the following nine environmental factors that contribute to the increased importance of corporate identity and corporate communications:

- Acceleration of product life cycles (PLC)
- Deregulation
- Privatisation of organisations
- Increased competition in the public and private sectors
- Increased competition among organisations in the services sector
- Globalisation and the establishment of free trade areas
- Inadequate personnel that have the necessary knowledge and expertise
- Public expectations for corporate social responsiveness
- Breakdown of the boundaries between the internal and external aspects of an organisation

The perceived role of these environmental factors in corporate brand image formation is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.6.1.

b **Stakeholders**

Balmer (2002b; 2006:9) states that organisations have diverse stakeholder groups, and that different stakeholder groups may overlap. This implies that individuals will belong to several stakeholder groups, which may also exceed the traditional corporate boundaries of internal and external stakeholders. The number, type and mix of an organisation's stakeholder groups will vary, as will the importance of each stakeholder group to the organisation. To ensure effective corporate identity management, these target publics must be prioritised. In addition, organisations must comprehend the expectations of each of these individual stakeholder groups as well as stakeholders' perceptions affiliated with a brand in order to meet their needs effectively. In this regard, The Mount Vernon Report (2006:2) explains that organisations must define the needs and perceptions of their individual stakeholder groups in order to develop messaging and a communication strategy that is appropriate for each. These views of Balmer (2002b; 2006:9) and The Mount Vernon Report (2006:2) are contextualised in Chapter 4, section 4.2.7 in which relationships and stakeholder value as a mandatory element of corporate brand identity (see section 3.3.2) is discussed. The perceived role of stakeholder value in corporate brand image formation is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.5.2.

c Reputations

Balmer (2002b) argues that the reputation of a corporate brand can be used as a control mechanism to enable organisations to benchmark decisions, actions, communications and behaviour, and to evaluate the effect of these elements on the organisation internally and externally (see Chapter 2, section 2.5).

This identity mix based on Balmer's (2001a:265) holistic perspective on corporate identity implies that Gioia's (1998:26) classification is applicable to researching business identity – corporate, organisational and visual identity. Gioia's (1998:26) classification provides an integration of the interpretive paradigm which aims to understand employees' various affinities to different identities and the functionalist approach which focuses on the above parts of the mix. This categorisation is also evident in He and Balmer's (2007a) categorisation of organisational identity, which in turn is based on the categorisation of Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000). He and Balmer (2007a) distinguish between three subcategories of organisational identity. These are the following:

- Identity of organisations — collective organisational identity; defines the organisation in terms of “who are we?” and “what are we?”
- Identity of people within organisations — organisational identity, which may be regarded as “an individual's social identity within an organisational context” (He and Balmer 2007a:770), and which describes who an individual is),
- People's identification with organisations — organisational identification, which can be defined as “the degree to which a person defines him or herself as having the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation” (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994:239) and which can be regarded as a cognitive process (He & Balmer 2007a).

This perspective is still relevant today in that employees' identification with the organisation can be described as a system of social identification. Identity can manifest in the organisational climate and mission and in the values and shared beliefs held among the organisation's internal stakeholders. Therefore, corporate identity represents the all-inclusive set of beliefs that stakeholders hold about what is central, enduring and distinctive in an organisation (Simões et al 2005:156). In this regard, Akerlof and Kranton (2005:10) maintain that “employees may have identities that lead them to behave more or less in concert with the goals of their organizations”. Table 3.1 below gives a summary of the different perspectives on the elements of corporate identity.

Table 3.1: Different perspectives on the elements of corporate identity

ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Number	Perspective	Author	Elements identified
1.	Visual identity or graphic design paradigm (traditional perspective)	Balmer (1995); Baker & Balmer (1997:366); Alessandri (2001:176); (2008); Melewar & Jenkins (2002); Balmer & Greyser (2003:67); Melewar (2003); Suvatjis & De Chernatony (2005); Melewar & Karaosmanoglu (2006)	Visual identification symbols, for example the organisation's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Logo • Tagline • Colour palette • Architecture
2.	Organisational identity (organisational studies perspective) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of organisation • Identity in organisation • Identity with organisation 	Balmer (1995, 1998, 2001a; 2002b; 2008; 2009:555, 2010a:190, 2011:1330); Van Riel & Balmer (1997); Bick et al (2003:839); Melewar & Karaosmanoglou (2006); Bendixen & Abratt (2007:71); Cornelissen et al (2007); He & Balmer 2007a; Van Riel & Fombrun (2007:64); Otubanjo, Amujo & Cornelius (2010)	The way in which an organisation's identity is disclosed to internal and external audiences through the corporate identity mix: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Communication • Symbolism
3.	Multidisciplinary perspective	Birkigt & Stadler (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality • Behaviour • Communication • Symbolism
		Henrion et al (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate culture • Corporate behaviour • Market conditions and strategies • Products and services • Communication and design

ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Number	Perspective	Author	Elements identified
	Multidisciplinary perspective (continued)	<p>Melewar & Navalekar (2002)</p> <p>Cornelissen & Elving (2003)</p> <p>Eren & Karul (2004)</p> <p>(strategic school of thought - similar perspective to corporate identity than organisational studies perspective)</p> <p>Vella & Melewar (2006)</p> <p>Melewar & Wooldridge (2001:328)</p> <p>Olins (1989; 1995)</p> <p>Whetten & Mackey (2002)</p> <p>Bick et al (2003)</p> <p>Simões et al (2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • The corporate identity mix: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism • Planned communication • Behaviour • Strategy • Structure • Culture • Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic presentation of vision and mission • Marketing communication strategy • Marketing mix • Human resource strategy <p>The aspect of an organisation's self-presentation as manifested in the behaviour of individual organisational members which expresses the organisation's "sameness over time" (continuity), "distinctiveness", and "centrality"</p>
		<p>Balmer (2001a; 2003; 2006; 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • Structure • Communication • Culture <p>Acknowledges the role of the following in the corporate identity management mix:</p>

ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Number	Perspective	Author	Elements identified
	Multidisciplinary perspective (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders • Reputations • Environment
		Balmer (2009)	<p>Two main perspectives dominate the area of corporate identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation's inherent features • The use of graphic design to communicate the organisation's actual or desired identity to stakeholders
		Balmer (2005a)	<p>Seven identity types shape and characterise an organisation. They are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actual identity (internal values, organisational behaviour, activities, market scope, positioning, and performance) • The communicated identity (the various organisational messages conveyed via primary, secondary and tertiary communications: total corporate communications) • The conceived identity (the images, representations, reputational profile held of the organisation by stakeholder groups and networks) • The ideal identity (which is aimed at positioning the organisation optimally in a given time frame) • The desired identity (the vision as articulated by the corporate and the management board); • The covenanted identity (the implied promise which is linked

ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Number	Perspective	Author	Elements identified
	Multidisciplinary perspective (continued)		to the corporate name and/or logo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cultural identity (the mix of subcultures within an organisation)
		Van Riel & Balmer (1997) (interdisciplinary paradigm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational culture Corporate strategy Corporate communication Integrated communication
		Gioia (1998)	This classification is applicable to business identity and incorporates two perspectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interpretive school of thought (with regard to understanding employees' attraction towards different identities); and The functionalist approach (which incorporates organisational, visual and corporate identity)

From the above discussion it is evident that authors in this specialisation field fail to agree on the elements that constitute corporate identity. Traditionally, corporate identity is considered in terms of how an organisation uses visual means to reflect its current or aspirational identity to its stakeholders. In this regard, some scholars view corporate identity mainly as a marketing device, for example advertising and public relations, to create a specific image of the organisation in the minds of external stakeholders. Other authors regard almost every aspect of the organisation, including the business strategy and culture, as part of the corporate identity. However, according to the definitions studied in the literature review it appears that the majority of authors concur that symbolism, behaviour and communication are the three overall elements that constitute corporate identity. An organisation reflects its identity by using certain visual means or symbols, planned communication, and behaviour in order to establish its image and to position itself

favourably among internal and external audiences. In this regard, the literature shows a link between the concepts of corporate identity and corporate brand. According to Knox and Bickerton (2003) the corporate brand was previously defined as “the visual, verbal and behavioral expression of an organization’s unique business model”. Internally, corporate branding is regarded to transmit messages to employees about a desired culture. Externally, corporate branding is viewed to encourage customers to look deeper into the organisation’s qualities. In addition, by building respect and trust with the corporation's offerings, consumers come to accept the organisation's promises about its product and service offerings (Knox & Bickerton 2003). In addition, a number of researchers define corporate branding as corporate identity or corporate image (De Chernatony 2001). However, a number of significant differences have been identified between the concepts of corporate identity and the corporate brand (Balmer & Greyser 2003). The identity concept is applicable to all entities (a “mandatory” concept), while a corporate brand is determined by conditions or circumstances. Although visual identity elements for example a name, logo or particular design is used to differentiate a brand, it is customers’ ideas about the brand and their added value that is worthwhile (Blombäck 2005:9).

3.2.4 Towards adopting a definition of corporate identity

The literature review has revealed that despite the large volume of literature dealing with corporate identity, the exact meaning of the concept remains unclear. To date, no operational definition of corporate identity has been formulated that incorporates all the elements comprising this concept. Over the years, the concept of corporate identity has expanded to include brand identity. Therefore, in view of the broad scope of the construct, as also discussed in section 3.2, the following definition of corporate identity (in terms of visual identity) is adopted for the purpose of this study:

Corporate identity refers to all the observable and measurable elements manifested in an entity’s visual presentation, including its nomenclature, graphic design, interior design and architecture.

From the discussion of corporate identity and the above definition, it follows that corporate identity is the fundamental profile which an organisation aims to display to its various stakeholder groups through symbolism based on how it would like to be known by these audiences in terms of the corporate image and reputation (see Chapter 2, sections 2.4 and 2.5) it holds.

The above definition which is adopted for this study is based on visual corporate brand identification, which refers to the use of symbolism or visual identity to reflect a single image of the organisation as explained in section 3.2.2.1. However, over the years the role of symbolism has evolved from the purpose of enhancing the organisation's visibility to the purpose of communicating corporate strategy, resulting in the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary theories on corporate identity. These theories are in favour of expanding the elements that constitute corporate identity to consist of elements that were excluded from the traditional corporate identity mix or framework. The multidisciplinary (cf. Balmer 2002b) and interdisciplinary (cf. Van Riel 1997) theories on corporate identity are a construction of numerous authors' perspectives on the meaning of corporate identity. These include different schools of thoughts and views of corporate identity. From these, the concept of brand identity has developed, which is discussed in the next section.

3.3 THE CONCEPT OF BRAND IDENTITY

As already mentioned, the concept of brand identity has developed from the corporate identity concept. The metaphorical use of the concept "identity" in the corporate context implies that organisations can be described as possessing specific characteristics similar to those of human beings, and that organisations can be described in terms of these attributes (Karjalainen 2003:3). Aaker's brand personality concept of 1991 originates from this perspective on brand identity. Similarly, Albert and Whetten (2003:81-89) argue that just like each human being's character displays a sense of personal distinctness, personal continuity and personal autonomy, an organisation's brand identity should meet three requirements in order to ensure the organisation's competitive advantage, namely reflecting the most essential attributes of the organisation, distinguishing the organisation from competitors and displaying a consistent degree of continuity over time. As such, Grundey (2002 in Janonis, Dovalienė & Virvilaitė 2007:69) describe the main principles of brand identity as follows:

- Communication ensures the brand remains prominent (a prerequisite for durability);
- Brand should properly respond to changes (a prerequisite for understanding); and
- Brand should reflect balance between consumer's expectations of the brand and the extent to which the brand fulfils these expectations (the prerequisite for consistency).

3.3.1 Perspectives on the concept of brand identity

Scholars perceive the concept of brand identity differently. A number of scholars and practitioners in the field of marketing, for example Aaker (1991; 2010:12), Farquhar (1989), Keller (1993), Melewar et al (2005) and Nandan (2005) have established a solid understanding that corporate brand identity communicates the unique features of a product or service to customers. These characteristics differentiate the brand from its competitors, which in turn contributes to the improvement of organisations' shareholder value.

However, Gagliardi (2002:33) views brand identity as not limited to serving as a marketing tool or expressing the unique attributes of a product or service. Instead, brand identity has a tangible, realisable value. Brand manifests the values and beliefs of the brand creator who is rooted in a particular culture. Therefore, brand represents the unique values of a certain organisation. This perception of brand applies to product brands as well as corporate brands.

The view of brand identity held by Park et al (1986:186) is based on the brand concept, which it considers as "brand unique abstract meanings ... that typically originate from a particular configuration of product features ... and a firm's efforts to create meanings from these arrangements". According to this perspective, a brand is described as the set of distinct, intangible features based on the way in which the attributes of the product offering are composed and how the organisation uses these attributes to communicate the brand to internal and external stakeholders by means of marketing strategies (Park et al 1986:186). Therefore, it can be deduced that a brand's function depends on the extent to which the values associated with it can satisfy the needs of consumers.

Park et al (1986:186) identify three types of consumer needs: functional, symbolic and experiential (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.1). A brand with a functional concept is designed to meet consumers' needs that are generated by an external source. This implies that consumers will be motivated to buy and use functional brands in situations where the product meets their utilitarian needs. The purpose of a brand designed with a symbolic concept is to associate the individual with a specific group, role or self-image. Brands that are designed to meet symbolic needs facilitate the communication of symbolic meaning to the individual and to others. In this regard, Grubb and Grathwohl (1967 in Nandan 2005:264) contend that consumption of a brand with a symbolic concept is aimed at enhancing the user's self-concept. A brand with an experiential concept is designed to fulfil an internally generated need for stimulation and/or variety. These days, the extent to

which the unique qualities of a brand meet consumers' symbolic or emotive needs is an equally decisive factor that contributes to brand equity (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.8.11). This implies that consumers are increasingly viewing the benefits and service offered by organisations from a holistic perspective when making purchase decisions (Alexander et al 2009:2).

Following the perspective of Park et al (1986:186) that brand is a set of distinct, intangible features, Aaker (1992:109-110; 2003) describes brand identity as a set of brand associations which an organisation must develop and incorporate in its brand strategy. Identity should contribute to developing the relationship between a brand and the consumer by offering the consumer a particular benefit.

Kapferer (2003; 2004; 2008) focuses on brand identity from the perspective of the brand aspect. Kapferer's (2003:107) viewpoint on brand identity concurs largely with the perspective of Harris and de Chernatony (2001 in Nandan 2005:266) with regard to positioning, brand culture, brand personality and relationships. These authors include all the elements of brand identity as indicated in the above descriptions. According to these authors' perspective, brand identity comprises the following components: brand vision, brand culture, positioning, personality, relationships and presentations. Brand vision gives expression of the core purpose for a brand's existence. It is composed of a set of values which, combined with brand culture, provide guidance on the strategic direction of the brand. The purpose of a brand's positioning is to emphasise the characteristics and attributes that make the brand unique and differentiate it from its competitors. As such, brand positioning conveys the benefits offered by the brand to consumers compared to those of its competitors. Personality represents the emotional characteristics unique to the brand, and is developed by means of positioning strategies as well as the core values and culture of top management. Visual identity forms part of the profound identity of the group; it is the reflection of employees' commitment, and reminds employees of the organisation's real purpose (Abratt 1989:68). Vision and culture also serve to establish relationships between employees, consumers and other stakeholders. Presentation styles are designed and refined to present the brand identity. In order to reflect the brand identity effectively, these presentation styles should take into account consumers' needs and aspirations (Nandan 2005:266; The Mount Vernon Report 2006:2). Kapferer (2008:182-187) describes the composition of brand identity by using a prism of identity, which is explained below. The elements of Kapferer's (2008:182-187) prism of identity include physical appearance, brand personality, brand is culture, brand is a relationship, brand is a customer reflection and brand is a reflection of consumer self-image.

- ***Physical appearance***

Brands have specific characteristics that can be visually observed in their physical appearance. It is the most essential and unique feature of the brand and contains the value added by the brand (Hollis 2008:36). The physical appearance of the brand, which Kapferer (2008:182) labels as the brand's "physique", is closely connected with a brand original or prototype and depicts the quality and benefits a brand offers to consumers (Verma 2010:50-51). The brand's positioning will be affected by artefacts which provide consumers with a set of visual or tangible signs and signals about the brand's unique performance characteristics.

- ***Brand personality***

Brand personality constitutes the second element of Kapferer's (2008:183) identity prism. The metaphor of personality develops from the brand's core values, among other things, and represents the brand's emotional features (Harris & De Chernatony 2001:444; De Chernatony 2006:40). A unique brand character is developed by means of communication in order to give a description of the nature of the brand's products and services and to relate the attributes of a brand to the traits of a particular human being. Brand personality is described and measured by using those features of consumers' personality that are directly related to brands (Kapferer 2008:184). Furthermore, a close relationship exists between brand personality, self-image and the image of a consumer because consumers identify themselves with particular brand features that reinforce their self-image. Moreover, the personality traits that characterise a brand are further developed through consumers' experience of an organisation through their contact with the organisation's employees. Based on their experience of the organisation and its employees, consumers come to associate the brand with the personality traits of typical individuals who use the brand and endorsers (De Chernatony 2006:40; Fioroni & Titterton 2009:32). Brand personality as a mandatory element of corporate brand identity (see section 3.3.2) is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, section 4.2.8.2. The perceived role of brand personality in corporate brand image formation is put in context in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2.

- ***Brand is culture***

Kapferer (2003 in Janonis et al 2007:72) holds the opinion that brands display the culture in which they originated. The author suggests that a brand represents its culture, including communication. This perspective implies that culture incorporates values that determine the direction and objectives of the brand (Janonis et al 2007:72-73). Culture is the most essential principle of the brand and the cultural features of a brand are the core indicators associated with the external elements involved in brand management, namely a product and communication. In this regard, Balmer and Gray (2003a:973) indicate that corporate brand is regarded as the additional brand values associated with the organisation and its products and services. According to Balmer and Gray (2003a:977-979), culture represents the set of values that determine the brand's inspiration and feeds the aspirational power of the brand. This implies the culture embodies the basic principles controlling the brand in its visible manifestation, namely products and communication. In addition, culture reveals the ethos whose values are embedded in the brand's products and services (Kapferer 2008:184). Brand culture as a mandatory element of corporate brand identity (see section 3.3.2) is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, section 4.2.4. The perceived role of brand culture in corporate brand image formation is elucidated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2.

- ***Brand is a relationship***

Brand includes a relationship, since brands are the most decisive factor in the process of human commerce (Kapferer 2008:185). The absolute role of brand in business dealings is particularly relevant to organisations in the services and retail sectors. Fournier and Yao (1997 in Harris & De Chernatony 2001:444; De Chernatony 2006:49) indicate that employees play a determining role in a brand's relationship with stakeholders through their interactions and direct contact with stakeholders. Furthermore, organisations need to implement suitable measures to ensure employees have a sound knowledge of the brand's core values, so they will understand the appropriate types of relationships which they are required to maintain with co-employees, consumers and other stakeholders (Harris & De Chernatony 2001:444; Balmer & Gray 2003a:979-981; De Chernatony 2006:50). A more comprehensive view on relationships and stakeholder value as a mandatory element of corporate brand identity (see section 3.3.2) is provided in Chapter 4, section 4.2.7.2. The role of internal branding as a measure to ensure employees realise the brand messages through the behaviour they demonstrate to internal and external stakeholders is put in context in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1.

According to Kapferer (2003 in Janonis et al 2007:72), developing a sustained brand in the market depends on the way the brand is communicated to consumers. Communicating the brand associations provides consumers with all the information required to understand the most essential qualities of a brand.

- ***Brand is a customer reflection***

Certain brand products are produced for consumers who possess certain characteristics and personality traits. In addition, consumers with particular characteristics use a product to fulfil specific utilitarian and emotional needs (Elliot & Percy 2007; Hollis 2008:38; Kapferer 2008:186). Individuals use a specific brand in order to convey a desired personal identity (social-symbolism). Brands may also serve a role in creating individual identity (self-symbolism). As such, brands create meaning rather than messages (Leitch & Richardson 2003:184; Balmer 2010b). The products of a brand and the communication used to market that products to consumers are aimed at addressing the needs of the particular group of consumers for whom the products are intended (Leitch & Richardson 2003).

Kapferer (2003 in Janonis et al 2007:72) asserts that consumer reflection and the organisation's target market are different concepts. The target market refers to potential consumers, although consumer reflection is not an element that defines the organisation's target market. Consumers use the products of a specific brand in order to create a particular self-image to satisfy certain emotional needs. Therefore, the brand should reflect the self-image of the consumer who purchases a specific brand.

- ***Brand is a reflection of consumer self-image***

The perspective on brand as a customer reflection included in Kapferer's (2008:186) prism of brand identity emphasises that a brand should reflect an understanding of consumer self-image (Hollis 2008:37-38). Consumer self-image is a determining factor in consumer behaviour, as consumers purchase products that reinforce their self-image. As explained in Chapter 2, section 2.2.1.2, brands are associated with a symbolic meaning in addition to their functional benefits. By using a specific brand, the user of the brand communicates its symbolic meaning, for example the beliefs and feelings evoked by the brand. As a result, these symbolic meanings of the brand are associated with the personality and esteem of the individuals who use the brand. In this case, the purpose of the brand is to serve as a non-verbal communication mechanism which is used to enhance the self-image of the brand user (Janonis et al 2007:73). In this regard, Verma (2010:28) maintains that customers have a more favourable attitude to the products of

brands and organisations they perceive as reflecting their self-concept consistently. In addition, the symbolic function of brands helps consumers understand and communicate the way they perceive themselves to others (Batey 2008:14; Kapferer 2008:194).

The different perspectives on brand identity as explained in this section are summarised in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: A summary of the different perspectives on brand identity

Perspectives on brand identity		
Number	Author(s)	Perspective
1.	Balmer (2001a)	Corporate ethos, aims and values Presents a sense of individuality
2.	Albert & Whetten (2003)	Brand identity should achieve three things: Capture the most essential qualities of the organisation; Distinguish the organisation from others; and Display the same degree of continuity over time.
3.	Harris & De Chernatony (2001); Balmer & Gray (2003a); Kapferer (2003 in Janonis et al 2007); Leitch & Richardson (2003); De Chernatony (2006); Elliot & Percy (2007); Batey (2008); Hollis 2008; Kapferer (2008); Fioroni & Titterton (2009); Balmer (2010a, b); Verma (2010)	Physical appearance Brand is personality Brand is culture Brand is a relationship Brand is customer reflection Brand is a reflection of consumer self-image

The discussion of the various perspectives of brand identity reveals that as in the case of corporate identity, no uniform definition exists for the concept of brand identity. Similarly, a number of scholars view brand identity mainly as a marketing device to create a specific image of the organisation in the minds of external stakeholders based on the distinct intangible features of the brand (Farquhar 1989; Aaker 1991; 2010:12; Keller 1993; Melewar et al 2005; Nandan 2005). Other scholars disregard the perspective that brand identity serves as a marketing tool or expresses the unique attributes of a product or service (Gagliardi 2002:33). Recent literature acknowledges brand identity as an effective strategic instrument which requires a multidisciplinary approach. According to these

authors' viewpoint, brand identity has a tangible, realisable value. Brands have specific visual characteristics that are reflected in their physical appearance. These provide consumers with a set of visual or tangible signs and signals about the brand's unique performance characteristics (Hollis 2008:36; Kapferer 2008:182; Verma 2010:50-51). The brand's symbolic features constitute the unique character of the brand and are developed by means of communication in order to give a description of the nature of the brand's products and services and the extent to which these meet consumers' emotional needs (Elliot & Percy 2007; Hollis 2008:38; Kapferer 2008:186). Brands also manifest the values and beliefs of the brand creator who is rooted in a particular culture. Therefore, a brand represents the unique values of a certain organisation (Balmer & Gray 2003a:973; Kapferer 2003 in Janonis et al 2007:72). A close relationship exists between brand personality, self-image and the image of a consumer. Apart from the functional benefits of a brand, consumers identify themselves with particular brand features that reinforce their self-image (Janonis et al 2007:73; Batey 2008:14; Hollis 2008:37-38; Kapferer 2008:194; Verma 2010:28). In addition, the personality traits and values that characterise a brand are further developed through consumers' experience of an organisation through their contact with the organisation's employees which result in specific associations with the personality traits of typical individuals who use the brand and endorsers (De Chernatony 2006:40; Fioroni & Titterton 2009:32).

In view of the above discussion, it can be concluded that scholars view the concept of brand identity as the brand's unique vision, aims and values, the needs it fulfils and its field of competence (Kapferer 2004).

3.3.2 Towards adopting a corporate brand identity perspective

As is evident from the literature review on the concept of brand identity, scholars' understanding of brand identity has changed over the years to display a deeper dimension that highlights the importance of detailed brand analysis. Following the perspective in recent literature that brand identity is an effective strategic instrument which requires a multidisciplinary approach, this study adopts a corporate brand identity perspective. Based on the detailed literature review, the following definition of corporate brand identity is adopted for the purpose of this study:

Corporate brand identity refers to the tangible, realisable value of a product or service created in consumers' minds by using a network of tangible and intangible associations through planned strategic communication and behaviour in order to position the brand favourably in the marketplace.

From the discussion on the concepts of corporate identity and brand identity it is evident that these concepts are closely interrelated. For the purpose of this study, corporate identity refers to the tangible elements, known as symbolism, which an organisation uses to reveal its character to stakeholders and the public. Corporate brand identity, on the other hand, refers to the unique value associated with a brand's product and service offerings. The brand's total value proposition is derived from the organisation's total set of brand-related activities, which may include tangible elements. These associations are created both in a planned and unplanned manner by means of tangible and intangible cues and are derived from the total set of brand-related activities engaged by the organisation. The brand-related activities comprise corporate branding, product branding, services branding and emotional branding (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2), and involves the incorporation of a unique mix of functional and emotional values into a brand. Stakeholders' overall evaluation of the attributes which they associate with a brand from their subjective viewpoint, results in a specific corporate brand image (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.2).

3.4 THE COHERENCE BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY, CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY AND CORPORATE BRANDING

The coherence between the concepts of corporate identity, corporate brand identity and corporate branding also needs further explanation because elements of the corporate brand identity mix (see Chapter 4) borrow from all these concepts. Balmer (2001b in Balmer 2005b:170) argues that an inseparable link exists between corporate identity and corporate branding and explains the connection between these concepts as follows: "Corporate branding provides the grit around which the pearl of a corporate brand is formed". It follows that corporate identity provides the visual means to enable brand strategists to communicate the unique features of the corporate brand and establish the brand among stakeholders. Balmer's explanation (2001b in Balmer 2005b:170) means that corporate identity refers to the tangible elements or symbols used by the organisation to distinguish the organisation from its competitors. Corporate identity is largely based on fact and constitutes an institutional, economic and legal identity type (Balmer 2010a:186). On the other hand, corporate brand identity is a perceptual or cognitive identity type and has especial meaning to groups and to individuals.

Corporate branding refers to the way in which an organisation communicates its corporate brand identity (Kay 2006). These days, organisations aim to establish a specific set of associations pertaining to distinct brand elements, for example the logo or brand name. Following this perspective, a distinct visual identity is not the only means involved in corporate branding (Antorini & Schultz 2005:220). Instead, corporate branding requires a holistic, integrated and cross-disciplinary perspective as it involves a number of organisational functions. Therefore, building a coherent corporate brand identity depends on a comprehensive understanding of the factors that can affect the congruency of perceptions formed by various publics. The visual elements of design, which constitute corporate identity, are concerned with product branding aimed at marketing the functional product attributes (Antorini & Andersen 2005:85). The corporate brand, which focuses on values, relationships and culture, fulfils a more appropriate role and is concerned with brand consumption as a means to shape and express consumers' identities (Leitch & Davenport 2008:47).

Urde (2003) explains that corporate brand identity is developed as a continual and ongoing interaction between the identities of the organisation and the customers. According to Urde (2003) developing the core values of a brand is a prerequisite for developing a corporate brand. The core values provide a summary of the corporate brand identity. Corporate branding takes place according to a planned business strategy to convey the brand's values and identity in a cohesive manner by aligning advertising promotion, packaging and design with the various brand components. In this manner, consistency is established to create lasting value (Mukherjee & Balmer 2008:3). Communicating the brand essence or the central idea of the organisation in a coherent manner requires involvement of all internal stakeholders (Schultz 2005:183). The corporate brand represents a direct promise between the organisation and its stakeholders. This promise as revealed through its value proposition is communicated by means of various channels, and customers experience this through the organisation's services, products and employees (Balmer & Gray 2003b). An organisation's vision and culture are part of the value proposition communicating the core brand values (c.f. Balmer & Gray 2003b). As such, corporate branding involves branding as a strategic force, relationships between strategic vision, organisational culture and stakeholder images, as well as brand alignment (Hatch & Schultz 2008:68). Therefore, corporate branding can be regarded as an organisational tool used by management to mediate corporate identity and to manage relations with the organisation's various stakeholder groups. This means corporate branding is a marketing tool used to convey a combination of symbolic

meanings, values and images associated with the brand to distinguish the brand from its competitors in stakeholders' minds (Jensen & Beckman 2009:471).

In view of the above discussion, corporate branding refers to the tangible and intangible elements as communicated by means of the organisation's values, mission statement, vision and objectives, and realised by using selected marketing strategies, including communication and behaviour. Corporate brands are created out of corporate brand identities, but live in individuals' minds (Balmer 2010a:186). According to Kiriakidou and Millward (2000 in Brexendorf and Kernstock 2007:33), this perspective integrates the internal building and the development of values as well as the external reflection of these values through the brand. Morsing and Kristensen (2001 in Brexendorf and Kernstock 2007:33) add that with corporate branding a holistic corporate view is adopted as opposed to a product view which is emphasised in the case of corporate identity. Although corporate branding involves the visual expression of the brand to external audiences (Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:153), it also includes a more extended scope, as organisations conduct business with different groups of internal and external stakeholders. As such, the Tandem White Paper on brand strategy ([sa]:3) indicates that corporate branding includes all aspects of the relationship between the organisation and the customer. Corporate branding is concerned with creating a lasting and coherent identity among organisational members and a consistent corporate brand image among external stakeholders by means of strategic, symbolic and social relations and interaction strategies (Fuglsang & Sundbo 2005). In view of the above discussion, it can be concluded that corporate brand identity is the fundamental profile which an organisation aims to display to its various stakeholder groups based on how it would like to be known by these audiences in terms of the corporate image and reputation (see Chapter 2; sections 2.2 and 2.3) it holds. To ensure stakeholders' perception of an organisation is more or less consistent and aligned with the projected corporate brand identity, all communication media must be integrated to convey a coherent message.

3.5 SUMMARY

The differences, similarities and relationship between corporate identity and brand identity were investigated in this chapter. This discussion revealed that discrepancies exist in the definitions for the concepts of corporate identity and brand identity in the branding literature. In addition, the literature differs with regard to how these concepts apply to an organisation's brand, its products and services. At the end of the chapter the concept of corporate brand identity is adopted for the purpose of this study based on both corporate

communication and marketing communication theory. Following this discussion, definitions of corporate identity and corporate brand identity were adopted for this study.

For the purpose of this study, corporate identity is defined as the fundamental profile which an organisation aims to display to its various stakeholder groups through visual demonstration. Corporate brand identity is regarded a more elaborate concept than corporate identity and refers to the unique value associated with a brand's product and service offerings. The brand's total value proposition is derived from the organisation's total set of brand-related activities, which may include tangible elements. These associations are created both in a planned and unplanned manner by means of tangible and intangible cues which are derived from the total set of brand-related activities engaged by the organisation, and involve the incorporation of a unique mix of functional and emotional values into a brand. The definitions formulated in this chapter provide a means for differentiating between these concepts based on their constituencies. In addition, the definitions of these concepts provide a theoretical framework comprising specific conceptual elements that yield key dependent variables for conducting this study.

Following the definitions of corporate identity and corporate brand identity presented in sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.2 respectively, the elements that constitute corporate identity and corporate brand identity and which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation are identified and explained in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: MANDATORY ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive literature review on corporate and brand identity in Chapter 3 includes both a corporate communication and marketing communication perspective. Based on the literature review, the mandatory elements that constitute corporate brand identity are identified in this chapter for the purpose of the concourse for the Q study (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7). These elements are described as mandatory since they are perceived by scholars in the field of corporate and marketing communication as essential elements of the corporate brand identity mix which contribute to effective corporate brand image formation. These elements coincide with corporate identity and brand identity at different levels and are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. A number of components and elements identified as elements of the corporate brand identity mix are rooted in corporate identity, from which the concept of brand identity has evolved over the years, hence the inclusion here of corporate identity elements. Each of the elements of corporate brand identity as identified from the definitions of corporate identity and corporate brand identity presented in Chapter 3, sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.2 respectively is also discussed in this chapter. The objective of this chapter is to demarcate the corporate brand identity concourse for corporate brand image formation in order to compile representative Q statements for the Q study.

4.2 ELEMENTS OF THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX

This study adopts a perspective that includes both corporate communication and marketing theory (see Chapters 2 and 3). As a result, reference is made to the elements of the corporate brand identity mix. Traditionally, marketing communication focuses on visual or tangible elements only as promotional tools for product branding in order to market the organisation's products. However, these days, organisations are concerned with elevating the total meaning of a market-oriented organisation. Traditional communication programmes are inadequate for this purpose. Instead, a totally integrated approach comprising elements of marketing, corporate communication and branding is required to convey the total meaning of the organisation to internal and external stakeholders and strengthen its business relationship with these stakeholders (Schultz &

Kitchen 2004:349-350). As such, elements of the corporate brand identity mix refer to the visual or tangible elements (symbolism) as well as non-tangible elements used to differentiate an organisation from its competitors (see Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3). These elements are the essential qualities of corporate brand identity, which the organisation selects for developing a distinct image, and which will have a positive effect on its performance and profit margin if these attributes are appealing to the organisation's internal and external stakeholders (Hawabhay et al 2009:6).

To facilitate the discussion of the different elements that constitute corporate brand identity, these mix elements are first summarised in Table 4.1. This table is followed by a detailed discussion of each of these elements.

Table 4.1: Mandatory elements that constitute the corporate brand identity mix which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION				
NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
1.	Marketing theory (product branding)	Visual components (as element of the corporate identity mix) (cf. Dowling 2001:167; Melewar 2003; Hem & Iversen 2004:84; Schultz, Antorini & Csaba 2005:13; Karaosmanoglu & Melewar 2006:200; Keller & Lehmann 2006:743; McLellan 2006:23; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:200; Bartholmé & Melewar 2009:157; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:84; Daw & Cone 2011:146-148)	Name	
			Slogan	
			Symbols	Logotype
			Graphics	Typography, colour
			Architecture	Monolithic identity Consistent visual identity (cf. Van Riel 1995:39-47; Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:155; Laforet & Saunders in Uggla 2006:787; Olins 1995 in Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:859)

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION				
NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
				<p>Endorsed identity</p> <p>A combination of the corporate identity of the parent organisation and the corporate identity of a series of business lines (cf. Van Riel 1995:39-47; Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:155; Laforet & Saunders in Uggla 2006:787; Olins 1995 in Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:859)</p>
				<p>Branded identity</p> <p>Multiple brands with different identities are used to manifest an organisation's products and services. (cf. Van Riel 1995:39-47; Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:155; Laforet & Saunders in Uggla 2006:787; Olins 1995 in Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:859)</p>
2.	Corporate communication theory (corporate branding)	Corporate communication (as element of the corporate identity mix)	Internal and external communication (cf. Hunt & Grunig 1994; Frank & Brownell 1989:5-6; Argenti 1998; Orsini 2000:31; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002:480; De Chernatony, Cottam & Segal-Horn 2006:821; Luo & Donthu 2006; Welch & Jackson 2007; Cornelissen 2008:198; Odunlami & Ofoegbu 2011:408; Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto 2008:53; Schultz et al 2011:67)	<p>Internal communication</p> <p>(management and organisational communication)</p>
				<p>Marketing communication</p> <p>(marketing and organisational communication)</p>

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
			<p>Controlled and uncontrolled communication (corporate, management and marketing communication) (cf. Burns 1978; Cornelissen 2000:119-125; Kitchen & Daly 2002; Cornelissen & Elving 2003; Cornelissen 2004:23; Miles & Mangold 2004; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006; Morley 2009:92)</p>	<p>Formal internal communication Human resources management and public relations systems</p> <p>Informal internal communication Interaction between employees and their colleagues and employees and the organisation's leadership and management</p> <p>Formal external communication Public relations and advertising</p> <p>Informal external communication Customer feedback and word-of-mouth communication</p>
			<p>Integrated marketing communication (IMC) (cf. Duncan & Everett 1993; Duncan & Caywood 1996; Gronstedt 1996; Schultz & Schultz 1998 cited in Kliatchko 2005; Fill 2001; Belch & Belch 2003; Naik & Raman 2003; Duncan & Mulhern 2004; Kitchen, Schultz, Kim, Han & Li 2004:33; Kliatchko 2005; Pavlú 2005; Stammerjohan, Wood, Chang & Thorson 2005; Eagle, Kitchen & Bulmer 2007; Hallahan 2007:310; Kitchen, Spickett-</p>	<p>Organisational integration</p>

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION				
NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
			Jones & Grimes 2007; Kitchen et al 2008:532; Kliatchko 2008; Finne & Grönroos 2009:193; Smith 2010:48; Přikrylová & Jahodová 2010; Chlebišová, Kyzeková, & Zajarošová 2011:1235; Odunlami & Ofoegbu 2011:408)	Public integration
			Integrated communication (IC) (cf. Van Riel 1995; Gronstedt 1996; Baker & Balmer 1997; Balmer 2001; Balmer & Greyser 2003; Duncan 2003:1; Knox & Bickerton 2003; Shimp 2003; Duncan & Mulhern 2004; Duncan 2005; Naik, Raman & Winer 2005; Naik 2007; Keller & Lehmann 2006:743-744; Christensen, Firat & Torp 2008; Christensen, Morsing & Cheney 2008; Keller 2009a:46-47; Keller 2009c:151; Balmer 2011: 1330-1331; Daw & Cone 2011:160, 162)	IMC (aimed at promoting the individual or product brand)
				IC (mainly aimed at promoting the corporate brand)
3.		Behaviour (as element of the corporate identity mix)	Corporate behaviour (cf. Kiriakidou & Millward 2000 in Melewar & Jenkins 2002:84; Melewar & Jenkins 2002:83; Aaker 2004b:11; Adkins 2005:5; He & Balmer 2005; Paswan, Pelton & True 2005:4; Melewar et al 2005:65; Morsing 2006; Ind & Bjerke 2007:45; Otubanjo & Melewar 2007:421; Powell & Dodd 2007; Powell et al 2009:442; Daw & Cone 2011:78-80)	Management behaviour
				Employee behaviour

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION				
NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
4.		Culture	Brand philosophy	Brand vision (future environment, brand purpose, brand values); brand mission and brand objectives (cf. Abratt 1989:70; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35; 38; Yang 2010)
			Brand origin	Brand founder(s) Geographical area (region or country) where the brand is positioned and owned by the residents of that geographical area (cf. Thakor & Kohli 1996:27; Blinda 2003; Thakor & Lavack 2003:403; Verleigh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg 2005; Lehu 2006:88-89; Batey 2008:146; Burmann, Schaefer & Maloney 2008:162; Dev 2008; Kapferer 2008:196)
5.		Structure	Organisational structure	Work units Resources Policies Job structures Reward system (cf. Kilmann 1984:199; Papasolomou & Vrontis 2006:41-45; Dev 2008; Buckingham 2011:51; Daw & Cone 2011:123)
6.		Industry identity	Fundamental industry features	Competitiveness Size Rates of change (cf. Melewar et al 2005:65)

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
7.		Marketing strategy of the corporate brand	Strategic marketing activities	<p>Brand stewardship (relationships and stakeholder value) (cf. Duncan & Moriarty 1998:7; Speak 1998:33; Brink & Berndt 2004:31; Ind & Bjerke 2007:34; Shimp 2007:13; Urde et al 2007:14-15; Daw & Cone 2011:6)</p> <p>Brand communities (cf. Muñiz & O'Guinn 2001:412; Antorini & Andersen 2005:95-96; 99; Devasagayam, Buff, Aurand & Judson 2010:211)</p> <p>Corporate citizen initiatives (cf. Blumenthal & Bergstrom 2003:337; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:71; Batey 2008:162; Hollis 2008:16; Keller 2009a:47; Hoeffler, Bloom & Keller 2010:78; Keller 2011:259; Aaker 2011; Buckingham 2011:178)</p> <p>Advertising spending (cf. Milgrom & Roberts 1986 in Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000:199)</p>
8.		Corporate strategy	Differentiation strategy	<p>Experience</p> <p>Skills</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <p>Talents (cf. Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:861-862)</p>

MANDATORY ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THE CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY MIX WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

NUMBER	THEORY	ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	CONSTITUTING PARTS
			Positioning strategy	<p>Brand essence (cf. Van Rekom, Jacobs & Verlegh 2006; Kapferer 2008:198)</p> <p>Brand extension and brand stretching (cf. Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:152; Jevons, Gabbott & De Chernatony 2005:302)</p> <p>Brand strength (cf. Aaker 1996:103; Kitchen 2010:46)</p> <p>Brand attitudes (cf. Grace & O’Cass 2005:127)</p> <p>Brand message (cf. Duncan & Moriarty 1998:6; Ind & Bjerke 2007:35)</p> <p>Brand awareness (brand recognition, brand recall) and brand associations (functional, experiential, symbolic) (cf. Aaker 1991; Alba & Hutchinson 1987 in Yoo et al 2000:197; Burmann & Meffert 2005:158; Keller & Lehmann 2006:740; Aaker 2007:17; Ind & Bjerke 2007:37; Chen 2010:314; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:313).</p> <p>Brand knowledge (cf. Aaker 1996:115; Chandon 2003:1; Lebar, Buehler, Keller, Sawicka, Aksehirlı & Richey 2005:414)</p> <p>Brand equity (cf. Keller 2003:60; Grönroos 2007; Batey 2008:124; Angelopulo 2009:23)</p>

From the explanation of the mandatory elements of the corporate brand identity mix in the above table, the following definition of corporate brand identity mix can be adopted for the purpose of this study:

The corporate brand identity mix comprises all the tangible and non-tangible elements which an organisation uses as part of a pre-established strategy and a systematic process, in which integrated communication techniques play an essential role in reinforcing the organisation's values, relationships and culture in order to position and differentiate the organisation from its competitors and enhance its brand equity.

Each of the mandatory elements that constitute the corporate brand identity mix as listed in Table 4.1 above are discussed in more detail below.

4.2.1 Visual identity – symbolism as element of the corporate identity mix

The element of visual identity, or symbolism, is one of the elements derived from corporate identity which is also regarded as an element of the corporate brand identity mix. This assumption is based on a large number of literature studies which maintain that visual identity contributes to brand image formation in a number of ways. The classic definition of branding as a marketing tool refers to signs and symbols such as names, logos and design to identify and differentiate a product from competitors' products (Schultz et al 2005:13; Bartholmé & Melewar 2009:157). Various marketing communication scholars (for example Dowling 2001:167; Melewar 2003; Hem & Iversen 2004:84; Karaosmanoglu & Melewar 2006:200; Daw & Cone 2011:146-148) identify graphic design as the most essential element of brand identity.

A number of scholars (for example, Underwood 2003:63; Balmer, Greyser & Urde 2006:140) hold a broader view with regard to the role of visual elements in identifying an organisation. These authors argue that the symbol represents a specific emotional meaning which causes the symbol to have value. The act of developing a visual identity involves explaining and communicating the essence and connotation of the visual brand identity elements which consumers often regard as a composition of superficial cultural components. This perspective implies that consumers evaluate the network of meanings associated with the symbol instead of the symbol itself. In view of the argument that organisations use various brand identity symbols to convey a message with a specific emotional content, it can be concluded that visual brand elements have an important effect on the overall corporate identity.

Melewar and Saunders (1998) as well as Melewar and Jenkins (2002:83) maintain that visual brand identity contributes to establishing a positive corporate reputation. These authors emphasise the relevance of symbolism by indicating that rapid technological development increasingly forces consumers to base their purchase decisions upon the reputation expressed by the organisation's visual symbols. Organisations that appear to project their core mission and identity in a more coherent way manage to establish a more positive reputation among consumers (Fombrun & Rindova 1998; Omar & Williams 2006:268). Furthermore, reputable organisations tend to provide consumers with significantly more information about various issues relating to their products, operations, identity and history (Buckingham 2009:55; Fioroni & Titterton 2009:10).

The relevance of symbolism in creating a positive corporate reputation is supported by Keller and Lehmann (2006:743), who view the role of visual brand identity in differentiating an organisation from a managerial perspective. These authors indicate that visual brand identity is a useful tool for reinforcing employees' morale. Moreover, visual brand identity serves as a means of conveying an unambiguous message to the marketplace, and establishing a competitive advantage. This must be done in a way that captivates the attention of internal and external customers in order to have a positive impact on their purchase decisions (De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:84).

The above discussion reveals that visual brand identity elements reflect a total set of meanings which represent the most distinct functional and emotional attributes of the brand. If organisations use their visual brand identity elements in a consistent manner, they are better able to establish the organisation as a transparent, trustworthy and reliable enterprise among stakeholders, thereby enhancing its competitive advantage. In addition, visual brand elements that reflect a reputation of trustworthiness increase employees' morale; in turn, employees are more committed to deliver on the brand promise.

4.2.1.1 The elements of visual identity

Trademarks, also referred to as visual brand devices or symbols, are powerful instruments for marketing the brand and are regarded to be more noteworthy than words. These symbols and visual devices are usually designed in a way that enhances or reinforces the meaning of the brand (Underwood 2003:63; McLellan 2006:23; Batey 2008:152). Since visual brand devices are regarded as persuasive instruments for marketing the brand, Keller (2003 in Hem & Iversen 2004:86) emphasises the importance of selecting visual elements that represent the organisation's identity. In addition, coherence of the organisation's identity is determined by the extent to which it uses its visual identity in a

consistent manner. Visual elements that are used consistently reinforce the message conveyed by each individual symbol and serve to unify the complete process of image formation and building. In turn, a congruent brand image contributes to establishing a solid, unique brand identity. Moreover, creating a unique brand identity should not be limited to visual identity symbols. Instead, an organisation can enhance the significance of its visual identity by aligning its values, organisational culture and strategy with its visual style. The aim of integrating symbolism with organisational strategy is to create a single set of values, and to communicate this value proposition to every stakeholder, including internal stakeholders. In addition, a consistent value proposition which is communicated to employees creates commitment to understand, protect and live the brand (Dowling 2001:180-181; Pilch 2005:39; Daw & Cone 2011:23).

In view of these authors' perspectives, a single set of values is created if visual brand elements are aligned with the organisation's culture, its value proposition and business strategy. Organisations that communicate these values consistently to internal and external stakeholders convey an unambiguous message of what the brand represents.

a Brand architecture as visual means for explaining the brand's products and services

Balmer and Gray (2003a:983) define brand architecture as the connection among and between the parent organisation, its subsidiaries and product brands. These associations are relevant to products and services, or a combination of products and services across the structure of brands. Brand architecture helps define the brand's boundaries with regard to the products or services represented by the brand, the benefits provided by the brand and the needs the brand satisfies. In addition, brand architecture serves as guideline for determining suitable line and category extensions. It serves as a means of explaining the products or services of the brand to consumers and indicates the most appropriate versions of the product or service for their individual needs (Keller 2009a:47). Laforet and Saunders (1994 in Uggla 2006:787) reveal three general patterns of brand architecture: corporate-dominant, product-dominant and mixed structures. This distinction in the structures of brand architecture concurs with the three patterns of brand identity identified by Olins (1995 in Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:859), Van Riel (1995:39-47), as well as Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:121). These authors distinguish between the three brand identity structures as follows: In the case of monolithic identity or uniformity model, a single name and a consistent visual identity is used to market a specific idea

about an organisation. Organisations that adopt a monolithic identity tend to be highly visible and well positioned in the marketplace.

The second pattern of brand architecture is referred to as endorsed identity, also known as the endorsement model. This type of identity is defined as a multi-business identity, since a combination of the brand architecture of the parent organisation and a series of subsidiary organisations in a number of business sectors is used to brand an organisation. Aaker (2004b:6) observes that the parent brand provides credibility to the brands delivered by the subsidiary organisations. Endorsement by the parent brand serves as a means of providing reassurance to the consumer who buys the brand for the first time, because it is associated with an organisation that is committed to high-quality products and services.

The third structure of brand architecture is branded identity, also referred to as the variety model. In the case of the branded identity structure organisations tend to market their services and products as a multitude of brands, each with a different identity (Olins 1995:20-22; Van Riel 1995:39-47; Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:121).

b Brand slogans reinforce and support the brand meaning

Keller (2009b:17) regards a brand slogan, also referred to as a brand mantra, as a useful element of an organisation's internal branding effort. A brand slogan is an expression of the heart and soul of the brand. Brand slogans are short phrases comprising three to five words that apprehend the incontestable essence or spirit of the brand positioning. The purpose of a brand slogan is to ensure all employees as well as external stakeholders involved in the marketing of the brand have a solid understanding of what the brand should represent to customers so they can adjust their actions accordingly.

Brand slogans are an essential marketing instrument for a number of reasons. Firstly, every time a customer encounters a brand in any way, his or her knowledge about the brand may change. As a result, every encounter the stakeholder has with the brand affects the brand equity. Since a large number of employees have direct or indirect contact with customers in a manner that may impact on customers' knowledge about the brand, measures must be implemented to ensure employees' behaviour continuously reinforces and supports the brand meaning (Keller 2009b:17).

4.2.2 Corporate communication as element of the corporate identity mix

Corporate communication refers to an extensive range of activities varying from visual brand elements, for example an organisation's logo and management communication, to

activities aimed at promoting the brand's products and services (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar 2006:197). Cornelissen (2008:5) provides the following definition of corporate communication:

Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent.

In the above definition as presented by Cornelissen (2008:5), corporate communication focuses on the organisation as a whole and the important task of how an organisation is presented to all of its key stakeholders, both internally and externally. Furthermore, corporate communication is aimed at encouraging employees to carry out their functional duties in a manner that supports the overall organisational objectives. Therefore, the purpose of corporate communication is to:

- provide a detailed account of the features of the organisation behind the brand (corporate branding);
- implement strategies to minimise inconsistencies between the organisation's desired identity and brand attributes;
- determine the tasks of the various roleplayers involved in the organisation's communication;
- implement procedures to promote effective decision making about communication matters; and
- enhance support of the corporate objectives among internal and external stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:23).

Numerous authors argue that corporate communication comprises three main constituents, namely management communication, marketing communication and organisational communication (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:14; 22). A combination of management and organisational communication is used to communicate values to employees, while marketing and organisational communication is used to promote the brand values among consumers (De Chernatony et al 2006:821). Of the three main communication types, management communication is viewed as being the most important, as this is the primary form of communication by which the organisational goals are disseminated to internal stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:14; 22).

Organisational communication as an academic discipline focuses on symbols, messages, media, relationships, interactions, persuasive campaigns, networks, and broader discourses within the organisational setting (cf. Cheney et al 2004). Organisational communication used as a general concept refers to internal communication and external communication, which include public relations, investor relations, public affairs, labour market communication, environmental communication and corporate advertising (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:14). Furthermore, organisational communication signifies a collection of heterogeneous communication initiatives that have the following common characteristics:

- All forms of organisational communication are directed at stakeholder groups with which the organisation has an indirect and interdependent relationship. These corporate audiences include shareholders, investment analysts, legislators, regulators and financial journalists.
- Organisational communication differs from marketing communication in that it has a long-term perspective and is not directly aimed at selling the organisation's products and services.
- Organisational communication employs a formalistic style to convey messages to target audiences (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:20).

In the next section, internal and external organisational communication as well as formal (controlled/planned) and informal (uncontrolled/unplanned) communication is discussed.

4.2.2.1 Internal and external organisational communication

As already indicated, a combination of management and organisational communication is used to communicate values to employees, while marketing and organisational communication is used to promote the brand values among consumers (De Chernatony et al 2006:821). The literature refers to internal communication as internal relations, employee communication, employee relations, internal public relations, and staff communication (Welch & Jackson 2007). As a result of the multidisciplinary nature of internal communication, this concept is defined in various ways. For example, in the late 1980s Frank and Brownell (1989:5–6) defined internal communication as “the communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities”. In view of this definition, internal communication takes place between employees from different fields of expertise to influence the organisation's strategic direction. Similarly, Orsini (2000:31) defines internal communication as “the full series of strategies people in an organization use to

communicate with each other". Following these definitions, internal communication was regarded as a means that organisations use to effectively develop structure and culture to achieve their strategic goals and objectives (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002:480). More recently, Welch and Jackson (2007:183) have defined internal communication from a strategic management perspective as "the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations". These authors are of the opinion that communication between all employees in the organisation requires strategic coordination. In addition, these authors prefer the concept internal communication as they regard it more symmetrical than internal relations, employee communication, employee relations, internal public relations, or staff communication. Symmetrical two-way communication promotes communication between internal line managers and team peers. In addition, it encourages internal project peer communication (Welch & Jackson 2007). Furthermore, effective internal communication promotes organisational identification as well as commitment among employees to achieve organisational objectives (Cornelissen 2008:198). Following these perspectives, Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:188) conclude that internal communication is mainly used to convey information about organisational activities in order to establish a common perspective among internal stakeholders about the organisation's goals. In this manner, internal communication emphasises the interrelated nature of the organisation's activities and how its people contribute to realising these activities. As a result, internal communication serves as an instrument in enhancing job satisfaction among employees.

Odunlami and Ofoegbu (2011:408) define marketing communication as "the promotional tools that favourably communicate information about the organization and its products to target market". These authors also define marketing communication as "those promotional tools used in communicating favourably with the targeted market". Marketing communication aimed at external stakeholders is thus associated with promotional communication; its purpose is to create favourable impressions of the organisation's products and services among consumers, which in turn enhance the overall image of an organisation (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:17; Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto 2008:53; Schultz et al 2011:67). In addition to positioning the organisation's products and services in the market, marketing communication initiatives are also aimed at promoting the organisation. Marketing communications, which include corporate advertising (Argenti 1998) and public relations activities (Hunt & Grunig 1994), can contribute to brand equity; establishing the brand in memory will drive sales and ultimately affect shareholder value (Luo & Donthu 2006). This means the extent to which the mentioned marketing communication activities

reflect the organisation's anticipated identity will determine how favourable consumers perceive the organisation.

Various authors have different perspectives on the elements that constitute the marketing mix based on the properties of the marketing strategies and how these elements interact with one another. For example, Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:17-19) include advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, sponsorship and personal selling as part of the promotional elements. According to Onditi (2012:298), advertising, personal selling, public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing constitute the marketing communication mix. Dahlén, Lange and Smith (2010:11) propose seven elements of the marketing communication mix, which include the most common promotional tools that an organisation can use as a persuasive instrument to convey information about its products and services to its target markets. These seven promotional tools are advertising, personal selling, public relations, sales promotion, direct response marketing, sponsorship and new media in the 21st century.

4.2.2.2 *Controlled (planned/formal) and uncontrolled (unplanned/informal) communication*

A number of scholars (for example Van Riel 1995; Van Riel & Balmer 1997; Kitchen & Daly 2002; Cornelissen & Elving 2003) distinguish between controlled and uncontrolled corporate communication. Communication that management initiates with the aim of enhancing stakeholders' perception of the organisation and improving the organisation's relationships with its various stakeholder groups is referred to as controlled corporate communication. In this regard, Van Riel (1995) indicates that the organisation's values and principles provide a description of its corporate identity. For this reason, the organisational values and principles must be a fundamental aspect of the management, marketing and organisational initiatives. These are regarded as the basis of the elements of the corporate identity mix (CIM), and constitute symbolism, communication and behaviour (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2). This means that controlled communication takes place according to a carefully planned strategy which provides for all CIM elements, namely symbolism, communication and behaviour. Uncontrolled communication takes place when stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation are influenced unintentionally.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) as well as Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006:851) maintain that the concept of corporate identity perceived by publics, known as corporate image, is a result of the total impact of controlled and non-controlled messages of an organisation's actions on consumers' minds. In this regard, Cornelissen (2000:119-125)

argues that communication takes place in both a controlled and uncontrolled manner simultaneously to deliver messages that create a uniform image of the brand or the organisation. Unplanned communication includes interpersonal communication (word-of-mouth communication from close environment), intermediary communication (word-of-mouth communication published by mass media, non-governmental organisations, governmental institutions) and intrapersonal communication (Morley 2009:92). Intrapersonal communication involves the psychological consequences caused by previous experiences and images of those experiences stored in the memory which result in consumer identification with and emotional attachment to the organisation, its products and services based on their knowledge about the organisation.

The most commonly used channels of formal internal communications consist of an organisation's human resources management and public relations (PR) systems. These systems distribute information to internal stakeholders in the form of recruitment documents, newsletters and the internal website. Messages communicated by the human resources department must be consistent and aligned with the organisation's other communications (Goetting 2000).

Informal internal communication mainly takes place both through interaction between employees and their colleagues and employees and the organisation's leadership and management (Miles & Mangold 2004). Information transmitted via interaction with colleagues may reflect a more accurate perception of the organisation than the messages conveyed by means of formal communication channels. In addition, organisational leaders serve an important function in helping subordinates understand the organisation's values and vision and how to achieve that vision (Burns 1978).

Similar to internal communications, external communications comprise both formal and informal channels. Formal external communication channels constitute public relations and advertising. Informal external communication channels include customer feedback and word-of-mouth communication (Bone 1995). Messages conveyed by means of public relations and advertising must be coordinated with the messages communicated to internal stakeholders to reflect a consistent image of the organisation to internal and external stakeholders. An integrated strategy for communicating messages to stakeholders must be followed in order to evoke the necessary mental activities to combine the brand identity elements in consumers' minds in the most effective information environment (Daw & Cone 2011:149-150).

In the next section, integrated marketing communications (IMC) and integrated communications (IC) are discussed.

4.2.2.3 Integrated marketing communications (IMC)

There is little agreement in the literature with regard to what constitutes IMC beyond the “one message, one voice” interpretation (Kliatchko 2005) and the possibility of creating synergy by coordinating communications (Stammerjohan et al 2005). Early definitions of IMC focus on the strategic nature of coordinating communications and are based on the perspective that appropriate use of multiple communication media can enhance the contribution of each medium to the communication effect (Belch & Belch 2003). The definition presented by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (1989) describes IMC in terms of enhancing the effect of communication by using all marketing communications tools in a coordinated manner (Kliatchko 2005). The American Association of Advertising Agencies’s description is fundamentally based on the synergistic effect created by the use of individual marketing communication instruments which supplement one another to create an enhanced understanding of communication messages (Duncan & Everett 1993; Naik & Raman 2003), resulting in lower communication cost (Fill 2001).

Following these traditional perspectives, Pavlů (2005) regards IMC as “the concept of marketing communication systems, which provides a logical and synergistic whole”. Furthermore, previous studies on IMC focused on four critical conditions, namely planning that considers recipients, rather than the senders of the communication message, strategic coherence, effective control of agencies who participate in the communication process, and clients’ perceived understanding of the concepts of IMC (Kitchen et al 2008:532).

Definitions presented in later years include several additional components. These are the following:

- The use of IMC as a business or management instrument for branding (Schultz & Schultz 1998 cited in Kliatchko 2005);
- IMC as a means of controlling information to establish the organisation’s products and services more favourably among audiences;
- The role of IMC in building relationships with stakeholder groups (Duncan & Caywood 1996);
- The detailed description of the concepts of IMC channels, audiences, and communications tools (Kliatchko 2008).

From these additional components identified from more recent definitions, IMC has emerged as a natural development in marketing communications as a result of radical changes in at least three main domains: media and communications, the marketplace, and consumers (Kliatchko 2005:7). In addition, recent definitions describe the essence of the process of IMC as the “effort to combine various components of the communication mix into a unified whole and to ensure that the position of brands on the market, characteristic of product and communication messages will be systematically included in every element of communication, and to be transmitted within the single coherent strategy” (Chlebišová et al 2011:1235). Odunlami and Ofoegbu (2011:408) add to this perspective by defining marketing communications as the “promotional tools that favourably communicate information about the organization and its products to target markets”. In addition, these authors also define marketing communications as “those promotional tools used in communicating favourably with the targeted market”. They state that, based on knowledge and understanding of the target market in the environment, suitable and relevant marketing tools must be selected to communicate with the target market in the most appropriate manner to ensure the organisation achieves its marketing objectives. Following this explanation, Odunlami and Ofoegbu (2011:408) define IMC as “the totality of the various communicational tools used in communicating an organization’s image and products with the target market. It is the combination of all promotional tools used in communicating effectively with the target audience”. In this regard, Eagle et al (2007) as well as Kitchen et al (2007) regard IMC as a strategic process in the brand building process. In addition to these perspectives, Duncan and Mulhern (2004) maintain that the essence of IMC is to create more effective marketing communication by means of strategic coordination in order to establish a strong brand directed by consumer feedback.

From the above discussion of the various definitions of IMC it appears that two main perspectives of integrating communications exist. The first regards integrating communications as the coordination of communication tools and organisational departments, while the second focuses on the coordination of an organisation’s various target publics, including consumers (Smith 2010:48). These levels of integration are briefly explained below.

- ***Organisational integration***

Integration at organisational level concerns coordination of all relevant departments in the organisation responsible for controlling any communication directed at the customer, public, or organisational audience. This includes advertising, sales, marketing, public relations, customer service, and even human resources. This level of integration

emphasises the coordination of media channels and messages (Stammerjohan et al 2005) for the creation of a “single persona and voice” (Hallahan 2007:310). The objective of this level of integration appears to be the creation of message synthesis in order to establish communication synergy (Moriarty 1996). In this regard, Kitchen et al (2004:33) view IMC as a cost-effective marketing strategy that incorporates a variety of marketing media with the purpose of eliciting a quick response from diverse stakeholder groups, each with their unique needs and demands.

- ***Public integration***

Integration of communication at the public level is a comprehensive process that involves coordinating audiences to the communication strategy (Kim, Han, & Schultz 2004; Kliatchko 2008). A public orientation perspective is also proposed by Gronstedt (1996), who maintains that public relations audiences and marketing communications publics are not mutually exclusive. Following Gronstedt’s (1996) argument, an employee of an organisation may also be a consumer of the organisation’s products and services, and a consumer may also be an opinion leader. In view of this perspective, IMC differs from a marketing campaign in that it is aimed at merging different public audiences, rather than communicating with targeted customers. The purpose of integrating communication at this level is therefore to build public and consumer relationships, rather than establishing communication effects (Duncan & Duncan 1992, cited in Kliatchko 2005). Furthermore, Přikrylová and Jahodová (2010) argue that marketing communication and relationships with the most significant stakeholder groups increasingly result in competitive advantage. These authors identify the fundamental principle of modern communication as the interdependence of all communication initiatives. These result in the creation of communication that is tailored to individual target audiences, referred to as IMC.

This distinction between public relations as a promotional tool and public relations as a means of managing stakeholder relationships provides further insight into the concept of IMC and assists in explaining the definition of IMC. According to Smith (2010:54), the emerging conceptualisation of IMC is twofold – the first is oriented towards business objectives, while the second is public oriented. This perspective highlights the contradiction in public relations: it is used for both marketing activities and non-promotion marketing. In view of this paradox, a suitable definition for IMC would focus on both the business and public orientations. Since definitions in the literature emphasise either of these aspects, Smith (2010:54) proposes the following revised definition:

Integrated Marketing Communications is the process by which an organization's communications coordinate or are coordinated to achieve business objectives and build or improve relationships with organizational stakeholders.

The above definition emphasises the dual nature of IMC in that public relations as promotion serves as a means of achieving an organisation's business objectives by coordinating its activities with marketing communications activities. Relationships with stakeholders are managed by means of non-promotional public relations. Furthermore, this process involves coordination of communication messages. Alternatively, the communications produced are coordinated by a designated executive.

According to Finne and Grönroos (2009:193), IMC is an inside-out approach to marketing communication. Therefore these authors propose the following consumer-centric definition of marketing communication:

Relationship communication is any type of marketing communication that influences the receiver's long-term commitment to the sender by facilitating meaning creation through integration with the receiver's time and situational context. The time context refers to the receiver's perception of the history and envisioned future of his/her relationship with the sender. The situational context refers to other elements internal or external to the receiver.

The consumer, who is the recipient of communication messages, integrates these messages. In this process of integration meaning is created. The process of meaning creation will be different for each individual, since each person is subject to unique time and situational contexts. As a result, different individuals will derive different meanings from the same message. For this reason, relationship communication differs from other types of communication, since it is not a planned input but an outcome. The recipient decides whether a communication message or campaign activates meaning and integration and, as such, is relationship communication or not. Although it is the recipient of communication messages who determines whether or not communication initiatives function as relationship communication, marketing communication efforts or campaigns must be executed in a manner resulting in a relationship communication outcome. In order to achieve this objective, sufficient information must be obtained about the relevant time and situational dimensions of the organisation's target customers. This means integration should originate from consumers' needs instead of communication objectives (Grunig & Grunig 1998).

In view of the above discussion, Smith (2010:55) concludes that the concept of IMC is not broad enough to define the process adequately, since it does not provide for non-promotional public relations activities. This author advocates the use of the concept integrated communications (IC), since it refers to the role of marketing as well as public relations' dual roles in the integration of communication.

The concept of integrated communications (IC) is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2.4 Integrated communications (IC)

Christensen, Firat and Torp (2008:424) describe the concept of integrated communications (IC) as the practice of coordinating the organisation's symbols, messages, procedures and behaviours with the purpose of conveying clear, consistent and coherent messages within an organisation and across formal organisational boundaries. Research conducted by Ahmed and Rafiq (2003:1177), Massie and Anderson (2003:223) as well as Nandan (2005:272) shows that in contrast to the fields of organisational communication and marketing communications, traditionally concerned with influencing the perspective of employees and consumers respectively, corporate communication follows a planned approach which focuses on combining all communications that involve an organisation as a corporate entity in a coherent and synergistic way. From this perspective, IC is regarded as an expansive concept that connects marketing to various other disciplines, including corporate culture, corporate design, corporate communication and public relations (Van Riel 1995; Baker & Balmer 1997; Balmer & Greyser 2003; Christensen, Morsing & Cheney 2008:41). When combined, the disciplines of marketing, corporate design, corporate communications and public relations promote a vision of an organisation that is able to survey and monitor its own communication as a uniform entity.

Early perspectives on IC focused on the coordination of a limited set of communication specifications with the purpose of communicating clear, consistent messages. However, these days the concept of IC requires a holistic approach which involves more substantial inclusion of the organisation's employees, customers and other stakeholders (Balmer 2001; Duncan 2005). In view of the belief that contemporary organisations convey a particular meaning with every action and form of communication (Gronstedt 1996:39), known as total communication impact (Grönroos 2000:265), the concept of IC has developed from a rather constrained and specialised activity to an issue that concerns the entire organisation (Balmer 2011:1330-1331). According to Balmer and Greyser (2003:195-196), different target publics, namely consumers, distributors, suppliers,

employees and other interested parties each has a specific background. As a result, these stakeholder groups will have various objectives and, therefore, will interact with the organisation at different levels. Since organisations interact with diverse groups of stakeholders, they will not have a single, consistent image. Stakeholders' image of an organisation is formed according to their exposures to the identity cues presented by the organisation. This implies that stakeholders will hold diverse images of the same organisation, as the circumstances under which individuals have contact with the identity cues vary. To maintain effective IC at the corporate level, relationships with each of these stakeholder groups must be built and managed in a pluralist, interactive manner, while keeping a long-term relationship marketing perspective in mind. This means that communication must be integrated at the tactical level as well as in respect of corporate strategy (Kitchen & Schultz 2003:74; Argenti, Howell & Beck 2005:87).

In view of how IC influences the perception of an organisation in a globalised business world, organisations are required to use various different communication media that have a shared meaning and content but which each offers unique, complementary advantages so that the whole is greater than the sum of the individual components (Duncan & Mulhern 2004; Naik et al 2005; Naik 2007; Daw & Cone 2011:160, 162). By combining a variety of online and offline communication media, the effective brand dynamically expresses its essence and connects with constituents in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them (Daw & Cone 2011:30). Keller (2009c:151) focuses specifically on on-line, interactive communications as an essential area of development in IC. The versatile nature of online, interactive communications enables organisations to address virtually any aspect of brand building to potentially impact on brand equity.

Furthermore, corporate communications that are directed at internal and external stakeholders need to be aligned with the business identity (Daw & Cone 2011:162). An organisation's reputation for delivering a specific product or service must mirror the corporate brand promise. This attribute must be reflected in the symbolism used by the organisation in terms of architecture, ceremonies, and artefacts. Consistency in the strategic management of an organisation's communication means the meanings transmitted by the messages are appropriate for the various audiences for which they are intended. This implies the use of a range of messages, where the corporate and product brand propositions are based on a single, uniform strategy. All messages must be mutually beneficial and limit incongruity. Furthermore, the Performance Enhancement Group (2002:2) points out that the vision and the values which are regarded most critical to the organisation and the image it aims to portray must form the core message of all

communication to an organisation's external audience. These key values must also be communicated consistently to all employees in the organisation (Keller & Lehmann 2006:743-744; Dev 2008; Keller 2009a:46-47). In this way, the organisation communicates its prestige and distinctiveness (Balmer 2008). In addition, Greyser, Balmer and Urde (2006) as well as Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:28) suggest that organisations use corporate communication initiatives to convey the meaning of the corporate brand in an unambiguous manner to ensure stakeholders form a consistent image of the organisation which will ultimately enhance corporate reputation. Initially, "integration" meant coordination across the marketing functions and speciality disciplines. However, the notion of integration has subsequently been extended to encompass complementary activities performed by all functional departments, integrated around the customer in order to increase loyalty (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007:28).

Following the above discussion, Kitchen and Schultz (2003:75) conclude that IC must be approached from a global viewpoint, which results in the following two-fold communication scenario:

- IC, which is mainly aimed at the corporate brand; and
- IMC, which is primarily aimed at promoting the individual or product brand.

In view of this dual perspective, the authors indicate that communication decisions must provide for traditional product branding as well as corporate and organisational brand communication. These two areas of communication must function in an interactive and synergistic manner.

4.2.3 Behaviour as element of the corporate identity mix

Behaviour constitutes a principal aspect of the identity mix and is discussed in detail under Balmer's (1995) behavioural school of thought, Moingeon and Ramanantsoa's (1997) French school of thought and He and Balmer's (2005) collective organisational perspective.

Balmer's (1995) behavioural school addresses matters pertaining to organisational activities, culture, habits and characteristics (Balmer 1995:33). Moingeon and Ramanantsoa's (1997) French school of thought views culture as a phenomenon that describes the way in which the organisation's employees and other internal stakeholders behave and act, either formally or spontaneously (Moingeon & Ramanantsoa 1997; Melewar & Jenkins 2002). Similarly, He and Balmer's (2005) collective organisational perspective focuses on the core features that assign a unique character to an

organisation, specifically in respect of the ways employees behave, act or conduct themselves. In view of the associations that connect and unify these theoretical conceptions, it can be argued that Balmer's (1995) emphasis on the phenomenon of employee behaviour, Moingeon and Ramanantoa's (1997) concept of culture, and He and Balmer's (2005) collective organisational perspective are related concepts which overlap in certain respects (Otubanjo & Melewar 2007:421).

Apart from the elements of behaviour as identified in the above perspectives, the literature refers to a number of other elements that are associated with organisational behaviour. These additional elements include corporate behaviour, employee behaviour and management behaviour.

According to Melewar and Jenkins (2002:83), corporate behaviour refers to the entire spectrum of corporate activities and behaviour. These include strategic actions that are aligned with corporate culture as well as actions that take place spontaneously from recruitment, environmental and ethical issues. Management communications are a composition of employee behaviour and manager behaviour.

Furthermore, Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006:201) as well as Melewar and Jenkins (2002:83) indicate that management behaviour and employee behaviour are two distinct entities. Management behaviour involves the function of senior management to communicate the corporate vision and strategy to employees in an unambiguous manner. Consequently, managers' ability to reflect and communicate an organisation's values as well as employees' behaviour towards consumers contributes significantly to corporate image formation as a result of the increased interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders, and stakeholders' multiple roles these days (Paswan et al 2005:4). Employee behaviour involves the process by which employees relate to the organisation by internalising the organisational values and objectives and aligning their behaviour accordingly (Melewar et al 2005:65). Kiriakidou and Millward (2000 in Melewar & Jenkins 2002:84) add that employee behaviour reflects the distinct attributes of the organisation to external stakeholders, which demonstrates how the organisation "thinks, feels and behaves". In this regard, Aaker (2004b:11) states as follows:

The translation of the corporate brand internally to employees must be supported by the mission, values, and culture of the organization. It is important for employees to buy into organizational values and programs. The corporate brand serves as a link between the organization and the customer. Thus, it can play a role in articulating these elements to employees, retailers, and others who must buy into the goals and values of the corporate brand and represent them to customers.

In essence, organisations are increasingly being forced to eradicate possible ethical incongruences reflected in corporate behaviour and communication (Bernstein 2009:609) which contradict its vision, decisions, strategies and actions, in order to benefit the corporate brand (Adkins 2005:5; Powell & Dodd 2007; Daw & Cone 2011:78-80). To increase corporate integrity and better align the organisation's promises and actions, employees are increasingly being regarded as ambassadors of the organisation, who are expected to maintain and display the social and ethical values of the organisation. Morsing (2006) equates this to a power towards "Corporate Moral Branding". This puts organisations under pressure to implement measures that ensure decisions and behaviour of employees coherently display the ethical values explained in the corporate brand by top management (Powell et al 2009:442). In this regard, Ind and Bjerke (2007:45) maintain that in future organisations will only be able to control their brand image effectively by encouraging employee participation and aligning the behaviour of all internal stakeholders to create relevant value to the customer.

4.2.4 Brand culture

Brand philosophy, brand vision, brand mission, brand values and brand objectives are the elements that constitute brand culture (Bendixen & Abratt 2007:71). As a result of the integrated nature of these concepts, they are discussed under the same heading as concepts identified as mandatory elements of corporate brand identity. The elements that constitute brand culture are first discussed individually, followed by a discussion on how these elements collectively contribute to establishing the brand culture.

4.2.4.1 Brand philosophy, vision, mission, values and objectives

In an article published in the late eighties, Abratt (1989:70) argues that a formal, well-defined corporate philosophy which relates specifically to the unique character of the organisation forms the central component of the corporate image management process. He believes that management should develop the corporate philosophy from the key attributes of the organisation reflected by the corporate personality. As such, the corporate

philosophy must represent the core values and assumptions of the organisation. He refers to this embodiment of the organisation's core values and assumptions as the corporate culture. The corporate mission statement provides an abridged articulation of the corporate purpose, which is formulated from the corporate philosophy and which should be definite, feasible, inspiring and market oriented. Once a distinct corporate mission has been formulated, the overall business objectives are determined according to the organisation's purpose as expressed in the mission statement (Cornelissen 2004:24; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:174-175). The organisation's mission and vision statements represent goals which the organisation aims to achieve in the long term. These long-term goals are explained in terms of what the organisation aims to achieve in business, which constitutes the mission, as well as the results expected from the organisational performance, as expressed in the organisational vision.

According to more recent perspectives on brand vision, successful brands require a definite and stimulating vision that contributes to shared lifestyles, values and interests with customers (Morley 2009:128; Aaker 2010:10). De Chernatony (2001c:34-35; 2006:44) distinguishes between three components of a brand vision, namely the future environment, brand purpose, and brand values. This author argues that the first component, the envisioned future, determines the nature of brand environment which management would like to establish over a certain period. The second component, the brand purpose, provides a framework for contemplating in which ways the market will benefit from the brand, and whether the brand's contribution to the specific industry in which it operates will inspire and guide employees. The third component, brand values, provides guidelines to direct employee behaviour in realising the brand promise (De Chernatony 2001c:34-36; 2006:44). Urde (2009:621) refers to the concept of corporate brand core values and defines these as mindsets embedded within an organisation and the vital perceptions of stakeholders which define the identity of a brand. These values impact on the way internal and external stakeholders view the brand. Core values define the elements which the corporate brand represents. The core values are all-inclusive concepts established in and extracted from the organisational values and resonating with customers' perceived values (Urde 2009:621).

Finally, the brand vision should consist of quantified objectives stipulating the business direction of the brand (Cornelissen 2004:24; De Chernatony 2006:46). These involve decisions on implementing strategies and values that will influence employees' behaviour to achieve personal, work-related objectives as well as the performance they expect of their work teams. Setting a business direction for the brand also involves providing

guidelines about the behaviour required from employees towards other employees and external stakeholders of the organisation. All internal stakeholders of the organisation should be involved in activities aimed at realising the strategic decision to achieve competitive advantage by rendering high-level customer service (De Chernatony 2006:46). This perspective of De Chernatony (2001c:34-36; 2006:44) on the components of brand vision and how these relate to establishing the brand in the marketplace is supported by Keller and Lehmann (2009:7), who describe brand vision as the organisation's ability to recognise the innate prospects of a brand as well as its current and inherent future brand equity to realise the potential of the brand. As such, the vision is a statement about an intended future state and the organisation's role in it. Although the vision is articulated by management, it need not be a reflection of management's aspirations only. Instead, an effective vision is best achieved when it emerges as a result of a dialog between stakeholders within the organisation so that it is experienced as a shared sense of purpose across the organisation. (De Chernatony 2001:113). Moreover, vision provides the global aspect under which organisational strategy develops. In this way, vision acts as the starting point for organisational development and as a focus for its stakeholders. The vision may be imbued with different meaning and is an end state at an arbitrary point of time, but is not prescriptive with regard to how that state should be reached. Consequently, different stakeholder groups for example employees or external stakeholders, can have a shared understanding of the vision with different perspectives of how to fulfil the vision.

The next section provides an explanation of how the individual elements that constitute brand culture collectively contribute to demonstrate the brand culture in the organisation's product offering and business operation.

According to Yang (2010:223) brand culture refers to the composite of certain elements, including the brand name, logo, symbols and designs as well as the cultural features embedded in the combination of these elements. In addition, brand culture involves all cultural phenomena demonstrated in the performance of a brand's products or services. Furthermore, brand culture comprises the emotional attributes and individual images which these cultural features represent. These cultural phenomena help to identify and differentiate the products or services of a business enterprise.

The construction of brand culture should be rooted in the understanding of corporate culture. Yang (2010:223) regards brand culture as an extension of corporate culture and maintains that it constitutes an important part of corporate culture. Corporate culture is a

broad term which refers to the objectives and methods of management, group cohesion, the organisation's standards for values and behaviour demonstrated in its product offering and business operation. Excellent corporate culture helps to construct distinctive brand culture (Yang 2010:223).

As indicated in the previous paragraph, brand culture is an extension and identification of corporate culture; as such, corporate culture contributes to the establishment of brand culture. Corporate culture embodies the ideas, standards for behaviour and group styles which must be demonstrated in all operations and activities of the brand. Corporate culture, in particular the core values and the emotional meanings associated with these core values, is invisible. As a result, corporate culture must be displayed in the brand's attributes and services which form the foundation of brand culture. This means that brands serve as an instrument to convey the vision to the market in order to establish internal coordination, resulting in external competitive advantage and economic benefits. Furthermore, brand culture is a fundamental element of corporate culture, since these two forms of culture form an integral part of an organisation's operation and products. Brand culture is a reflection of the organisation's values about clients. In addition, it reflects the spiritual culture of the organisation, since it symbolises an organisation's affinity with the products and services of its brand (Yang 2010:223).

Since brand culture is embodied in the organisation's products and services, brand culture establishes common values and guidelines for behaviour based on a combination of the value of consumers and businesses. The purpose of establishing common values and standards for uniform behaviour is to create optimal value for consumers, while maximising market profits for the enterprise on the one hand, and consumers' values (Yang 2010:223). Brand culture deals with three important matters, namely brand popularity, brand reputation and brand loyalty. With regard to brand popularity, Yang (2010:223) explains that businesses transmit information on the brand culture to consumers by means of specific media based on their knowledge of consumer preferences. In this manner, the social influences of brand culture are formed. With regard to brand reputation, consumers form an image of the brand culture based on their experiences, associations and evaluations of the brand culture. In the case of brand loyalty, organisations are engaged in continuous efforts to manage brand relationships in order to ensure consumers remain loyal to the brand. Following this argument, brand culture is a demonstration of the corporate culture to external stakeholders. In addition, brand culture is the destination of corporate culture, since brand culture involves the

transmission of pre-eminence and excellence, thereby influencing consumers' values and perspective on life. This implies that a brand is the carrier of corporate culture.

Moreover, Yang (2010:224) maintains that corporate culture is the core of a brand. Brands that reflect a unique corporate culture and demonstrate powerful cultural features meet consumers' psychological needs and values orientation. In this way, corporate culture contributes to enhancing a brand's reputation and esteem, while increasing consumer loyalty. Secondly, corporate culture embodies the connotations and details of brand culture. All ideas, meanings, connotations and spirits embodied by the corporate culture can be reflected in the quality, performance and services of products. Images or associations of the consumption value of the brand demonstrated in this manner can have an indirect influence on consumers' perspective of the brand through the consumption process. By influencing the behaviour of internal stakeholders, corporate culture displays brand culture. Therefore, corporate culture is the basis for the development of brand culture as well as the most central component of an organisation's brand value. Thirdly, corporate culture influences the establishment of brand culture. Brand culture is based on the corporate culture. As a result, corporate culture will determine the attributes of a brand to some extent, which in turn will determine the level of satisfaction experienced by consumers about the specific brand. In addition, brand culture is an extension of corporate culture; from consumers' perspective, a brand represents the image of an organisation as well as the brand itself (Yang 2010:224). The image that stakeholders form of the organisation is a combination of corporate culture and brand culture, since a favourable brand image results from a favourable corporate culture which in turn creates exceptional brand culture. The objective of corporate culture is thus twofold, namely to establish a complete internal corporate cultural system, and to create brands with specific emotional attributes in order to enhance both consumers' emotional attachment to the brand and the benefits consumers derive from these attributes. Core ideas can meet consumers' emotional or spiritual needs and positive ideas can establish brands with powerful associations which determine the products and services consumers will use. The core ideas which are embedded in corporate culture can be demonstrated in all business operations of the organisation. This will give the brand a unique connotation and meaning and enhance consumers' favourable impressions and associations of the brand, resulting in increased brand loyalty. Brands in which the organisation's strategic objectives are connected with social benefits and consumers' needs will appeal to the public (Yang 2010:225).

In view of the above discussion, Yang (2010:225) concludes that corporate culture fulfils certain internal and external functions in constructing a unique brand culture. With regard to the internal functions, corporate culture unites the organisation's employees with common values so they will experience a sense of identity with and belonging to the organisation. The unity between internal stakeholders increases the organisation's performance. In addition, corporate culture serves as a means of coordinating interpersonal relationships and creating a cohesive atmosphere. In this manner it assists in transforming the organisation's goals and objectives into the actions and behaviour of employees in order to improve organisational efficiency. Corporate culture thus creates enthusiasm among employees for brand culture construction (Yang 2010:225). Organisations whose corporate cultures support the principles of their business strategy are likely to gain competitive advantage. Those that align employees' behaviour are better equipped to increase synergy among internal stakeholders. Such organisations are better qualified to coordinate activities across all organisational departments for increased competitive advantage. The decisive factor determining the success of organisational alignment is to ensure the organisational values and beliefs of its core business are inhabited by its employees and that awareness is created among employees so they will know what behaviour is expected of them (Bergstrom et al 2002:136; Gagnon & Michael 2003:26; Brexendorf & Kernstock 2007:38; Van Riel 2008:352). Corporate culture also has an external function: along with providing products, services, public relations and advertisements, the organisation also transmits its corporate culture and thus creates a favourable image with consumers. In this way, brand reputation and popularity will be improved.

De Chernatony (2001c:37) postulates that an appropriate culture can enhance a brand's competitive advantage. This perspective is based on the phenomenon that the functional characteristics of brands competing in similar product and service industries are becoming increasingly similar. Since the functional characteristics no longer serve as the decisive factor according to which consumers differentiate between brands, culture will become a more prominent brand discriminator.

4.2.4.2 Brand origin determines how consumers view the brand's functional and symbolic attributes

In addition to the concepts identified traditionally as elements that contribute to brand equity, brand origin must also be considered as an influencer of brand equity (Blinda 2003; Thakor & Lavack 2003:403; Lehu 2006:88-89; Batey 2008:146 and Dev 2008).

Thakor and Kohli (1996:27) define brand origin as “the place, region or country to which the brand is perceived to belong by its customers”. According to this definition, brand origin can be viewed as the geographical area, including the region or country, where the brand is marketed and perceived to be owned by the residents of that geographical area. In this regard, Verleigh, Steenkamp and Meulenberg (2005) as well as Kapferer (2008:196) explain that elements such as the type of product and the perceived image of the organisation and its brands contribute to the effect the country of origin will have on the brand and its products and services. Moreover, Burmann et al (2008:162) argue that brand origin also influences the way consumers view the functional and symbolic attributes of a brand. A brand is perceived as having high-quality functional utility when certain skills related to it complement its functionality. Brand origin that emphasises the trust, identification and superiority associated with a brand enhances the perceived symbolic value of the brand among consumers.

4.2.5 A well-managed corporate structure as revealed in effective human resource practices and brand architecture

Foil (1991:200) states that corporate structure comprises two components, namely organisational structure and branding structure. This author maintains that corporate structure is a key component of corporate identity.

Melewar (2003:207) explains organisational structure is the constituent of corporate structure which involves the hierarchy of communication and reporting sequences. Kilmann (1984:199) holds a similar view by describing organisational structure as objectives to be achieved, tasks to be performed, ordering objectives and tasks into work units and managing the leadership of work units that coordinates the organisational divisions into a functioning entity. To ensure this structure becomes fully operational, employees and all other necessary resources must be allocated to each work unit in order to equip them with the required means to perform the tasks effectively and to achieve the relevant objectives. Apart from making resources available, various job structures, for example policies, job descriptions, work procedures, rules, and regulations, are designed and implemented to ensure the organisation functions as intended. Lastly, the reward system is developed to motivate and reward employees for accomplishing the organisational objectives. The organisational structure becomes operational if all the documentation varying from the general mission statement to the specific job descriptions is done correctly, provided that the right culture, management skills and team behaviour

have been successfully established (Kilmann 1984:199; Papasolomou & Vrontis 2006:41-45; Dev 2008; Buckingham 2011:51).

Furthermore, research findings indicate that the reason why an organisation prefers a certain brand strategy depends on the needs and habits combined with aspects such as the history of the organisation, its structure, management and resources (Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:155). The brand structure adopted by the organisation creates a specific corporate identity. A corporate dominant structure creates a monolithic identity and is therefore more likely to be implemented in centralised organisations, since these organisations prefer standardisation of their corporate identity. Conversely, brand-dominant structures are more likely to be implemented in decentralised organisations, which allow their subsidiaries to develop their own identities (Dev 2008). The brand architecture is discussed in more detail in section 4.2.1.1.

4.2.6 Industry identity as determined by the organisation's business environment

Melewar et al (2005:65) state that industry identity refers to the core features of the industry in which an organisation functions, such as size, competitiveness, and rates of change. In this regard, Melewar and Jenkins (2002:85) postulate that these aspects have an effect on the corporate identity of an organisation. It can therefore be argued that the industry in which certain organisations operate will strongly influence their corporate strategy.

4.2.7 Marketing strategy of the corporate brand is aimed at presenting a unique set of brand values to enhance corporate reputation

Maklan and Knox (1997:126) state that the strategic role of marketing is to supervise and monitor the development of the unique set of brand values. In this regard, effective marketing requires proper resources in order to present the unique set of the organisation's values in a manner that enhances the organisation's reputation among all internal and external stakeholders. To achieve this, the following elements must be included in the brand's marketing strategy:

4.2.7.1 Strategic marketing activities are aimed at coordinating advertising and business strategy

In the late 1990s, Maklan and Knox (1997:126) identified the need for a new approach to marketing in order to meet customers' increasing demand for superior value, to satisfy the requirements of cross-functional management, and to meet the needs of the growing

number of stakeholders. These authors suggest that in order to meet the expectations of a diverse group of stakeholders, marketing should assume a more comprehensive role which provides strategic direction to all the business processes of the organisation, from suppliers to the customers.

More recently, Keller and Richey (2006:79) have indicated that elements such as changes in consumer behaviour, strategies to compete effectively in the market, governmental regulations, or aspects in the field of marketing can have a profound effect on the prosperity of an organisation. In addition to these external elements, an organisation may get involved in various activities and shifts in strategic direction. These may result in comprehensive changes in the way the organisation markets its brand. To counteract these different forces, organisations are required to design proactive strategies to maintain and enhance brand equity. This implies that an organisation must possess the ability to detect and take advantage of new opportunities in the market promptly. Hollis's (2008:16-17) view on marketing offers a solution to the need for proactive, comprehensive marketing strategies to meet the expectations of a diverse group of stakeholders as identified by Maklan and Knox (1997:126) and Keller and Richey (2006:79). Hollis (2008:16-17) indicates that an organisation's communication must explain the entire brand promise so that consumers understand the complete set of a brand's physical features, functional benefits, and emotional associations. Since this requirement cannot be met by a single communication medium only, disciplines referred to as 360° marketing and touch-point planning have emerged over the past few years (Hollis 2008:16-17). These measures enable marketers to consider the return on investment of marketing efforts on brand equity in order to create, manage, and exploit brand equity (The Branding Sweet Spot 2009).

Nordic School researchers take a different perspective on marketing by focusing on interactions. According to these researchers, marketing involves a number of functions. First, marketing as a traditionally external function involves advertising, while interactive marketing involves the interactions that take place during the simultaneous production and consumption process. This requires facilitation of interactions with customers as part of marketing (Grönroos 2007:178-179).

The above explanation emphasises that organisations deal with different stakeholder groups. To meet the expectations of a diverse group of stakeholders, marketing must be used as a strategic measure to direct the activities of all business units of the organisation. This implies that successful marketing requires managing and coordinating

marketing messages and business strategy at every contact point of the brand or organisation with its target audience. In addition, all decisions made about marketing actions must take account of the extent to which these decisions impact on brand equity.

4.2.7.2 A brand stewardship process creates stakeholder value and commitment to support the brand

Tosti and Jackson (2000:5) describe stakeholders as “any group that is significantly affected by the organisation’s performance, such as customers, shareholders, suppliers, even the general public”. Stakeholder value refers to the different relationships various stakeholder groups have with the organisation and their expectations of the organisation. According to the perspective of Ruth and Simonin (1995 in Duncan and Moriarty 1998:7), stakeholders include an even more comprehensive group of roleplayers than those identified by Tosti and Jackson (2000:5). These authors explain that stakeholders include corporate constituencies such as the financial community, investors, employees, vendors and suppliers, competitors, neighbours and community leaders, special interest groups, the media and government agencies who can affect and be affected by an organisation’s marketing programme. Duncan and Moriarty (1998:7) indicate that the elaborate viewpoint on which groups of people or institutions constitute an organisation’s stakeholders also applies to marketing communication. They maintain that if the aspect of public relations is incorporated into the communication mix, it is also responsible for managing communication programmes for employees, the financial community and investors, government and regulators, the local community and the media. This perspective is also reiterated by Dev (2008).

Various authors maintain that the relationship between a brand and the customer is continuously being developed by creating experiences with the brand that reinforce stakeholders’ associations with it and leave durable impressions (Shimp 2007:13; Daw & Cone 2011:6). In this regard, Brink and Berndt (2004:31) identify a strong association between the extent to which stakeholders relate the brand to specific behaviours, goals and policies that are regarded as critical, meaningful and appropriate under particular circumstances and consumers’ commitment to support the brand. Furthermore, Brink and Berndt as well as Ind and Bjerke (2007:34) indicate that shared goals and mutual benefits among internal and external stakeholders are the key elements of building effective business relationships.

In view of the above perspectives on establishing meaningful relationships with stakeholders, Urde et al (2007:14-15) are of the opinion that organisations must have an

unambiguous brand stewardship function. Speak (1998:33) defines brand stewardship as “the leadership of and the accountability for the long-term well-being of the organizational brand equities”. Developing a brand stewardship process involves executive leadership in formulating a vision for establishing a relationship with key stakeholders in the market to obtain brand-loyal customers.

More specifically, brand stewardship aims at influencing brands to create positive values, for example by means of co-branding or joint-venture partners. The brand building process is thus expanded to the organisation’s entire marketing process. Brand stewardship involves all internal stakeholders of the organisation to commit themselves to transmitting the brand promise through every action they take (Speak 1998:33; Daw & Cone 2011:114; 122).

4.2.7.3 Brand communities as a social platform reinforces stakeholder relationships

A brand community consists of supporters of a brand who are not confined to a specific geographical area and whose relationship is determined according to the structure of the community (Muñiz & O’Guinn 2001:412; Antorini & Andersen 2005:94). Brand communities provide a social structure to the relationship between consumer and marketer by carrying out important functions on behalf of the brand, such as providing assistance, sharing information, and preserving the history and culture of the brand (Antorini & Andersen 2005:95-96; 99; Devasagayam et al 2010:211). Furthermore, organisations increasingly employ brand communities as a branding strategy on the Internet, for example by means of various social media networks (Kapferer 2008:163; Devasagayam et al 2010:211; Aaker 2011:292). A well-established internal brand community enhances employees’ support of strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the corporate brand, increases the levels of mutual support among employees, and establishes increased employee satisfaction in respect of interactions with external audiences (Devasagayam et al 2010:214).

4.2.7.4 Corporate citizen initiatives an essential element of internal and external marketing efforts

Blumenthal and Bergstrom (2003:337) identify four key reasons for integrating corporate citizen initiatives as a way of promoting the brand. These reasons are: maintaining customer loyalty, avoiding conflict with shareholders, recognising the magnitude of the brand promise, and maximising investment in corporate citizen initiatives regardless of the brand. The main prerequisite for successful corporate branding strategies is that the corporate brand must meet the brand promise by satisfying the physical, emotional,

functional and experiential needs of consumers and potential consumers (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:71; Batey 2008:162; Hollis 2008:16). As such, Keller (2009a:47) maintains that the effective execution of the brand promise will enhance the esteem and loyalty in which the organisation is held by its stakeholder groups. Aaker (2011:259) identifies three ways in which social and environmental programmes can affect a brand and motivate consumers to prefer it over competitor brands. Firstly, human beings tend to experience the need to have a relationship with trustworthy people and believe that corporate citizen initiatives reflect an organisation's values. Secondly, corporate citizen initiatives can meet customers' need for self-expressive behaviour, particularly those who have strong feelings about these issues. Thirdly, corporate citizen initiatives can make a brand interesting (Aaker 2011:259).

Hoeffler et al (2010:78) indicate that although CC initiatives are mostly aimed at enhancing the brand image among consumers, a number of constituencies other than consumers determine the success of this form of marketing initiative. According to these authors, a large number of organisations have recognised internal marketing among employees as an important marketing priority in recent years. Effective internal marketing enables successful organisations to recruit, retain, and develop exceptional talent (Buckingham 2011:178). In addition, internal marketing initiatives enable the organisation to create a work environment that maximises productivity and satisfaction among employees. In this regard, a number of organisations regard corporate citizen initiatives as an essential aspect of internal marketing efforts (Hoeffler et al 2010:78).

4.2.7.5 Advertising spending increases market share and profitability

According to Milgrom and Roberts (1986 in Yoo et al 2000:199), advertising serves as an important extrinsic guideline for product quality. In this regard, Kirmani and Wright (1989 in Yoo et al 2000:199) argue that large advertising expenditure proves that the organisation is investing in the brand, which implies superior quality. Advertising is aimed at influencing consumers' perceptions of the benefits of a particular brand. Influencing consumers' perceptions adds value to products and specific brands, since effective advertising causes brands to be perceived as of higher quality than competitive offerings. In view of the above it can be concluded that advertising is regarded an important value-adding function; when done effectively, brands are viewed as superior, which in turn may increase market share and profitability (American Association of Advertising Agencies 1989:13-15).

4.2.8 Positioning and differentiation strategy (corporate strategy)

Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006:861-862) identify two forms of corporate strategy, namely differentiation strategy and positioning strategy. Differentiation strategy refers to the overall corporate strategy that focuses on the manner in which the organisation uses specific strengths of its human resources, for example skills, knowledge, experience and talents, to compete in the market. Positioning strategy is associated with the business strategy implemented by an organisation to realise the identity to which the organisation strives. An effective positioning strategy is dependent upon successful advertising aimed at providing customers with a clear, unambiguous explanation of the benefits offered by the brand and how its products and services compare to competing offerings. Effective brand positioning requires extensive knowledge of the nature of competitive brands in order to exploit their weaknesses and deficits. As such, positioning is aimed at establishing the brand in the consumer's mind relative to competitive brands and to make it appealing to the public (Shimp 1993:313; Kapferer 2008:175).

In this regard, Melewar and Wooldridge (2001:332) argue that the nature and requirements of the industry in which the organisation operates as well as the products or services offered by competitors can affect the corporate strategy selected by an organisation. The marketing strategy adopted by an organisation must therefore be interconnected with the production processes and the contemplated performance of the product or service. In this manner, all organisational units and work procedures are aimed at contributing to enhance the corporate reputation. All the elements that constitute the identity mix as discussed above must be realised through the product or service, which is the operationalisation of the corporate strategy. These elements comprise culture, which determines how things are done, and behaviour, which is observed in the way the products and services are delivered and which takes place by means of the communication of the marketing mix.

The above discussion reveals that an organisation's corporate strategy is aimed at establishing the brand in consumers' minds relative to competitive brands and to make it appealing to the public. In this regard, advertising is considered an important value-adding function. If an organisation's advertising is done effectively, based on a sound knowledge of the nature and weaknesses of competitors, the brand is viewed as superior, which in turn may increase market share and profitability. In addition, the corporate strategy is based on communicating the distinct brand features to stakeholders and realised through establishing a uniform brand culture that is aligned with the business strategy and reflected in product and service delivery.

4.2.8.1 Strategic consistency in brand messages are fundamental in establishing brand relationships

Duncan and Moriarty (1998:7) as well as Ind and Bjerke (2007:35) explain that the decisive factor in effectively managing stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation is to ensure that the form and content of all messages delivered and received in the entire organisation meet the requirement of strategic consistency. These authors explain that strategic consistency means that the content of the messages is appropriate for their respective audiences, while consistency is applied in the way the organisation presents corporate values, the organisation's performance in terms of product and service delivery, and how the brand is identified and positioned. Stakeholders interpret brand messages while transforming the meaning of these messages into their perceptions of the organisation. Impressions of the organisation that are formed in this way are the building blocks of brand relationships, provided that the brand messages communicated to the various stakeholder groups are consistent (Duncan & Moriarty 1998:7; Ind & Bjerke 2007:35).

4.2.8.2 Brand personality traits that reflect the organisation's core values mould the brand personality

Opoku, Pitt and Abratt (2007:23) maintain that brand personality is a concept of the marketing communication field derived from individual psychology. For some years now, prominent researchers in the field of branding, for example Aaker (1997:347), have considered the opinion that organisations possess personality attributes. This perspective is supported by Gill and Dawra (2010:193).

Aaker (1997) distinguishes particularly between instrumental and symbolic personality traits. This assumption implies that just as individuals have unique personalities, a brand can be associated with a specific personality that has similar characteristics to those displayed by consumers of the brand (Aaker 1997; Buckingham 2009:31). The most noticeable approach for conceptualising and measuring brand personalities is Aaker's (1997) brand personality inventory. The scale includes five dimensions, which are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. According to Aaker (1997), three of these brand personality dimensions relate to the "big five" in human personality research: agreeableness is related to sincerity, extroversion to excitement, and conscientiousness to competence. The remaining two dimensions – sophistication and ruggedness – differ from any of the human personality dimensions. Following the partial correspondence between the human personality and the brand personality

concept, a correspondence is assumed between success in life due to an individual's personality and the market success of a brand having a particular brand personality. This perspective is based on the possibility of applying the human personality concept and its outcomes to brands (Eisend & Langer 2007).

According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality inventory, each of the five dimensions comprises a number of facets. Sincerity includes four facets, namely down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful. The dimension of excitement also consists of four facets, namely daring, spirited, imaginative and up to date. Competence can be described by means of three facets, namely reliable, intelligent and successful. Sophistication consists of two facets: upper-class and charming, outdoorsy and tough are the two facets that describe ruggedness (Ekinci & Hosany 2006).

Batra, Lehmann and Sing (1993 in Aaker 1997:348) add that indirect association of personality traits with a brand takes place through visual brand identity elements, for example the brand name, symbol or logo, as well as product attributes, product category associations, advertising style, price, and distribution channel.

Keller and Richey (2006:75) add to these perspectives by arguing that although the concept of brand personality is relevant to product brands as well as corporate brands, an important distinction can be drawn between the two which determines how the brand personality concept should be applied. A product brand is defined by the functionality of the product and what it represents. A corporate brand is defined in terms of who the brand is, instead of its functionality. Keller and Richey (2006:76) indicate that product brand personality relates strongly to the personality traits of consumers who use or are intended to use a brand. As such, brand personality serves as a means according to which consumers express their actual or idealised self-image (Buckingham 2009:32). A product brand personality relates to consumers and symbols representing the functional benefits of a specific product brand, while a corporate brand personality is defined in terms of the human characteristics or personality traits of an organisation's employees. Therefore, a corporate brand personality manifests the words, actions and values of employees, individually and as a collective entity. These behavioural and intellectual properties are selected according to a well-defined business strategy with the aim of differentiating the organisation from its competitors (Harris & De Chernatony 2001:444; Bick et al 2003:838; Keller & Richey 2006:75).

More recently, scholars such as Lievens, Van Hove and Anseel (2007) have related the concept of brand personality to employer branding. In the view of these authors as well as Lievens and Highhouse (2003), the symbolic aspects of the employer brand are a useful means of depicting the abstract, intangible and subjective attributes associated with the organisation's image (Lievens et al 2007:48), while the more functional aspects of the employer brand depict the tangible, physical and objective attributes of the organisation as employer. In addition, employees' common perceptions of the central, enduring and distinctive characteristics of an organisation (Albert & Whetten 2003) help establish the aspects pertaining to the image of the employer brand and employment experience. Edwards (2010:7) explains that an organisation must create a set of specific values and beliefs which are associated with the organisation's identity. These values and beliefs can contribute to establishing an organisation's value proposition. If the organisational values constitute a particularly strong component of the central, enduring and distinctive identity based on the attributes of the organisation, it can be expected that the aspects pertaining to the organisation's values, principles and beliefs would construct a greater part of the content profile that composes the organisation's distinctive employment experience (Edwards 2010:7).

The above perspectives indicate that the concept of brand personality is relevant to product brands as well as corporate brands (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.1). A product brand is defined by the functionality of the product and what it represents. The corporate brand personality should portray the corporate values held in esteem by the organisation as a set of brand personality traits associated with the brand. Consumers associate a collection of human characteristics with a brand by linking these human characteristics to the typical personality traits that characterise the consumer of a specific brand, the organisation's employees, and the brand's product endorsers. In this way, the brand is viewed as having similar characteristics as the people associated with it. By reflecting the organisation's core values in its brand personality traits, the corporate brand values mould the corporate brand personality. Furthermore, an organisation's corporate brand personality traits as experienced by the general public should concur with the organisational values advocated among internal stakeholders. Consequently, to achieve sustainable success against opponents, contemporary organisations must carefully manage their corporate brand personality. This requires an appropriate set of personality traits that are in congruence with the organisation's values in order to direct employees' behaviour.

In view of the above discussion and for the purpose of this study the following definition of brand personality is formulated:

Brand personality is the global term used to refer to the brand's mission and philosophy, as expressed in its values, to form the distinguishing behavioural and intellectual characteristics of the brand.

4.2.8.3 Brand essence – distinctive properties that create a unique brand

The concept of brand essence relates to the most important and distinctive properties that make a brand unique and give a brand its competitive edge. The essence of the brand is a single value which consumers can easily understand and appreciate. It represents the personality of the brand and is the element that is distinctive in the market (Van Rekom et al 2006; Kapferer 2008:198).

4.2.8.4 Brand extensions and brand stretching

The brand's identity symbols and the performance of its products and services are in constant communication with the consumer. Such communication can be developed in order to enhance brand awareness. Expanding the brand's communication through its identity symbols as well as product and service performance is done by two methods: brand extensions and brand stretching. In the case of brand extension, a brand name that is successfully established in a specific industry or in one sector of an industry is used as a means of associating a new product with the established brand in the same broad market (Gjøls-Andersen & Karmark 2005:152; Jevons et al 2005:302). According to the definitions of these authors, brand stretching involves extending a brand's territory by transferring the name of the established brand and product to a completely different market.

Gjøls-Andersen and Karmark (2005:152-153) indicate that a mutual relationship exists between a corporate brand stretch strategy and the organisational culture and identity. These influence each other in two ways: firstly, in the case of a corporate brand stretch strategy, new business units are often created. These business units are staffed by employees with professional backgrounds who are often introduced to the organisational culture for the first time. Consequently, new subcultures will develop in the organisation. Secondly, the corporate brand is rooted in employees' perceptions of the organisation's identity. As a result, any change in the corporate brand strategy, for example stretching the brand, will influence the organisational identity, which is embedded in the organisation's strategic and cultural history. It follows that both issues raise the need for organisations to involve employees in the brand stretch process in a dynamic way. Brand

extension and brand stretching are not isolated activities. Instead, these two techniques for expanding the brand's domain take place in the context of the brand's competitors and the entire marketplace (Buil, Martinez & De Chernatony 2009:71).

4.2.8.5 Brand awareness and brand associations create a mental structure of the brand attributes

A network of strong associations creates brand awareness. The unique attributes associated with the brand result in a specific brand image. Kotler and Pfoertsch (2010:313) view brand awareness as the ability of possible consumers to associate a special brand with a special product. In addition, brand associations are a complex set of features which relate to one another, and which are composed of multiple ideas and facts about the unique brand attributes. Aaker (2007:17) explains that in order to realise the potential or value of a brand and establish the desired brand identity, an organisation's positioning strategy must be aimed at creating a series of associations in consumers' minds, referred to as brand associations, to familiarise them with the brand and to establish the brand favourably in the marketplace (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.1). Familiarising consumers with an organisation's brand by explaining these brand attributes to them is accomplished by means of advertising, sales promotion and other marketing communications methods used in an organised way to create a well-established network of brand knowledge among an organisation's target audience (Lebar et al 2005:414).

Furthermore, brand associations formed by means of a carefully planned advertising and marketing strategy are stronger when consumers are exposed to a variety of communications on the brand, rather than when they encounter the brand on a few occasions only. Brand associations, which result in a high level of brand awareness when integrated skilfully with the organisation's advertising and marketing strategy, have the ability to enhance brand equity. This positive relationship between brand associations and brand equity exists because brand associations help create a mental structure of the brand's attributes that serves as an expression of quality and commitment. Brand associations help consumers retrieve, process and organise information on a specific brand which facilitate purchasing decisions (Ind & Bjerke 2007:37). As such, brand associations can help consumers consider the benefits of the brand at the point of purchase, thus enhancing the brand's competitive advantage (Aaker 1991; Alba & Hutchinson 1987 in Yoo et al 2000:197; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:313). Chen (2010:314) distinguishes between two types of brand associations, namely organisational associations and product associations. Kotler and Pfoertsch (2001:443) further divide

product associations into functional attribute associations and non-functional attribute associations. Burmann and Meffert (2005:158) as well as Keller and Lehmann (2006:740) explain that functional attribute associations refer to the features and functional benefits of the product as well as its perceived quality, while non-functional attribute associations encapsulate the emotional or symbolic meaning associated with the brand, the price or value, and the context in which the brand is used (Batey 2008:117). In this regard, Keller (2009d:296) explains that this symbolic meaning associated with the brand describes consumers' personality, and is an expression of their role and self-esteem. Likewise, two types of organisational associations are identified, namely corporate ability and associations with corporate social initiatives. This categorisation of brand associations into organisational and product associations indicates the relationships that exist between internal and external aspects of the associations.

Woods (1960 in Nandan 2005:267) employs the categorisation proposed by Chen (2010:314) to divide products into three classes according to the nature of the problem that a product solves, namely products that meet functional needs, those that are primarily hedonic, and a third category of products that consumers purchase for the symbolic meaning associated with the product to enhance their self-esteem. The third dimension of brand associations involves attitudes or brand conception, which constitute consumers' perception of a brand based on their overall evaluations of the brand's performance. This structure, which develops from the perception of the target audience regarding the emotional and factual elements of a specific brand, is known as the corporate brand image (Interbrand 2004:2).

According to NetAcademy (2001:2), the amount and quality of knowledge on the emotional and factual elements comprising the series of brand associations stored in consumers' memory are key components in determining the degree of trust the organisation gains from the target person. According to various authors (for example Aaker 2008:21-22; Buckingham 2009:56; Bresciani & Eppler 2010:359), the corporate brand name or symbol serves as the most influential element with which consumers associate a brand. O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2003) as well as Martinez and De Chernatony (2004:39) indicate that consumers consider the functional properties of a brand and the extent to which the brand will satisfy their needs as well as its symbolic meaning when purchasing a brand. Therefore, to ensure the continued viability of the corporate brand, it must possess the ability to meet stakeholders' practical and psychological needs. In this way, the brand remains meaningful to these constituencies. To remain meaningful in meeting stakeholders' needs, organisations need to

communicate and display the brand's relevance to these stakeholder groups (Woods 1960 in Nandan 2005:267). Jevons et al (2005:301) conclude that in order to gain a complete understanding of the meaning of a brand relationship, the entire set of associations which a brand evokes among customers, and the complete series of relationships that exist between brands must be assessed. In addition, they argue that all these associations must be taken into account to assess how they affect brand meaning collectively.

4.2.8.6 Brand attitude – consumers overall assessment of the brand attributes

Grace and O'Cass (2005:127) as well as Batey (2008:121) view brand attitude as consumers' overall favourable or unfavourable disposition towards the specific attributes and benefits of the brand which result from how favourably they perceive the brand associations. As such, brand attitude represents consumers' global assessment of all brand stimuli, rather than their immediate response to the extent to which the brand's performance meets its promise of value. Three aspects associated with brand attitude influence consumers' decision regarding future brand usage. These aspects of brand attitude develop from the following:

- The brand verdict, which results from consumers' overall positive or negative disposition toward the brand;
- Brand evidence, which includes all dimensions of the brand's performance in terms of service that affect consumer's perception and evaluation of the brand; and
- Brand hearsay, which refers to all forms of planned and unplanned communications on the service brand that are experienced indirectly by consumers (Grace & O'Cass 2005:126-129).

4.2.8.7 Brand strength determines consumers' knowledge of the brand

Aaker (1996:103) explains the concept of brand strength as "the sensitive and credible measure, which supplements the short-term financial measures". According to Aaker's (1996:103) definition, brand strength refers to how well the brand is positioned in the market. Consumers' awareness and experience of a brand creates a specific knowledge of a brand. Positive brand associations result in competitive advantage and increased profit margins. Kalafut, Low and Robinson (1997:45) as well as Zimmermann, Klein-Bölting, Sander and Murad-Aga (2001:46) include brand identity, brand knowledge, brand positioning and perceived quality as the elements that constitute brand strength. These four elements originate from the four dimensions identified by Aaker (1996) to define this measure, namely associations, awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Kitchen

(2010:46) argues that the appraisal of the brand strength can reveal areas of the brand's weaknesses. Furthermore, this author explains that areas of unsatisfactory brand performance require the implementation of adequate measures in order to make adjustments to the brand management strategy and implementation.

4.2.8.8 Brand knowledge – a two-dimensional concept that creates distinct brand associations in consumers' minds

The concept of brand knowledge refers to the extent to which consumers understand and have made what the brand represents part of their attitude and way of thinking. Consequently, knowledge is the result of a combination of all the marketing and communications efforts as well as consumers' experiences of a brand (Lebar et al 2005:414). Chandon (2003:1) views brand knowledge as a two-dimensional concept that encapsulates both brand awareness and brand image in its composition. This author explains the reason why both brand awareness and brand image encompass brand knowledge by indicating that brand awareness can affect the way consumers perceive the brand, which in turn may influence their attitude towards the brand. In this case, brand knowledge is regarded as an "associative network memory model" comprising two dimensions in consumer memory: brand awareness and brand associations. Consumers' awareness of the branded product creates solid, unique and favourable brand associations in their minds as a result of brand equity (Aaker 1996:114; Christodoulides, De Chernatony, Furrer, Shiu & Adimbola 2006).

4.2.8.9 Continuous brand performance evaluation enhances brand equity

In view of the importance of maintaining customer relationships in brand image formation, organisations need to continuously monitor their brands' reputation and performance against the effect of competitive brands, especially if they operate in a competitive environment. They should monitor the brand's progress in the marketplace, and determine the impact of certain interventions of competitive brand in the market on the brand equity. Continuous evaluation of the brand's performance will enable brand marketers to assess the effect of a marketing campaign in influencing the behaviour of target consumers, which in turn leads to measure the brand strength. In this regard, it is imperative that organisations adopt a holistic approach to brand management which involves all internal and external stakeholders responsible for executing the corporate strategy (Davis & Dunn 2002:9, 15; Ghodeswar 2008:7; Morley 2009:211-223).

4.2.8.10 Internal and external organisational influences require continuous revision of the business strategy

Research findings on the organisational system conclude that the strategic and cultural aspects of an organisation do not operate as two separate entities. As such, the strategic and cultural paths are in continuous interaction with the organisation's internal support systems, its stakeholders as well as the external environment. For example, the Marketing Teacher (2002:3) explains that the marketing environment confines the organisation and is composed of the microenvironment, the macro-environment and the internal environment.

According to Jansen van Vuuren (2002:125), elements of organisations' external environment can be classified into two primary sectors depending on their proximity to the organisation. These two sectors are the following:

- The task environment, which is the organisation's most proximate environment. A mutual interaction exists between the environment and the organisation. This environment comprises elements that influence the organisation directly, and in turn the activities of the organisation influence the environment. The customer, local stakeholder, competitor and supplier sectors constitute the task environment (Jansen van Vuuren 2002:125).
- The remote environment, which is composed of those environmental sectors that influence the organisation indirectly. These include the political, social, economic, technological, ecological, socio-cultural and natural environments (Jansen van Vuuren 2002:125; O'Keefe 2002:132). Other external environmental factors that may influence the organisation include demographics, market conditions and strategies (for example, Schmidt 1995:37; Daw & Cone 2011:46), purchase price (for example, Kotler & Keller 2006:591; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:265), distribution and logistics (for example, Gilmore & Pine in Logman 1997:42; Logman 1997:42; Yoo et al 2000:199), perceived quality (for example, Yoo et al 2000:197; Gill & Dawra 2010:193), after-sales support and costs (for example, Logman 1997:42), satisfaction (for example, Grace & O'Cass 2005:127), globalisation of competition and greater openness of markets (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:23), acceleration of product life cycles (for example, Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:37, 44); deregulation (for example, Balmer & Gray 2003b:127-128), mergers, acquisitions and divestitures (for example, Balmer & Gray 2003b:129; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:35), privatisation programmes (for example, Balmer & Gray 2003b:129), increased competition in the

public and private sectors (for example, Balmer & Gray 2003b:128) and shortage of highly skilled staff (for example, Balmer & Gray 2003b:129-130).

The internal environment consists of all factors pertaining to the structures and systems implemented and controlled by the organisation to ensure it has the required resources and human capital to function optimally. The internal environment includes internal organisational support systems, organisational infrastructure, product and service delivery systems (Maklan & Knox 1997:121), service quality (Lau 2000:423; Farner, Luthans & Sommer 2001:350), resource transformation (Maklan & Knox 1997:125), total quality management (for example, Kuei 1999:784; Farner et al 2001:350), performance measurement and strategic control systems (for example, the Balanced Scorecard of Robert Kaplan and David Norton in Slater, Olson & Reddy 1997:39), organisational learning and change management (for example, Eagle & Kitchen 2000:12; Gróf 2001:193; Kitchen & Daly 2002:47; Proctor & Doukakis 2003:275). The internal and external environments are equally important aspects in change management (Marketing Teacher 2002).

The broader environment is subject to constant change. Therefore, the organisation, and the corporate communications team in particular, must implement measures to counteract changes in culture, politics, technology and economics. This influence of the external environment on the organisation can be audited, for example by using Interbrand's (2004:1) Opportunities Model, which examines the four aspects of relevance (how stakeholders' needs are growing and transforming, and which measures the organisation can implement to ensure it meets those needs on a continuous basis); differentiation (what the brand's perceived points of differentiation are); credibility (what strengths can be developed and whether the organisation can deliver on the promise); and stretch (the brand's scope for growth to remain updated as the business continues to expand).

4.2.8.11 Consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) – the psychological and financial value of the brand

The concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) has developed largely from cognitive psychology and information economics (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993; Christodoulides & De Chernatony 2010:47). As is the case with brand, brand identity and brand image, specialists in these fields hold different perspectives about the exact meaning of brand equity and which methods are appropriate for measuring the value of a brand.

Ambler (2003:41) notes that “brand equity is such a big concept that people have difficulty describing it” and points out that researchers investigate different aspects of brand equity resulting in diverse viewpoints on the meaning of this concept. Likewise, Schultz (2003:5-6) views the extent of brand equity as a continuum. The one extremity of the continuum represents the psychological value of a brand; while the other represents the financial value of the brand, which is also described as the amount the brand is worth to the owner. This perspective is also supported by Christodoulides et al (2006:802). Moreover, Aaker (1991:12) states that this distinction is unambiguously expressed in one of the most commonly quoted definitions of brand equity, which refers to this concept as “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by its product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers”. Yoo and Donthu (2001:1) add to this perspective by defining CBBE as “the incremental utility or value added to a product by its brand name”. As such, brand equity can be thought of as a mix that includes both financial assets and associations. Consequently, Mackay (2001:38) describes the evaluation of marketing strategies in terms of their ability to enhance brand value as a complicated process. Allen, Matho and Otondo (2007) conclude that brand equity is an important aspect which organisations must take into consideration, since it enables them to influence consumers’ attitudes and behaviours and to convince customers to make (repeat) purchases (Mummalaneni 2005). Keller (2008) adds that brand equity has significant benefits: it serves as an indication of quality, it aims to reduce costs and purchasing risk, and carries symbolic power. Furthermore, strong brand equity contributes to specific behavioural outcomes, for example brand loyalty, identification, commitment, and resonance (Keller 2008). Although the general definition of CBBE as proposed by Keller (2003, 2008) describes brand equity in terms of the extent to which brand knowledge enables consumers to distinguish between brands’ products and services in response to marketing initiatives, a number of specific conceptualisations and measures have been developed. These can be grouped into the dimensional approach and the outcome approach. In terms of the dimensional approach, brand equity is regarded as a multidimensional construct which can be measured by evaluating its antecedents and components (Keller 2003, 2008). The dimensions of this approach include brand image, brand performance, perceived quality, trustworthiness, and loyalty/commitment. The focus of the outcome approach is on measuring the distinct and unique effect of a brand as well as the overall brand equity (Washburn, Till & Priluck 2004). A critical literature review has revealed various dimensions of brand equity. These dimensions are, among other things, perceived quality (Aaker 1991), brand association

(Aaker 1991), brand awareness (Keller 1993), brand personality (Batra et al 1993), brand image (Keller 1993), brand description (Feldwick 1996), brand attributes (De Chernatony & McDonald 1998) and brand attitude (Keller 2003). The dimensions constructed by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993, 2003) are the most cited and researched in literature. These are brand awareness, brand association, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

As explained in section 4.2.8.5, brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recall or recognise a brand, or whether or not they know about a brand (Keller 2008; Kim, Kim, Kim, Kim & Kang 2008). Brand awareness is a prerequisite for building brand equity (Huang & Sarigollu 2011). According to Keller (2003:60), consumers' knowledge of the brand offerings and their benefits enables them to distinguish between brands in response to marketing initiatives, resulting in customer loyalty and market leadership. As such, Keller (2003:60) views CBBE as a process that occurs when the consumer is knowledgeable about the brand and associates the brand with favourable, enduring, and unique qualities (Chandon 2003:1; Keller 2003:60). As such, brand image formation constitutes a personal learning process and is the result of the total experiences in the past. It comprises associations and attributes that are arranged in a meaningful way and are activated from memory when recalled (Aaker 1991). These associations refer to beliefs and attitudes regarding the performance and perceived benefits of a specific brand and are known as primary brand associations (Keller 1993:5). These perceived benefits of a brand are classified as functional and experiential or symbolic benefits. "Primary" brand associations, which include perceived quality, perceived value for the cost, uniqueness, and the willingness to pay a higher price, are the most influential predictors of purchase behaviour from the perspective of Keller (2003:67) and Batey (2008:124). The most commonly accepted definition of perceived quality combines consumers' experience of the service and how they perceive the organisation that renders the service (González, Comesaña & Brea 2007). Netemeyer, Krishnan, Pullig, Wang, Yagci and Dean (2004) regard perceived quality as a core factor of CBBE, since it has been associated with consumers' choice of brands, their purchase behaviour of brands as well as their willingness to pay a price premium. In addition, consumers who experience a positive attitude towards a brand may be open to information and have broader attention and more integrative thought patterns (Fredrickson & Branigan 2005). Also, high brand equity encourages customers to recommend the organisation and its product and service offerings, which ultimately enhances brand performance (Beverland 2005; Beverland, Napoli & Lindgreen 2007).

According to the results of research conducted by Balaji (2011), brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are the dimensions that most significantly contribute to brand equity. Brand awareness is an important element of an organisation's marketing communication efforts, since creating brand awareness is the first step in establishing associations about the brand in the consumer's mind and brings about positive, favourable brand responses. Brand awareness determines consumers' choice of a brand based on their perceived quality of its benefits.

Balaji (2011:18) continues that of the three brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty) which most significantly contribute to brand equity, perceived quality is the most critical. This finding is also emphasised in service marketing literature, indicating the importance of quality perceptions in attaining customer retention, recommendation and resistance to brand switching (Omachonu, Johnson & Onyeaso 2008). Perceptions of exceptional quality that distinguish the organisation's product and service offering from those of competitors can enhance the organisation's performance and customer relationship performance by means of revenue expansion, cost reduction and customer satisfaction (Rust, Moorman & Dickson 2002). In addition, perceived quality has a strong influence on brand loyalty, a significant principle of brand equity (Aaker 1991). Brand loyalty is associated with reduced marketing costs, higher rate of returns, greater market share and strong competitive position of the brand (Balaji 2011:18). For this reason, organisations must develop strategies that provide consumers exceptional quality and positively contribute to the organisation's brand equity. In addition, communication strategies aimed at enhancing awareness and conveying quality needs must be pursued to reinforce loyalty (Balaji 2011:18).

On the other hand, brand image is created by means of marketing programmes that are structured with the intent to create unique, enduring and favourable impressions (Keller 2003:70). This perspective is rooted in consumer psychology. Grönroos (2007 in Angelopulo 2009:23) and Wood (2000 in Tran & Cox 2009:122) add to this perception by indicating that the prominence which the brand gains in the market is based on the brand image that exists in the mind of consumers as well as the brand relationship that results from that image. A favourable brand image ultimately results in brand loyalty, which Oliver (1997:392) describes as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour". The definition proposed by Oliver (1997:392) is still popular and used by scholars in literature dealing with the topic of brand loyalty. Christodoulides and De Chernatony (2010:48) regard the two research

streams, namely cognitive psychology and information economics, from which the CBBE concept has developed, as complementary. In view of this perspective, these authors define CBBE as a set of impressions, perspectives, knowledge and behaviour displayed by consumers which enhance brand usage, resulting in increased profit margins based on the brand name.

In view of the above discussion on brand equity, it can be concluded that two main perspectives apply. The first approach, which is the financial or organisation-oriented perspective, focuses on the value which brand owners gain from the brand. The second approach to brand equity deals with the customer perspective and emphasises the customer's relationship with the brand. This approach, which is also referred to as consumer-based brand equity, is a well-debated topic in the literature, since it maintains that the brand is regarded worthless to brand owners if it is not valued by consumers (Webster & Keller 2004:199; Tran & Cox 2009:123). Brand equity is largely created by elements such as possessing the most visible market share, having a compelling value position, incorporating an inspiring vision in the business strategy, and a quality reputation of business success. In view of these features it can be concluded that brand building is a long-term initiative. Brand building initiatives that incorporate visual stimulation only have a limited capability to affect brand leaders (Aaker 2010:10). Following the perspectives of Keller (2003:70), Grönroos (2007 in Angelopulo 2009:23) as well as Wood (2000 in Tran & Cox 2009:122), it can be deduced that the marketing programme is only one aspect that controls brand associations (Ind & Bjerke 2007:6). Other decisive factors include word-of-mouth communication, direct experience, brand information, visual brand elements, for example the brand name or logo, or assumptions made by the brand, for example its identification with a certain country, organisation, person, place or event. The extent to which consumers perceive these associations to be favourable will influence their behaviour to invest in a specific product or service consistently despite attempts of competitors to persuade consumers otherwise. Jones (2005) adds to this perspective by indicating that brand value is established by completely satisfying the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, not only those of customers.

In addition to the above viewpoints, Lehmann, Keller and Farley (2008:50) argue that as consumers are becoming more empowered, they will increasingly evaluate organisations on their attitudes and the way they conduct business. At the level of the individual consumer, enhancing brand equity can result in an increase in both the amount of the product purchased as well as the price which the consumer pays for a product. When purchasing a product, the individual buys the generic product as well as the added

contribution of the brand. This means brand equity is part of the customer's value to an organisation. Considered from this perspective, total customer lifetime value is based on brand equity obtained at the product-market level, which is the added revenue an organisation receives from selling the brand. At the combined level, enhancing brand equity improves the three determinants of customer lifetime value. These are acquisition, retention and expansion (Keller & Lehmann 2009:15-16).

The various perspectives on brand equity as presented above reveal that this concept refers to the additional value with which a specific brand supplements the benefits of a product. Apart from the functional benefits of a product, the brand also equips the product with intangible attributes in addition to its functionality, which in turn enhance the perceived usefulness and attractiveness of a product. This implies that consumers do not only evaluate brands and products based on their functional value, but their purchasing decisions are also influenced according to their value in terms of intangible attributes. These intangible attributes include the perceived prestige and status associated with the brand, value-adding product offerings, and the behaviour of the organisation's internal stakeholders towards customers. As a result, two main perspectives apply: first, the value which brand owners gain from the brand, and second, the customer's relationship with the brand. Consumers who are knowledgeable about the brand associate the brand with favourable, enduring, and unique qualities regarding its performance and perceived benefits. Consumers' image of the added value provided by the brand is based on a number of aspects that serve as the most essential criteria according to which they evaluate the brand. The relationship which develops between the consumer and the brand based on consumers' perception of the brand's value-adding qualities determines their future purchasing decisions and behaviour.

4.3 SUMMARY

Following the definitions of corporate identity and corporate brand identity presented in sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.2 respectively in Chapter 3, the mandatory elements that constitute corporate brand identity were identified in this chapter for the purpose of the concourse for the Q study (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7). These elements are described as mandatory as they are perceived by scholars in the field of corporate and marketing communication as essential elements of the corporate brand identity mix which contribute to effective corporate brand image formation. These elements coincide with corporate identity and brand identity at different levels and are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. Corporate identity elements were also included because a number of

components and elements identified as elements of the corporate brand identity mix are rooted in corporate identity from which the concept of brand identity has evolved over the years. Each of the elements of corporate brand identity as identified from the definitions of corporate identity and corporate brand identity was also discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 5, all the essential elements of corporate brand identity discussed in section 4.2 are grouped into seven categories based on the perceived function of these elements in corporate brand image formation as identified from the literature review for the purpose of the extensive person sample for the Q study (see Chapter 6 section 6.4.1.7). The elements of each category as well as the perceived role of these elements in corporate brand image formation are also discussed in the context of these seven categories.

CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL CATEGORISATION OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY ELEMENTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the elements of corporate brand identity are grouped into seven theoretical categories based on their perceived function in corporate brand image formation as identified from the literature review. These elements were identified in Chapter 4 based on the overall literature review of corporate identity and corporate brand identity (see Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3.2 respectively). The perceived role of each of the elements of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation, as argued in various academic publications, is explained in the context of these seven theoretical categories. The objective is to indicate that these elements form part of the concourse for corporate brand image formation. These elements, identified as the most essential elements of corporate identity and corporate brand identity in the overall literature review, are therefore regarded as compulsory aspects of the concept of corporate brand identity (see Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3.2 respectively). The extent to which each of the corporate brand identity elements is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation was evaluated by means of three measuring instruments (see Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion).

5.2 THEORETICAL CATEGORISATION OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY ELEMENTS AND THEIR PERCEIVED ROLE IN CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

The theoretical categorisation of the corporate brand identity elements and their perceived role in corporate brand image formation was necessary for the purpose of measurement by means of three measuring instruments, including an online Q sort (see Chapters 6 and 7 for a detailed discussion). The categorisation of the corporate brand elements is first summarised in Table 5.1 to facilitate the explanation of how and why the categorisation was done. The Six Station Corporate Identity Model and its Mechanisms (Suvatjis & Chernatony 2005:816) was used as basis for categorising the elements identified as compulsory to the concept of corporate brand identity in Chapter 4. The six categories of

the Model were adapted and expanded to seven categories to include the corporate brand identity elements identified in Chapter 4. The Six Station Corporate Identity Model comprises the following six categories:

- The Head Station comprising mission/vision/values, leadership and top management
- The Strategy Station comprising brands products/services, marketing and corporate strategy
- The Creativity Station comprising corporate visual identity systems, advertising and visual identity
- The Communication Station comprising digital communication, internal communication and external communication
- The Human Power Station comprising stakeholders, the organisation's employees and its group dynamism
- The Critical Triplet Station comprising reputation, corporate personaligy and corporate image

The Six Station Corporate Identity Model and its Mechanisms (Suvatjis & de Chernatony 2005) was adapted and used as basis for categorising the corporate brand identity elements identified in Chapter 4, since corporate identity forms the basis from which the corporate brand concept has expanded. The Model reflects the multidimensional nature of corporate identity, since it introduces a large number of the elements that are regarded mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity as identified from the literature review in Chapter 4. These elements include visual symbolism, behaviour and corporate communications. Furthermore, the model emphasises complexity between all the elements of corporate identity. The way in which the interrelationships between the numerous components of corporate identity have been depicted provides a holistic, systems perspective to corporate identity. The Model acknowledges that corporate image is an impression formation process that incorporates multiple variables. In addition, it regards a favourable perception of the organisation as an imperative variable contributing to profitability, business advantage and survival of the organisation. Furthermore, the Model notes that a resultant corporate image may be either negative and unwanted or favourable. This perception also applies to reputation. In addition, the Model recognises that a single corporate image among stakeholders does not exist (Suvatjis & De Chernatony 2005:819).

The categorisation of the corporate brand elements is summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Categorisation of corporate brand identity elements and their perceived role in corporate brand image formation

NUMBER	CATEGORY	ELEMENTS	PERCEIVED ROLE IN CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION
1.	Transformational leadership and management	Brand personality and brand philosophy Core ideology Brand vision and brand mission Brand purpose Core values	The role and leadership of executive management is critical, and their contribution, attitudes, values and policies have a major impact on future corporate success.
2.	Business strategy	Brand associations Brand knowledge Brand essence Brand awareness Brand positioning Brand messages Brand strength Brand stewardship Brand architecture and corporate structure Internal branding Product and service delivery Resource transformation; total quality management (TQM); strategic control systems	Positioning and differentiation of the brand is a management function which takes place according to a coherent brand strategy with the purpose of creating brand knowledge.
3.	Creativity	Visualisation Marketing, corporate strategy and corporate social initiatives	This category involves creating visual means and symbols to communicate the most fundamental aspects of the organisation and its products. This enables stakeholders to visualise the organisation's objectives, vision, mission and values.

NUMBER	CATEGORY	ELEMENTS	PERCEIVED ROLE IN CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION
4.	Communication	Controlled communication Uncontrolled communication Integrated marketing communication (IMC) Integrated communication (IC) (internal, external and digital communication (internet))	Corporate brand image formation results from the total set of controlled and non-controlled messages, as these messages influence how consumers perceive the corporate brand identity.
5.	Human power	Corporate behaviour Stakeholder value Industrial relations	The values, attitudes, roles, actions and interests of internal and external stakeholders play a central role in the messages about corporate brand identity transmitted to external audiences.
6.	External environmental influences	Demographics, market conditions and strategies; Perceived quality and satisfaction; Globalisation of competition and greater openness of markets; Mergers, acquisitions and divestitures; Increased competition and acceleration of product life cycles (PLC); Deregulation; Privatisation programmes; Increased competition in the public and private sectors; Increased competition in the service sector;	There is interaction and interrelationship between the components of the micro- and macro-environments, because each of the components of organisational systems is mutually influenced by each component of the system as well as by the external environment.

NUMBER	CATEGORY	ELEMENTS	PERCEIVED ROLE IN CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION
		Shortage of high-calibre employees; Technological innovation and strategic alliances.	
7.	Critical triplet	Reputation Corporate brand image Brand equity	Reputation, corporate brand image and brand equity are the first aspects that are adversely affected when the brand is experienced as inadequate in meeting consumers' needs.

In the next section the theoretical categorisation of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as summarised in Table 5.1 is discussed and validated. The categories are connected, since each category involves the production of specific functions and benefits which can be transmitted to the next category where further value is added. Furthermore, the categories work in synergy in that the successful execution of each category is a prerequisite for effectively controlling the elements in each category.

5.3 VALIDATION OF THE THEORETICAL CATEGORISATION OF CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY ELEMENTS IN CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

This section provides an explanation of the theoretical categories of the elements of corporate brand identity as indicated in Table 5.1. Each of these categories comprises a number of corporate brand identity elements that are perceived to render a unique contribution to corporate brand image formation when incorporated in an organisation's branding strategy. Each category has been named suitably to include its unique elements. Furthermore, the perceived role of these elements in corporate brand image formation is discussed in the context of each category. The objective is to indicate that the identified elements of corporate brand identity form part of the concourse for corporate brand image formation.

5.3.1 Category one: transformational leadership and management

The first category, *transformational leadership and management*, embodies the setting of suitable corporate brand identity objectives. In addition, the leadership, values, contribution and attitudes of management are influential in determining the future success of the organisation. Transformational leadership is aimed at encouraging employees to take responsibility for achieving the organisation's objectives as expressed in its vision statement (Ind & Bjerke 2007:204).

5.3.1.1 Elements of the transformational leadership and management category

For the purpose of this study, the *transformational leadership and management category* comprises the following elements under top management's leadership:

- Brand vision;
- Brand mission;
- Brand purpose;
- Brand values;
- Brand philosophy; and
- Brand personality.

These elements are included in the *transformational leadership and management category* as they are the constituent parts of brand culture. Brand culture plays an important role in developing and establishing corporate brand image (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4). In addition, the brand culture is a fundamental part of establishing an inviting environment that attracts and retains quality employees. The perceived contribution of the brand vision, the brand mission, the brand purpose, brand values, brand philosophy and brand personality to corporate brand image formation under the leadership of executive management is explained in the following section.

5.3.1.2 Perceived role of the brand personality, brand philosophy, core ideology, brand vision, brand mission, brand purpose and core brand values in corporate brand image formation

The perceived role of each of the elements that constitute the *transformational leadership and management category* is discussed below.

a A unique brand personality requires a well-articulated brand philosophy

Brand personality is a concept which has developed from the transfer of personality theory from the field of individual psychology to the marketing framework. By applying the

concept of personality to the marketing context, it is argued that brands, like individuals, can develop a personality with specific, unique characteristics (Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera 2001; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:146).

Following the perspective that the brand personality has distinct attributes, De Chernatony and Cottam (2009:81-82) suggest that the brand philosophy must be formulated based on the unique qualities of the organisation. Furthermore, these authors maintain that since the brand philosophy forms the most fundamental part of the corporate image management process, a well-articulated brand philosophy will enable the organisation to reflect its actual nature as the complete set of the organisational characteristics. These unique attributes form the basis from which an organisation's corporate brand identity is developed and include the organisation's product offering, culture and services.

Similarly, Knox and Bickerton (2003:1001) as well as Riesenbeck and Perry (2007:146) view the metaphor of brand personality as a communication tool to express the brand culture in addition to the emotional characteristics attributed to the corporate brand. Moreover, the emotional attributes associated with a brand based on the brand personality serve as a powerful mechanism to influence consumers' purchasing behaviour in favour of the brand (Abratt 1989:70; Van Heerden & Puth 1995:12; Markwick & Fill 1997:400; De Chernatony 2006:244). A strong, favourable brand personality fulfils consumers' emotional needs. This may enhance the corporate brand image, and lead to an increased willingness to continue using a specific brand or to use a new brand or brand extension for the first time, and to pay premium prices for a high-quality brand (Freling & Forbes 2005b; Venable, Rose, Bush & Gilbert 2005; Chang & Chieng 2006; Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrman, Huber F, Huber S & Lee 2006; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:146).

Following the opinion of various scholars in the literature (for example, Chang & Chieng 2006; Kressmann et al 2006) that fulfilment of consumers' emotional needs may increase brand equity, Freling and Forbes (2005a:405-406) explain that a product has intrinsic and extrinsic cues that influence the ways consumers perceive its benefits. A product's intrinsic cues are its physical composition, while the extrinsic cues relate to the product but do not form part of the physical product itself. For example, the marketing strategy often involves using the brand name as an extrinsic cue to reflect the intrinsic product attributes. The brand name as extrinsic cue also serves as substitute for product quality when the consumer lacks adequate information about the inherent qualities of a product. Information provided on the intrinsic and extrinsic brand attributes increases the attention consumers pay to the brand and stimulates active information processing. It can therefore

be argued that more brand associations will be created if an organisation's marketing and advertising initiatives are aimed at communicating a distinctly positive brand personality instead of providing only product information (Freling & Forbes 2005a:405-406; Fioroni & Titterton 2009:60).

Consumers also tend to rely on information about a brand's personality as the actual reflection of the intrinsic product attributes when a purchasing decision in favour of a specific brand is made. This implies that brand personality may influence the way consumers perceive the intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes, especially if they lack previous experience of the intrinsic attributes which complicates their evaluation of these attributes. For this reason, the brand associations resulting from the communication of a unique brand personality should be more favourable, strong, differentiating and congruent than associations based on product information only. If competing brands have similar intrinsic cues, brand personality may serve as a tool to create a basis for differentiation. Therefore, in the case of products that have equivalent product attributes, consumers will evaluate the product benefits more favourably if claims made in the marketing and advertising material provide intrinsic and extrinsic cues that communicate a strong, positive brand personality, as compared to marketing aimed at informing consumers about the product's features and benefits only (Freling & Forbes 2005a:405-406).

Aaker (1997:348) and De Chernatony (2006:245) hold a similar view on the role of a strong brand personality in differentiating the brand in the industry. These authors maintain that any direct or indirect contact with the brand can influence consumers' perceptions of the brand personality traits. This argument was also previously maintained by McCracken (1989), who indicates that in this way the personality traits of individuals who are associated with the brand are linked directly to the brand. Batra et al (1993) add that consumers indirectly associate personality traits with a brand by means of the brand name, symbol or logo, product-related attributes, product category associations, price, distribution channel and advertising style. The role of positive personality traits in creating a strong brand is based on earlier perspectives of scholars such as Levy (1959:12). Apart from linking personality attributes to the concept of brand personality, Levy (1959:12) also regards demographic characteristics such as gender, age and class as decisive elements in establishing a positive brand personality. These traditional viewpoints are also reflected in more recent literature on brand personality. Aaker (1997 in Harris & de Chernatony 2001:444) maintains that similar to personality characteristics, these demographic

characteristics are also derived directly from individuals who use the brand, employees or product endorsers, and indirectly from other brand associations.

It follows from the above discussion that brand personality provides knowledge on the benefits of a product or service that appeals emotionally to customers since it evokes specific feelings in them. These feelings shape consumers' perceptions about a brand by enabling them to categorise information, by controlling the amount of attention consumers give to a brand and their awareness of the brand, by guiding consumers to acquire sensory data on a brand that will influence their purchasing behaviour, and by supplying a context to give and explain the sensory data on a specific brand.

Furthermore, scholars argue that a brand which is associated with a strong, positive personality has numerous benefits. Apart from increasing levels of trust and loyalty, a brand with a strong personality evokes specific emotional feelings in consumers which increase their preference for and usage of a particular brand. In addition, a strong brand personality encourages consumers to actively process sensory data on a specific brand which provides a basis for product differentiation, among other things. Moreover, brand personalities, like human personalities, comprise relatively enduring traits. Therefore, brand personality may influence consumers' perceptual processing of product information.

b Core ideology that reflects the predominant character of the organisation differentiates it from competitors

Core ideology refers to the core principles according to which an organisation functions and defines its predominant character. The role of core ideology is to guide, inspire and enthuse employees; therefore, it must be meaningful and motivating to stakeholders within the organisation. An organisation that implements a clear, well-formulated and organised ideology attracts stakeholders whose personal values are congruent with the organisation's core values (Ind & Bjerke 2007:140). The consistency, authenticity and discipline with which the ideology is enforced differentiate an innovative organisation from its competitors (Collins & Porras 1996:66; 71; De Chernatony 2006:122).

A strong culture enhances the performance of an organisation in two ways. Firstly, it motivates employees to achieve higher ideals and values based on a set of meaningful, unified goals. These ideals elicit employees' effort and commitment, because they are inherently engaging and fill voids in identity and meaning. Secondly, a strong culture coordinates and shapes employees' behaviour. Values and norms shared by employees create awareness of priorities that direct employee behaviour and decision-making. In this

regard, the leadership of an organisation's founder can significantly influence organisational culture. This may create increased awareness and motivation to demonstrate the organisational values. Furthermore, to optimise the corporate branding approach, alignment of three essential elements is required, namely vision, culture and image (Schultz et al 2005; De Chernatony 2006:124).

c *Brand vision and brand mission reflect the long-term purposes and strategic management of the organisation*

The brand vision and brand mission are regarded as sub-elements of the *transformational leadership and management category*, because the mission and vision statements of the organisation represent its long-term purposes.

Earlier perspectives on the brand vision and brand mission which are also reflected in more recent literature maintain that these concepts contribute to corporate brand image formation as they determine the strategic management of the business (Abratt 1989; Collins & Porras 1996:67; Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-40; Keller & Lehmann 2009). Brand vision serves as an influential means of communicating to a variety of organisational stakeholders simultaneously and delineating a definite direction for future corporate brand growth (Jones 2010:45). An effective vision exemplifies the core ideology of the organisation. The core ideology consists of two prominent parts: the first comprises the core values of an organisation, which embody a system of principles that guide the way the organisation conducts business; the second constitutes the core purpose, the most fundamental reason for the organisation's existence. The value of the organisation's vision can be communicated to employees through symbolic action. However, to ensure credibility of an organisation's vision, the evidence of continuous commitment is required. In addition, employees must be given the opportunity for active involvement in the process, so the vision will be reflected in their day-to-day behaviour, and ultimately result in lasting cultural change. Finally, to ensure effective execution of the organisation's vision continuous feedback from internal and external audiences is required, which will provide guidelines for adjustment of the organisation's vision (Ind & Bjerke 2007:195).

The mission statement expresses the organisation's business purpose, which sets it apart from all other organisations and functions as a principle of order. The brand mission describes the basic point of departure from where all activities of the organisation are initiated, while brand vision explains the objectives which the organisation aims to achieve in future. As such, an organisation's vision and mission statements provide a set of

organised, formal guidelines to internal stakeholders of the organisation to ensure consistent employee behaviour and organisational activities (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35).

Furthermore, the mission and vision statements of an organisation proclaim the long-term aspirations which management envisages for the brand. The verbal articulation of the brand's purpose enables employees to understand how their job contributes to the organisation's success. Finally, the mission and vision statements serve as prescriptive measures that provide knowledge to govern employees' choices about strategies, customers, products, services and the market in which the organisation operates (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35).

In view of the above explanation it can be concluded that the mission and vision serve as guidelines for employees' behaviour according to which they should interpret and realise the corporate principles for the various areas of business activity and functions. These guidelines explain how the corporate principles apply to the actions and behaviour of all employees, departments and functions (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35). In this regard, Ind and Bjerke (2007:204) indicate that transformational leadership is not exclusively aimed at influencing employees' attitudes through the organisational vision. Rather, transformational leaders impact on the way employees' behave by encouraging them to take responsibility for achieving the organisation's objectives as expressed in its vision statement. This implies a culture that puts greater emphasis on creative change and de-territorialisation.

d Core values direct business objectives to achieve organisational goals

Brand values are the beliefs and principles of moral behaviour established in the brand culture. This implies that brand values reveal the organisation's identity, organisational performance, corporate behaviour, the type of products and services an organisation offers and the quality of its products and services. Therefore, the perceived role of brand values in corporate brand image formation is to provide greater direction about the organisation's business objectives and the means employed by the organisation to achieve its goals. As such, values reinforce the purpose and strategy of the organisation. In addition, the brand values stipulate the intended behaviour of internal stakeholders and organisational activities required to execute the brand mission and vision (values). As such, brand values provide guidelines to internal stakeholders on the appropriate behaviour required in order to ensure delivery of the brand promise (De Chernatony 2001c:34-36). Urde (2009:630) adds to the perspectives of De Chernatony (2001c:34-36)

by emphasising the important role of perseverance, dedication and stewardship in reinforcing employees' commitment to adhering to the corporate brand values. In addition, core values that are shared among employees, customers and other external stakeholders link the organisation with its brand and stakeholders. These values are continuous and shape the organisation's reputation. Furthermore, the brand values must be formulated in a way that represents the unique character of the brand in order to attract customers and continuously render superior client service (De Chernatony 2006:114-119).

It follows that the mission, vision, values and strategy statements of an organisation provide an exposition of the core business of the organisation and guide employees in setting priorities and behaving appropriately (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3). By communicating with and acting consistently towards internal audiences, the organisation disseminates a set of uniform values. In this way, employees come to share a sense of purpose and uniform destiny, and are linked with the organisation's value proposition (Forman & Argenti 2005:258; Lorraine 2005:172; Brexendorf & Kernstock 2007:38; Ind & Bjerke 2007:188).

5.3.1.3 Summary of the perceived role of the transformational leadership and management category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature

The elements included in the transformational leadership and management category were grouped in this category, since these elements explain the business direction of the organisation, as is evident from the literature review in sections 5.3.1.1 and 5.3.1.2. A brand philosophy, based on the distinct attributes of the organisation, serves as foundation for enhancing corporate brand image formation. A well-formulated brand philosophy encapsulates the total set of unique functional and emotional characteristics of the organisation based on its product offering, culture and services (c.f. De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81-82). In this regard, the unique organisational attributes reflected by the brand personality may influence consumers' associations with the brand and how they perceive the intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes. Thus, favourable, distinguishing associations with a unique brand personality serves as powerful tool to enhance brand image formation (c.f. Freling & Forbes 2005b; Venable, Rose, Bush & Gilbert 2005; Chang & Chieng 2006; Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrman, Huber F, Huber S & Lee 2006; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:146). From the core ideology a set of shared, uniform values and norms is created to guide employees' behaviour and to provide direction to the organisation's business, based on the organisation's vision and mission statements (c.f.

Jones 2010:45). As such, a solid core ideology is a prerequisite for establishing a differentiating brand personality and revealing the distinct character of the organisation.

5.3.2 Category Two: Business strategy

If the activities in the *transformational leadership and management category* are coordinated with the necessary skill and expertise, it should result in the formulation of corporate strategies (Suvatjis & De Chernatony 2005:818). Therefore, the second category, *business strategy*, deals with the formulation and implementation of a coherent, integrated and well-planned business strategy in order to position the brand favourably among the various target publics.

5.3.2.1 Elements of the business strategy category

The elements of the *business strategy category* comprise the following:

- Brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand essence, brand associations, brand positioning, brand messages, brand strength, brand stewardship and brand architecture and corporate structure;
- Internal branding;
- Product and service delivery;
- Resource transformation; total quality management (TQM), and strategic control systems.

5.3.2.2 Perceived role of business strategy in corporate brand image formation

The brand provides the premise for directing interaction with its target group(s) according to pre-determined strategies. Therefore, the objective of the *business strategy category* is to coordinate employees' behaviour in order to enhance cooperation among the organisation's employees. In this regard, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000:7), Chandon (2003:1) as well as Ind and Bjerke (2007:114) propose that management must employ measures to ensure that employee behaviour and all communication with external stakeholders consistently convey the essence of the brand, its values, objectives, products and services. According to these authors, consistent messages on the brand, its values, objectives, products and services positively influence the way stakeholders perceive the personality of the corporate brand. Marianne (2007) adds that effective recruitment and retention of customers is dependent upon the marketing strategies used to project the brand, since customers tend to enter into a partnership with a brand. As such, applying a coherent strategy for brand positioning is a management function which provides brand knowledge to consumers in order to affect their perception and attitudes of

the brand (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:71). In this regard, Sreedhar, Vishag and McDonald (2005) indicate that the role of the brand strategist is to ensure a more synchronised and effective communication of the brand, resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction and increased sales (Gibson 2003). In view of these perspectives it can be concluded that implementing the most suitable strategy may enhance corporate brand image (see Chapter 2, section 2.6) and brand equity (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.8.11) (Srivastava 2009).

a *Brand associations, brand knowledge, brand essence, brand awareness, brand positioning, brand messages, brand strength, brand stewardship, brand architecture and corporate structure*

The concepts of brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand essence, brand associations, brand positioning, brand strength, brand stewardship, and brand architecture and corporate structure are grouped under three separate subdivisions. The elements constituting these subdivisions were identified from the literature review based on how organisations use these elements collectively as part of a well-articulated business strategy to enhance corporate brand image formation.

• *Brand associations based on consumers' brand knowledge as reflected in the brand essence create brand awareness*

The elements of brand associations, brand knowledge, brand essence and brand awareness are considered under the same subdivision, since these elements are deemed to complement one another in the way they are used as part of the marketing mix to enhance brand equity, as explained in this section.

Brand associations refer to any feature which the consumer associates with the brand, including symbols, the typical brand users, the unique attributes of the brand product, aspects that connect the consumer with the organisation and brand personality (Batey 2008:116). These elements encompass the central nature or essence of what the brand represents through direct and indirect contact with the brand. Therefore, consumers' awareness of a specific brand, based on strong associations of the brand, creates a specific image in their minds, since brand awareness affects the way consumers perceive a brand and their preference for a specific brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000:17). Brand knowledge, which is a constituent of brand equity, is the result of information on the qualities of a specific brand stored in customers' consciousness. Consumers' knowledge about a brand is related to their ability to recognise the qualities of a brand from abstract

cues and to connect these to a specific class of products (Vaitkiene & Vainauskiene 2010:45).

To create and reinforce associations about a specific brand in consumers' minds, brand symbols are used to communicate the distinct qualities of the brand. These qualities are created by identifying a set of values that reflect those competencies of the brand which address the needs of the organisation's customers. The visual elements of a brand provide a foundation for classifying the brand as part of a specific product category. In addition, brand symbols can affect the conclusions consumers reach about the attributes or benefits of a brand (Verma 2010:26). Moreover, visual brand elements used in combination with other elements create synergy in the marketing mix to reinforce groups of functional and emotional elements associated with the brand, establish a brand's positioning, and maintain its equity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000:17; Ind & Bjerke 2007:114; Lynch & De Chernatony 2007:131; Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000 in Ghodeswar 2008:6; Verma 2010:105).

Brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition refers to the consumer's ability to verify previous exposure to the brand when a brand is given as a cue. Brand recall encompasses the consumer's ability to retrieve the brand from memory; to relate it to the needs which the category fulfils or a previous purchase or usage situation. Lee and Labroo (2004) conducted research to determine the effects on emotional judgement of the ease with which the meaning of symbolic stimuli is understood, also referred to as conceptual fluency. These authors hold the view that visual symbols which are effortlessly called to mind, and whose meanings are more easily comprehended, are easier to process. The findings of their research suggest that the ease with which information on a brand is processed precipitates more favourable attitudes towards a product, and that ease of processing may be based on conceptual or perceptual viewpoints.

Research conducted by Biedenbach and Marell (2010:455-456) provides new evidence on the vital role of combining the activities of an organisation aimed at creating customer satisfaction and sustaining brand equity. In addition to employing tools such as IMC, which were used traditionally to enhance corporate brand image formation and consequently brand equity (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2), the major effect of direct customer experience on developing brand equity must be taken into account. According to the results of this study, positive customer experience could be a primary factor affecting customers' brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality of the brand and their

brand loyalty. The findings of this research suggest that more focus is required on creating more positive customer experience to establish a more favourable attitude towards the brand among consumers.

The above discussion on brand associations, brand knowledge and brand awareness reveals that well-positioned brands occupy particular status in consumers' minds. Therefore, brand building initiatives are aimed at changing consumer perceptions, reinforcing attitudes, and creating and fostering customer relationships. Following this perspective, it can be concluded that corporate branding is about creating positive brand knowledge in the minds of all relevant target communities in order to enhance trust in the organisation, its products, services and actions, and to differentiate it from its competitors (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:44).

- ***Brand positioning requires distinct, coherent brand messages and brand stewardship to reinforce the brand strength***

The second subdivision comprises the elements of brand positioning, brand messages, brand strength and brand stewardship. A well-established brand positioning strategy that incorporates brand messages in the form of all organisational activities and communication creates a set of brand associations. Furthermore, an effective brand building process requires brand stewardship which involves a holistic marketing process in order to enhance the identity of the organisation (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:16).

According to Verma (2010:132), brand positioning activities are aimed at differentiating a brand from competitors' brands or offerings. Consumers distinguish between brands based on the extent to which the products or services meet their needs or expectations. Consequently, brand positioning relates to creating apprehension of a brand in customers' mind (Verma 2010:105; 132-135). All activities and communication an organisation engages in create knowledge in the network of brand associations. The communication strategy should therefore be designed to enhance the identity of the organisation. As such, the communication strategy is aimed at creating a coherent network of brand associations that contain corresponding messages by communicating all the dimensions that constitute the corporate strategy to the relevant target markets. This implies that the brand building process must be expanded to the organisation's entire marketing process. Brand stewardship involves all internal stakeholders of the organisation to commit themselves to transmitting the brand promise through their every action. For this reason, the brand positioning process must incorporate the brand values, strengths, brand culture,

corporate style and future direction as measures to differentiate the organisation from its competitors.

Moreover, a well-established corporate branding strategy serves as a powerful tool that adds significant value in terms of enabling the organisation to execute its long-term vision and to position the organisation in the marketplace. Therefore, branding must be incorporated into the overall strategy of the organisation. Organisations must realise brand development is an infinite process. In addition, they must be able to identify the attributes that set the brand apart and which should remain unchanged, while recognising those that may need adjustment in order to sustain brand differentiation. Finally, organisations must research and analyse marketplace developments and modify the branding strategy accordingly in order to ensure the brand remains in step with trends in the industry (Roll 2004:1).

The above discussion indicates that corporate branding is a well-ordered process which relies on IC techniques to create congruency between communication messages sent to internal and external stakeholders. Creating alignment between the internal and external corporate brand messages to ensure a coherent brand image requires the organisation to communicate the organisational values to a network of internal and external stakeholders by integrating corporate as well as marketing communication initiatives. In the above discussion corporate branding is described as a multidisciplinary approach which incorporates marketing, strategy, organisational behaviour and communications. Corporate branding is explained as a process aimed at reflecting the most fundamental attributes of an organisation with the purpose of distinguishing it from its competitors to achieve a competitive advantage. This perspective implies that the branding process should be fully incorporated into the overall strategic plan with systemic support throughout the organisation.

- ***Brand architecture and corporate structure as a means to reflect the attributes and interrelationships of portfolio brands***

Brand architecture and corporate structure comprise the third subdivision discussed under the *business strategy* category. These elements are discussed as a separate subdivision since they deal with the relationship between the parent brand and the sub-brand as well as the role of brand extension in positioning the parent brand and sub-brands favourably in the marketplace.

Aaker (2004b:13) refers to brand architecture as brand portfolio strategy, indicating that “the brand portfolio strategy specifies the structure of the brand portfolio and the scope,

roles, and interrelationships of the portfolio brands". This means that brand architecture relates to positioning brands, sub-brands, their relationships and roles. In addition, brand architecture explains the relationship between the parent brand and the sub-brand and the benefits that the brand extension offers consumers. In view of the above, Dev (2008) and Verma (2010:170-171) add that the leveraging of brand assets requires an organisation to understand the role of brands, sub-brands and endorsed brands in order to know when brand extension is appropriate, and to determine the relative role of each brand of the portfolio. In addition to the perspectives of Dev (2008) and Verma (2010:170-171), Keller (2009a:47) focuses on the role of a well-defined brand architecture strategy. In this author's view, brand extension to similar or different product and service categories requires the implementation of a well-planned brand architecture strategy that defines the brand's product or service categories, the benefits it offers and the needs it satisfies. As such, brand architecture explains the brand to consumers in terms of the most appropriate versions of the product or service to meet their individual needs.

b *Internal branding (inside-out perspective on branding)*

Internal branding is included as part of the *business strategy* category, since internal communication is a key element that contributes to the success of an organisation, particularly with regard to its role in implementing the organisation's business strategy and building its reputation.

Many prominent authors dealing with branding and marketing, for example Aaker (1996), Kapferer (1997) and Keller (2003), focus primarily on the role of products rather than services in corporate brand image formation. These scholars reflect an era in which advertising was regarded as the most fundamental determinant of brand image. More recently, various authors specialising in corporate branding have suggested that formal marketing and management communication initiatives are not the only measures of ensuring corporate brand consistency (Hardaker & Fill 2005:369; McDonald, De Chernatony & Harris 2001; Schultz et al 2005:18). Over the years, changes in consumer needs and increased competition between organisations have resulted in a shift in focus from transaction marketing to relationship marketing (Payne 2006:6). Relationship marketing is aimed at reinforcing relationships with various internal and external stakeholders, for example employees, consumers, distributors, suppliers and retailers. This means relationship marketing also deals with employee-focused internal marketing (Kale 2006:3) which is aimed at managing relationships between decision-makers and internal stakeholders of the organisation (Hollensen 2003:66). Grönroos (2000:ix)

maintains that in this way organisations aim to create awareness among employees of appropriate behaviour towards external *and* internal customers (Steyn, Steyn & Van Rooyen 2001:133). According to these authors' perspective the behaviour displayed by the organisation's employees, its customers and other stakeholders as well as the quality of relationship maintained between these groups of stakeholders are also important determinants of corporate brand image formation. Ind and Bjerke (2007:6) reiterate this view by emphasising the significant role of employees and services as intangible assets of the organisation.

Managing stakeholder relationships effectively requires a uniform organisational culture which focuses on employee empowerment as well as quality of service rendered to internal and external customers (Kelemen & Pappasolomou 2007:745; Yoon, Choi & Park 2007:386). In addition, relationships between the organisation and its internal stakeholders that are mutually beneficial also contribute to the recruitment of highly skilled and qualified employees (Mahnert & Torres 2007:55). Furthermore, instilling a sound knowledge of the values and beliefs of the organisation's core business among employees is one of the most essential measures to create organisational alignment. Values determine expected behaviour and ways of thinking and provide a framework against which actions can be judged (Ind & Bjerke 2007:58). Enhancing employee engagement with organisational values could stimulate employees to act as brand builders through their behaviour when interacting with the organisation's stakeholders (Bergstrom et al 2002:136; Vallaster & De Chernatony 2003:7; Knox & Freeman 2006:716; Brexendorf & Kernstock 2007:38; Van Riel 2008:347, 352; Buckingham 2009:124-125; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009; Hawabhay et al 2009:5; Keller 2009b:15-16; Devasagayam et al 2010:211). In addition, Punjaisri and Wilson (2009:60) explain that the objective of internal branding is to ensure employees realise the brand messages through their actions and the behaviour they demonstrate to customers and other stakeholders. Organisations that better align the capabilities of internal stakeholders are better able to respond to conditions in the external market (Gounaris 2006). In this manner, employees and services are regarded as determinants of the brand's value (Punjaisri & Wilson 2007:60). From this perspective the concept of intellectual capital or inside-out branding has developed.

The fundamental principle of inside-out branding is rooted in the field of organisational development (OD). It focuses specifically on measures that will enable organisations to create cultures that participate in organisational renewal. In contrast to the scientific management approach, organisational development emphasises the significance of

human relations and the psychology of individuals as employees and managers in the workplace (Ind & Bjerke 2007:49). To enhance the value stakeholders derive from using the brand, organisations must recognise the desire that most employees have to be involved in the organisational cause (Wheeler, Richey, Tokkman & Sablynski 2006:96; Ind & Bjerke 2007:52; Ferdous 2008). Committed employees will be more likely to deliver value to customers and other stakeholders. Internal stakeholders therefore need to have a clear understanding of the brand and the capacity to deliver it to customers in appropriate ways. As such, organisational alignment is a strategic measure that enables organisations to coordinate activities across all departments, thereby increasing competitive advantage (Forman & Argenti 2005:257; Kalla 2005:311; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:215). With regard to establishing a uniform understanding of the brand, Van Riel (2008:354) maintains that employee alignment benefits from stimulating dialogue with groups of employees. This is aimed at discussing the organisational strategy, and motivating employees to discuss the conditions which they regard as imperative to guaranteeing the successful execution of the strategy. Implementing organisational rituals, for example monthly staff meetings, offers an important opportunity for providing updates, previewing brand strategies, relating success stories, and celebrating achievements with employees by means of a peer award programme (Daw & Cone 2011:123). Competent and motivated employees identify with the organisation and consequently interact with external stakeholders in a manner that strengthens the corporate reputation. In addition, a significant correlation exists between the perceived effectiveness of training and commitment of employees, the level of job satisfaction and motivation (Aurand et al 2005; Mitki & Herstein 2007; Punjaisri et al 2008:412; Sahinidis & Bouris 2008; Van Riel 2008:354). Involving employees in the organisation's cause results in certain advantages, namely (a) inclusivity: which ensures that all departments and divisions participate in the brand building process; (b) credibility: that the brand reveals the true nature of the organisation; and (c) comprehension: that the process of discussion provides staff with insight to comprehend and engage with the brand (Ind & Bjerke 2007:69).

The inside-out branding approach is also proposed by a number of studies which investigate the subject of internal branding from the viewpoint of organisational/behavioural science (Burmam & Zeplin 2005). This viewpoint focuses on members' perception of the organisation and the corporate brand (Brown et al 2006:100). The organisational/behavioural science perspective contrasts with the perceived organisational identity perspective (Dutton et al 1994), and investigates how corporate brand values and beliefs direct organisational members' behaviour based on their

interpretation of these values (Von Wallpach & Woodside 2009:390). This approach can serve as the entry point for redefining the organisation's values, beliefs and behaviours. Cultivating acceptable organisational behaviour by displaying guiding principles in the everyday interaction with stakeholders may be a much more powerful measure for ensuring the success of a corporate brand than values that are defined and reinforced in an artificial manner. Management may consider implementing additional corporate brand values and beliefs that are not yet incorporated in the organisation, but which may be essential for positively influencing employee behaviour in order to achieve the corporate brand's vision. By integrating enacted values with intended values a corporate brand is provided with a base of solid, credible values which organisational members automatically enforce, since they provide a common goal towards which organisational members can work (Von Wallpach & Woodside 2009:420). The topic of internal branding as viewed from an organisational/behavioural science perspective is supported by Whisman's (2009:370) research findings on inside-out approaches to brand building which indicate that the actions of authentic and successful corporate organisations are based on their core values and guiding principles. They are contending with a marketplace of knowledgeable, sophisticated consumers. In addition, internal branding is regarded the most valuable intangible asset of these organisations' brand development process (Whisman 2009:370). Andreassen and Lanseng (2010:213) as well as Daw and Cone (2011:113) confirm the above viewpoint by indicating that employees play a fundamental role in differentiating market offerings. Since employees often interact with customers, organisations should create a differentiation strategy that focuses on recruiting employees who support the organisation's values. In addition, the differentiation strategy should provide for relating employees to customers with whom they can identify in the co-creation process. Co-creation implies that employees are required to use their talents and competencies to the organisation's advantage. In this way, employees are associated with the value the organisation provides in the market. Consequently, the process of co-creation requires employees to identify with the organisation and its customers and vice versa. The higher the level of co-creation, the more important identification becomes (Andreassen & Lanseng 2010:213).

c *Enhanced product and service delivery systems meet consumers' functional and symbolic needs*

According to perspectives in the late nineties (for example, Maklan & Knox 1997:121), organisations engage in branding initiatives to create customer value. This is done by

providing added service as well as functional and emotional value in order to enhance organisations' products and services and ensure brand loyalty. By integrating the elements of the organisation's products and services that provide added customer value in the organisation and its supply chain, customers can benefit from the organisation's value offer beyond its products and services. More recent perspectives support the viewpoint of Maklan and Knox (1997:121). Keller (2009a:46) argues that a well-designed product or service affects consumers both rationally and emotionally. Product design is not limited to the functioning of a product, it also involves sensory experience of the brand in terms of how it looks, feels, or even sounds and smells. Similarly, service design appeals to all sensory aspects of the consumer's experience and encounters with a brand. In view of Keller's (2009a:46) argument, it can be concluded that brand strength and the competitive advantages offered by the brand will be largely influenced by delivering products and services that are better designed than those of competitors, in order to provide more comprehensive and compelling consumer benefits (Ind & Bjerke 2007:118).

d Resource transformation, total quality management (TQM) and strategic control systems enhance customer satisfaction

Hammer and Champy (1993 in Maklan & Knox 1997:125) state that the process of creating products that will continue to meet customers' needs at functional and emotional levels, and rendering satisfactory customer services has been the principal object of management initiatives. Furthermore, they explain that these initiatives include total quality management (TQM) in which measures are applied for quality control purposes, continuous improvement of products and services, and business process reengineering which is applied to ensure products and services remain competitive in the market. Innovative organisations make their assets work in synergy with product development and customer service by sharing their knowledge, expertise and capabilities with suppliers and customers to enhance their role in the value chain. In this way, the organisation's assets are reconstructed into processes that enhance the brand's value to customers (Petrash 1996 in Maklan & Knox 1997:124).

Recent research on corporate brand identification and corporate brand management conducted by Balmer, Liao and Wang (2010:88) confirms the significance of aligning service quality so that it corresponds to the corporate brand covenant. The corporate brand custodianship requires that all employees should be involved in the branding activities.

Paswan et al (2005:5) as well as Pappasolomou and Vrontis (2006:39) provide a different perspective: that of aligning service quality by focusing on how improvement of the level of internal service quality contributes to performance outcomes. These authors indicate that the quality of internal service experienced by the employees in the main organisational systems responsible for the delivery of products and services could enhance the quality of the overall performance of an organisation. They add that productive, committed employees contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty, resulting in increased profitability and growth of the organisation over time. As a result, the internal service concept, which dictates that the entire organisation must serve its employees, has manifested as one of the underlying principles of the service management approach. Timothy, Aurand and Judson (2010) expand on this argument by stating that internal service delivery serves as a means of helping employees understand the brand promise in that it cultivates a natural motivation among employees to own the brand. In this regard, Carley, Punyaisri and Cheng (2010) declare that individual staff must render and receive outstanding service to ensure superior service to customers and consistent delivery of the brand promise.

5.3.2.3 Summary of the perceived role of the business strategy category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature

The elements included in the business strategy category are required for a synchronised strategy to enhance corporate brand image formation, as is evident from the literature review in sections 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.2.2.

An organisation that aims to promote its brand creates value and meaning within the brand structure. This requires a strategy of coherent brand messages according to which brand knowledge is transmitted to consumers in order to create a positive perception of the brand among the target audience (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:71). With regard to brand architecture this principle applies in that the brand knowledge transmitted to consumers through a network of brand associations enables them to differentiate the brand in terms of the most appropriate versions of the product or service to meet their individual needs (Keller 2009a:47).

For this purpose, brand symbols in combination with other corporate brand identity elements are used to differentiate the distinct qualities of the brand. Furthermore, execution of the *transformational and leadership category* is a prerequisite for coordinating the activities in the *business strategy category*. Creating unique brand qualities is a management function which is done by identifying a set of values that reflect

the functional and emotional attributes of the brand which address the needs of the organisation's customers (c.f. Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000:17; Ind & Bjerke 2007:114; Lynch & De Chernatony 2007:131; Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000 in Ghodeswar 2008:6; Verma 2010:105). Incorporating a set of values in the marketing process creates a coherent network of brand associations with corresponding messages that reflect all the dimensions of the corporate strategy to the internal and external stakeholders (c.f. Verma 2010:105; 132-135).

Execution of the *transformational and leadership category* is also a prerequisite for coordinating the activities in the *business strategy category* in that organisational alignment is required to create a culture of organisational renewal (c.f. Ind & Bjerke 2007:49). Creating brand knowledge and a coherent network of brand associations among external stakeholders requires management to instill sound knowledge of the values and beliefs of the organisation's core business among employees. This provides a common goal towards which organisational members can work and a framework of guidelines for acceptable behaviour (c.f. Ind & Bjerke 2007:58; Von Wallpach & Woodside 2009:420). Instilling a sound knowledge of the values and beliefs of the organisation's core business among employees also requires management to create a business strategy that provides for quality control measures to ensure competitive products and services in the market (c.f. Hammer & Champy 1993 in Maklan & Knox 1997:125). These initiatives create functional and emotional associations to the extent that the organisations' products and services meet consumers' needs resulting in enhanced brand loyalty. The brand knowledge created by the network of brand associations differentiates the organisation from its competitors, since it increases trust in the organisation, its products, services and actions (c.f. Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:44).

5.3.3 Category Three: Creativity

The *creativity category* is the all-inclusive category for the corporate creativity functions. This category also embodies the expansion and interrelation of the creativity functions to corporate advertising. The perceived role of this category in corporate brand image formation involves considering and creating means of visual expression which categorise and symbolise the organisation and the products and services it offers.

Christensen and Askegaard (2001:5) as well as Keller (2003) argue that the visual identity of an organisation serves as a method for the condensed expression of the organisation's cultural values, including its mission, vision, beliefs and objectives, and for supporting the organisation's communications efforts. It is a sub-element of corporate identity that

symbolises the quality, prestige and style associated with the organisation's product and service offerings to stakeholders. In addition, the corporate image constitutes a collection of interpretations resulting from these representations. The corporate image thus reflects stakeholders' perceptions and impressions of the organisation. The creative concept plays a pivotal role in this process. The function of the visual identity is to serve as a representation of the brand properties to position the brand in consumers' minds. This implies that the visual elements must be captivating and persuasive in order to influence the consumer's perception of the product's benefits in relation to the consumer's needs and to find a dominant place in the consumer's mind. In this manner, the product is differentiated from all the other competitive products on the market that could possibly satisfy those needs (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:315). The commodities produced by an organisation also convey particular messages through the way they are designed, which includes dimensions such as product design, environmental design, communication materials, vehicles and corporate clothing. The visual identity therefore provides the focal point at which the marketer and the target market first meet. These perspectives emphasise the significance of creating a distinctive visual communication system that represents the organisation's agreed corporate strategies, corporate artefacts, staff attitudes and behaviours in a holistic manner (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:315).

5.3.3.1 The elements of the creativity category

For the purpose of this study, "corporate design" is assumed to be characterised by two constructs:

- Visual identity and the corporate visual identity system; and
- Marketing, corporate strategy and corporate social initiatives.

5.3.3.2 Perceived role of the creativity category in corporate brand image formation

The perceived role of each construct of the *creativity* category in corporate brand image formation is discussed below.

a Visualisation as a means to create a brand personality

The elements that constitute the visual corporate design include the organisation's name, graphics (which include logotype, typography, symbols, colour), its slogan, the way in which its logo and slogan are combined, and its interior style (Melewar & Wooldridge 2001:329). Corporate visual identity is a collection of tangible, visual signs and symbols designed by the organisation according to which it is physically recognised. The visual cues that comprise the corporate visual identity embody the organisation's culture and

values. Symbolic values and meanings are introduced to brands to create the brand personalities required in order to portray a product or service. The symbolic values and meanings that the organisation selects to create a brand personality will reflect the recognised needs of the target customers which the organisation's product or service is designed to satisfy. In this way, the organisation enhances its brand equity. In addition, these values and meanings associated with the brand personality must be congruent with the brand attributes that compose the existing marketing mix. Over time, the corporate visual elements that display these symbolic values and meanings should be reflected in consumers' perceptions and feelings about the product's attributes and how it performs and should provide the foundation for brand equity (Keller 2003 in Hem & Iversen 2004:86).

The successful outcome of the use of visual identity symbols is predominantly based on the positive affective reactions triggered by the meaning associated with these symbols. Visual elements that are used consistently reinforce one another and serve to unify the entire process of corporate brand image formation and building, which in turn contributes to the strength and uniqueness of corporate brand identity (Keller 2003 in Hem & Iversen 2004:86). Hence all aspects of advertising and visual identity must be coordinated in order to prevent inconsistencies in an organisation's identity symbols used on its communication material, and to present a coherent style to internal and external stakeholders (Tan Tsu Wee & Chua Han Ming 2003:213).

In addition, Dowling (2001:180-181) argues that the consistent use of an organisation's identity symbols can create even more impact if the organisational values, strategy and culture are aligned with the organisation's visual style. Moreover, Dowling is of the opinion that selecting visual elements which represent the brand consistently and create a uniform set of values contribute to corporate brand image formation, since a unified process of corporate brand image formation narrows the gap between the prevailing image in the memory of the target group and the image which the organisation wishes to establish.

b Marketing, corporate strategy and corporate citizen initiatives – strategies to create a holistic image of the brand's attributes

As early as the 1970s, it was recognised that the purpose of a distinct brand personality is to establish and confirm in the public's frame of reference the fact that a brand is indispensable to the economy and consumers' way of life (McDaniel 1979:374). In addition, long-term investments in marketing actions can affect the way consumers perceive the quality of a product, which may result in brand loyalty.

More recently, corporate design has come to be regarded as a mechanism aimed at achieving specific economic goals. By creating a unique corporate design, the organisation establishes itself in the market by means of distinctive visual characteristics. These visual characteristics enable the organisation to differentiate itself from its competitors by creating a basis for marketing its products and services to the relevant target publics. In this regard, Keller (2007) explains that marketing communications activities create awareness of the brand by providing clues for establishing a set of brand associations in consumers' memory. In this way, marketing communications activities elicit positive judgements or feelings about the brand and thus establish a stronger consumer-brand connection. However, Keller (2009c:146) cautions that these marketing communications activities can only be used to achieve the strategic positioning if they are presented in an integrated manner which delivers a consistent message about the qualities of the brand. Keller (2009c:146) adds that marketers require a sound knowledge of which experiences and impressions consumers may have about the brand that will be most influential at each stage of consumers' purchasing process. These include knowledge about how well a proposed advertising campaign contributes to create awareness of the brand to strengthen brand associations; whether a sponsorship significantly influences consumers' judgement of the brand; and to what extent price promotion influences consumers' purchasing behaviour (Keller 2009c:146).

Scholars such as De Chernatony (2001a:5), Grimaldi (2003:1) and Keller (2009d:296) elaborate on the viewpoints of Maklan and Knox (1997) and McDaniel (1979), arguing that a brand is constituted of emotional and rational or functional elements. Therefore, brands are associated with specific values that meet consumers' functional and symbolic needs. Advertising that promotes the brand's benefits at an emotional or symbolic level is primarily aimed at creating a particular personality or character for the brand in consumers' minds by connecting the brand to specific associations or values. It follows that the way corporate activities, marketing mix activities and marketing communications promote the brand must be integrated into a holistic image of the brand's emotional and functional attributes in the consumer's mind. In this way, an integrated marketing approach creates brand messages that will reinforce the brand essence and enhance corporate brand image formation.

In addition to traditional marketing initiatives, organisations' attitudes to ethics are becoming increasingly important. This aspect of the corporate branding process requires organisations to be able to justify their actions and decisions from an ethical and moral point of view (Mukherjee & Balmer 2008:5). Research conducted by Hawabhay et al

(2009:14) confirms that organisations realise that corporate social initiatives support an organisation's visibility in the market, its image among internal stakeholders and also enhance customer loyalty. Similarly, Hoeffler et al (2010:86) indicate that corporate citizen initiatives can serve as an important instrument in internal branding. According to these authors corporate citizenship is a means that enables the organisation to interact with employees in ways they can more personally relate to. In addition, organisations benefit from corporate citizenship initiatives in a number of ways: they have the opportunity to develop more holistic relationships with employees and are more attractive as potential employers than organisations with lower corporate social performance ratings (Ind & Bjerke 2007:139). In this regard, Keller (2009a:47) and Aaker (2011:318) add that marketing programmes in the form of corporate citizenship initiatives are a powerful instrument for creating brand awareness, establishing the brand as a credible entity and eliciting brand engagement. However, Keller (2009a:47) and Aaker (2011:317) indicate that to ensure long-term sustainability, these initiatives must be branded in a way that enables consumers to make a connection from the cause to the brand. Hillestad, Xie and Haugland (2010:441) add to the perspective of Keller (2009a:47) and Aaker (2011:317) by indicating that corporate citizenship initiatives can also be integrated as an essential dimension of an organisation's business strategy. Incorporating corporate citizenship initiatives and environmental activities can serve as useful means for branding and differentiating the organisation. In addition, these activities can contribute to the development of unique and valuable business models, skills and operations.

Hoeffler et al (2010:78) highlight increased job satisfaction as another important consequence of employees' participation in corporate citizenship activities. The role of employees' perceived job satisfaction and their experience of internal working conditions in corporate brand image formation is evident from annual surveys such as Deloitte's "Best company to work for", *Fortune's* "Best places to work" and online reviews from websites such as Vault.com.

5.3.3.3 Summary of the perceived role of the creativity category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature

The elements included in the creativity category provide a visual representation of the nature of the brand as well as its vision, mission and objectives, as is evident from the literature review in sections 5.3.3.1 and 5.3.3.2.

Organisations use a collection of visual brand identity elements, including the organisation's name, graphics, logo and slogan for physical recognition and to provide a

visual representation of the organisation, its product and service offering. The distinct visual characteristics constituting the corporate design are used in an integrated and consistent manner by an organisation to establish itself in the market and create a platform for selling its products and services.

Execution of the *transformational and leadership category* is a prerequisite for realising the *creativity category* in that the corporate visual identity serves as a means to reflect the organisation's culture, strategy and values. Brand personalities that portray the brand's product or service are created by introducing a uniform set of symbolic values and meanings to the brand based on the brand attributes and consumers' needs which the organisation's product or service is designed to satisfy (c.f. Dowling 2001:180-181). A particular brand personality or character is established by means of advertising and brand messages that create a holistic image of the brand's benefits at an emotional or symbolic level in order to connect the brand to specific associations or values in consumers' minds. In this regard, the *creativity category* relies on the execution of the *brand strategy category* in that marketing communications is aimed at establishing unified brand messages that elicit positive knowledge and associations about the the brand, its product and service offerings. Over time, consumers come to associate the brand, its products and services with the corporate visual elements that display these symbolic values and meanings (c.f. Keller 2003 in Hem & Iversen 2004:86) and differentiate it from competitive products on the market (c.f. Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:315).

5.3.4 Category Four: Communication

The fourth category, that of *communication*, will be tested for inclusion in the measuring instrument, because communication operates as a two-way channel in which information for the internal and external environments is transmitted and received, as explained below.

5.3.4.1 Elements of the communication category

The *communication category* consists of the following three sub-elements:

- Internal communication;
- External communication; and
- Digital communication (Internet).

Each of these three sub-elements is divided into controlled (planned) and uncontrolled (unplanned) communication.

5.3.4.2 Perceived role of controlled and uncontrolled organisational communication in corporate brand image formation

In a world where information directs behaviour and determines all business decisions, communication is an inextricable part of the corporate strategy. For this reason, controlled and uncontrolled communication is included as an element of corporate brand identity which is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. Authors such as Cornelissen (2000:119-125) and Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006:851) hold the view that corporate identity as perceived by publics, which is referred to as the corporate image, is the consequence of controlled and uncontrolled messages. In view of the above discussion, it can be argued that planned and unplanned corporate communication is a process that converts corporate identity into image — the communication that takes place creates impressions among stakeholders which result in images about how stakeholders perceive the organisation. For this reason, organisations must follow a holistic approach for the strategic management of communication (Cornelissen 2000:119-125; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:851).

a Uncontrolled (unplanned/informal) organisational communication

Uncontrolled communication (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2), which constitutes tertiary communication (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3), is included as a sub-element of the *communication* category that contributes to corporate brand image formation because unplanned communication plays a considerable role in corporate identity and corporate brand image management. In this regard, Balmer (1995:35) as well as Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006:201) explain that all activities and behaviour of the organisation communicate information about it that influences stakeholders' perceptions of its identity.

- **Interpersonal communication a significant determinant of consumers' perception of the organisation's identity**

Interpersonal communication refers to two-way communication which can be either uncontrolled or controlled. Uncontrolled interpersonal communication includes word-of-mouth communication involving informal communication among consumers on products and services (Liu 2006).

Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006:201-202) regard the transmission of positive, informal information about an organisation or a product by means of intermediary sources in an informal way or from person to person as a major factor that determines consumer attitude and behaviour and adds significance to the way consumers perceive an organisation's identity. According to this perspective, it can be concluded that a more

favourable image of the organisation may be created among stakeholders if they receive constructive informal information which positively influences their attitude towards an organisation. If an organisation's communication functions are focused on establishing effective relationships, the organisation's strategic management of communication must be aimed at supplementing impersonal mass communication with interactive communication that is personally customised according to the characteristics of each target group, especially in business-to-business communication and communication to the services sector.

- ***Intermediary communication – positive, unplanned communication enhances consumers' perception of the organisation***

As explained in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2, intermediary communication refers to word-of-mouth communication published by mass media, non-governmental organisations and governmental institutions (Morley 2009:92). Unplanned media exposure impacts substantially on consumers' perception of an organisation and therefore is an essential aspect of external communication. Positive information that is communicated by intermediaries and the mass media can contribute to consumers' perception of organisations' identities. For this reason, audiences' views about an organisation must be shaped by achieving positive media coverage through communicating transparent organisational information which is not primarily aimed at advertising (Fombrun & Shanley 1990:233-258).

- ***Intrapersonal communication – an emotional appealing brand identity enhances consumers' perception of the brand***

As explained in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2, intrapersonal communication involves the psychological consequences caused by previous experiences and images of those experiences stored in memory. These result in consumer identification with and emotional attachment to the organisation, its products and services based on consumers' knowledge about the organisation (Morley 2009:92). Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006:202) regard emotional attachment as a prerequisite for a consumer's identification with a brand. These authors' assumption is based on a positive correlation between the emotional appeal of a brand's identity and consumers' image of the brand. According to their perspective, the more emotionally appealing a brand's identity is to consumers, the more favourable is the image which consumers have about the brand. This implies that the higher the level of consumers' emotional attachment to the brand, the stronger they identify with it.

b *Controlled (planned/formal) organisational communication*

Various communication specialists such as Chaloner (1990:29); Van Riel (1995:26); Markwick and Fill (1997:396); Balmer (1998:699); Burke (1998:8); Forman and Argenti (2005:246); Melewar et al (2005:63) as well as Daw and Cone (2011:149-150) maintain that secondary communication (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3), which includes the organisation's strategy for planned communication, can be regarded as a tool which management uses as effectively and efficiently as possible in a pre-determined way in order to harmonise all forms of internal and external communication with the aim of achieving a specific purpose. Therefore, corporate communication refers to any medium which an organisation uses in any form or manner to communicate with its various audiences. This argument is based on the fact that organisations use various cues to project the corporate brand identity to stakeholders.

According to Odunlami and Ofoegbu (2011:411), marketing communication is an essential instrument for increasing the sales of an organisation's products and services. In addition, it serves as a tool for creating awareness, and as such creates economic value by having a positive impact on the future earnings of the organisation. In this way, investors form a positive impression of the future performance of the organisation (Graham & Frankenberger 2011:19). Advertising, sales promotion and personal selling are elements of marketing communication used to increase the sales of an organisation's products and services. Personal selling is a marketing tool that enables organisations to obtain quick feedback from prospective clients. In this manner, organisations can make the required adjustments to their products and services in order to increase sales. In addition, by interacting effectively with prospective clients, organisations are better able to meet consumers' needs and achieve organisational objectives (Odunlami & Ofoegbu 2011:409).

An important trend in contemporary marketing theory is a growing focus on corporate-level marketing rather than product-level marketing (Blombäck 2009:228-229), also referred to as primary communication (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3). In the 1960s a broad perspective on marketing was proposed in terms of which marketing was regarded as a concept that applied to any social unit exchanging values with other social units. These values are not limited to economic and utilitarian values, but also include social and psychological values defined as symbolic values (Csaba 2005:129). In competitive markets product differentiation no longer serves as the only means of maintaining a trustworthy position in the market. As a result, organisations increasingly rely on strategies aimed at positioning the entire business, including its tangible and intangible elements, to

enhance competitive advantage (Appel-Meulenbrock et al 2010:47). In this regard, advertising aimed at enhancing the organisation's image serves as a useful means of establishing favourable relationships with prospective clients, which encourages repeat purchase (Odunlami & Ofoegbu 2011:409).

Similarly, public relations serve as an essential instrument for creating a positive image of the organisation among public audiences and for establishing successful relationships with members of society (Odunlami & Ofoegbu 2011:409). The particular messages conveyed in this manner represent how the organisation would like to be perceived by the public. These cues can be integrated so that premeditated messages are delivered to specific target audiences in order to achieve particular business objectives (also see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.3). When internal communication strategies are executed in tandem with external marketing communications, organisational promises made in advertising material are more likely to be fulfilled to the required level of performance since employees are more prepared to deliver on these promises. This means internal and external organisational communication forms the link between identity and image, and connects image and strategic management (Ahmed & Rafiq 2003:1183).

In essence, the focus of the corporate communication process is to carefully organise the organisation's communication activities as a single well-planned entity to produce a set of coherent messages internally and externally (Nandan 2005:275-276). As such, the purpose of corporate communication as management instrument is to create a favourable basis for establishing relationships with the organisation's stakeholder groups. In addition, communication initiated by management contributes to establishing a relationship between corporate personality and corporate identity. In this context, management communication involves the process of communicating the organisation's vision and mission as defined by its management in order to establish a favourable image and ultimately a good reputation among internal and external stakeholders. Management communication can therefore be viewed as the dominant method by which top-level managers convey the goals and objectives of an organisation (Markwick & Fill 1997:402; Stuart 1999:204). Furthermore, Veljković and Petrović (2011:78) regard corporate communication as a critical link between corporate identity and corporate image and reputation. It subsumes all communications to the organisation's multiple stakeholders who, in turn, may further influence the organisation's image and reputation through secondary and tertiary interpersonal communication. This implies that corporate communication is the channel through which an organisation's strategies are implemented. From the above explanation it appears that all corporate activities,

marketing mix activities and marketing communications fulfil a meaningful purpose in the corporate communication process.

Another aspect impacting on corporate communication is the evolving nature of business environments. Contemporary organisations are faced by challenges such as rapid changes, competition, modern trends and advanced technologies that take place in the environment in which they operate. In this regard, Schultz and Kitchen (2004:358-359) indicate that over the past few years, communication initiatives have focused mainly on the World Wide Web (WWW) and the development of Internet sites. However, they argue that communication activities will increasingly focus on “connectivity” through electronic systems such as intranets and extranets with the purpose of building and maintaining close relationships with the organisation’s various stakeholder groups, including business alliances, suppliers and consumers. Interactivity has an immediate impact on the organisation, forcing it to engage in two-way communication by means of dialogue-based connections with its stakeholders, instead of providing unilateral communication by means of direct marketing advertising and public relations. As a result, communication is a continuous action in which the organisation is involved (Alba & Stay 2008; Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan 2010; Scott 2010; Sheenan 2010).

As indicated in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.2, communicating the central idea of the organisation requires involvement of all internal stakeholders in the implementation process (Schultz 2005:183). In this regard, organisations use internal communication to encourage internal stakeholders to display the organisation’s values in their daily interaction with its stakeholders. Employee behaviour that supports the organisation’s values enhances the organisation’s ability to adhere to initiatives received from its members, thereby boosting its competitiveness. It follows that internal communication enables the organisation to accept, introduce and acquire new values and management guidelines that accompany organisational development (Welch & Jackson 2007). In this regard, Otubanjo and Melewar (2007:421-422) point out that organisational values set guidelines for establishing the characteristics that should form part of the normative behaviour of employees and mould the capabilities of an organisation to interact. In this regard, strategic communication in an organisation involves the process of recognising and transferring values communicated by external stakeholders, and aligning employees’ attitudes with these values through the processes of internal branding. This concept is also referred to as inside-out branding (see section 5.3.2.2). The alignment between the organisation’s attitude and the values of external stakeholders results in changes in the

organisation's values and priorities. These changes consequently affect the organisation's performance and efficiency (Burke 1998; Harrop & Varey 1998; Kim & Mauborgne 1999; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:215; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007:60; Hawabhay et al 2009:5).

In the context of the above discussion, internal communication is regarded as a mechanism for creating a single corporate identity by educating employees on the organisation's overall philosophy and strategic direction to ensure they understand its objectives and goals. Management thus creates a culture that fosters the needs of the consumer at every level in the organisation in order to enhance overall levels of satisfaction (Asif & Sargeant 2000:200, Proctor & Doukakis 2003:274, 276; Brunetto & Farr-Wharton 2004:570; Chong 2007:201; Nordin, Halib & Ghazali 2011). Following the perspective of aligning employees' behaviour with the values communicated by external clients, internal communication is regarded an essential element of employee development. In addition, effective internal communication is a core component for increasing participation, enhancing employees' commitment to achieving corporate goals and implementing programmes for total quality management (Quin & Hargie 2004:146). Furthermore, the extent to which internal communication meets employees' needs and expectations is an important factor in their performance, which ultimately contributes to the organisation's success (Erasmus-Kritzinger 2002:15). In addition, effective internal communication can explain to what extent employees' jobs contribute to executing the organisational strategy: it can make employees feel accountable for the organisation's success, thus increasing their productivity (Roberts 2002:20).

To achieve the objective of coherent corporate communication, both online and offline strategic communication must be oriented towards an organisation's priorities as well as the external environment. As such, strategic communication emphasises the importance of aligning communication to internal and external stakeholders with the organisation's objectives. Moreover, the internal and external communications of an organisation also aim at the interaction of organisational values in order to create meaningful and memorable communication experiences that will be directly associated with the brand (Goodman 2001:119; Massie & Anderson 2003:223; King & Grace 2005:280; Daw & Cone 2011:149-150). Proctor and Doukakis (2003:275) add to the above perspectives by indicating that coordination of internal and external communication activities provides a means of ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in organisations.

The evolving nature of business environments also requires that the strategic management of an organisation's communication function involves the implementation of IMC techniques as part of the business strategy to transmit information effectively to consumers and other stakeholders (Jevons et al 2005:301; Nandan 2005:275-276; Grunig 1993 in Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:850; Batey 2008:218-219).

c *IMC – coordinating communications and media to create synergistic effects enhances effectiveness of marketing communications*

Ahmed and Rafiq (2003:1183) state that all processes, particularly the cross-functional ones, require communication to function effectively. The customer-based brand equity model (Keller 2001, 2008) is a comprehensive model of brand equity (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.8.11) which outlines the role of all the different types of marketing communication in brand building. In terms of the customer-based brand equity model, brand equity is fundamentally established by creating brand knowledge in consumers' minds through a variety of marketing programmes and activities. According to this perspective, brand knowledge does not refer to the facts about the brand. Instead, it involves all the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images and experiences that consumers (individuals and organisations) come to associate with the brand. Therefore, the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model is rooted in the premise that the power of a brand lies in the meaning which consumers associate with it. For this reason, marketers should incorporate various communication channels with common meaning and content to create synergy among the selected communication media (Duncan 2005). In addition, these communication media should offer different, complementary benefits so that the total conceptual meaning is greater than the sum of the individual components (Keller 2001:841; 2009c:141-143; 146). IMC is based on the process of strategically analysing, selecting, implementing and controlling all components constituting marketing communications which influence transactions between the organisation and its existing and prospective customers efficiently by making optimal use of resources at the lowest cost in order to obtain optimum results (Holm 2006:24). For this reason, the mobile communication medium should be used in an integrated manner together with traditional communication channels to obtain maximum results (Kavassalis, Spyropoulou, Drossos, Mitrokostas, Gikas & Hatzistamatiou 2003:63; Sultan & Rohm 2005:88; Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto 2008:59) and not as a substitute for traditional communication channels (Park, Shenoy & Salvendy 2008:357; Shilale 2009).

In view of the above discussion it can be concluded that maintaining consistency in brand communications is important in building and maintaining a strong corporate brand image. Consistent brand positioning is a major objective of corporate communications. Sustaining a coherent and consistent corporate brand image by means of the communication platform is the purpose and prime concern of corporate communications, especially in the case of large and diversified corporations (Hawabhay et al 2009:14). In this regard, Keller (2009c:153-154) emphasises the need for an understanding of the role of different communication media and how communication programmes complement and substitute one another. To gain such an understanding, marketers must carefully delineate the unique aspects of each communication option, but also contrast these with the aspects that these media have in common with other communication options. In addition, effective IMC requires a clear picture of how different communication options should be combined to create enhanced effects. Coordinating communications and media to create synergistic effects is one of the most powerful ways of increasing productivity of marketing communications. Ultimately, comprehensive, concrete guidelines are required to fully develop IC programmes to ensure the most suitable marketing communication options are used to optimise the effects for each marketing communication option that is employed (Keller 2009c:153-154).

d Integrated communication (IC) – integration of product and corporate branding as part of the business strategy enhances brand reputation

Recent developments in the field of IMC have resulted in a shift to the more organisation-wide IC approach. In view of this dual perspective, Kitchen and Schultz (2003:75) indicate that communication decisions must provide for traditional product branding as well as corporate and organisational brand communication. These two areas of communication must function in an interactive and synergistic manner. However, Smith (2010:54) maintains the concept of IMC is not broad enough to define the process adequately, since it does not provide for nonpromotional public relations activities. Smith (2010:55) therefore advocates the use of the IC concept, since it refers to the role of marketing as well as public relations' dual roles in the integration of communication.

IC is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation and is therefore included as a sub-element of planned communication, since the objective of IC is to improve the coordination of communication and to present unified messages to internal and external stakeholders in order to enhance brand image and corporate reputation. Research conducted by Ahmed and Rafiq (2003:1177), Massie and Anderson (2003:223) as well as

Nandan (2005:272) shows that in contrast to the fields of organisational communication and marketing communications traditionally concerned with influencing the perspective of employees and consumers respectively, corporate communication follows a planned approach which focuses on combining all communications that involve an organisation as a corporate entity in a coherent and synergistic way. In this regard, Jevons et al (2005:301), Nandan (2005:272) and Hawabhay et al (2009:14) argue that organisations apply IC techniques to create coherent messages about the unique brand attributes sent to internal and external stakeholders. In addition, an integrated and interactive corporate communication process takes account of how consumers' perception affects the way they interpret messages. Moreover, Christensen (2002:164) points out that conventional management programmes, such as TQM and business process reengineering referred to in section 5.3.2.2, are aimed at creating organisational efficiency through complicated self-description. In this regard, the purpose of IC is to provide a detailed explanation of all the relevant elements of communication involved in the reflection of a consistent image in the organisation's micro- and macro-environments.

Duncan (2003:3) explains that at the corporate level the way the organisation executes its overall business practices and philosophies conveys a particular message to its target audience. For example, the organisation's corporate culture, missions, corporate social initiatives, its practice of responding or not responding to enquiries and employment practices, all have communication dimensions that reconfirm, strengthen, or weaken brand relationships. Nandan (2005:275-276) believes that at the marketing level, messages sent by other activities that are initiated as part of the organisation's marketing mix in order to create brand awareness must also be strategically planned and managed to ensure consistency. The hidden messages that are indirectly implied by the organisation's actions, behaviour and communication must be recognised and coordinated at all levels of contact which stakeholders have with the organisation and its marketing communication and activities. In this regard, Ehrenberg, Barnard, Kennedy and Bloom (2002:10) warn that messages which are not aligned with consumers' existing image of the brand can achieve the opposite result from the one intended. In addition, messages that are inconsistent with the brand's image can inhibit brand recall and first learning about the brand.

Moreover, consistency is applied in the way the organisation identifies and positions its brand, how it presents its corporate values, and how products perform. In this regard, Kitchen and Schultz (2003:75) maintain that consumers increasingly form an opinion of the organisations whose products and services they purchase. Consumers do not merely

purchase products with a specific functional or symbolic benefit. Instead, they also support and form positive and negative images towards the brand. These images are often created by consumers themselves, or by various marketing media. This implies that consumers associate the brand with a specific meaning. For this reason, integration of all communication activities at product level is inadequate. Rather, all communication activities at business or corporation level must be integrated and a continuous, interdependent interaction must exist between these two forms of communication. Without meaning coordination of an organisation's visual brand elements, communication, procedures and behaviours, its potential impact is reduced. Communications that lack clarity, consistency and continuity cause organisations to experience difficulties in maintaining their positions as distinctive brands in a cluttered marketplace. Furthermore, organisations that fail to apply consistency in their messages, procedures and behaviours, cannot expect to be regarded as legitimate business enterprises in the contemporary globalised world (Smith 1996; Balmer 2001; Knox & Bickerton 2003; Shimp 2003; Duncan 2005). Moreover, Dolphin and Fan (2000:104) indicate that coherence between internal and external communication is an essential strategic aspect in the development of competitive advantage, since messages characterised by a consistent style and quality create unity between the various forms of communication, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the corporate brand. If communication reveals transparency and honesty in an organisation's business dealings, shareholders are enabled to gain a more informed understanding of the organisation's operations, and this helps them ascribe a better reputation to the organisation (Burke 1998:8; Forman & Argenti 2005:248-249; Bick et al 2008:17). From the above perspective, the corporate communication process is focused at managing the impressions created among an organisation's constituencies in order to enhance the organisation's reputation. As such, integrated corporate communication should form an integral part of the business strategy, since enhanced reputation creates an advantage by reducing an organisation's transaction costs.

5.3.4.3 Summary of the perceived role of the communication category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature

The elements included in the communication category involve planned and unplanned corporate communication activities that result in specific perceptions that stakeholders' have of the organisation's identity (Balmer 1995:35; Karaosmanoglu & Melewar 2006:201) and which contribute to consumers' impressions, images and perceptions about the organisation (c.f. Cornelissen 2000:119-125; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:851). In this regard, execution of the *transformational leadership and management category* is a

prerequisite for the successful functioning of the *communication category*. Corporate communication is a management function aimed at organising the organisation's online and offline communication activities by applying IC techniques in order to develop consistent messages about the attributes of the organisation's products and services that will establish favourable relationships with internal and external stakeholders (c.f. Nandan 2005:275-276). Furthermore, management's strategy for planned communication must be aimed at aligning communication to internal and external stakeholders with the organisation's vision, mission and objectives. Moreover, the internal and external communications of an organisation also aim at the interaction of organisational values in order to create specific associations with the brand that will establish a favourable brand personality (Goodman 2001:119; Massie & Anderson 2003:223; King & Grace 2005:280; Daw & Cone 2011:149-150).

Brand relationships are also affected by the organisation's business practices and philosophies (c.f. Duncan 2003:3). In this regard, the effectiveness of the communication category depends on the successful execution of the *business strategy category* and the *creativity category*. All brand messages that are communicated as part of the organisation's marketing mix in order to create brand awareness must also be strategically planned and managed in order to position the entire business, including its tangible and intangible elements, to achieve particular business objectives (c.f. Appel-Meulenbrock et al 2010:47).

The successful execution of the communication category contributes significantly to the next category, the *human power category*. Organisational values set guidelines to direct the behaviour of employees, which affects the organisation's performance and efficiency (Burke 1998; Harrop & Varey 1998; Kim & Mauborgne 1999; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:215; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007:60; Hawabhay et al 2009:5).

5.3.5 Category Five: Human power

Since communication is a process aimed at conveying a message to multiple recipients, its properties, functions, role, processes and policies must be used to their full capacity by the fifth category, the *human power category* which is elucidated below:

5.3.5.1 Elements of the human power category

The *human power category* comprises the following elements:

- Corporate behaviour;
- Stakeholder value (for example, customers, distributors and competitors); and

- Industrial relations.

5.3.5.2 Perceived role of the human power category in corporate brand image formation

This category involves the human factor and focuses on the behaviour of organisational members in order to establish solid relationships with internal and external stakeholders. The *human power category* is a crucial component of relationships among all relevant stakeholders in the corporate environment and contributes to corporate brand image formation because the roles, attitudes, values, ethics, actions and interests of internal and external stakeholders perform a central function in transmitting messages about brand identity to external audiences. The contribution of these elements to corporate brand image formation is discussed below.

a Consistent corporate behaviour creates uniform perception of brand promise

Methods used by an organisation for establishing its corporate identity are not limited to corporate design and corporate communication only. Corporate behaviour also contributes to the extent to which an organisation creates appreciation of and trust in the brand, since brand identity originates from the organisational culture (Bick et al 2008:17). The values, beliefs and assumptions held by members of an organisation which constitute the organisational culture serve as symbolic context for developing and maintaining the organisational identity.

The literature presents numerous examples of the vital role of employees in contributing to services brand building at an operational and strategic level (Harris & De Chernatony 2001; Ind 2001). At an operational level, customer relationships are enhanced through encounters of high-quality service (Lovelock 2000; Ind & Bjerke 2007:6). At a strategic level, employees whose behaviour are aligned with the brand values (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001, 2003; Hawabhay et al 2009:5; Keller 2009b:15-16) and who demonstrate these brand values to colleagues and customers significantly contribute to enhancing the brand's relationship with its consumers (Bergstrom et al 2002:136). In this regard, Vallaster and De Chernatony (2003:6-7) as well as Harris and De Chernatony (2001:442, 451) believe it is imperative that the organisation's interaction with stakeholders takes place in a consistent manner, since relationships are dynamic and can be destabilised by either partner. Consistency in employee behaviour ensures that stakeholders experience the brand's promise in a consistent manner at all occasions when they come into contact with the brand, as all actions of the organisation are aligned

with its service brand values. These authors explain that if employees understand the brand's identity, they are better able to act and communicate in a more coordinated manner. As a result, their activities are more likely to support the desired identity (Bick et al 2008:17).

b *Stakeholder value and industrial relations ensure the brand's financial stability*

As a result of commoditisation of the traditional marketing mix elements, organisations more and more realise that establishing firm relationships with customers and other key stakeholders is the most valuable activity in the brand building process. In this regard, Nandan (2005:273) explains that strong brands are developed over time. To enhance brand loyalty and increase sales an organisation must aim to enter into solid relationships with the consumer. These authors base their perspective on the argument that the value of the brand is measured according to the strength and quality of relationships with its customers. Corporate brands defined by clear principles of support, and which encourage dialogue and feedback, create interactivity between stakeholders and organisations, as brands with these characteristics contribute to customer loyalty and build customer value (Mukherjee & Balmer 2008:10). This contributes to the economic viability of the organisation, as it ensures long-term financial performance (Brink & Berndt 2004:32).

5.3.5.3 *Summary of the perceived role of the human power category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature*

The elements included in the human power category involve the central function that employees fulfil at an operational and strategic level in transmitting messages about brand identity to external audiences (c.f. Harris & De Chernatony 2001; Ind 2001).

Strong customer relationships reinforce brand loyalty and increase sales. Establishing strong customer relationships depends on service delivery and consistent employee behaviour (c.f. Harris & De Chernatony 2001; Ind 2001). In this regard, the effectiveness of this category depends on the successful execution of the *transformational and leadership category*, the *business strategy category* and the *communication category*. Management must pursue a business strategy to create a uniform corporate identity aimed at establishing a consistent brand promise. Internal communication serves as a useful management tool to keep employees informed of the organisation's overall business strategy and philosophy. Employees who understand and realise the organisation's objectives and goals are better able to respond to the needs of the

consumer, which enhances overall levels of customer satisfaction (c.f. Asif & Sargeant 2000:200, Proctor & Doukakis 2003:274, 276; Brunetto & Farr-Wharton 2004:570; Chong 2007:201; Nordin, Halib & Ghazali 2011).

5.3.6 Category Six: External environmental influences

The sixth category, *external environmental influences*, is named this way because it includes all factors of the external environment that impact on the organisation and over which the organisation does not have direct control. The environment in which a system operates consists of elements that function within a specific relation to their environments. These mutual interactions among the various component systems and the interaction between the component systems and the environment connect the various components into a single unit.

Since the external environment in which the organisation functions is a constantly changing setting, it is included as a category that may influence corporate brand image formation. As a result of competitiveness and globalisation, substitute products and new products are constantly introduced to the market. To compete effectively in the market, the organisation, and in particular the corporate communications team, must make amendments to their brand positioning strategy to compensate for changes in culture, politics, technology and economics (Heylighen 1998:1; Marketing Teacher 2002).

This category comprises factors of the external environment over which the organisation does not have direct control. As a result, the measuring instruments used in this study were designed to measure the extent to which these external environmental influences impact on corporate brand image formation. For this reason, the following measures were applied to determine how the organisations included in the study function in relation to these environmental influences:

- Statements dealing with a number of the elements of the *external environmental influences category* were included in the Q sample (see Annexure A); and
- Questions were included in the interview schedule (see Annexure C) to enable the researcher to obtain more insight into the strategic measures that the relevant organisations apply to ensure these elements contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation.

5.3.6.1 The elements of the external environmental influences category

The task environment includes customers, investors, suppliers, partners, regulators, local communities and groups who have special interests towards the organisation (Hatch &

Schultz 2003; Roper & Davies 2007). These stakeholder groups often overlap with each other, for example, suppliers can also be partners, customers or shareholders (Olins 2000). The various stakeholder groups that constitute the microenvironment exert direct influence on the organisation and direct the relationship between organisations and the key forces that control this relationship. The organisation can exercise a degree of influence as a result of the fact that the relationship is local (contextual).

These days, organisations are also easily affected by changes in the macro-environment (political, social, economic, technological, legal and ecological environment). Balmer and Gray (2003b:127-129) identify the following aspects or component systems that are associated with the external environment. Changes to these aspects have the most significant impact on the strategic perspectives of the organisation.

- Demographics, market conditions and strategies;
- Perceived quality and satisfaction;
- Globalisation of competition and greater openness of markets;
- Mergers, acquisitions and divestitures;
- Increased competition and acceleration of product life cycles (PLC);
- Deregulation;
- Privatisation programmes;
- Increased competition in the public and private sectors;
- Increased competition in the service sector;
- Shortage of high-calibre employees;
- Technological innovation and strategic alliances.

The perceived role of these aspects in corporate brand image formation is elucidated below.

a *Demographics, market conditions and strategies*

The market conditions comprise all the circumstances, contexts, goals and strategies pertaining to the market in which the organisation functions, or which result from the market setting. As such, the market dimension includes the target groups and the strategies used by the organisation to market the brand effectively. Other component systems that are included in the market conditions as part of the *external environmental influences category* are the market position, the competition, trade restrictions and the state of technological development (Schmidt 1995:37; Daw & Cone 2011:46). Furthermore, Simon and Sullivan (1993 in Yoo et al 2000:197) identify a number of system elements that are in mutual interaction with the external environment in which the

organisation functions and which are sources of brand equity. These elements include the age of the brand, product portfolio, advertising expenditure, expenses for marketing research and sales staff. The perceived role of demographics, market conditions and strategies in corporate brand image formation is discussed in the sections below.

- ***Psychographics***

According to this approach potential constituents are divided into groups based on their psychological and behavioural characteristics. Psychographics is a measure that provides insight into the attitudes, lifestyles and behaviour of individuals, thus enabling organisations to develop more specific and engaging products, services and programmes (Daw & Cone 2011:46).

- ***Purchase price and price promotions as measures to increase sales***

The price of a product or service is one of the key brand positioning factors that consumers can often evaluate prior to consumption (Kotler & Keller 2006:591; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:265).

Although pricing serves as a method for offering consumers comparable satisfaction at lower cost, consumers view price as a measure for evaluating the quality of a product or service. By increasing the quality of a product or service as perceived by consumers, price contributes to brand equity. As such, the price of a product or service is not restricted to a monetary figure, but serves as an important extrinsic measure according to which consumers evaluate the quality or benefits associated with a product or service (Yoo et al 2000:198; Kapferer 2008:89; Smith & Woodside 2009:440). Alexander et al (2009:10) add that brand awareness and the risk reduction associated with reputable brands contribute to consumers' willingness to pay price premiums. According to Vaitkiene and Vainauskiene (2010:44), increasing or decreasing products' prices without having a grounded reason has a negative effect on consumers' image of the brand. These authors maintain that if the price of a product is increased without granting additional value, the value which the consumer associates with the product decreases. In this manner the consumer develops a negative attitude towards the brand. Similarly, an inexplicable decrease in a product's price may have a negative impact on brand knowledge, since the consumer could form a negative association of the product with a direct influence on their image of the brand.

Marketing communication programmes use sales promotion to increase the sales figure of particular products or services (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2). As explained in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2, sales promotion involves the use of mostly short-term incentive tools to

stimulate purchase by consumers or the trade (Kotler & Keller 2006:585). Offering price discounts is one of the most popular business strategies to customise prices. However, in certain markets, especially business-to-business sales, purchase price may be only partly customisable, since customers' bargaining power determines sales figures in these markets. In view of this explanation, it appears that sales promotion only serves to enhance the performance of the brand temporarily, since it encourages consumers to switch brands and purchase the product while the promotion lasts. Following this argument, it can be concluded that price promotion is not a sales technique that changes consumers' loyalty level towards a brand permanently. Once the external factor that promotes the brand, namely price promotion, is removed, consumers discontinue purchasing the brand. This implies that consumers will only continue using a brand once the price promotion is discontinued if the brand is perceived to be of higher quality and meets consumer needs better than its competing products. Superior quality and the extent to which the brand meets customers' functional and emotional needs are known as the internal factors that promote sales of the brand (Gupta 1998 in Yoo et al 2000:200; Logman 1997:40; Yoo et al 2000:200; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:17). This argument is supported by Hardie (1991 in Onditi 2012:300-301), who indicates that sales promotion is a short-term incentive which is offered to arouse interest among consumers to purchase a specific product or service. Sales promotion as the only means of affecting consumers' purchasing behaviour does not ensure long-term results. Therefore, sales promotion is conducted in conjunction with other elements of marketing communication, for example advertising, as part of an IMC programme in an attempt to convert consumers who purchase a product as a result of a price promotion into long-term supporters of the brand (Hardie 1991 in Onditi 2012:300-301).

- ***Logistics, delivery and distribution and after-sales support and costs create increased brand value and enhanced customer satisfaction***

Logman (1997:42) and Yoo et al (2000:199) regard a multiple-channel system that provides both product and service as most appropriately structured to offer a solution that is customised to individual consumers' needs. As the magnitude of product and service distribution increases, consumers have more time and place utility and perceive the product and service as feasible and adding more value. These authors maintain that increased brand value enhances consumer satisfaction, perceived quality and brand loyalty, ultimately leading to greater brand equity.

With regard to the role of suppliers in corporate brand image formation, this group of stakeholders in the task environment is almost never visible to the end consumer. Consequently, their brand awareness does not contribute to create a competitive advantage in the consumer market (Blömbäck 2005:41). Since there is a growing trend among organisations to operate with key suppliers (a reduced number of suppliers), relationships are aimed at creating partnerships with customers. As a result, the management of relationships is considered a significant aspect of corporate brand image formation at the strategic level of suppliers. In addition, interaction and relationships can add value to the basic product the supplier is offering. Maintaining solid relationships between the supplier and their customers contributes to corporate brand image formation, since the sales force plays a major role in communicating the brand towards the customer (Blombäck 2005:42). Moreover, establishing solid relationships with members of the delivery channel contributes to corporate brand image formation, since suppliers are often more willing to promote the offering of well-known organisations with a strong corporate brand than the offering of those with a weak image (Ojasalo, Nätti & Olkkonen 2008). In summary, every interaction which organisations have with stakeholders contributes to the accumulating brand equity of the organisation. The more positive a stakeholder experiences its encounter with the organisation, the stronger the brand, and the greater the positive corporate reputation (Abimbola & Vallaster 2007).

In addition, sales contracts between business-to-business markets often provide for product maintenance and replacement. Reduced maintenance fees can positively influence customers' perceptions of after-sales cost. It is also recommended that provision be made for after-sales service when the brand unexpectedly fails and the organisation needs to ensure rapid recovery of any problems (De Chernatony 2006:291).

b Perceived quality and satisfaction increase brand loyalty

Randall (2000:40) identifies two types of brand consumption, namely low-involvement situations and high-involvement situations. Low-involvement situations for example, fast-moving consumer products, are routine and trivial to the customer and do not require a long decision-making process. In the case of high-involvement situations, alternatives are compared, analysed and evaluated in detail. Ehrenberg (in Randall 2000:43) argues that consumers usually buy a range of brands, and purchase certain brands more often than others depending on their specific preferences. Furthermore, buying patterns established in consumers' minds are very difficult to change (Randall 2000:44). The extent to which consumers perceive the overall brand quality to be satisfactory reflects the general

attitude towards the product (James 2005:4). In this regard, Xiaohua and Germain (2003) maintain that quality can be viewed in terms of two dimensions: market-perceived quality and performance quality. Market-perceived quality of a product or service refers to consumers' perception about its overall supremacy in terms of the extent to which it meets consumers' expectations (Grönroos 2007:77). Cateora and Graham (2007:339) conclude that consumers prefer a brand which they perceive as having a superior quality compared to competitor brands. Gill and Dawra (2010:193) add that perceived quality can positively influence a brand's equity: the higher the perceived quality associated with a brand, the greater its brand equity. Consequently, these authors emphasise that it is imperative that a customer should perceive a brand to be of high quality, since this perspective will enhance the brand preference and increase brand equity.

Brink and Berndt (2004:48) describe customer satisfaction as the degree to which the performance of an organisation's products or services meets the customer's expectations. Therefore, satisfaction is the consumer's positive or negative reaction to the perceived service performance and the confirmation or disconfirmation of the consumer's expectations prior to purchase. Since satisfaction is a response to service attributes and service information, namely brand evidence and brand hearsay, it has a significant effect on brand attitudes and brand loyalty (Brink & Berndt 2004:49; Spreng, MacKenzie & Olshavsky 1996 in Grace & O'Cass 2005:128). In this regard, Cretu and Brodie (2009:284) suggest a focus on customer value as the impetus for customer loyalty and financial performance.

c *Globalisation of competition and greater openness of markets require an effective brand positioning strategy to create a favourable reputation*

Globalisation is adding a new dimension to business strategy and communication practice. International markets are expanding and becoming more closely related. As a result, organisations are required to create coherence in decisions on branding their products and services across national markets. A high profile, positive image and good reputation can be a powerful tool for an organisation that is expanding internationally. The primary function of communication is therefore to be proactive and to support the organisation in the changes effected by globalisation. Furthermore, organisations must pay specific attention to composing an effective strategy for brand positioning in the case of brands that are marketed internationally. In addition, an organisation must decide on the most appropriate strategy for managing brands that extend beyond different

geographic markets and product lines (Balmer & Gray 2003b:129; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:23; Morley 2009:140-141).

d *Mergers, acquisitions and divestitures create incongruence between the actual organisational identity and the public image*

According to Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006:35) the increasing number of mergers, acquisitions and divestitures has drastically changed the business profile of various organisations. Balmer and Gray (2003b:129) indicate that these business transactions usually result in a significant gap between the public image of an organisation and its actual identity. According to these authors this tendency is a source of concern, as incongruence between an organisation's actual identity and perceived identity may create confusion among financial markets and customers, resulting in decreased support for the organisation. To overcome the gap between the public image of an organisation and its actual identity Abrahams (2008) advises that the new brand owner must have a deep awareness of the brands prior to amalgamation of the organisations.

e *Increased competition and acceleration of product life cycles (PLC) require revision of brand strategy to ensure continued viability*

Balmer and Gray (2003b:128) describe the acceleration of product life cycle as a critical trend which requires adjustment to an organisation's brand strategy. These authors maintain that organisations with a strong reputation and high visibility have an advantage over their competitors in volatile markets since a respected brand name reduces the perceived risk in the minds of retailers, distributors and customers, which adds value to their products (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:37, 44). In this regard, Keller (2009b:25) indicates that risk reduction enhances consumers' sense of security. The emotions of security evoked by the brand can influence consumers' purchasing decisions, thus enhancing brand equity.

f *Deregulation creates undefined product-market boundaries*

Balmer and Gray (2003b:127-128) identify deregulation in specific industries as another factor that affects brand management, as it contributes to indefinite product-market boundaries. Despite the opportunity to compete in new business domains, the main focus of these organisations' brand strategy is to modify their public persona accurately.

g *Privatisation programmes require effective differentiation strategies to create a strong public image*

Privatisation programmes pose the challenge to new organisations to differentiate themselves from their competitors as well as their former status as nationalised institutions by establishing clear corporate images (Balmer & Gray 2003b:128).

h *Increased competition in the public and private sectors pose challenges to strategic identity management*

Increased competition affects almost every organisation in the public sector. In this regard, Balmer and Gray (2003b:128) maintain that identity management is of great strategic importance, since image and reputation are the most significant elements used by an organisation to differentiate itself from its competitors.

i *Increased competition in the service sector necessitates a favourable reputation*

Over the past few years, competition in service industries has increased significantly. Consequently, organisations in the services sector increasingly realise the strategic importance of corporate image and reputation (Balmer & Gray 2003b:128-129).

j *A favourable reputation facilitates recruitment and retention of high-calibre employees*

One of the key elements contributing to sustained competitiveness is the organisation's ability to attract and retain expertise and motivated employees. Balmer and Gray (2003b:128-129) argue that a favourable reputation can be a decisive factor in achieving this objective, since an organisation's reputation provides a certain psychological income to the employee. In turn, competent employees can play a prominent formal and informal role in communicating the organisation's identity to the outside world.

k *Public expectations for corporate social responsiveness*

Argenti and Druckenmiller (2003:372-373), Buckingham (2009:142) and Fioroni and Titterton (2009:142) remark that society is showing a growing demand for organisations to participate in programmes for corporate social responsiveness either by means of involvement in initiatives to protect the environment or to alleviate destitution in less privileged communities (also see section 5.3.3.1).

l Breakdown of the boundaries between the internal and external aspects of organisations

The previously inflexible limitation between internal and external aspects of organisations is diminishing. Balmer and Gray (2003b:130) point out that organisations increasingly regard suppliers, consultants and joint-venture partners as important stakeholders contributing to their sustained viability.

m Technological innovation and strategic alliances as effective brand building strategies

Hyde (2001:2) mentions that research conducted by the Harvard Business School proves that customer satisfaction must be an organisation's prime concern in order to perform exceptionally in a service industry. One way of enhancing customer satisfaction is by implementing advanced technology, a critical success factor for delivering quality customer service more rapidly. In addition, Cateora and Graham (2007:375) maintain that technological innovation in product development may offer consumers greater practicality at lower cost. An organisation can also include innovation as part of its corporate strategy to ensure sustained competitive advantage. Innovation as an attribute of service dimensions not related to product delivery, imagery, distribution or creative pricing may enhance brand differentiation (Shocker, Rajendra, Srivastava & Ruekert 1994:152; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:262-263). In this regard, Song and Zahedi (2006) suggest that technological innovation, in particular web technologies, can be implemented as a sales medium. Web technologies result in changes in product design as well as the way that products are acquired and used. As such, web technologies are a powerful instrument for exploiting market opportunities. Furthermore, as a result of technological developments, closer interactions between the organisation and its various external stakeholder groups are becoming more and more possible, making organisations increasingly transparent and accountable to their stakeholders (Gregory 2007). By using the specialist knowledge that stakeholders can offer to collaborate with the organisation in problem solving and integrating this knowledge with the economic resources and political support both the organisation and the stakeholders can gain mutual benefit (Gregory 2007.)

Technological innovation, in particular Internet-based communications, are regarded an integral component of successful corporate brand management strategies (Morley 2009:170). Kitchen (2010:60) adds that brand marketing and communication require a major reconsideration as a result of the fast development of the WWW, Internet and supplementary digital communication systems, for example mobile and social networks.

These interactive facilities have a drastic impact on the way marketers operate these days. Mobile marketing, which the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) (2008:22) defines as “the use of wireless media as an integrated content delivery and direct-response vehicle within a cross-media marketing communications program”, is regarded a particular useful instrument in various marketing concepts. These include brand building (Sultan & Rohm 2005), customer relationship management (Sinisalo, Salo, Karjaluoto & Leppäniemi 2006), marketing research, and marketing communication (Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto 2008).

Nandan (2005:272) indicates that the business environment in which brands function often necessitates continuous adjustment to strategy based on technological advances or competitive actions in order to respond effectively to the actions of customers and other stakeholders, competitors, as well as to the organisation’s own past actions and reputation. Traditionally, one communication medium was adequate to reach large-scale audiences. However, over the years audiences have split up into smaller audiences who have more specialised interests and concerns. Due to the resultant fragmentation of markets, reaching consumers becomes increasingly complicated, rendering non-personal mass communication, especially advertising through traditional media, less effective. As a result, targeted and personal marketing communication becomes more important (Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto 2008:50). SMS advertising was the first form of mobile advertising used (Kim & Jun 2008:130). Over the years, a number of mobile tools have been introduced for mobile marketing (MMA 2009:1-2). In view of the unique benefits associated with mobile media and the increasing tendency among consumers to rely on technology, mobile media must be used as part of the marketing communication mix selection in addition to traditional media. The brand marketer must identify which media forms are most efficient for brand message delivery, and which media most effectively communicate with consumers. This “push and pull” marketplace has resulted in a shift in focus in brand marketing and communication from the distribution of messages to message consumption (De Chernatory & McDonald 2003:394; Kitchen 2010:63). In this regard, Boyers (1997:26) indicates that organisations’ survival and prosperity depend on “outside-in” thinking skills which require organisations to adjust internal strategy according to developments in the external environment so that they will fit the external environment. The environment in which an organisation operates determines strategy and significantly affects the organisation’s performance (Jansen van Vuuren 2002:103). If organisations fail to adapt to the changing environment, their business culture, systems, structures and strategies will increasingly become dysfunctional and obsolete (Jansen van Vuuren

2002:103). Consequently, to remain viable in a volatile business environment, organisations must have the necessary means at their disposal to forecast future business trends and to analyse strategic alternatives. At the same time, organisations must develop an increasing awareness of the long-term implications of environmental change (Jain 1993:138). In addition, amendments to the business strategy necessitated by changes in the macro-environment require organisations to modify their brand messages adequately to reflect contemporary reality and accurately describe the brand identity (Nandan 2005:272).

In view of the above advantages of innovations in technology and telecommunications, it follows that advances in information technology are ultimately expanding the effectiveness of organisational communication. In addition, advances in these fields help create worldwide alignment between the organisation and its external and internal stakeholders.

5.3.6.3 Summary of the perceived role of the external environmental influences category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature

The elements included in the external environmental influences category comprise various component systems in the external environment which are in continuous interaction with the environment. The mutual interaction between the component systems and the environment affects corporate brand image formation, as is evident from the literature review in sections 5.3.6.1 and 5.3.6.2.

Execution of the *transformational leadership and management* as well as *business strategy* categories is a prerequisite for coordinating the *external environmental influences category* in that the business environment in which brands function often necessitates continuous adjustment to internal strategy according to developments in the external environment and competitor activities in order to respond effectively to the actions of customers and other stakeholders, competitors, as well as to the organisation's own past actions and reputation (Boyers 1997:26; Nandan 2005:272). Change as the most essential aspect of management requires "outside-in" thinking skills to enable management to adjust internal strategy according to developments in the external environment to ensure organisations' culture, systems, structures and strategies will remain functional (Jansen van Vuuren 2002:103). In addition, execution of the *creativity category* and *communication category* is a prerequisite for coordinating the *external environmental influences category* since business strategy amendments resulting from changes in the macro-environment require organisations to modify their brand messages accordingly to reflect the brand identity (Nandan 2005:272).

5.3.7 Category Seven: critical triplet

The seventh category is referred to as the *critical triplet* category. The perceived importance of this category in corporate brand image formation is based on the fact that if alignment between the preceding six categories is established, effective corporate brand identity management and practice are created. As a result, the reputation, corporate brand image and brand equity are likely to be enhanced. Therefore, the functionality of this category is largely dependent on the extent to which the elements of the previous six categories perform in synergy. This is elucidated below.

5.3.7.1 Elements of the critical triplet category

The *critical triplet* category comprises the following three elements:

- Reputation;
- Corporate brand image; and
- Brand equity.

5.3.7.2 Perceived role of the critical triplet category in corporate brand image formation

The *critical triplet* category comprises reputation, corporate brand image and brand equity, since these three elements are the first to be negatively affected when consumers are dissatisfied (Suvatjis & De Chernatony 2005:819). Moreover, from the perspective of Balmer and Stotvig (1997:170) employees, external stakeholders as well as developments that occur in the external environment in which the organisation functions also influence reputation and performance. Reputation is one of the primary factors that impact on how consumers perceive the quality of a product or service. In addition, Janonis and Virvilaitė (2007:81) argue that an appealing and distinct identity which is conveyed to the target market in a coherent manner is a prerequisite for a strong brand. The corporate brand image should conceptualise consumers' belief about the brand based on their real experience, and must correspond to the brand understanding. Moreover, the success with which a brand is positioned in the market depends on the elements selected to reflect the corporate brand identity and the development of the corporate brand image based on the selected elements of corporate brand identity. Furthermore, acceptance of the brand is based on the guarantee that the corporate brand identity, which the organisation selected to differentiate it from competitors, is adequately transferred by the image in order to respond to a desired consumer's equity.

In view of this explanation, brand equity from the organisation's perspective can be described as the added value (for example, discounted cash flow) that accumulates over a period of time as a result of the presence of the brand name. This additional value would not accumulate in the case of an equivalent, unbranded product. However, Keller and Lehmann (2006:745) indicate that brand equity is not restricted to the organisation's perspective of the value added by a specific product or service. Although consumers initially link a brand with the product it makes, a series of attachments may come to be associated with the product through advertising, usage experience, and other activities and influences over time. These attachments and associations exist over and beyond the objective product (Keller & Lehmann 2006:745). Since a brand represents an organisation's guarantee of satisfaction to customers, the nature of associations about the brand in consumers' mind have important consequences for the business prospects which the brand can achieve in the marketplace.

The real potential of a brand is thus created in the minds of consumers or customers based on their experience of the brand over time. The knowledge consumers have gained about the brand determines their response to different brands, resulting in brand equity and hence marketplace results (Keller & Lehmann 2006). Cobb-Walgren, Ruble and Donthu (1995:26) as well as Yoo and Donthu (2001:10) expand on this view of Keller and Lehmann (2006) by indicating that the marketing literature distinguishes between two groups of consumer-based brand equity: the first category is consumers' perception of product or service brands, which constitutes the elements of brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality; the second category is consumer behaviour, comprising brand loyalty and consumers' willingness to pay a high price. This operationalisation of consumer-based brand equity suggests that high brand equity is achieved if customers have strong associations related to the brand, perceive the brand as of high quality, and are loyal to the brand. Customer loyalty means that customers will continue to purchase products and services from a specific organisation despite the activities of competitors aimed at attracting their patronage, thus ensuring future sales (Brink & Berndt 2004:32).

In addition, a strong identity facilitates the recruitment of qualified, talented employees who are potentially committed, because these organisations provide greater opportunities for the realisation of personal goals (Buckingham 2009:50). Employees who have these competencies possess the necessary skills to challenge internal silos and to build good relationships with customers (Ind & Bjerke 2007:141). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004:502) refer to this process as employer branding, which involves the differentiation of an

organisation's features as an employer from those of its competitors by considering the total set of tangible and intangible reward features which an organisation offers its employees. In addition to these features, a fundamental element of employer branding deals with the identification of elements of the character of the organisation – properties such as the organisation's key values and the guiding principles that determine how the organisation functions as a collective entity (Edwards 2010:7). It is assumed that if organisations carefully manage their "employment experience" this would help create brand value and influence (Edwards 2010:18; Daw & Cone 2011:112-113).

From a financial market's point of view, brands are assets of which the financial worth is the price they bring or could bring in the financial market. As such, current brand equity is a strategic way of providing marketers with a vital connection from their past to their future (Keller & Lehmann 2006:745).

5.3.7.3 Summary of the perceived role of the critical triplet category in corporate brand image formation as argued in the literature

Effective corporate brand identity management, which is based on alignment between the elements of the first six categories, enhances reputation, corporate brand image and brand equity, as is evident from the literature review in sections 5.3.7.1 and 5.3.7.2.

The critical triplet category relies on the extent to which the elements in the preceding six categories are coordinated to perform in synergy. If all the elements of the six categories perform in synergy, consumers will have a favourable perception of the organisation's products and services. This perception is based on how the organisation reveals a consistent corporate brand identity by harmonising tangible and intangible elements through IC techniques into a meaningful unit to differentiate the distinct qualities of the brand. A consistent corporate brand image created in this way as well as positive transactional experiences over time results in a favourable reputation (c.f. Balmer & Stotvig 1997:170). The real potential of a brand is thus created in the minds of consumers or customers based on their experience of the brand over time. The knowledge consumers have gained about the brand determines their response to different brands, resulting in brand equity (Keller & Lehmann 2006).

5.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the elements of corporate brand identity as identified and discussed in Chapter 4 of this study have been grouped into seven categories based on the perceived function of the corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as

identified from the literature review. The elements of each category as well as the perceived role of each of these elements in corporate brand image formation have been explained and validated in the context of the literature review in Chapter 4. The objective was to indicate that these elements form part of the concourse for corporate brand image formation that were measured by means of an online Q study, an online questionnaire and an interview schedule for the CATI (see Chapter 6, sections 6.4.1, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2).

In Chapter 6, the guiding research paradigm, which determined the specific research design used in this study for evaluating the perceived role of the corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation, is explained. A multi-methods research design integrating two research methods, namely Q methodology and CATI was used for this study.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research design for this study is discussed from a theoretical perspective. The guiding research paradigm, which informed the research design, is also discussed. The two research methods that were used to determine the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation are discussed in detail, namely Q methodology (and its different phases), as well as CATI. This is followed by a discussion of the three data collection methods that were used to systematically collect and analyse empirical data (see also Chapter 7). Lastly, the methods used for data analysis are explained.

6.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In summary, a research paradigm can be regarded as the “basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator” (Guba & Lincoln 1994:105). The two most widely recognised research paradigms, often described as polar opposites, are positivism and interpretism (or phenomenology) (Blumberg et al 2008). Neuman (2003) explains that positivism regards social science as an organised method whereby deductive logic is combined with empirical observations of behaviour aimed to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human behaviour. Interpretivism in the social sciences is the major alternative to positivism and is discussed in the next section.

6.2.1 The interpretivist paradigm

The main principle of interpretivism is that research must be observed from inside through a person’s direct experience. This paradigm acknowledges that people interact with the world in order to find meaning and their actions are based on reasons.

By its nature, interpretivist research promotes qualitative data in obtaining knowledge and is concerned with the distinctness of a specific situation (Kelliher 2005:123-132). Qualitative research is based on the principle that a naturalistic approach is followed for research with the purpose of understanding a phenomenon in “real world” settings in which the researcher does not attempt to manipulate participants’ behaviour (Creswell 2007:37; 78). Consequently, “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings,

attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. It begins by accepting that there is a range of different ways of making sense of the world and is concerned with discovering the meanings seen by those who are being researched and with understanding their view of the world rather than that of the researchers” (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:3). In this regard, Cohen et al (2007:19) explain that the role of the scientist in the interpretivist paradigm is to “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants”. As a result, interpretivism is based on the ontological assumptions that social reality is seen by multiple people who interpret events differently, resulting in multiple perspectives of an incident. In addition, qualitative research is concerned with a subjective, relativistic social world rather than an absolutist, external reality (Cohen 2007:8). Furthermore, in the case of positivism, assessment of research findings is done by adhering to the concepts of reliability and validity. Interpretivists judge their research results according to trustworthiness, which includes credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability.

One of the criticisms raised against interpretivism is that the ontological assumption is subjective rather than objective in nature. However, by selecting a research paradigm, the researcher is being subjectively oriented towards one way of doing research. In qualitative research, the researcher is being more subjective in the sense that he/she is not using a hypothesis and is involving him/herself in the research. However, interpretivists still take an objective stance when analysing the data they collect so that the data informs the researcher about what is going on in the environment, instead of the researcher’s own preconceptions (Cohen et al 2007).

The three elements of a paradigm that directly or indirectly guides a researcher’s work are ontology, epistemology and methodology. The paradigm adopted in this study is based on these assumptions. “Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions. These in turn, give rise to methodological considerations (which give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection)” (Cohen et al. 2007:5). The ontological and epistemological assumptions for the current study are briefly discussed in the next section.

6.2.1.1 *Ontological and epistemological assumptions for the current study*

Ontology explains how the world in reality is constituted. Consequently, ontology is concerned with the essence of the researched phenomenon (Fuglsang & Olsen 2004). In the case of ontological assumptions from the interpretivist paradigm, people interpret and

make their own meaning of events and there are multiple perspectives on one incident. In addition, causation in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols. (Cohen et al 2007:19). The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism, which means reality is subjective and therefore it differs from person to person (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110).

Nieuwenhuis (2007:55) indicates that epistemology “looks at how one knows reality, the method of knowing the nature of reality or how one comes to know reality; assuming the relationship between the knower and the known”. Knowledge is gained inductively to create a theory. In addition, knowledge arises from particular situations and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation. The interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism which means meaning is constructed through personal experience and active participation in the world (De Villiers 2005:11-13, 17).

The interpretivist paradigm as foundational philosophical base was therefore conducive to the research objectives of this study and to answer the research questions for this study. The current study is not based on hypotheses. As a result it does not accept the existence of a single reality, and has a more exploratory nature. Creswell (1997) states that when qualitative methodologies for inquiry into a social problem is used, the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting, analyses words, reports detailed views of participants, thus building a holistic picture of the phenomenon under investigation. As such, the research methods employed in the current study were inductive or qualitative in nature, based on a sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design in which general conclusions were drawn from empirical facts (Andersen 2005). This methodological approach addressed the objectives of the current study by supplying a framework for obtaining a holistic picture of participants’ experience from their subjective experience. The purpose of this study was not to determine the number of participants who hold a specific perspective on the role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. Instead, the purpose of this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the corporate brand identity elements that are perceived significant in corporate brand image formation by exploring the interpretations of organisations across various business sectors on the elements that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent. Employees from different organisations in the product and services sectors have different understandings and definitions of which corporate brand identity elements are deemed

significant in corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent, and these different understandings were of interest for this study.

The research design used in this study is discussed in the next section.

6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

As indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2, the objectives of this study were both exploratory and descriptive by adopting both a qualitative and quantitative research approach. Qualitative research and quantitative research approaches are briefly elucidated below.

6.3.1 Qualitative research

Boeije (2010:11) indicates that qualitative research carefully explains the behaviour of human beings in their natural environment. From these observations conclusions are drawn on how people act socially Boeije (2010:12-13). Moreover, qualitative researchers follow a non-linear research approach and apply logic in practice (Neuman 2000:76). Therefore, Neuman (2000:122) maintains that qualitative research relies on the informal knowledge gained from the experiences of researchers. Allan (1993:179) agrees with this viewpoint and concludes that qualitative data provide quantitative researchers with useful information on the social processes in specific settings. In addition, Leedy and Ormrod (2005:94) note that qualitative researchers aim to use participants' own understandings of events in analysing social settings. Following these perspectives, results of research conducted by Neuman (2000:145) reveal that qualitative data are empirical, as it involves documenting real events, recording what people say, examining visual images and studying written documents. These are all concrete aspects of the world. Research conducted by Shaw (1999:13) concurs with Neuman's (2000:145) view regarding interpretation, thus qualitative evaluation is interpretive. NIU (2002:4) further implies that the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and explain, to explore and interpret, and to build theory. The relationships between variables can be causal or non-causal and the researcher construes the meanings that can be derived from the data by means of inductive reasoning (Du Plooy 2009:33). Allan (1993:80) concurs with the above statements and notes that qualitative approaches are regarded as exploratory. The goal of exploratory research is to formulate more precise questions that future research can answer.

6.3.2 Quantitative research

In quantitative research, answers to the research problem are best provided by understanding which factors or variables influence or relate to an outcome (Creswell 2003:77). Guy Edgley, Arafat and Allen (1987) state that quantitative research is usually associated with “scientific research”. In this regard, Neuman (2000:123) and Skinner (1993:216) explain that quantitative research methods combine the use of numbers, deduction and testing of hypotheses. Authors such as Fouché and Delport (2002:81) and Neuman (2000:126) add to these perspectives by explaining that quantitative research values integrity by using standardised techniques, statistics, replication and numerical measures. The purpose of quantitative research is to explain and predict, and to test, confirm and validate theory (NIU 2002:4). Neuman (2000:122) further indicates that quantitative researchers follow a linear research approach and emphasise measuring variables and testing hypotheses that are linked to general causal relationships between variables. Following the viewpoints of Neuman (2000:66,122), it can be concluded that quantitative research applies reconstructed logic. This means that the logic of doing research is highly organised and presented in a formal, idealised and systematic form (Neuman 2000:122). The purpose of a quantitative research approach is to describe and explain a population with the aim of generalising the information obtained through this research method to a larger population (Holme & Solvang 1997; Du Plooy 2009:27). Quantitative researchers thus seek to understand relationships without emphasis on the participants’ perspectives (Reichardt & Rallis 1994:11).

Table 6.1 below explains the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Table 6.1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods

Qualitative (discovery-based) research methods	Quantitative (verification-based) research methods
Establish the reality of social life, the meaning of cultural elements, in order to discover and express meaning once the researcher analyses and interprets the data.	Objective facts, such as test hypotheses are measured; the researcher investigates a general relationship of cause and effect between variables
Focus on comprehensive investigations of cases that occur in everyday life; focus on interaction of variables in processes and events, since concepts occur in the form of themes,	Focus on variables, since concepts occur as distinct variables.

Qualitative (discovery-based) research methods	Quantitative (verification-based) research methods
motifs, generalisations and taxonomies.	
Authenticity is the most fundamental principle.	Reliability is the most fundamental principle.
Explicit values are present.	Values are absent.
Restricted by the situation.	Not dictated by context.
Investigate few cases, subjects.	A large number of case subjects are investigated.
The researcher actively participates in the research process.	The researcher is not actively involved in the research process.
Theory on the relationships between variables can be causal or non-causal and is often deduced from specific situations and extrapolated to general cases by means of inductive reasoning.	A linear research approach is followed aimed at measuring variables and testing hypotheses based on explanations of relationships between variables – theory on the general relationships between variables is largely causal and is concluded from general case theory and extrapolated to specific situations by means of deductive reasoning.
Specific procedures are used to conduct research and are often aimed at meeting the individual requirements of the research setting or the researcher. Replication seldom occurs.	Standard research procedures are used in a structured way before data correction and replication of data is assumed.
Data analysis is done by identifying themes or generalisations from evidence, and by interpretation of the data to present a logic picture.	Data analysis is done by means of statistical techniques, tables or charts and explains how the findings relate to the hypotheses based on the data collection during the research process.

Sources: Shaw (1999:130); Neuman (2000:22); Fouché & Delport (2002:81).

The information provided in Table 6.1 indicates that the qualitative research process is a holistic process that deals with unknown variables, uses flexible guidelines and an emergent design, is context bound and is subjective (Neill 2005:5). Quantitative research

accentuates general laws of cause and effect, and is based on an explanatory viewpoint and objectively defined facts that constitute reality.

In the next section, the research methodology used for the current study is discussed.

6.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2, best practice in research methods often recommends a mixed-methods research design integrating effective methods from different sources (Livingstone et al 2005). Although mixed methods can be used in either qualitative or quantitative research, more recent investigations in which mixed methods are used tend to combine qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Bryman et al 2007:268). Two research methods were used for this study. Q methodology was the main research method, supplemented with CATI to gain more insight and to obtain more rich data (see Chapter 6, sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 for a more detailed discussion). In addition, as explained in Chapter 1, section 1.7.1, Hogan (2008:80) regards Q methodology as a mixed method by arguing that it combines the subjective approach of qualitative research techniques with quantitative, mathematical techniques used in factor analysis, which is referred to as a qualiquantological approach by Watts and Stenner (2005:69).

6.4.1 Q methodology as subjective research method

Q methodology was initially developed and applied in psychology (Angelopulo 2009:22). To date, Q methodology has been applied in a large number of studies in various fields to investigate and gain insight into people's attitudes and perceptions of a specific topic. These include studies of nursing and medicine (Dennis & Goldberg 1996), strategic planning (Black & Härtel 2002), customer loyalty (Rosenbaum, Ostrom & Kuntze 2005) and organisational culture (Zsóka 2007).

The principles, processes and statistics underlying Q methodology are discussed in a large volume of literature (for example, Stephenson 1953 & Brown 1980a, b). However, the use of Q methodology has only increased in recent years with the availability of software suitable for statistical data analysis for Q studies. Although the use of Q methodology has increased the past two decades, it is still an unexplored research methodology in many academic institutions. Although it is not considered a mainstream research methodology, Q studies offer a valuable alternative to solving research problems based on the subjective viewpoints of participants (Angelopulo 2009:21). Q methodology is increasingly being used for consumer-related research (for example, Kleine, Kleine & Allen 1995). This proves that the usefulness of this approach for marketing-related

research is being increasingly recognised, particularly for investigating phenomena from the subjective experience of consumers. Certain characteristics of Q methodology make it a useful research method for studies in the field of advertising and consumer research, and of particular relevance to the topic under investigation in this study. These characteristics of Q methodology are discussed below.

Q methodology obtains information on the topic under investigation from the group of participants included in the study as reasoned from their viewpoint (Stainton Rogers 1995; Watts & Stenner 2003). In this regard, Q methodology agrees with qualitative research approaches by relying on personal insight and human perspectives to make sense of events in social life. Furthermore, Q methodology uses statistical techniques of Q-factor analysis (see section 6.4.1.7) for the analysis and interpretation of the research results. In this way, Q methodology corresponds with quantitative research approaches. This explanation justifies in a number of ways why Q methodology was selected as research method for this study instead of alternative research approaches, known as R methodologies. Q methodology is particularly relevant for this study, where the aim is to understand relationships between the elements of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image formation with emphasis on participants' perspectives on this matter. In this study, Q methodology is used to investigate the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as viewed from the subjective viewpoint of participants included in the person sample. In this regard, Q methodology explains the overall attitudes, associations and opinions of the participants towards the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as well as the extent to which each of these corporate brand identity elements contributes to corporate brand image formation.

6.4.1.1 Relevance of Q methodology for this study

Q methodology is the preferred research method for this study as it has strengths that are not present in other qualitative research approaches, for instance other forms of field research. Q methodology has a unique set of principles and methods (Wolf 2010:250) designed to study the subjective viewpoints of participants included in the research on the topic under investigation. As such, Q methodology has particular value when used to obtain new perspectives on human behaviour through inductive reasoning (Schlinger 1969:53; Brown 1997:2; Baker et al 2006:7). It is therefore not suitable for research questions aimed at measuring matters of fact (De Graaf & Van Excel 2008:69). Consequently, Q methodology gives participants included in the person sample the

opportunity to express their opinions on the topic that is investigated. Q methodology shows the particular combinations of themes as arranged in preferential order by the group of participants by means of Q sorting. The rank order in which a participant sorts a given set of Q statements is interpreted as an expression of that particular participant's viewpoint or perception of the topic under investigation (Wigger & Mrtek 1994:9). In this study, Q methodology is used to investigate the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as viewed from the subjective viewpoint of participants included in the person sample. In this regard, Q methodology explains the overall beliefs and opinions of the participants regarding the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as well as the extent to which each of these corporate brand identity elements contributes to corporate brand image formation.

This approach has also been selected for the current study because of its specific advantages. In Q methodology, participants are required to respond to each item in relation to all the others. This requires high levels of task engagement and item discrimination. Furthermore, since it is difficult for participants to guess socially desirable Q-sort responses, the Hawthorne (demand) effect, which is normally associated with user feedback where participants form an interpretation of the purpose of the research and unconsciously change their behaviour to fit that interpretation, is eliminated (Papworth & Walker 2008:204).

A further strength of Q methodology relates to the classification of research results. In Q methodology, the Q sort is based on the subjective viewpoint of the participant required to do the Q sort. As such, Q methodology studies "...matters of taste, values and beliefs about which a limited variety of alternative stances are taken" (Smith, Harré & Van Langenhove 1995:180; Brouwer 1999:35). A beneficial consequence of this may be that biases related to the researcher's preconceptions are minimised. The number of factors that emerge from the Q sort and their configuration are a result of the participants' views on the topic under investigation and the extent to which their views correspond with those of other participants. The factors resulting from Q analysis thus represent distinctions that are functional as viewed from the perspective of the participant, rather than merely logical as regarded by the researcher (Brown 1993, 2002).

The quantitative nature of Q methodology also makes it a particularly useful research method. Stephenson (1975) posits that existing quantitative research methods in the social sciences fail to take into account the opinion of the individual concerned (Brown

1996). Q methodology, on the other hand, is more easily combined with qualitative methods than other quantitative approaches. Q methodology combines the ability to elicit a simple structure from complex data, while remaining mindful of subjectivity and personal interpretation (Thompson, Cullum, McCaughan, Sheldon & Thompson 2001 in Baker et al 2006:18). Q methodology, like depth interviews, elicits intensive, in-depth data about the individual participants included in the person sample. However, unlike depth interviews, the data of Q methodology are structured and is readily adapted to statistical analysis. Correlation and factor analysis are used to compare each participant's evaluation of a set of stimuli with every other participant's rankings of the same stimuli, and types of participants are defined objectively by means of mathematical techniques. Most quantitative research approaches lack a reasoned integration of the subjective perspective of participants included in the study with explicit and structured analytical techniques. This integration makes Q methodology a unique research method. Furthermore, by combining a qualitative and quantitative research approach, Q methodology enables the researcher to draw conclusions by means of deductive reasoning based on the subjective opinions of participants included in the research.

Another characteristic of Q methodology which makes it particularly relevant for this study instead of a response format such as a Likert-type scale, is that Q methodology relies for its effectiveness on the cooperation and candidness of the participant included in the person sample. This may have certain disadvantages, for example the participant may attempt to fake responses or "give a great many uncertain responses" (Oppenheim 1992:210). However, unlike with Likert-type scales, the number of uncertain responses is limited by the forced distribution of the statements in the Q sort.

Q methodology is a reliable research method. In Q methodology, replicability is the most important type of reliability. According to Brown (1980a), a fundamental aspect of Q methodology is that only a limited number of distinct viewpoints exist on any topic under investigation. A well-structured Q sample containing a wide range of existing opinions on the topic will reveal these perspectives. This implies that the same conditions of instruction lead to factors that represent similar viewpoints on the topic across similarly structured but different Q samples when administered to different sets of persons. Consequently, factorial results cannot be predicted (Prasad 2001).

In view of the above characteristics, Q methodology was selected as the most suitable research approach for this study. The above discussion on the characteristics of Q methodology proves that this research method promotes knowledge on a specific topic

from the subjective viewpoint of participants. This enables the researcher to discover truth-value in subjectivity in terms of the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation and the extent to which these mandatory elements of corporate brand identity contribute to corporate brand image formation. Q methodology provides a framework through a “distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles that, when conjoined with specialised statistical applications of correlational and factor analytic techniques, provides researchers with a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining subjectivity” (McKeown & Thomas 1988:7). Q methodology factors participants and their perspectives or viewpoints on a given topic instead of factoring tests or traits. This enables a researcher to investigate each participant’s response patterns, rather than variables, in order to systematically identify groups of people with common structures to their perspectives. As a result, Q methodology was selected to determine the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation and the extent to which these mandatory elements of corporate brand identity contribute to corporate brand image formation. Employees from different organisations in the product and services sectors hold different opinions of which corporate brand identity elements are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation to a lesser or greater extent. These different opinions were of interest for this study. As a result, the advantages of using Q methodology in this study are that this research method allowed the researcher to obtain a wide diversity of the different beliefs and perspectives on how the various corporate brand identity elements identified from the literature are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation, none of which was defined a priori.

6.4.1.2 Definitions of Q methodology

In order to explain the concept of Q methodology as well as its various phases, the most important terminology used in Q methodology needs to be clarified. Table 6.2 below lists the various terminology of Q methodology accompanied by a brief explanation.

Table 6.2: Terminology in Q methodology

Terminology	Explanation of terminology
Q methodology	A research method in which quantitative and qualitative methods are combined to study the subjective opinions of human beings.
Subjectivity	How a specific topic is viewed from an individual’s perspective.

Terminology	Explanation of terminology
Concourse	The first collection of opinions which the researcher obtains from a variety of sources on the topic under investigation. In most cases the opinions are in the form of statements, although these can also be obtained from other media such as pieces of art, collections of paintings, music, photographs and picture cards.
Q sorting (Q exercise)	The participants included in the research arrange selected statements about the concourse in their order of preference.
Social perspectives	A social perspective is a consistent set of opinions about a topic (Stephenson 1965). It is a description or a pattern of beliefs, a “story that makes sense” about the field of investigation. A social perspective constitutes fundamental or core beliefs and beliefs of lesser importance. Social perspectives are well-reasoned stories composed by studying the common attributes as well as the opinions of individuals as they appear from the Q sorts of participants included in the study.
Q-sort cards	The statements which participants are required to sort are printed separately on cards almost the size of business cards. Only one statement is printed on each individual Q-sort card.
Q-sort deck	The total set of Q-sort cards. The number of Q-sort cards corresponds with the number of statements. Therefore, the size of the Q-sort deck varies between 30 and 100 cards, but usually consists of 50 to 70 cards.
Q-sort diagram	A Q-sort diagram is an enlarged diagram (or board) on which the statements are sorted in the participant’s order of preference.
Rating scale	The rating scale refers to the ranking dimensions according to which statements are sorted on a continuum ranging from +3 to –3, or +4 or –4, or +5 to –5. The ranking dimension on the continuum is determined according to the number of statements which participants are required to arrange on the Q-sort diagram.
Distribution marker	The distribution marker is the +3, +4, etc. of the rating scale.
Q sample	The process of selecting or excluding statements from the concourse

Terminology	Explanation of terminology
	by following a scientific procedure as the entire concourse is too large to be included in the study.
Person sample (P set)	A group of participants who are selected to sort the statements included in the Q sample in their order of preference.
Score sheet	A small version of the Q-sort diagram on which the number of the placement of each Q-sort card of each participant is recorded for the purpose of Q-factor analysis.
Composite statement arrays	The composite Q sort (opinion profile) which summarises the views of all the participants loading on any one factor (also referred to as factor array or model Q sort).
Sorting instruction (condition of instruction)	The set of instructions consistently used by all participants when rank-ordering sets of statements.
Rotation	Rotation is a statistical technique which is used to examine the relation between Q sorts from different angles as they are represented in factor space.
Orthogonal rotation	In this method, axes are maintained at 90 degrees, thus the factors are uncorrelated to each other. In orthogonal rotation, three methods are available based on the rotation (quartimax, varimax and equimax)
Factor	The collection of participants who produced similar Q sorts. These participants ranked the statements into similar orders of preference. Consequently, these individuals hold common perspectives about the topic being investigated. Each factor represents a different type of opinion.
Factor array	The combined Q sort which represents a factor as derived from participants' Q sorts.

Terminology	Explanation of terminology
Factor loadings	These numbers represent each participant's correlation with each of the identified (extracted) factors.
Factor/statement scores	These scores indicate the level of agreement/disagreement among statements within each identified opinion cluster.
Factor extraction	Factors are selected in exploratory factor analysis by using the eigenvalue criterion.
Generalisation	Generalisation refers to the extent to which research findings are applicable beyond the study or participants. The aim of generalising research findings is to reveal valid and reliable opinions, in-depth analysis of research findings, and subsequent categorisations of research results.
Reliability	Various means are available to establish the reliability of Q methodology, one of which includes the test-retest study. Studies have proven that when the same instrument is used to test an individual's opinion at two different points of time, the resultant correlation coefficient is .80 or higher.

Sources: Valenta & Wigger (1997:508); Amin (2000:414); Du Plessis (2005:142); Baker et al (2006:20); Webler et al (2009:43)

6.4.1.3 Origin of Q methodology

In this section, the origin of Q methodology is discussed in order to explain the principles of the school of thought on which this research method is based. In addition, this section elucidates how the research results obtained from Q methodology contribute to scientific knowledge. The results gained from Q-methodological research enable the researcher to draw conclusions by means of deductive reasoning based on the subjective opinions of participants included in the research.

The concept of Q methodology was introduced by psychologist and physicist William Stephenson (1902-1989) in a letter to the British scientific journal *Nature* on 24 August 1935 in which he proposed applying factor analysis to persons rather than to traits. Q

methodology is based on the principles of indeterminacy, interpretation, and discovery of Peirce's abductive inference, which is rooted in the use of logical analysis in scientific research (Peirce 1934:414, 56). This perspective forms the basis of Q methodology (Goldman 1999:595). Stephenson (1975:102) explains as follows in this regard: "In this connection, therefore we do not accept the position of philosophers who hold that reality is known only to the senses (positivism)... We are satisfied with the premise of communicability per se...its immediate advantage is that it makes science possible for subjectivity....". This view implies that science is not only based on phenomena that can be observed by the senses and conclusions drawn from hypotheses based on the causal relationships between variables. Instead, Q methodology provides a subjective research method that takes into account the individual's personal perspective on a specific topic.

6.4.1.4 Differences between Q methodology and conventional research methods (R methodologies)

As explained in section 6.4.1.3, Q methodology is a research method that allows participants to express their personal views (Stephenson 1953:51; Smith et al 1995:180). In Q methodology the study sample comprises the different tests or measurable materials, instead of the group of participants, as is the case in conventional research methods (Smith et al 1995:180; Stephenson 1953:51). Furthermore, Watts and Stenner (2005:72) explain that since Q methodology is concerned with the subjective opinion of the participants included in the person sample, the data obtained by means of participants' Q sorts are used for factor analysis and interpretation instead of tests or hypothesised traits as employed by conventional research methods. This implies that the researcher uses the patterns between participants as represented by their Q sorts in order to identify and describe the different viewpoints about a particular topic or issue (Stainton Rogers 1995:187). Therefore, the major difference between Q methodology and more conventional research methods lies in whether it is the participants or the researchers who structure responses:

...unlike normative methodologies, the use of Q sorts does not impose a structure in advance; and unlike the 'qualitative methodologies'..., the use of Q-sorts does not require the investigator to impose a structure after the data have been gathered ...: respondents in the process of sorting the items created their own structure.

(Kitzinger & Stainton Rogers 1985:170)

In view of this discussion, it follows that Q methodology integrates interpretive methods with statistical-mathematical operations to provide a simple alternative to conventional research methods for accessing personal viewpoints or attitudes in a more sophisticated way (Goldman 1995; McKeown, Stowell-Smith & Foley 1999:142). As such, Q methodology contains elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. In the following section, how Q methodology applies methods of both quantitative and qualitative research is explained.

6.4.1.5 Qualitative and quantitative research methods applied in Q methodology

Q methodology as a research method combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to reveal social perspectives since it gathers and then processes data (Schlinger 1969:53). In Q methodology, qualitative research takes place through Q sorting as the means of data collection, while Q-factor analysis is based on the principles of quantitative research (Watts & Stenner 2005:68). McKeown and Thomas (1988:5) reiterate the unique research approach followed by Q methodology by indicating that it “applies a distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles. When these are combined with statistical applications of correlation and factor-analytical techniques, Q methodology provides a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining human subjectivity”. In this regard, Dennis and Goldberg (1996:104) argue that Q methodology “combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research traditions” and in other respects provides a bridge between the two (Sell & Brown 1984).

Baker et al (2006:5) indicate that Q methodology follows a qualitative research approach with regard to its data collection method given that participants sort statements on a Q-sort deck (see Table 6.2). The approach is also “self referent”: the researcher does not impose a priori constructs on the respondent. Furthermore, both research approaches are aimed at obtaining subjective opinions, beliefs and values. In addition, only small samples are required to explore the vast amount of diverse opinions on a topic. Therefore the qualitative data collection method of Q methodology allows participants to express their subjective opinions. Q methodology research emphasises the qualitative *how* and *why* people think the way they do; the methodology does not count *how many* people think a certain way (Valenta & Wigger 1997:5).

Q methodology also adopts a quantitative approach in terms of data analysis: it uses the mathematical approach of data reduction and induction by means of factor analysis. Q-factor analysis enables the researcher to identify underlying patterns in data and to provide insights into opinion formation as well as to generate testable hypotheses.

However, Q methodology differs from other quantitative research methods in the sense that research hypothesis as it applies to quantitative research is not required in Q methodology. A hypothesis reflects the viewpoint of the researcher and what he or she expects to prove or disprove by the particular research. In addition, quantitative research disregards the human factor. Q methodology is based on an individual participant's viewpoint and not the researcher's viewpoint; each of the responses is regarded as valid and as a valuable source of information in the research. Following this argument it can be concluded that quantitative researchers seek to understand relationships without emphasis on the participants' perspectives (Reichardt & Rallis 1994:11).

The above discussion illustrates that Q methodology uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research results obtained by Q methodology reveal aspects of phenomena as viewed from the unique perspective of the individual based on his or her subjective experience of the relevant topic. These results enable the researcher to determine by means of statistical techniques how participants' viewpoints on a specific topic differ and to identify common characteristics of individuals who hold similar perspectives on the topic under investigation (Stephenson 1953; McKeown & Thomas 1988; Watts & Stenner 2005).

6.4.1.6 Application of Q methodology in advertising, marketing and branding

As indicated in section 6.4.1, the usefulness of Q methodology for marketing-related research is increasingly being recognised, particularly for investigating phenomena from the subjective experience of consumers. This section explains how Q methodology can be applied to a variety of research questions particularly in the field of advertising, marketing and branding, for example:

- to examine different modes of attitudes and motives that consumers hold with respect to buying and using a particular product;
- to evaluate advertising themes and determine which themes interest various types of consumers, as well as to find out which themes seem to appeal across-the-board to all consumer groups;
- to generate new product ideas by having consumers sort out the physical, social, and psychological values that they value in a product;
- to explore changes in the organisation and structure of people's attitudes and opinions after they have viewed advertising for a brand; and
- to find out the images that users and non-users have of a particular brand, or to find out the images that various publics hold of an organisation (Schlinger 1969).

In the next section, the different phases of a Q study are explained.

6.4.1.7 The phases of a Q study

Q methodology uncovers and identifies the range of opinions regarding a specific topic under investigation. The methodology usually involves five phases (Gaebler-Uhing 2003:439; Stricklin & Almeida 2004). These five phases are summarised in Figure 6.1 below:

Figure 6.1: Steps in Q methodology

Each of these five phases is now discussed in more detail:

a Phase 1: Collecting the concourse

The first step in designing a Q-method study is to select items or statements, also referred to as the Q sample, which will be used to examine the topic of investigation (Chinnis et al 2001:252). The researcher creates a comprehensive collection of statements that reflects the entire range of opinions regarding the topic from the subjects included in the Q study, also known as a concourse (see Table 6.2). In the case of the current study, a comprehensive literature review was used to compile the concourse. The purpose of the research determines the nature of the statements included in the Q sample. The

statements are aimed at providing a comprehensive representation of the discussion about a particular topic in the participants' own words and language (Valenta & Wigger 1997:503). The set of statements included in the Q sample is obtained from the concourse. Stephenson (1978:13) explains that “concourses are not compilations of facts or information ..., but ... feelings experienced by human beings on an everyday basis”. From this perspective, concourses are regarded as the common set of knowledges, the “social recipes” (Schutz 1967) in and through which human beings understand social life. The types of Q samples are explained below.

i Types of Q samples

Collecting items for the Q sample may be determined according to the research question or may be part of the research question. The items that will constitute the Q set can be gathered from primary and/or secondary sources according to the nature of the study. These items are divided into two major types, namely naturalistic and ready-made Q samples.

- ***Naturalistic Q samples***

Naturalistic Q samples refer to Q samples obtained from direct quotes and themes from in-depth and group interviews (McKeown & Thomas 1988:26; Cross 2005:210). Therefore, this type of sample reflects the opinions of the persons performing the Q sorts (McKeown & Thomas 1998:25).

- ***Ready-made Q samples***

Ready-made Q-sort samples are compiled from sources other than in-depth and group interviews with the participants, for example, literature or newspaper articles. Since this group of Q samples can be compiled from a variety of sources, several subtypes of ready-made Q-sort samples exist. These are the following:

- ***Quasi-naturalistic Q samples***

Quasi-naturalistic Q samples are similar to Q samples that are collected from interviews. However, this type of Q sample is obtained from sources external to the study, for example taking statements from an interview with an expert on the topic without the expert being included in the study.

- ***Hybrid-type Q samples***

In a Q study, statements from naturalistic and ready-made Q samples can be combined. These statements are referred to as hybrid-type Q samples. For example, statements can

comprise both interviews with participants as well as statements from newspaper articles (McKeown & Thomas 1988:27).

Some Q studies apply statements borrowed from attitude and attribute scales in order to determine whether the personal meanings of participants correspond with the meanings the items are designed to measure. The use of conventional scales does not have a negative effect on the discovery of meanings different from those “built” into the scale.

- ***Standardised Q samples***

McKeown and Thomas (1988:26-27) also indicate that several standardised Q samples are available. These include Block’s (1961) adjective Q set for Non-professional Sorters (personality assessment) and the Butler-Haigh (1954) Q sample for psychotherapeutic counselling.

b Phase 2: Developing a representative Q sample from the discourse

Once the researcher has decided what type of Q sample will be used in the measurement instrument, relevant examples of that particular type of Q sample must be collected. The researcher selects a representative sample of statements from the discourse which he or she develops to be more meaningful. These statements, referred to as the Q sample (see Table 6.2), represent various issues related to the topic under investigation (Prateepko & Chongsuvivatwong 2009:2). Brown (1970a, 1971a) and Stephenson (1953:62-85) provide scientific principles for the selection of statements or other stimuli in a Q sample. The following guidelines for selecting representative samples from the discourse for inclusion in the Q sample set also apply:

- An adequate number of statements must be included in the Q sample set in order to keep the probable errors low (Burt 1937:68).
- The statements included in the Q sample set must form a representative or random sample of the total number of statements obtained from the discourse (Burt 1937:68).
- Stephenson (1953:65) suggests the principle of heterogeneity for selecting statements to be included in the Q sample set: In view of the relative homogeneity of all statements within a specific cell, those 10 statements that are most different from one another within the same cell (heterogeneity) must be included in the sample in order to ensure comprehensiveness of the entire sample.
- The statements included in the Q sample set must represent the entire range of opinions on the topic. This implies that the Q sample must contain items covering as

diverse and inclusive a range of relevant issues as possible (Stenner & Marshall 1995:621; Gaebler-Uhing 2003:439).

- The Q sample statements must be subjective opinion statements (not statements of fact) and must not generate strong feelings regarding the topic (McKeown & Thomas 1998).
- The identification of a factor after the Q-sorting process does not mean the experimental population is in any way representative of any sort of hypothetical general population and the same principle applies to statement populations (Thurstone 1947:324).
- Q samples drawn from the same concourse will produce essentially the same structure (Daily 1973:151-161).
- Extreme elements must be avoided. Instead, elements should be plausible competitors with one another, such that some participants may be attracted to them and others disinclined to choose them (Donner 2001:27).
- Statements should be clear and double negatives must be avoided (Donner 2001:27).
- The implied underlying criteria and perceptions people use to consider an issue are most important. The statements included in the Q sample set must be broad and clear enough to reveal these implied criteria and perceptions, and to give the researcher insights about them once the sort is complete (Donner 2001:27).
- The statements selected for inclusion in the Q set must meet the requirements of optimum balance, clarity, appropriateness, simplicity and applicability (Cross 2005:210).

In addition, the resulting sample may be unstructured or structured, depending on the approach to statement selection that is taken (Wolfe 2000:1441). If Q items are statements about a product or brand, the final selection should be balanced to achieve an equal number of positive and negative statements. Unstructured and structured Q samples are discussed below:

i Unstructured Q samples

Unstructured Q samples include statements that are regarded relevant to the topic under investigation. When the researcher selects statements for inclusion in the unstructured Q sample no particular effort is made to cover all possible sub-issues of the topic under investigation (McKeown & Thomas 1988:28).

Unstructured samples are selected at random from a “parent-universe”. As a result, the unstructured sample provides a reasonably accurate survey of attitudes towards a specific issue. However, it is possible that some aspects on the topic under investigation might be either under- or over-sampled, which could result to a certain degree of unintentional bias in the final Q sample (McKeown & Thomas 1988:28; Dasgupta & Vira 2005:6). Despite this shortcoming, Stephenson (1953:74) points out that not all Q samples need to be structured.

ii Structured Q samples

Structured samples are used in order to ensure that relevant sub-classes of participants are adequately represented, even though the incidence of those sub-classes in the population may be relatively small (Schlinger 1969:55). Structured Q-sort samples are composed more systematically because the researcher groups statements according to categories. The researcher also includes different aspects of the same statements to make them more or less representative of the concourse (Brown 1980a:189).

The principles of Fischer’s (1960) factorial experimentation are used to compile structured Q samples. According to Fischer’s (1960) factorial design, Q sample statements are assigned to (experimental) conditions designated and defined by the researcher. Firstly, the statements included in the “parent universe” are organised into all-inclusive categories. The items included in the Q sample are conceptualised theoretically and organised into a factorial framework. Once the main all-inclusive categories have been identified, a set of statements that cover each category is selected to make it representative of the parent concourse. Fischer’s (1960) factorial design provides a reasonable method for selecting the Q sample theoretically and can be deductive or inductive. A deductive design is based on a priori hypothetical or theoretical considerations, which means that this approach comprises categories and levels that are specified by the researcher according to the theory at the beginning of the research (Stephenson 1953:73). Inductive designs appear from the patterns that are observed as statements are collected. An inductive approach is based on observation of emerging patterns, since inductive factorial designs are unknown at the beginning of the research. As a result, inductive factorial designs are formulated as statements are collected. The dimensions that guide the selection of statements are suggested “by the statements themselves” and become visible once statement collection is completed. Both types can integrate few or many design conditions (McKeown & Thomas 1988:28-29; 30).

Structuring of the Q statements has two practical advantages. Firstly, it provides the researcher with a framework according to which he or she can select the final sample of Q statements from the available statements. Secondly, a balanced selection of statements contributes to an unbiased Q sample which is varied enough to allow many different viewpoints to be expressed through the sorting. The structuring of Q samples, based on the principles of factorial design, enables the researcher to compose a set of stimuli which is as representative as possible of the main effects of the topic under investigation (Brown & Unga 1970). Therefore, it can be concluded that the structure of a Q sample provides a useful way of promoting comprehensiveness in the final collections of statements for inclusion in the Q-sort deck. Table 6.3 below illustrates a structured Q sample in Q methodology.

Table 6.3: An illustrative table of a structured Q sample in Q methodology

Factors	Levels	Number of levels
X, "Attitudes"	(a) Introversion (b) Extroversion	2
Y, "Mechanism"	(c) Conscious (d) Unconscious	2
Z, "Functions"	(e) Thinking (f) Feeling (g) Sensation (h) Intuition	4

Source: Stephenson (1953:69).

- ***Number of statements for a Q study***

The literature is inconsistent regarding the number of statements that must be included in the Q sample set. There are some restrictions on the number of items; there must be enough for stability and statistical reliability, but not too many as a large number of statements will overwhelm the participants. Stainton Rogers (1995:181) indicates that the Q sort usually consists of 10 to 100 samples, while McKeown, Hinks, Stowell-Smith, Mercer and Forster (1999:254) consider 50 to 70 items as the norm. Schlinger (1969:54) regards a sample of 55 to 75 items as ideal and warns that too many statements included in the Q sample set may fatigue participants, resulting in a distortion of research results. The exact size of the final Q set will ultimately be determined by the nature of the study

and the number of multiples of the basic design (Brown 1980a:189). However, research literature advises that it is always best to initially compile an overly large number of statements. These statements can then be refined and the number of statements be reduced through processes of piloting.

- ***Preparation of the statements for the Q-sorting process***

Once the researcher has finalised the Q sample, the statements must be prepared for the Q-sorting process.

As is the case with sampling respondents in survey research, selecting a Q sample is aimed at providing a miniature that includes all the relevant aspects on the topic under investigation which are represented by the statements included in the Q sample (Wolf 2010:251). Statements are selected from the discourse according to Fisher's experimental design principle (Brown 1970) in order to ensure representativeness in the Q sample (see section 6.4.1.7). As indicated previously in this section, the statements selected for inclusion in the Q set must meet the requirements of optimum balance, clarity, relevance, simplicity and suitability (Cross 2005:210).

Each statement is numbered and printed on a separate card to form a valid and reliable Q-sort deck (Denzine 1998). Each Q-sort card must contain only one individual statement written in a language clearly understood by the participants. The guidelines proposed by Donner (2001:27) for selecting representative samples from the discourse for inclusion in the Q sample also apply. In addition, the statements selected from the discourse must be pre-tested on a few participants to ensure clarity and general comparability.

The statements selected for this particular study are included as Annexure A.

- c Phase 3: Selection of participants***

In conventional research methods or R methodologies, the population refers to the group of people in which the results of the study can be applied. The sample refers to those people on which the study is actually conducted. In Q methodology, the population and the sample are not as absolutely defined as in quantitative research. The person sample, also referred to as P set (see Table 6.2), is theoretically relevant to the problem under investigation and is selected according to the purpose of the study. Sampling is used to select a diverse group of individuals with variables of interest. Q methodology focuses on internal validity, and therefore the P set is constructed by means of purposive sampling (Brown 1980a:194) (see section 6.5.3.1). This means that the persons are mainly selected

for the research because they have special relevance to the topic or hold strong views about the topics of interest (Fox 2003:281).

Participants in the Q sort may be chosen randomly or according to a structured sample design based on the principles of Fischer's (1960) experimental design (see section 6.4.1.7). The latter design allows the researcher to predetermine the categories of participants for the study. In addition, it enables the researcher to specify the number of participants within each class (Brown 1980a:194). The sample size is relatively small and the research focuses on in-depth analysis of a small number of cases rather than superficial analysis of large number of cases (Amin 2000:411).

i Design of the person sample

The design of P sets is intended to select persons who have viewpoints relevant to the topic under investigation (Coke & Brown 1976:102). Therefore, in Q methodology the P set tends to be more theoretical (Glaser & Strauss 1967:45-77) than random or accidental. Dennis (1986:10) supports the view of Coke and Brown (1976:102) by stating that when purposive sampling is used, participants are selected based on "the expectation that they will hold different points of view on the topic being studied". Participants are therefore selected according to specific personal attributes, their possible views on the topic, or their social position and background. Baker et al (2006:10-11) conclude that in Q methodology the person sample is designed in such a way that the results obtained from the Q-sorting process will represent the structure and form of participants' shared views on the research topic, instead of predicting the percentage of individuals in the population who hold these views. As such, the research topic in question will determine the basis on which participants will be selected for inclusion in the sample, rather than statistical power. It can be concluded that purposive sampling enables the researcher to select participants who are likely to either strengthen or challenge emerging theory.

The exact constitution of the participant group must also be considered. The use of an intensive or extensive person sample depends upon the nature and purpose of the study (McKeown & Thomas 1988:37). Intensive studies include a small number of individuals in the P set. These participants each undertake several Q sorts under different conditions of instruction. In extensive studies the P set constitutes a larger number of participants in order to obtain Q sorts from a diverse group of people (Baker et al 2006:10).

- ***Intensive person sample***

In an intensive person sample, participants are required to sort the Q-sort cards under various conditions of instruction. A condition of instruction serves as a guideline to a participant for sorting the Q-sort cards from his or her own point of view. In an intensive person sample, a small number of participants can sort the Q-sort cards under various conditions of instruction. An intensive person sample may comprise one to about 30 participants. If only one person participates in the study, it is referred to as a single-case study, where one participant sorts statements about a specific topic under different conditions of instruction at different times (Brown 1991).

- ***Extensive person sample***

In an extensive person sample, many participants are required to sort the Q-sort cards under an identical condition of instruction. The number of participants included in the person sample must be enough to establish the existence of a Q factor in order to enable the researcher to compare one factor with another. Brown (1980b) suggests that 40 to 60 participants are usually adequate.

- ***The size of the person sample or P set***

The preferred size of the P set is determined by the number of factors extracted and the way in which individual Q sorts “load” onto these factors. Therefore, the exact size of the P set can only be determined once data have been collected. The number of participants constituting the P set must be large enough to enable the researcher to establish the existence of a factor for the purposes of comparing one factor with another. Contrary to the practice applied in R methodology, the results of a Q study are not generalised to the population, but to a specific factor type, which is referred to as generalisation of a particular perspective (Brown 1980a:192) (see Table 6.2). Generalisations are applied in the case of participants who hold similar perspectives on a specific topic. As a result, these participants’ views on a specific matter would lead them to load highly on a factor (Brown 1980a:67).

- ii **The response format**

Once the person sample has been selected, the researcher must select a response format, that is, the labels chosen for the ranking dimensions. The ranking dimensions refer to the participant’s viewpoint according to which statements are sorted, for example, how agreeable or acceptable statements are. If the researcher selects “agreement” as the subjective area of interest, participants would be asked to rank statements using a continuum of most agree and most disagree (Denzine 1998; La Paro, Siepak & Scott-Little

2009:23). Participants are required to sort the Q-sort cards from those statements with which they agree most, to those with which they disagree most. The rating scale according to which statements are sorted may range from +3 to -3, or +4 to -4, or +5 to -5, depending on the number of statements included in the study (Dennis 1986:11).

With regard to the range of the distribution, Brown (1980a:200) indicates that the larger the number of statements, the wider the range of available scores should be. However, Q samples mostly consist of 40 to 50 statements and employ a range of +5 to -5 with a quasi-normal flattened distribution (Brown 1980a:200). A quasi-normal distribution allows participants to place a larger number of statements in the middle categories than in the categories forming the distribution's tails. By allowing for more items in the middle categories, the researcher ensures that Q factor analyses will be based upon items that evoked meaningful reactions from participants. This can be done, since participants are likely to place items with little relevance to them closer to the middle of the distribution. This response format requires participants to use all the statements while at the same time giving them the freedom to place the statements in any position in the selected response matrix (McKeown et al 1999:254). Despite these guidelines, Brown (1971) and McKeown (1990) argue that the actual shape of the distribution curve is of little importance since the factors of subjectivity tend to be robust enough to be reproduced under a variety of configurations. In other words, whether the continuum varies from +5 to -5 or +3 to -3 does not impact significantly on the final results.

iii The Q-sorting process

Brown (1980a:17) refers to Q sorting, also known as the Q-methodological ranking procedure, as “the technical means whereby data are obtained for factoring”. The Q-sorting process usually occurs in the presence of the researcher. In the Q-sorting process, participants are asked to sort the sample of statements selected in phase two in their preferred order of importance on a Q-sort diagram, according to the condition of instruction (see Table 6.2). The Q-sort diagram is a preset, enlarged diagram or board that contains a space for each card in terms of the specific ranking dimension for the study for example, agreement and disagreement. The participants are required to place each card on the Q-sort diagram in their own order of preference. In practice, the Q-sort diagram provides a convenient method to ease the rankings of the participants. The cards are arranged in columns instead of hidden in a series of single piles, which facilitates visualisation (Dennis 1986:12). Traditionally, Q sorting has been done by means of a manual, offline process. As a result of technological development such as the

computer and online communication media, the Q-sorting process can now be conducted electronically. An online Q-sorting tool provides an alternative method for performing the Q-sorting process in a more cost- and time-efficient manner since a larger number of diverse participants can be obtained (Hogan 2008:104).

Q sorting involves a set of Q items which participants are required to sort according to a standardised ranking distribution or continuum, for example “most agree” to “most disagree” (Stainton Rogers 1995:180) as experienced from the person’s viewpoint (Brown 1980a:195). Those Q items which the participant regards of great significance will be “ranked or scored highly, while those of little relative significance ... [would be] ranked or scored lowly” (Stephenson 1936a:347). “Statements given zero on the Q-sort scale are those which ‘do not matter’ in the given situation. The resulting Q sorts reflect, or picture, the participants’ active ‘measurement’ of their own knowledge of their experiences” (Wolf 2010:250).

A number of online tools are also available for conducting the Q sort electronically. However, not all online tools simulate the manual Q-sorting process, although the same processes and principles apply for conducting the Q sort (Hogan 2008:105).

Participants are required to sort Q-sort statements according to specific instructions given by the researcher. These instructions are referred to as the “conditions of sort” (McKeown & Thomas 1998) or conditions of instruction. There are two types of conditions of instructions, namely forced-choice condition of instruction and free-sort condition of instruction. These two types of conditions of instruction are explained below.

- ***Forced-choice condition of instruction***

If the participants are given a forced-choice condition of instruction by the researcher, they must place the Q-sort cards into a fixed number of categories or columns (ranking dimensions) within a distribution. The participants could be asked to sort the statements from those with which they agree most to those with which they disagree most. The number of items or objects that participants may place in the space provided for each card on the Q-sort diagram is determined by the researcher in advance.

If participants are required to do the Q-sorting process according to a forced-choice condition of instruction, each participant is provided with a deck of cards and instructed to view a situation from a specific point of reference. To ease the sorting, the participants are first instructed to read all the Q-sort statements in order to get a broad impression of their overall content. At the same time, the participant is required to divide the Q-sort statements into a specific number of piles in accordance with the conditions of instruction,

for example three piles (Brown 1980a:196). Statements that participants experience as agreeable are placed in one pile to the right, statements experienced as disagreeable are placed in a second pile to the left and the remainder of statements are placed in a third pile in the middle.

After completing the initial sort, the participants proceed to a more detailed sorting by using a scoring continuum or scale comprising a U-point continuum. The scoring continuum ranges from most characteristic of the participants' viewpoint (+5, +4 or +3) to most uncharacteristic of the participants' viewpoint (-5, -4 or -3), with "absence of characteristicness" (score 0) in between the extreme values (Brown 1980a:199). The latter is reserved for statements that are neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic in the opinion of the participants, although they may also sort statements which they regard as unclear, meaningless or contradictory in this category (Brown 1980a:198).

The researcher instructs the participants to spread out all the statements which they sorted in the right-hand pile during the initial sorting and which contain those statements that are most characteristic of the participants' point of view. The participants study the statements in the right-hand pile, and select the required number of statements that represent their viewpoint most in accordance with the required distribution continuum (for example, +3, +4, or +5). The participants place these statements vertically under the highest positive ranking position (for example, +3, +4, or +5). The order in which the statements are placed under the markers is irrelevant, as all statements below a specific marker will receive the same score when the data are recorded (McKeown & Thomas 1998:32-33). The researcher can also instruct the participants to allocate a specific number of statements to each ranking position (for example, +3, +4, or +5).

The researcher then instructs the participants to study the statements which they sorted in the left-hand pile during the initial sorting and which contain those statements that are most uncharacteristic of the participants' point of view. They are instructed to select the required number of statements that are most uncharacteristic of their point of view and to place these statements vertically under the highest negative ranking position (-5, -4 or -3).

The participants then return to the statements which they sorted in the right-hand pile during the initial sorting, and select the required number of items that are more like their viewpoint than the remaining ones among the grouping but which are not as significant as those statements already selected and placed under +5, +4 or +3. They are instructed to place these statements under the second highest positive ranking position (+4 or +3).

Participants may switch the order of statements at any time during the Q-sorting process (McKeown & Thomas 1998:33).

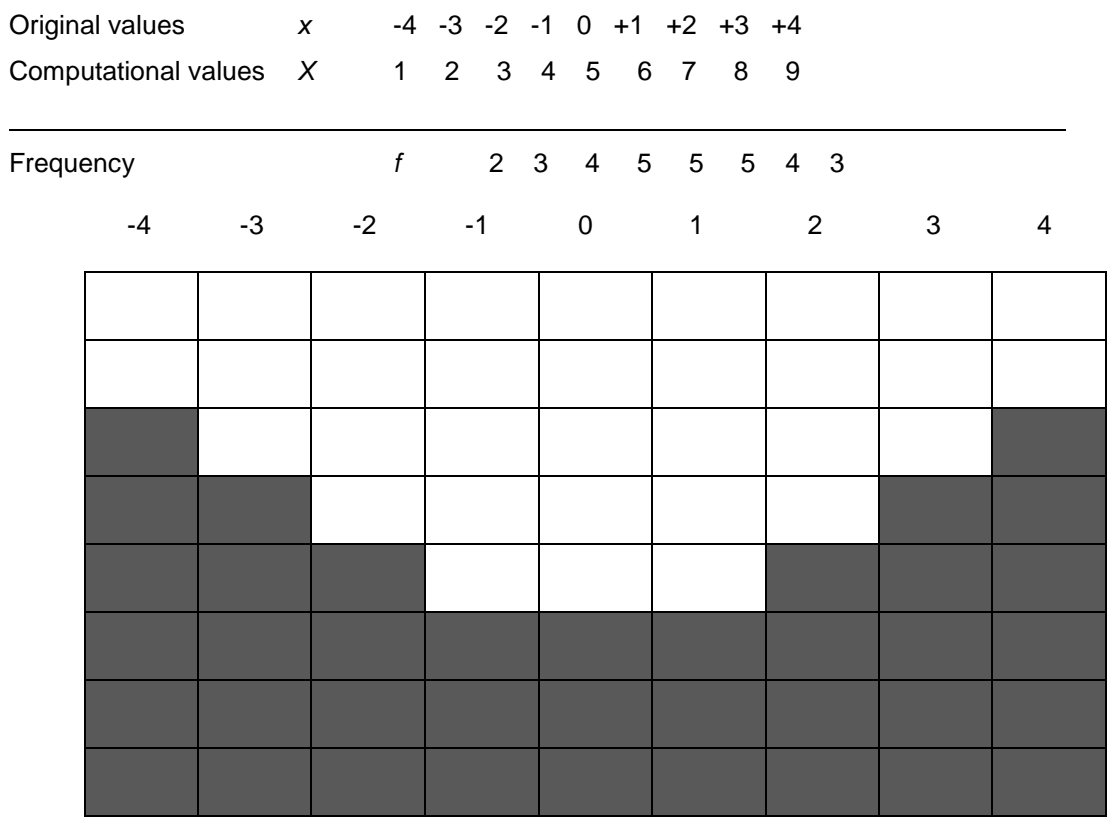
The participants return to the statements sorted in the left-hand pile during initial sorting, and the process is repeated with the statements in this pile. By working back and forth between statements that are characteristic and uncharacteristic of the participants' viewpoint, they gradually approach the middle of the continuum. At some point during the sorting process, normally around 2, the participants exhaust the statements regarded as characteristic and uncharacteristic of their point of view, and are required to make subtle distinctions among the statements that represent more or less absence of characteristicness, by placing those statements that are only "slightly characteristic" under +1, and those that are only "slightly uncharacteristic" under -1. Statements that represent total absence of characteristicness or "indifferent" statements are used to fill in any open spaces that remain after all the statements that are most characteristic and most uncharacteristic of the participant's viewpoint have been sorted (Stainton Rogers 1991:128).

The researcher requests the participants to re-examine the entire array to ensure it represents their views adequately, and to make any adjustments in the arrangement, if necessary. After the Q-sorting task has been completed, each participant's opinion continuum resembles an inverted normal distribution of cards or an upside-down pyramid (Gaebler-Uhling 2003:440).

Once the Q sorting is finally completed, the statement scores are recorded by writing the corresponding statement numbers in the appropriate cells of the score sheet that reproduces the Q-sort distribution in order to preserve a record of the way in which the participant sorted them (Brown 1980a:197-198).

Figure 6.2 below illustrates a Q-sort diagram using a forced-choice condition of instruction.

Figure 6.2: An example of a Q-sort diagram using a forced-choice condition of instruction



For purposes of gathering data, the values expressed in deviation form x are of theoretical importance, and help the participant conceptualise the Q-sorting task. However, scores on computer cards can be entered more easily if the original values are transformed into all positive numbers. Therefore, when the data are prepared for analysis, the statements for each rank are given the same value. In a continuum ranging from -4 to +4, each item under -4 would receive a 1, those under -3 a 2 and so forth to +4, which would be scored 9 (Mckeown & Thomas 1998:33). In this way, positive and negative signs are eliminated, which reduces coding and punching errors, but does not affect the analysis in any way (Brown 1980a:204).

The data resulting from a forced-choice condition of instruction will have a specified mean and variance, and the mean and variance of each participant's data are always the same. This information is known before any data are collected because the mean and variance are properties of the distribution rather than of a participant's responses. This is a useful characteristic not found in other rating techniques. It may be employed to assure that the data have been prepared correctly for analysis. Any case whose mean value across the Q items does not match the known distribution mean is erroneous (Stephen 1985:198-199).

These results are then compared and factor analysis is done by means of statistical calculations as explained in section 6.4.1.7 of this chapter.

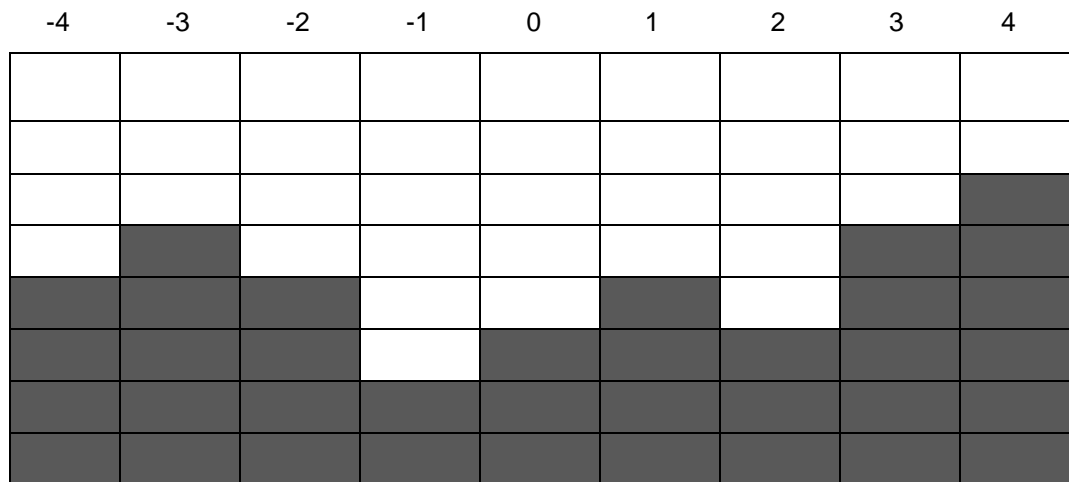
- ***Free-sort condition of instruction***

When participants are required to sort Q samples according to the free-sort condition of instruction, the use of the distribution continuum represented is optional (Stephen 1985:197). Participants may also place the Q-sort cards in any number of piles needed for the specific research problem. They may place as many or as few Q-sort cards under the distribution markers as they deem fit. In the case of free-sort condition of instruction, researchers do not determine in advance how many piles must be used for the Q-card sorting. The researcher can also request participants to sort the statements from those with which they agree most to those with which they disagree most in any place under the distribution markers. Therefore, the free-sort condition of instruction has no specified requirements regarding the number of categories, the number of statements sorted under each category, or the shape of the distribution (Stephen 1985:197).

In the free-sort condition of instruction, the researcher instructs participants to read through the statements first to familiarise themselves with their content. Participants are then allowed to determine how many piles are required for the Q sorting. Once they have decided on the number of piles to be used, they may place any number of Q-sort cards under the distribution markers until all Q-sort cards have been sorted. The rating scale may range from +3 to -3, or +4 to -4, or +5 to -5, depending on what the participant decides. They are allowed to shift Q-sort cards from one pile to another until they are satisfied with their Q sorting. Finally, statement scores for the completed Q sorts are recorded by writing the statement number on a score sheet that reproduces the Q-sort distribution.

Figure 6.3 below illustrates a Q-sort diagram using a free-choice condition of instruction.

Figure 6.3: An example of a Q-sort diagram using a free-choice condition of instruction



Source: Du Plessis (2005:158).

Table 6.4 below summarises the differences between a forced-choice and a free-sort condition of instruction.

Table 6.4: The differences between a forced-choice and a free-sort condition of instruction

Forced-choice condition of instruction	Free-sort condition of instruction
The number of piles in which participants are required to sort the Q statements are determined by the researcher in advance.	Participants are allowed to determine how many piles or categories are needed for the specific research problem.
The participant must select the most appropriate distribution marker for each Q statement and therefore must pay close attention to the statements to ensure the correct placement is assigned to each statement.	The participant is free to place the statements in any position under the distribution markers and therefore they do not pay as close attention to the statements.
Since participants are forced to place the Q-sort cards on specific places under the distribution markers they may become frustrated.	Since participants are free to place the Q-sort cards at any place under the distribution markers, frustration is minimised.
The sorting of Q statements according to forced-choice conditions of instruction is more stable and discriminating.	The sorting of Q statements according to free-sort conditions of instruction is less stable and discriminating.

Forced-choice condition of instruction	Free-sort condition of instruction
By following the forced-choice condition of instruction, the researcher is able to decrease responses by participants.	By following the free-sort condition of instruction, the researcher is able to increase the number of responses by participants.

Sources: Block (1955:487), Hess & Hink (1959:83); Denzine (1998)

Some attention is given in the literature to comparing forced-choice and free-sort distributions. Brown (1971b) believes that research results are not substantially affected by changes in distributional characteristics. Livson and Nichols (1956), however, present data which supports the use of a forced-choice distribution – a shape which requires the maximum number of discriminations between statements. According to these authors, using a forced-choice distribution yields more information while promoting higher test-retest reliability. This viewpoint is supported by Bracken and Fischel (2006:421), who assert that research on Q-sort methodology has demonstrated that a fixed distribution is preferable to a free distribution in which participants are allowed to place as many items as they wish into each category. Although the forced-distribution is artificially selected, it tends to reveal stable preferences and prevents individuals from resorting to the tendency to rate more items positively than negatively (Brown 1985).

d Phase 4: Data entry and formal comparison of the arrangements by participants by means of Q-factor analysis

In the fourth phase of Q methodology the data are entered and the arrangements of the statements by participants are formally compared by means of Q-factor analysis. Computer programmes are available to simplify data entry and Q-factor analysis. Once the data are entered, the Q-method software completes a standard Q-factor analysis. Q methodology uses familiar statistical procedures of correlation and factor analysis, but differs from methodologies that correlate researcher-measured attributes of individuals. Researchers make no attempt to define concepts in advance (Wolf 2010:250).

In the next section, factor analysis and the way in which it is applied in Q methodology is briefly discussed.

i Factor analysis

Analysis of the Q sorts is done by means of factor analysis, which is also described as the scientific base of Q methodology (Hogan 2008:100). Factor analysis is a statistical method commonly used in psychology and the social sciences to present complicated data in a

simplified manner (Kline 1994:1). Kline (1994:5) describes a factor as “a dimension or construct which is a condensed statement of the relationships between a set of variables”. As such, factor analysis is used to identify underlying factors or components that account for deviations among a much larger group of measured variables and to determine patterns of similarity or concurrence amongst the data (Tuler, Kay, Seager & Linkov 2007:7). The statistical calculations used in factor analysis generate a set of scores which represents the degree to which participants’ views show similarities with an “ideal” discourse. These scores are called “factor loading scores”. In view of the above explanation it can be concluded that the central aim of factor analysis is the “orderly simplification” of a number of interrelated issues to derive meaning from the apparent chaos of the environment (Child 1970:2).

There are two types of factor analysis, namely exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. These two types are discussed into more detail below.

- ***Exploratory factor analysis***

According to Kline (1994:9) exploratory factor analysis is applied to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables. In terms of exploratory factor analysis, the researcher assumes that any indicator variable may be associated with any factor. There is no prior theory to discern the factor structure of the data. Exploratory factor analysis is the most common form of factor analysis.

- ***Confirmatory factor analysis***

Confirmatory factor analysis was developed by Joreskog (1973) and is used to test hypotheses. Kline (1994:10) indicates that this type of factor analysis aims at determining if the number of factors and the loadings of measured variables on them coincide with the expected number of factors based on pre-established theory. If the researcher applies confirmatory factor analysis he or she assumes that each factor is associated with a specified subset of indicator variables.

In the next section, factor analysis as applied in Q methodology, known as Q-factor analysis, is discussed.

ii Q-factor analysis

Once the Q sorting has been completed, the data from the Q sorts of all the individual participants are anonymously coded and subject to Q-factor analysis in order to identify alternative patterns of response. Computer programmes for Q methodology are available to simplify data entry and statistical calculations. Once the data are entered, the Q-method

software completes a standard Q-factor analysis. The analysis done of the Q sorts is often called “inverted factor analysis”, because the normal data matrix is turned on its side (Webler et al 2009:43). As a result, the dataset is transposed or “flipped” so rows or cases become columns or variables (Baker et al 2006:14). A larger number of variables is reduced to fewer factors in order to reveal the latent structure of a dataset. In this regard, Q-factor analysis differs from factor analysis applied in R methodological studies. In the case of Q-factor analysis, correlations between participants are factored, instead of variables. It determines whether a group of participants cluster together instead of a set of variables, as is the case in R methodology (Hogan 2008:100). Q methodology uses inverted factor analysis or Q-factor analysis, which means that Q factors load on individuals rather than on tests. In Q methodology, the variables are the people’s Q sorts, and the “responses” are obtained from each Q statement. The researcher uses the patterns between participants as represented by their Q sorts in order to identify and describe the different viewpoints about a particular topic or issue (Stainton Rogers 1995:187). As a result, research that is conducted by means of Q methodology determines patterns across Q statements, instead of patterns across people’s responses. As such, Stephenson (1936b:345) indicates that such studies actively explore “correlations between persons or whole aspects of persons”. It is essentially a “gestalt procedure” (Good 2000) which shows the primary ways in which themes are being interconnected or otherwise related by a group of participants.

In the next section, the process of Q-factor analysis will be discussed. The statistical operations of computer programmes used for Q-factor analysis can be summarised in the following four steps:

- Extraction of factors: once all Q sorts in the study have been entered, the participants’ response patterns are compared with one another to determine the degree to which these responses concur with the overall results. The computer programme extracts seven to eight factors for interpretation.
- Calculating the correlation matrix: a correlation matrix is created which yields a set of factors.
- Factor loadings: factor analysis of the intercorrelational matrix is done, usually by the principal components procedure in a computer programme. Factor loading scores are obtained which determine the extent to which a specific participant’s sort corresponds with the overall results of the factor’s response pattern.
- Factor rotation: the resultant factor analysis solution is rotated to “simple structure”.

Each of these four steps is now discussed in more detail.

- ***Extraction of factors***

Factors are extracted for interpretation. Only the common factors or factors that are of any interest are selected for interpretation. To extract factors for interpretation, the researcher first calculates the correlation matrix of all completed Q sorts. The correlation matrix reflects the relationship of an individual Q-sort configuration with every other Q-sort configuration. Thereafter, the correlation matrix is subject to factor analysis. The objective of factor analysis is to determine the number of basically different Q sorts that are in evidence (Brown 1980; 1993). Q sorts that are highly correlated with one another are considered to define a factor. A factor indicates different conceptions about the topic that is being investigated. Participants who share a common conception define the same factor, but differently from participants who load on the other factors. Therefore, factors can be described as model Q sorts that summarise the subjective similarities among participants who associate significantly with them (McKeown 1990).

In Q methodology, Thurstone's (1947) centroid (or simple summation) method of analysis is used to extract factors. Centroid factor analysis offers an infinite number of possible solutions. As a result, researchers are free to consider any set of data from a variety of perspectives as represented in the Q sort in selecting the most appropriate and theoretically informative solution (Watts & Stenner 2005a). A centroid refers to a kind of grand average of the relationships between all the sorts, because they are represented by their correlation coefficients. In terms of the centroid method of analysis the eigenvalue criterion is employed for factor extraction. Brown (1980a:40) describes the notion of eigenvalues as follows: "Eigenvalues are the sum of squared factor loadings for each factor; the percentage of total variance accounted for by each factor is equal to the eigenvalue divided by the number of variates in the matrix". According to the eigenvalue criterion, a factor's significance (importance) is calculated by the sum of its squared factor loadings. Therefore, eigenvalues are a measure to explain relative contribution of a factor to the total variance in the correlation matrix. There are three criteria in the literature that serve as guideline for the extraction of factors (Donner 2001:31; Dasgupta & Vira 2005:12):

- A standard statistical criterion is to select only those factors that have an eigenvalue of 1.00 or higher, since factors with an eigenvalue exceeding 1.00 explain more of the overall study variance than a single variable would. As a result, eigenvalues less than 1.00 are regarded as insignificant and of too little interest to justify further investigation. Thus, the maximum number of factors the researcher would want to

carry forward for rotation is equal to the number of initial factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 (Donner 2001:31).

- A second standard requirement is that an interpretable Q-methodological factor must ordinarily have at least two Q sorts that load significantly upon it alone. Such significantly loading Q sorts are called factor exemplars as they exemplify the shared item pattern or configuration that is characteristic of that factor. Factor loadings are explained in more detail in section 6.4.1.7.
- A third criterion described variously in the literature as a guideline or “theoretical” criterion for factor extraction is that at least 5% of the total Q sorts should load distinctly and significantly on each factor (Dasgupta & Vira 2005:12). Three to four factors are usually extracted, although software for Q methodology typically extracts seven to eight factors to ensure enough variance in the factor.

The factors derived from Q-methodological studies are orthogonal, which means the factors are independent and at 90° to one another. This has a theoretical basis but it also appears to be the best description of the observed data, which implies that non-orthogonal axes do not achieve the same level of separation of data.

Recently, more sophisticated computer programmes have been developed which employ the principal factor method of factor extraction, instead of the centroid method, also referred to as the simple summation method (Comrey 1973:51). The principal factor method of factor extraction identifies the smallest number of factors which can account for the common variance (correlation) of a set of variables (Comrey 1973:76).

- ***Calculating the correlation matrix***

The factoring process begins once a correlation matrix of Q sorts is provided. A correlation matrix indicates, in tabular form, the extent to which each Q sort is correlated or uncorrelated in terms of significant or insignificant loadings (Brown 1991). Kline (1994:4) defines a correlation matrix as a set of correlation coefficients between a number of variables. A correlation matrix is constructed by calculating all possible pair-wise correlation coefficients between subjects in the study. The data obtained from the Q sort is used as basis for calculating these coefficients. Correlation is useful for indicating which pairs of Q sorts show similarities or resemblance and appear to go together as a group or type. Therefore, the correlation matrix provides the raw data for the factor analysis that follows (Brown 1980a:207).

- **Factor loadings**

Once factor extraction has been completed, a column of numbers is displayed, one for each individual Q sort. The separate columns reflect the loadings of the Q sorts onto each factor. Factor loadings are correlation coefficients representing the degree to which a participant's Q sort correlates with a factor. Therefore, a participant's Q sort is associated with the viewpoint represented by a particular factor (Dasgupta & Vira 2005:13). The factor loading resulting from each participant's Q sort indicates the degree of similarity between the participant's viewpoint as expressed in the Q sort and the underlying perspective represented by the factor. Q sorts that load highly onto a factor are usually regarded as defining sorts for the factor. As such, factor loadings enable the researcher to determine which individual Q sorts are positively correlated with, or load onto, a particular factor. Participants who have a significant positive loading on a factor are assumed to share a common perspective with one another, while those participants who load negatively on the same factor hold opposite views. Therefore, factor loadings are correlations between the Q sorts and the factor (Comrey 1973:7).

A factor loading in factor analysis is worth considering for interpretation when it represents about 10% or more of the variance (Child 1970:45). A standard error (SE) of 2 to 2.5 times is used as a guide to establish whether or not such a correlation is high enough to be considered significant. The standard error of a zero-order loading is given by the following expression (Baker et al 2006:15):

$$SE_r = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}$$

For a loading to be significant at the 1.00 level, it must exceed 2.58(SE_r). Therefore, theoretical significance for determining the number of factors to be extracted can be justified because factor size is "affected by the variables (persons) which are included in the study" (Brown 1980a).

- **Rotating factors**

After extraction of the factors needed to account for the correlations in the correlation matrix, the values are arranged in a table referred to as "the matrix of unrotated loadings". Unrotated factors tend to be highly complicated factor structures that relate to or overlap with many of the variables instead of only a few. However, factor analysis allows the researcher to "rotate" factors to represent factor structures that are often much more useful for scientific purposes than the unrotated factor compositions (Comrey 1973:7).

Figure 6.4 below depicts an example of the initial set of factor loadings for 10 Q sorts:

Figure 6.4: Example of matrix of unrotated factors

Q sorts	Unrotated factors						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	92	08	07	05	11	-06	-13
2	15	78	-14	34	-10	13	12
3	78	04	31	20	01	-24	07
4	87	-31	05	11	-19	-06	08
5	-82	35	-10	-14	26	-13	02
6	89	-02	16	13	-01	11	-25
7	50	47	-66	46	20	17	07
8	94	07	09	03	-01	-08	10
9	-84	17	40	01	29	19	15
10	-75	46	13	-03	03	17	05

Decimals to two places omitted.

The effect of a rotation is to create new factor axes on which the tendency for Q sorts to load either heavily or not at all is enhanced. Therefore, rotation is a mathematical technique used to emphasise the distinctiveness of particular factors.

Two main approaches are taken in the factor analysis of Q-sort data: varimax rotation and judgemental rotation (Stainton Rogers 1991:129). Analysts often use both solutions. Varimax rotation and judgemental rotation are explained in more detail below:

- ***Varimax rotation***

In the case of varimax factor rotation factors are rotated in such a way that they are always at right angles to each other, which implies that the factors are uncorrelated (Kline 1994:62). Varimax rotation produces a simple structure which maximises the similarities within factors and the differences between them (orthogonality). Large factor values become as large as possible and small factor values become as small as possible (Rosenblatt 1969:115). Therefore, varimax rotation clarifies the structure of chosen factors by maximising the variance between the factors (Donner 2001:32). The varimax procedure reveals the range of viewpoints that are favoured by the participant group (Brown 1980a:238).

- ***Judgemental rotation***

The centroid method also allows for hand rotation (also known as judgemental or graphical rotation), depending on the goals of the particular study.

Judgemental rotation allows the researcher to view the factors from different angles before arriving at a factor solution. For example, a researcher may perform a Q study with specific theoretical goals in mind. Therefore, he or she may select a particular Q sample to provide the Q sorts in order to meet these theoretical goals. As a result, the researcher may decide to maximise a specific participant's Q sort to reveal relationships between the participant's viewpoint and the perspective reflected by a factor that were not previously recognised. Another purpose of judgemental rotation can be to account for as many of the sorts as possible in as few factors as possible (Stricklin & Almeida 2004). As such, judgemental rotation enables exploratory hypothesising about patterns of data (Baker et al 2006:14).

Van Exel and De Graaf (2005) maintain that the type of factor rotation does not impact significantly on the factors with regard to the amount of variance. Rotation does not affect the configuration of meaning throughout the Q sorts of individual participants or the relationships that exist between Q sorts. Instead, it shifts the perspective from which Q sorts are observed (Thompson 1962).

e Phase 5: analysing the results of the Q-factor analysis

The final phase of a Q study involves Q-factor analysis to interpret the resulting factors. This is accomplished through the assessment of factor scores whereby all possible factors are re-expressed as the "best estimate" of the participants' viewpoint as represented in the Q sort. For this purpose the Q method computer program generates a factor array, which provides a visual representation of the rank ordering of the statements for each factor (see Table 6.2), in order to determine the distinguishing features and similarities between the factors (McKeown & Thomas 1998; Gaebler-Uhing 2003:439; Stricklin & Almeida 2004).

- **Calculating factor scores and factor arrays**

A factor score is derived as part of the Q-factor analysis to represent the degree to which a participant's beliefs share features with an "ideal" discourse. To determine the values represented by the various factors, these scores can be reconverted into an array of scores, known as a factor array, which correspond to the values (+3 to -3, or +4 to -4, or +5 to -5) used in the original Q-sort continuum. A factor array is compiled for every significant factor that is identified, and indicates the views of a factor rather than those of a single person. Factor arrays provide the best available "whole" description or model of the factor (McKeown & Thomas 1998:13).

Each of these factors represents a conception held in common by the persons whose Q sort loaded on the factor. The purpose of obtaining factor scores is to examine these perspectives as expressed in the specific configurations of statements more closely in order to elucidate the nature of the account being expressed (McKeown et al 1999:256). By analysing and interpreting the factor array for each factor, the researcher can establish what attitudes the various factors represent (Brown 1980a:239-240). No fixed strategy exists for interpreting factor arrays, because it largely depends on how participants interact with the Q-sorting task, depending on their perspective of the topic under investigation. In an attempt to provide guidelines to researchers in interpreting factor arrays, Brown (1980a:243) recommends that it is important in figuring a factor array to take account of the relative magnitude of the loadings for persons representing the factor. More weight should be given to the Q-sort scores of those persons who have higher factor loadings, because such persons are more representative of the factor type. Scores from participants who have significant loadings on only one factor are usually used to figure the factor arrays. Q sorts that load significantly on two or more factors, also referred to as bipolar or confounded Q sorts, are excluded from data analysis. The factor arrays or best estimate Q sorts are then subject to interpretation.

- ***Significance of factor loadings and factors***

As with correlation coefficients, factor loadings theoretically may range from +1.00 to -1.00. The higher a participant's plus or minus loading on a factor, the more representative his or her viewpoint is, either positively or negatively, of that particular factor dimension. Therefore, the higher a factor's reliability, the lower the magnitude of error associated with that factor's score (Brown 1980a:245).

- ***Distinguishing and consensus items***

The Q-sort items that differentiate between any pair of factors are referred to as distinguishing items. These items help to distinguish factors from one another by identifying the items in the configuration that are most salient to examine. For example, a distinguishing factor would typically be rated highly (ranked in the +4 position) in one factor, but lower on another factor (in the -3 position). These different placements are evident of different perspectives held by participants on an issue.

Items in the Q sample in which no significant difference between any factors occur are referred to as consensus items. These items fail to distinguish one factor from another because all the factors ranked the item in a similar way.

However, it is important to note that the purpose is not to isolate one or two particular items on which the overall analysis is based. Brown (1997) indicates that just because statistical criteria identify a statement as distinguished or consensual does not force the researcher to accept this item as having special theoretical or substantive importance. Instead, the factor array provides a gestalt configuration of items which implies that the position in which particular items are ranked must be evaluated in relation to the placement of the other items.

- ***Factor reliability***

Factor reliability depends on the number of participants who defined a factor. A factor should have at least five participants defining it. This will result in factor reliability of 0.95 (Brown 2000b). A factor reliability of 0.95 is sufficiently high to obtain a clear reading of the factor, as only enough individuals are needed for each factor type to provide the researcher with a clear indication of the point of view which that factor represents (Brown 2000a). According to Brown (2003) factor reliability provides the researcher with “a kind of index” of how much confidence can be placed in the factor. Brown (2000a) further explains that the reliability of a factor is significant because it enters into the calculation of the standard error of the factor scores.

- ***Size of factor loading***

Brown (2000b) maintains that each Q study and context is unique and therefore the researcher’s judgement and discretion cannot be denied. Schmolck (1998) suggests that the researcher should be inventive in detecting and expanding upon unanticipated perspectives.

A researcher should also deliberate the size of the factor loadings of the few cases or participants on a factor. Loadings can be extremely high if a small number of statements is included in the Q sample or if the Q samples contain simple and unambiguous statements to which participants respond in highly similar ways. In the latter case, the factors may reflect “commonplace” or obvious rather than meaningful and interesting responses. In this case, Brown (2002) suggests that the researcher may also select Q sorts that load significantly higher on one factor than on the other, for example, 0.80 on one factor and 0.38 on another, even though this will be a mixed loading. The factor with the high loading will not be affected too much by the participant’s low loading on another factor.

- ***Consideration of Q sorts with low factor reliability***

Brown (2001) explains that if a pure factor loading contains only one participant, it might first be regarded unworthy of retention. However, he suggests that this factor loading

should be retained if the participant is regarded important for theory testing. Likewise, if a participant loads very high on one factor and very low on other factors, it is also recommended that this factor should be examined, interpreted and compared with other factors if deemed important for theoretical reasons, even though no other participant loaded on that factor.

Table 6.5 below gives a summary of the five phases of Q methodology as explained in section 6.4.1.7.

Table 6.5: Summary of the five phases of Q methodology

Phase	Aim	Process
Phase 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting the concourse 	1.1 To create a set of items which represent the diverse viewpoints on the topic	a. Collect textual material from various sources
Phase 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a representative Q sample from the concourse 	2.1 To create a set of items comprising a reasonable number of statements relevant to the topic being investigated	a. Reduce number of statements to reasonable proportions for sorting (20-80) while ensuring that the statements included in the Q sample are representative of the topic under investigation b. Conduct a pilot study to ensure comprehensiveness of statements
Phase 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of participants; and • rank-ordering of the statements 	3.1 To represent the diverse viewpoints of relevant subject population 3.2 To allow the participants to give their subjective views on the statements included in the Q sample	a. Snowballing or theoretical sample techniques are used to select participants for inclusion in the person sample b. Each participant receives a set of Q statements, a Q-sort diagram, and the conditions of instruction c. Supplementary data can be requested at this stage d. Participants complete the Q sort according to the conditions of instruction
Phase 4: Data entry and Q-factor analysis	4.1 To identify factors that represent independent response patterns	a. Data entry and factor analysis of the completed scoring grids is done b. Rotation ensures orthogonality c. Q sorts that load significantly onto a factor are merged

Phase	Aim	Process
Phase 5: Analysing the results of the Q-factor analysis	5.1 To identify patterns of similarity in the subjective views of the participants	a. The researcher interprets the resultant “prototypical” factors

Source: Adapted from McKeown et al (1999:257)

As already indicated in this section as well as in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2, best practice in research methods often recommends a mixed-method research design integrating effective methods from different sources (Livingstone et al 2005). For this reason, two research methods were used for this study, namely Q methodology and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). CATI is explained below.

6.4.2 Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI)

Conducting interviews after the Q sort is an essential method of gaining additional information from the participants who completed the Q sort. The qualitative insight obtained by means of in-depth interviews with participants elucidates why they responded to the statements in a particular manner Hogan (2008:99). A copy of the interview schedule is enclosed as Annexure C.

Two types of telephone interviews can be conducted, namely traditional telephone interviews and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). For conducting CATI a questionnaire is programmed into a computer and the computerised questionnaire is administered by telephone to participants. A computer terminal is used for conducting CATI. The questions are displayed on the computer screen and the interviewer types the participants' answers directly into the computer's memory bank. The computer screen is programmed to display questions in a fixed order. This ensures that all questions are asked in a specific sequence and that no questions are omitted, which leads to less missing data. The computer can also be set to edit the responses in order to determine consistency in the information provided by a respondent. If any inconsistencies are detected, the interviewer can immediately request the participant to confirm or correct previous responses. In this way, the responses need not be verified at a later date, which enhances the quality of the data obtained (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & van Wyk 2005:226; 231). As a result, interim reports and update reports on data collection or the research results are almost immediately available (Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:195; Malhotra 2010:212-213). For this reason, CATI increases the speed of data collection, since the

interviewer can conduct the interview and enter the data simultaneously (Tustin et al 2005:231).

For the purpose of this study, CATI were conducted with the brand managers or senior brand managers of 10 South African organisations with an established brand. A computerised questionnaire comprising 12 questions that had to be covered in a specific sequence during the interview (Greeff 2002:302) (see Annexure C) was used. The computerised questionnaire provided a set of clear instructions in order to ensure that reliable, comparable qualitative data were obtained during the interview. Since the open structure of this type of interviewing allows the interviewer to follow leads should it be deemed necessary, unexpected facts or attitudes observed during the interview could be investigated. The participants' answers were recorded directly into the computer's memory bank providing interim reports and update reports on the data collection. These reports enabled the researcher to identify the viewpoints that participants in the research regarded as most significant and to determine different categories according to which to interpret the data (Andreassen & Wyller 2005:1311).

6.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES USED FOR THIS STUDY

As indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2 as well as section 6.4, a mixed-methods research design was used for this study. Mixed-methods research is briefly explained below.

Although mixed-methods research is not a new concept (Johnson et al 2007:113), it is only more recently that the advantages of a mixed-methods approach have been increasingly recognised by social science researchers (Boeije 2010:158). In view of its benefits, mixed-methods research is regarded the third major research approach in addition to qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson et al 2007:112).

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) define mixed-methods research as “research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a programme of inquiry”. In general, mixed-methods research is an approach to theory and practice in which multiple perspectives from qualitative and quantitative research are considered. As such, mixed-method research is a combination of ideas from qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson et al 2007:112-113).

Boeije (2010:158) explains that mixed-methods designs are classified according to two dimensions or criteria. The first criterion is time order, which refers to whether the studies take place sequentially or simultaneously. The second criterion is paradigm emphasis,

which refers to whether any of the two research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) is dominant or whether they have equal status. Similar to Morse (1991), Boeije (2010:158) identifies three mixed-methods designs, but indicates that there are various possible combinations. These three designs are a sequential explanatory design, a sequential exploratory design and a concurrent triangulation design. In the case of a sequential explanatory design, priority is given to the quantitative data which are collected and analysed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. Qualitative data are used primarily to augment quantitative data. Data analysis is usually connected, and integration usually occurs at the data interpretation stage and in the discussion. These designs are particularly useful for explaining relationships and/or study findings, especially when they are unexpected. With a sequential exploratory design priority is given to the qualitative data, which are collected and analysed first, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. Quantitative data are used primarily to augment qualitative data. Data analysis is usually connected, and integration usually occurs at the data interpretation stage and in the discussion. A sequential exploratory design is useful for refining and testing an emerging theory, exploring relationships when study variables are not known, and generalising qualitative findings to a specific population. In the case of a concurrent triangulation design qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously and therefore both are dominant. Furthermore, the qualitative data support and cross-validate the quantitative research findings by providing different types of knowledge. Using techniques of data collection and data analysis alongside each other provides overlapping information, which enables the researcher to consider results from various perspectives (Ramchander 2004:108).

A sequential exploratory design was used in this thesis since this study consists of both a qualitative and a quantitative component in which qualitative data were collected and analysed first, followed by quantitative data.

A sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design was deemed appropriate for this study, since the results of different data collection techniques can disclose various diverse but also interlinking perspectives on a phenomenon, resulting in a condensed description of the topic under investigation (Boeije 2010:176) which enhances the validity and reliability of the analyses and findings (Du Plooy 2009:41). Therefore, a sequential exploratory mixed methods research design was used to confirm and cross-validate findings within the study (Creswell & Clark 2007). In addition to the online Q sort (see section 6.4.1), an online questionnaire and an interview schedule were used as methods

for data collection for this study. The data collection process for this study is discussed in detail in Chapter 7, sections 7.8 and 7.9.

Interview schedules and questionnaires are the instruments which are most frequently used for data collection. These two data collection methods have a number of similarities. Interview schedules and questionnaires both comprise a set of questions pertaining to the topic being investigated; both forms are used to obtain responses from the participants; and for both these data collection methods the content, the wordings of questions, question sequence and response structure are the same for all participants (Krishnaswami & Ranganatham 2010:221). The online questionnaire and the interview schedule are discussed below.

6.5.1 Questionnaire as data collection method

Malhotra (2010:335) defines a questionnaire as “a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents”. Parasuraman (1986:341) adds to this definition by describing a questionnaire as a number of questions which have been formulated to obtain the information required to achieve the objectives of a research project.

6.5.1.1 Types of questionnaires

The types of questions that a researcher uses to obtain the required information from respondents are determined by two aspects, namely the research study’s degree of finality, and the amount of resistance expected to be experienced by respondents to direct questions on the matters being investigated. Two broad categories of questionnaire designs are distinguished based on these two characteristics: structured questions with structured responses, and structured questions with unstructured responses (Loubser 1996:221; 229; Malhotra 2010:343). These two types of questionnaire formats are briefly discussed in the next section.

a Structured questions with structured responses

In the case of a structured question which requires a structured response, the respondent is given a list of possible answers from which they must select one. Different types of structured questions are distinguished, including dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions with single answers, multiple-choice questions with multiple answers, checklists, rankings, grids and scaled questions (Loubser 1996:221; Malhotra 2010:344).

b Structured questions with unstructured responses

The flexibility and the directness of structured questions with unstructured responses are very popular in exploratory research projects involving personal interviews. Structured questions with unstructured responses (also known as free-response or free-answer questions) are open-ended questions which respondents are required to answer in their own words (Malhotra 2010:343). The purpose of these questions is to obtain as much information in as unrestricted a fashion as possible (Parasuraman 1986:213).

In this study, the Q sort was followed by an online questionnaire with open-ended questions as additional primary source of data collection method. The decision to use a free-response questionnaire was based on the two characteristics that determine the types of questions included in a questionnaire as explained earlier in this section. Since the researcher did not intend to conduct further research on this topic in future, the objective was to obtain the most comprehensive information as possible on the topic under investigation. The structured questionnaire that required unstructured responses served as a useful tool for clarification of the results of the Q study, since data obtained from the online questionnaire provide contextual clues for interpretation (McKeown 1990). Furthermore, if the research is aimed at discovering new insights and opinions, or at obtaining more information, open responses serve as a useful tool to achieve this objective (Krishnaswami & Ranganatham 2010:227). Apart from organisational policy stipulating the non-disclosure of intellectual capital, it was not expected that respondents would be hesitant to answer open-ended questions on the matter being investigated. For this reason, a free-response questionnaire was used for this study with the purpose of obtaining information on current perceptions, elements, behaviours and processes of corporate brand identity and corporate brand image. Having participants complete a questionnaire comprising open-ended questions after the Q sort is deemed a vital part of data collection, since the responses provide valuable information that aids in the interpretation of participants' viewpoints as reflected by the factors emerging from the sorting configurations (Hogan 2008:99). A copy of the questionnaire is enclosed as Annexure C.

There are advantages and disadvantages to open-response, or unstructured, questions. The advantages include a wide range of responses that can be obtained and the lack of influence in the responses from pre-specified categories. Respondents can express general attitudes and opinions that can help the researcher interpret their responses to structured questions (Aaker et al 2007:319; Malhotra 2010:343).

6.5.2 Interview schedule as data collection method

In interviews that are fully structured the participants are required to respond to as nearly identical a set of stimuli as possible. One variety of structured interviews involves the use of an interview schedule. Bernard (2006:212) describes an interview schedule as “an explicit set of instructions to interviewers who administer questionnaires orally”. Patton (2002:343) explains that the interview schedule provides topics or subject areas which the interviewer can use as a guideline to explore and ask questions in order to elucidate that specific subject. Furthermore, it enables the interviewer to use the limited time available in an interview situation most effectively. Several forms of structured interviews exist, including questionnaires pile sorting, frame elicitation, triad sorting, and tasks that require informants to rate or rank order a list of objects (Bernard 2006:212).

The types of questions to be included in the interview schedule are categorised as closed questions and open questions.

6.5.2.1 Closed questions

The closed form of interview schedule is used if the interview is aimed at classifying the participants' views into specific categories. In the case of closed questions, the respondent can choose from two or more alternative responses. This means the interview schedule consists of standardised answers which can be easily compiled and administered, and the responses are simple to analyse. Closed questions may comprise dichotomous or two-choice questions; multiple-choice questions which contain more than two alternatives; or declarative questions, which is a type of multiple-choice question in which a series of statements about the topic under investigation is given. The participant is required to select the alternative which represents his or her perspective (Krishnaswami & Ranganatham 2010:229).

6.5.2.2 Open questions

Open questions are mainly used in exploratory research to encourage a variety of opinions which may provide unanticipated insights (Krishnaswami & Ranganatham 2010:227). Open-ended interviews do not restrict the researcher with regard to the kinds of data that can be collected and hence allow flexibility (Boeije 2010:62). In addition, this type of interview allows participants to answer in detail and explain and qualify responses, which encourages a richness of data (Neuman 2000).

6.5.3 Sampling

In qualitative and quantitative research, sampling is used to select a specific group of respondents from which information can be obtained in order to clarify and enhance the researcher's understanding of the topic under investigation. According to Mouton (1996:132), the purpose of sampling in social research is to select a specific group of people who are representative of the larger population to whom the study applies.

The method of sampling applied by quantitative researchers differs from the sampling used by qualitative researchers. In quantitative research, sampling is based on theories of probability which originate from mathematics. This type of sampling is referred to as probability or random sampling. In the case of qualitative research, the sample's representativeness is of less concern for drawing a probability sample. In this regard, Neuman (2000:196) and Malhotra (2010:376-377) explain that when qualitative researchers draw a sample, they focus on the extent to which the group of respondents who are included in the sample for the study illuminate reality in social life. Qualitative researchers aim to find samples that will enhance the results obtained in studies about the processes of social life in a specific context. Therefore, qualitative research uses non-probability or non-random sampling in order to select respondents for inclusion in the study.

As indicated in the next section purposive sampling was used to include participants in the Q study. A method of sampling was also selected for conducting the CATI. Since interviewing is a qualitative research method, a non-probability type of sample method was used for the CATI, namely purposive sampling. The following section provides an overview of all the non-probability sampling methods.

6.5.3.1 Non-probability type of sampling methods

Neuman (2000:196) explains that since qualitative researchers use non-probability or non-random sampling methods for selecting respondents, they seldom determine the sample size in advance. In addition, qualitative researchers have limited knowledge about the larger group or population from which the sample is taken. In non-probability sampling the researchers gradually select sample units according to certain predetermined characteristics of the group of respondents. Since these characteristics determine whether or not a group of respondents is included in the sample, the probability of including a specific group of people in the sample cannot be estimated. In addition, it cannot be guaranteed that every unit of a population has an equal opportunity for being selected for

participation in the research study. It is the relevance of the case to the research topic rather than the representativeness which determines the method of sampling that will be followed to include a group of people in the study. The chance for bias is higher in non-probability sampling, thus generalisations that are derived from these samples are regarded as being less accurate than those based on probability samples (Neuman 2000:196).

Examples of non-probability types of sampling methods include convenience sampling (also known as accidental or haphazard sampling), purposive or judgemental sampling, theoretical sampling, snowball sampling and case control or quota sampling. These are briefly discussed below:

a *Convenience (accidental, haphazard) sampling*

In convenience sampling, which is also referred to as accidental or haphazard sampling, the researcher selects a sample unit that is convenient in order to obtain information quickly and inexpensively (Aaker et al 2007:394). However, Malhotra (2010:377) indicates that this method has been criticised, since it does not provide an accurate presentation of the population.

b *Purposive sampling*

In purposive or judgemental sampling the judgement of an expert is used in selecting sample units, or the sample units are selected based on a specific purpose (Strydom & Delpont 2002:334; Aaker et al 2007:394) to meet the requirements of the study (Boeijs 2010:35). Furthermore, Bernard (2006:190) indicates that in the case of purposive sampling, the researcher does not know whether the sample units included in the study are representative of the larger population. Instead, this method attempts to represent a specific portion of the population.

Aaker et al (2007:395) explain that a purposive sample can be drawn that guarantees the inclusion of certain population parameters, based on previous knowledge. In this case a purposive sample is also referred to as a quota sample. If the researcher uses quota sampling, he or she selects the subpopulations of interest, and decides on the proportions of those subpopulations that will be included in the final sample (Bernard 2006:187). Observations made are restricted to research conducted among individuals of this subpopulation. The conclusions that are drawn from the data that were collected are generalised to the total population.

An advantage of purposive sampling or known-group sampling is that the population selected for inclusion in the study has the specific qualities required to assist in the investigations. Moreover, by using purposive sampling the researcher can ensure that groups and/or population parameters are represented in the sample.

c *Theoretical sampling*

According to Strydom and Delpont (2002:335) the purpose of theoretical sampling is to find sample units that represent a grounded theory. Goulding (1998:53) adds that theoretical sampling is the process whereby the researcher collects, codes and analyses data. According to these results, the researcher decides the nature of the data that need to be collected next and the sources from which the data can be obtained in order to develop the theory as it emerges.

d *Snowball or respondent-driven sampling (RDS)*

Snowball sampling, also known as network, chain referral or reputational/respondent-driven sampling, is a multistage technique (Neuman 2000:199) in which sampling takes the form of a number of stages where the researcher uses key informants and/or documents to locate one or two people in a population (Bernard 2006:193). Each respondent included in the interview is asked to identify one or more other individuals in the field who may be considered for inclusion in the population. In this manner, the sampling frame extends with each interview (Aaker et al 2007:394; Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:287).

e *Case control sampling or quota sampling*

As already indicated, in case control sampling, also known as quota sampling, the researcher chooses a purposive sample on the basis of certain common criteria among respondents and match the cases on many criteria, but not on the case criterion. Case control sampling has great potential for field research (Bernard 2006:194; Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:287).

Since interviewing is a qualitative research method, a non-probability or non-random method of sampling was deemed appropriate to select participants for inclusion in the interviews. The non-probability sampling selected for the purpose of this study was purposive sampling, since this method attempts to represent a specific portion of the population, and the sample units are selected based on a specific purpose, in this case participants' specific qualities (Strydom & Delpont 2002:334; Aaker et al 2007:394). The method of sampling for the CATI is explained in Chapter 7, section 7.8.2.2.

6.5.4 ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In contrast to quantitative research, no statistical calculations are involved in qualitative research with the purpose of establishing correlations between certain stated variables in order to give an exact representation of an objective reality. In the case of quantitative research, the degree of accuracy and truthfulness of the research findings in their representation of the reality is evaluated according to their validity and reliability. On the other hand, qualitative research is aimed at establishing trustworthiness to ensure the research findings represent the social world of respondents. In the next section, trustworthiness and its dimensions are discussed, followed by a discussion on validity and reliability which were applied in the case of Q methodology.

6.5.4.1 Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria according to which interpretive research work must be evaluated and specifically present these criteria as alternatives to more traditional quantitatively-oriented criteria. According to these authors the four criteria better reflect the fundamental assumptions involved in qualitative research. The four criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, and the “analogous” quantitative criteria in each of these instances are internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. The four criteria for evaluating qualitative research are briefly explained below:

Credibility refers to the “adequate representation of the constructions of the social world under study” (Bradley 1993:436). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a set of activities to improve the credibility of research results: extended engagement in the field, continuous observation, triangulation, checking interpretations against raw data, peer debriefing, negative case analysis and member checking. To improve the credibility of qualitative content analysis, researchers must design data collection strategies that have the qualities to adequately solicit the representations. In addition, transparent processes are required for coding and drawing conclusions from the raw data.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the working hypothesis formulated by the researcher can be generalised or applied to another context. In this regard, the researcher is responsible for providing productive data sets and describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research to enable other researchers to evaluate

the extent to which the research findings can be transferred to different settings or contexts.

Dependability refers to “the coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomena” (Bradley 1993:437). This definition indicates the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. The research must provide a description of the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes impact on the way in which the study was approached.

Confirmability refers to “the extent to which the characteristics of the data, as posited by the researcher, can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results” (Bradley 1993:437). Establishing dependability and confirmability of qualitative research results is done mainly through audits of the research processes and findings. Determining dependability is done by monitoring the consistency of the study processes, while confirmability is verified by determining the internal coherence of the research product, namely, the data, the findings, the interpretations, and the recommendations. These audits are conducted to investigate the data collection and analysis procedures with the purpose of making judgements about the potential for bias or distortion. For the purpose of conducting audits, raw data, field notes, theoretical notes and memos, coding manuals and process notes, among other things, are used. The audit process is conducted in five stages, namely pre-entry, determinations of auditability, formal agreement, determination of trustworthiness (dependability and confirmability), and closure (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

6.5.4.2 Establishing validity and reliability in quantitative research

According to Delport (2002:166) and Huysamen (1998:25), validity and reliability are two of the most crucial concepts in the context of research measurement.

Aaker et al (2007:366) and Willis (2007:217) identify two types of validity, namely external validity and internal validity. According to Yin (2009:43) external validity involves the extent to which the research results can be generalised to situations external to the context of the actual research setting. Internal validity refers to the extent to which the results of the research can be used to show relationships unambiguously (Aaker et al 2007:366). Q methodology, which was used as one of the primary sources of data collection, focuses on internal validity. The factors extracted by means of varimax rotation reflect participants' subjective views on how their organisation uses selected corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. For this reason, findings can only be generalised to the perspectives reflected by a factor and not to the entire

population of South African organisations across the various business sectors. For this reason, external validity is not applicable to this study.

Similarly, Boeije (2010:169) distinguishes between internal reliability and external reliability. According to this author, internal reliability refers to the extent to which the data collection, analysis and interpretation are consistent, provided that the experiments are conducted under the same conditions and circumstances. External reliability deals with the issue of whether or not independent researchers can obtain similar research results when the studies are replicated in the same or similar settings.

The ways in which trustworthiness, validity and reliability were attained in this study are explained in detail in Chapter 1, section 1.9.

In the next section, the method for qualitative data analysis used in this study is discussed.

6.5.5 Qualitative data analysis

As already discussed, Q-factor analysis was used for the Q study (see section 6.4.1.7). In addition, a thematic analysis was done for the online questionnaire and CATI. In the process of a qualitative data analysis, the researcher interprets the data in accordance with the themes that are identified in the thematic analysis. The qualitative data analysis of the online questionnaire and the CATI is explained in detail in Chapter 7, section 7.9.5.

6.5.5.1 Transcription of data

As indicated in section 6.4.2, participants' responses to the questions in the interview schedule were recorded directly into the computer's memory bank. Interim reports and update reports on data collection or the research results were almost immediately generated (Iacobucci & Churchill 2010:195; Malhotra 2010:212-213). Therefore, no transcription of data was required after conducting the CATI as is the case with a verbatim account of the interview obtained by tape or video recording.

6.5.5.2 Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis was used as data analysis method for the responses to the online questionnaire and CATI in order to gain an understanding of the underlying meaning of the content. Thematic analysis should be regarded as a fundamental method for qualitative analysis. It is used to identify, analyse and report themes in data. It is a method for data analysis that systemises data and provides a comprehensive description of the data set (Braun & Clarke 2006; Casey & Murhy 2008). In addition, it interprets a number of aspects

of the research topic (Boyatzis 1998). A theme captures an essential idea and embodies repeated patterns of meaning in the data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

a *Essentialist/realist thematic analysis versus constructionist thematic analysis*

Two methods of thematic analysis can be distinguished. In the first method, thematic analysis can be essentialist or realist; used to report the meanings, experiences, and the reality of participants. Alternatively, thematic analysis can be a constructionist method. In this regard, thematic analysis serves as a means of investigating the ways in which meanings, realities, events, and experiences result from a range of discourses operating within society. Furthermore, thematic analysis can also be a “contextualist” method, which includes elements of essentialism and constructionism. In the case of a contextualist method, thematic analysis is characterised by theories such as critical realism (Willig 1999), which focuses on individuals’ sensemaking of their experience, and, in turn, how the broader social context affects those meanings, while taking into account the material and other limits of “reality”. Therefore, thematic analysis both reflects reality, and explains the surface of “reality” (Braun & Clarke 2006).

b *Inductive versus deductive thematic analysis*

In thematic analysis, two primary ways can be used to identify themes or patterns within data: an inductive or “bottom-up” thematic analysis (cf. Frith & Gleeson 2004), or a deductive or “top-down” (theoretical) thematic analysis (cf. Boyatzis 1998). In an inductive approach, the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton 1990). Inductive analysis therefore involves a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytical preconceptions. As such, inductive thematic analysis is data driven. In contrast, a theoretical thematic analysis is analyst driven, since it is determined by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the topic under investigation. Theoretical thematic analysis provides a more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data and a less rich description of the data overall (Braun & Clarke 2006).

c *Semantic/explicit level of thematic analysis versus latent or interpretative level of thematic analysis*

Two “levels” are distinguished at which themes are to be identified in a thematic analysis, namely a semantic or explicit level, or a latent or interpretative level (Boyatzis 1998). A thematic analysis usually focuses on one level only. If a semantic approach is followed, the analyst identifies the themes within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and is not looking for anything *beyond* what a participant has said or written. In the analytic process a

progression takes place from *description*, where organisation of the data is done to identify patterns in semantic content, to *interpretation*, in which the analyst attempts to develop an abstract idea of the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Patton 1990), often in relation to previous literature (cf. Frith & Gleeson 2004). A thematic analysis at the latent level on the other hand is a more comprehensive process than thematic analysis at semantic level, since it investigates the *underlying* ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations articulated in the data. In the case of thematic analysis at latent level, the development of themes involves interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

d *Epistemology: essentialist/realist thematic analysis versus constructionist thematic analysis*

As already indicated, thematic analysis can be conducted from either a realist/essentialist or a constructionist approach. However, the outcome and focus for each of these paradigms will be different. In the case of an essentialist/realist approach, the analyst can theorise motivations, experience, and meaning in an uncomplicated way, because a simple relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language in which language reflects and enables the analyst to articulate meaning and experience (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Widdicombe & Wooffitt 1995). A constructionist perspective is based on the assumption that meaning and experience are produced and reproduced in socio-cultural contexts, rather than inhering within individuals (Burr 1995). Therefore, thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist framework investigates the socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions resulting in the individual accounts that are provided. Thematic analysis that focuses on latent themes tends to be more constructionist, although not all latent thematic analyses can be regarded as constructionist (Braun & Clarke 2006).

For the purpose of this study, the responses to the online questionnaire and interview schedule were analysed by means of an inductive thematic analysis at latent level following an essentialist framework to identify both common and distinct themes. The thematic analysis involved interpretation of exactly how different organisations integrate the elements of corporate brand identity to contribute to corporate brand image formation (as identified in Chapters 4 and 5). The data analysis for the responses to the online questionnaire and interview schedule is explained in detail in Chapter 7, sections 7.10.5 and 7.10.6.

e *Phases of thematic analysis*

Braun and Clarke (2006) propose six phases of thematic analysis. However, these authors explain that thematic analysis is not a linear process in which the researcher progresses to the next phase once the previous phase has been completed. Instead, thematic analysis is

a recursive process which requires the analyst to move back and forth between the different phases during data analysis. The six phases of thematic analysis are explained below.

- ***Phase 1: familiarising yourself with your data***

In the first phase, the analyst familiarises him or herself with the data by reading the data repeatedly in an active way to search for meanings and patterns. The first step in thematic analysis involves reading the text carefully in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation, to explain the specific case that is being investigated, and to comprehend the causal or non-causal relationship between the variables investigated and to extrapolate these to a general situation by means of inductive reasoning. Thematic and content analyses are aimed at recognising meaning patterns, rather than yielding statistical data (Rogers 2000; Du Plooy 2001). During this phase it is recommended that the analyst take notes or mark ideas for coding which can be referred to in subsequent phases.

- ***Phase 2: producing initial codes***

Phase 2 begins once the analyst has read and familiarised him- or herself with the data, and has compiled a preliminary list of topics identified from the data and what is interesting about these topics. This phase then involves the production of initial codes from the data. Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998:63). Coding will to some extent depend on whether the themes are more “data driven” or “theory driven”. In the case of data-driven themes, the themes will depend on the data, while in the case of theory-driven themes, the analyst investigates the data with specific questions in mind which he or she wishes to code around. Since no data set is without contradiction, an overall conceptualisation of the data patterns, and the relationships identified between the data patterns need not have to ignore inconsistencies within and across data items (Braun & Clarke 2006).

- ***Phase 3: investigating the data to identify themes***

Phase 3 begins once all data have been initially coded. In this phase the different codes are sorted into potential themes, and all the coded data extracts are categorised according to the identified themes. The analyst analyses codes, and considers how different codes may combine to form an all-inclusive theme. At this stage, the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes (for example, main overarching themes and sub-themes within the main themes) is considered. Some initial codes may represent main themes, while others may form sub-themes, or may be discarded. Codes

that seem not to fit into the relevant main themes may be temporarily categorised under a “theme” called miscellaneous. The phase is ended when the analyst has compiled a collection of candidate themes, and sub-themes, and all extracts of data that have been coded in relation to them (Braun & Clarke 2006).

- **Phase 4: evaluating and reconsidering themes**

Phase 4 involves refinement of the set of candidate themes. Reviewing themes is done according to Patton’s (1990) dual criteria for considering categories, namely *internal homogeneity* and *external heterogeneity*. Data within themes should form a meaningful coherence, while clear and identifiable distinctions must exist between themes. In this phase, reviewing and refining the themes are done at two levels. Reviewing the coded data extracts constitutes the first level. The analyst reads all the collated extracts for each theme, and considers whether these form a coherent pattern. Should the candidate themes not fit, the analyst will be required to consider whether the theme itself is problematic, or whether some of the data extracts within it do not fit there. Should the data extracts not fit in the theme, a new theme must be created for categorising these extracts. Alternatively, these themes must be discarded from the analysis. Once it appears that the candidate themes form a coherent pattern, the second level of this phase is conducted. Level two follows a similar process, but it is conducted in relation to the entire data set. At level two the analyst considers the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set. In addition, it is determined whether the candidate thematic map is an accurate reflection of the meanings evident in the data set as a whole, depending on the theoretical and analytic approach. In this phase, the entire data set is reread for two purposes: first, as already explained, to determine whether the themes are relevant in relation to the data set; second, to code any data within themes that have been omitted in previous coding stages. If the thematic map does not represent the data set, further reviewing and refining of the coding are required until the thematic map accurately reflects the data extracts. Once this phase is finished, the analyst should have a relatively good idea of the different themes represented in the data, how they are interrelated, and the overall information they provide about the data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

- **Phase 5: defining and naming themes**

Phase 5 begins when a satisfactory thematic map of the data has been compiled. At this point, the themes that will be presented for the analysis are defined and further refined, after which the data within the themes are analysed. This means the analyst determines the “essence” of what each theme deals with as well as the themes overall. In addition, the analyst identifies the aspect of the data captured by each theme. For each individual theme,

a detailed analysis must be conducted and written. This is done by considering each theme and how it fits into the broader information represented by the data in relation to the research question or questions to eliminate overlap between themes. In addition, the analyst will determine whether or not a theme contains any sub-themes. Sub-themes provide structure to a large and complex theme, and are also useful for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data. Once phase 5 has been completed the analyst must be able to clearly define what the relevant themes are. If this cannot be done satisfactorily, further refinement of that theme may be required. In the final analysis, the analyst names each theme to capture the essential idea in a concise manner (Braun & Clarke 2006).

- ***Phase 6: writing the report***

Phase 6 begins when the analyst has compiled a set of completely worked-out themes. This phase involves the final analysis and writing of the report. The report must explain the information represented in the data in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis. The report, including data extracts to substantiate the findings, must provide a concise, coherent and logical account of the data within and across themes. The analytical narrative must be grounded in, but extend beyond, description of the data, and make an argument in relation to the research question. In this regard, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:109) explain that the researcher provides an integrated view of the data collected. In addition, this process involves tracing the thinking patterns of respondents by searching for meaningful patterns and themes that connect. The analyst combines the understanding of the case that is being investigated which he or she has gained from reading the text to form a new comprehensive understanding. The main interpretation of the text is also referred to as recontextualisation (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The method used for thematic analysis for this study is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

6.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design for this study was discussed and explained as follows:

- The guiding research paradigm, namely interpretivism, which informed the research design.
- The multi-methods research design integrating two research methods, namely Q methodology and CATI that was used to conduct this study.
- The five phases of Q methodology. In the first phase, the researcher collects statements from participants included in the Q study from primary and/or secondary sources according to the nature of the study. In phase 2 the researcher selects a

sample of statements from the concourse, referred to as the Q sample. The third phase involves the selection of participants for inclusion in the person sample or P set and rank-ordering of the Q statements. In the fourth phase of Q methodology each participant's response pattern is entered and formally compared with the Q sort of the other participants by means of Q-factor analysis. The final phase of a Q study involves factor analysis to interpret the resulting factors.

- The three data collection methods. These are the Q study, the online questionnaire and the interview schedule (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion).
- The various methods of sampling used in qualitative research, known as non-probability or non-random sampling, as well as trustworthiness, validity and reliability as quality standards of research measurement.
- Lastly, the method used for data analysis for the Q study as well as the methods for qualitative data analysis for the online questionnaire and the interview schedule.

In Chapter 7 data collection and operationalisation are discussed.

CHAPTER 7: DATA COLLECTION AND OPERATIONALISATION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the three data collection methods that were used are explained (see Chapter 6, sections 6.4.1, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2). The operationalisation of the research is also discussed, including the theoretical foundation on which the Q statements were based to explain how the concourse for the Q study was derived as well as issues related to trustworthiness, validity and reliability. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the data analysis methods which were used for this study.

7.2 STEPS FOLLOWED IN THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

As indicated in Chapter 1, sections 1.3.2, 1.9 as well as Chapter 6, section 6.5, a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was used to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings and to gain a deep understanding of the perceived role of the elements of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. The three data collection methods used in this study are the following:

- An online Q sort for the Q study was one of the primary sources of data collection. The Q sample comprised 54 statements (see section 7.7 and Annexure A). An online Q sort was deemed the most appropriate primary data collection method as it combines both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The online Q sort provided insight into participants' different perceptions regarding corporate brand image formation in relation to corporate brand identity elements (see Chapter 6, sections 6.4.1 and Chapter 7, section 7.7).
- The online Q sort included an online questionnaire. After the online Q sort was done, participants were required to also complete a short online questionnaire incorporating five open-ended responses. The respondents also completed these questions electronically (see section 7.8.1 and Annexure B).
- Lastly, an interview schedule for the CATI was used to obtain more insight into why the participants had responded to the Q sort in a particular manner. The participants included the brand managers or senior brand managers of 10 South African organisations across various business sectors (see section 7.8.2 and Annexure C).

The interview schedule consisted of 12 open-ended questions (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.2 and Annexure C). Question 2 of the interview schedule was structured according to a number of options. However, the purpose of providing these options was not to restrict participants in answering this question, but to serve as guidelines on the type of information required. The participants could refer to any strategic measures pertaining to the various options provided in the interview schedule which their organisation applies to assess the role of its products and services in corporate brand image formation and the steps that are taken to employ these aspects to their full potential. Although this question was structured according to specific options, it still required a free response from participants.

In the next section the theoretical foundation for selecting statements for the online Q sort is discussed to explain how the concourse for the Q study was derived.

7.3 THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR SELECTING STATEMENTS FOR THE ONLINE Q SORT

According to Brown (1980a) and Cross (2005), the first step in a Q-methodological study involves identifying the overall spectrum of perspectives dealing with the topic investigated in the relevant Q study. This concept in Q methodology is referred to as the concourse, which the researcher can derive in a number of ways (Angelopulo 2009:23) as explained in Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7. The concourse selected for this study is based on a comprehensive literature review that both argues for and substantiates all the elements of corporate brand identity which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. As already explained, these corporate brand identity elements determine why consumers prefer the products and services of a specific corporate brand over those of its competitors (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 for a comprehensive theoretical discussion of all the corporate brand identity elements which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation). In Q methodology, replicability is the most important type of reliability. In Q methodology only a limited number of distinct viewpoints exist on any topic under investigation. A well-structured Q sample containing a wide range of existing opinions on the topic will reveal these perspectives (Brown 1980a). If the same condition of instruction is followed factors will emerge that represent similar viewpoints on the topic across similarly structured but different Q samples when administered to different sets of persons. As a result, factorial results cannot be predicted (Prasad 2001). In the case of the online Q sort, internal validity (see Chapter 1, section 1.9.2) was obtained by following

a systematic approach for compiling the statements for the Q sample. In this manner, the researcher ensured the statements are broadly representative of the topic under investigation.

A total of 72 statements were initially selected for the structured Q sample (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7) before they were reviewed and tested in a pilot study.

7.4 REVIEW AND TESTING OF THE STATEMENTS FOR THE Q STUDY

The initial 72 statements for the Q study were reviewed by two research and branding specialists to determine the relevance of the statements to corporate brand image formation prior to the finalisation of the statements. This was important to determine the credibility of the statements within the context of the scope of this study (see Chapter 1, section 1.9.1). The amended set of statements for the Q study was then reviewed in a pilot study. This process is explained below.

7.4.1 Specialist review of the initial statements for the Q study

The specialist review of the initial Q statements was applied as a measure in addition to the pilot study to ensure the relevance, credibility and clarity of the Q statements. Furthermore, the specialist review enabled the researcher to reduce and refine the number of statements included in the initial Q sample.

An e-mail was sent to the CEO of an established research company as well as one of its directors specialising in branding and Q methodology to ask their assistance with reviewing the statements. An appointment was made with the two research specialists to discuss the purpose and objectives of the study as well as the initial 72 statements. For the purpose of reviewing the statements, the research specialists used a technical process referred to as coding, which is applied in qualitative data analysis to identify themes and subthemes in the discourse for the purpose of tabulation (Aaker et al 2007:433). For the purpose of coding, the corporate brand attributes represented in each statement were determined. To classify the statements, a list of the brand attributes identified from the statements was drawn up and each statement grouped according to the various categories of the Q sample was classified based on the attribute represented in each statement (see Annexure D). During the specialist review process statements that were less brand-relevant as well as double-barrelled statements and statements formulated in the negative were also identified (see Annexure E). The research specialists were of the opinion that Q statements formulated in the negative complicated the Q-

sorting process, which could aggravate participant fatigue. They advised that the Q statements be rephrased as positive sentences. This argument was later confirmed by the five participants included in the pilot study (see section 7.4.2). Furthermore, a number of Q studies in which all the Q statements were phrased as positive sentences were conducted successfully in the past (for example, Hogan 2008).

A second appointment was made with the research and branding specialists to discuss the above findings of their review as well as their recommendations on how to improve the Q statements. The number of Q statements was reduced based on the guidance and feedback received from the research and branding specialists and a revised set of 54 Q statements was compiled according to their suggestions. A structured Q sample technique similar to the process of stratified random sampling applied in survey research (Webler et al 2009:9) was used to include and exclude items in the final set of Q statements. Statements that were less relevant to the topic of corporate brand image formation according to the perspective of the research and branding specialists were excluded from the final set of 54 Q statements. Statements included in the final Q sample of 54 statements were selected for diversity within their theoretical categories. In this way, the specialist review ensured that the statements included in the final Q sample were reasonably representative of the relevant topic under investigation.

The corporate brand identity elements that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation were grouped into seven categories (see Chapter 5, section 5.2). From these seven categories, three all-inclusive categories were identified on the basis of the discussion of the various elements of corporate brand identity and their perceived relevance to corporate brand image formation in Chapters 4 and 5. The following three all-inclusive categories were identified for the structured Q sample based on an inductive approach (namely the comprehensive literature review in Chapters 4 and 5) to grasp the essence of the perceived role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. In this manner the researcher ensured that the best possible content validity (see chapter 1, section 1.9.2) was attained.

- Category 1: transformational leadership and management
- Category 2: positioning and differentiation strategy
- Category 3: brand equity

The three categories indicated above were selected because they include the different dimensions of the corporate brand identity elements that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. Statements were organised and specified based on the

three categories, namely *transformational leadership and management*, *positioning and differentiation strategy* and *brand equity*. Each of these categories consists of a number of levels that are all inclusive of the elements of corporate brand identity identified from the literature review in Chapters 4 and 5. The remainder of the corporate brand identity elements related to each category as identified in Chapters 4 and 5 is included as dimensions of each of the all-inclusive levels of a specific category. The integration of the corporate brand identity elements as dimensions of the various levels of each category is explained in section 7.6.

The revised format of the study uses a factorial design (3 X 3 X 2) which results in 18 groupings (combinations) of the levels. A set of three statements covers the 18 groupings to make it more or less representative of the concourse, constructing a structured Q sample of 54 statements (3 x 18) in total. In order to ensure representativeness of all three categories, an equal number of statements (18) was included in the final set of Q statements (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7)

The pretesting of the Q statements is discussed in the next section.

7.4.2 Pretesting of the Q statements: a pilot study

Once the revised set of 54 Q statements had been finalised based on the recommendations of the two research and branding specialists, pre-testing of the revised Q statements was done. The structured Q set comprising 54 representative statements was compiled, written in accessible plain English. In practice, the same statement viewed from a subjective perspective can have diverse meanings across the factor viewpoints. A very large number of different viewpoints on the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation could be modelled in participants' Q sorts. For this reason, a pilot study, as an additional measure to the specialist review, was conducted as the final step in order to refine the Q statements. The purpose of the pilot study was to minimise participant fatigue by testing the set of 54 Q statements and the instructions for clarity, relevance, comprehension and accuracy. The purpose of the pilot study was also to ensure full cooperation of participants, to ensure that the data which were collected would be as relevant and accurate as possible, and to limit problems with data analysis.

To recruit participants in the pilot study an e-mail was sent to the senior manager of the Research and Product Development Division of an organisation with a well-established brand in the financial services sector. This group of employees was selected based on their knowledge of research methodology, in particular Q methodology. Five of the six

employees from this division were selected to participate in the pilot study. The five participants completed the Q sort according to their own views about the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. Participants were required to give feedback in respect of three domains, namely the presentation, comprehensibility, and comprehensiveness of the statements and instructions. In addition, the participants provided feedback on the statements, the written instructions and the materials. The participants included in the pilot study were also asked to give their opinion on the methodology and research and to make suggestions to improve these. The Q statements were then revised as follows:

- Double-barrel statements that occurred in the Q set were eliminated to contain only one important idea on the role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation.
- The statements and instructions were modified and rewritten based on the results of the pilot study. For instance, the instructions were refined to include clearer steps.
- Participants reported that they found it more difficult to sort statements written in the negative, a concern also raised by the research specialists who reviewed the initial set of 72 statements (see section 7.4.1). As a result, statements formulated in the negative were rewritten as positive sentences.
- The final set of 54 statements was edited to improve the meaning of each statement.

In the next section, the revised structure of the Q sample based on the three all-inclusive categories namely *transformational leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy* and *brand equity* is discussed.

7.5 THE FINAL STRUCTURE OF THE Q SAMPLE FOR THIS STUDY

The final structure of the Q sample for this study after the review process by the research and branding specialists and the pilot study is depicted in Table 7.1 below, followed by an explanation. The final structure of the Q sample was compiled based on information obtained from a thorough literature review in the field of corporate and marketing communication.

Table 7.1: Revised structure of the Q sample

NUMBER	CATEGORY	LEVELS	NUMBER OF LEVELS
1.	Transformational leadership and management	(a) Brand philosophy (b) Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments (c) Stakeholder relations management	3
2.	Positioning and differentiation strategy	(d) Internal and external branding (e) Visual corporate brand identity elements (f) Integrated planned and unplanned communication	3
3.	Brand equity	(g) Brand loyalty (h) Brand reputation	2

(Number of groupings (combinations) of the levels = $3 \times 3 \times 2 = 18$).

The levels of the structured Q sample, which were selected according to the dimensions of the three categories and their perceived relevance to corporate brand image formation, are explained below.

7.5.1 Category one: transformational leadership and management

The first category, *transformational leadership and management*, consists of three levels that are all inclusive of the corporate brand identity elements pertaining to transformational leadership and management as identified in Chapters 4 and 5. These levels are brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, and stakeholder relations management. The corporate brand identity elements pertaining to transformational leadership and management as identified in Chapters 4 and 5 which are included as dimensions of each of the three levels of the *transformational leadership and management category* are as follows:

The first all-inclusive level, namely *brand philosophy*, comprises brand personality, brand mission and brand vision (which comprises brand purpose, brand objectives and brand

values) and brand culture (which comprises brand origin, brand founder and geographical area).

The second all-inclusive level is *business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments*. This level integrates the dimensions of external environmental influences and internal environmental influences respectively. External environmental influences include demographics, market conditions and strategies (for example, purchase price, price promotions, after-sales support and costs, distribution and logistics, globalisation, political, social, economic, technological, ecological, socio-cultural and natural environments). Internal environmental influences include the organisational structure (for example, strategic control systems, perceived quality and satisfaction, resource transformation, quality control management, performance measurement, product and service delivery).

The third all-inclusive level is *stakeholder relations management*, comprising two dimensions, namely corporate behaviour and management and employee behaviour. These dimensions include internal and external stakeholder relationships and industrial relations.

Table 7.2 below shows the dimensions included in the three all-inclusive levels of the *transformational leadership and management category*.

Table 7.2: The dimensions included in the all-inclusive levels of the *transformational leadership and management category*

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level
Brand philosophy	Brand personality
	Brand mission and vision (brand purpose, brand objectives, brand values)
	Brand culture (for example, brand origin, brand founder, geographical area)
Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments	External environmental influences (demographics, marketing conditions and strategies, for example purchase price, price promotions, globalisation, political, social, economic, technological, ecological, socio-cultural and natural environments, after-sales support and costs, distribution and logistics)

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level
	Internal environmental influences (organisational structure), for example strategic control systems, resource transformation, quality control management, performance measurement, product and service delivery)
Stakeholder relations management	Employee and management behaviour Corporate behaviour (internal and external stakeholder relationships, and industrial relations)

In the next section, the levels and dimensions of the second category, namely *positioning and differentiation strategy*, are discussed.

7.5.2 Category two: positioning and differentiation strategy

The *positioning and differentiation strategy category* consists of three levels that are all inclusive of the corporate brand identity elements pertaining to positioning and differentiation, as identified in Chapters 4 and 5. These three levels are internal and external branding, visual corporate brand identity elements and integrated planned and unplanned communication. The corporate brand identity elements related to positioning and differentiation in Chapters 4 and 5 that are included as dimensions of each of the three levels of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* are as follows:

The first all-inclusive level in this category consists of two dimensions, namely *internal branding* and *external branding* (which comprises brand awareness, brand knowledge brand associations, brand architecture and corporate structure, brand essence, brand strength, brand stewardship and brand messages).

The second all-inclusive level, namely *visual corporate brand identity elements*, comprises brand name, graphics (which include logotype, typography, symbols, colour) and architecture.

The third all-inclusive level is *integrated planned and unplanned communication*, which comprises advertising, marketing and internal and external (planned/formal and unplanned/informal) communication.

Visual corporate brand identity elements, advertising, marketing and communication are grouped as a single category, since visual elements must be captivating and persuasive in order to influence the consumer's perception of the product's benefits in relation to the consumer's needs and to find a dominant place in the consumer's mind. Thus the brand is differentiated from all the other competitive brands on the market that could possibly satisfy those needs (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:315). In this regard, Keller (2009c:153-154) maintains that successful marketing, which involves managing and coordinating all visual and verbal messages at every contact point the brand or organisation has with its target audience, is one of the most powerful strategies to enhance the impact of marketing communications. Proctor and Doukakis (2003:275) concur, and indicate that the various and growing number of functions in organisations that communicate with different groups through different means emphasises the importance of integrating communication efforts. These authors base their viewpoint on the argument that communication with an organisation's various stakeholder groups by using different communication channels may result in an increased risk for inconsistent messages communicated by the organisation. To overcome this obstacle, Keller (2009a:46-47) suggests organisations must follow an integrated approach to internal and external communication. This implies that all communication channels and the content of an organisation's messages communicated to internal and external stakeholders must be aligned in order to enhance the efficiency of all the organisation's communication activities.

Table 7.3 below explains the dimensions included in the three all-inclusive levels of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*.

Table 7.3: The dimensions included in the all-inclusive levels of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level
Internal and external branding	Brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand associations, brand architecture and corporate structure, brand essence, brand strength, brand stewardship, brand messages
Visual corporate brand identity elements	Name, graphics (logotype, typography, symbols, colour), architecture
Integrated planned and unplanned communication	Advertising, marketing, and internal and external communication

In the next section, the levels and dimensions of the third category, namely *brand equity*, are discussed.

7.5.3 Category three: brand equity

Finally, the *brand equity category* comprises two levels that are all inclusive of the corporate brand identity elements pertaining to brand equity as identified in Chapters 4 and 5. These levels are brand loyalty and brand reputation. The corporate brand identity elements related to brand loyalty and brand reputation as identified in Chapters 4 and 5 that are included as dimensions of these two levels of the *brand equity category* are as follows:

The first and second all-inclusive levels, namely *brand loyalty* and *brand reputation*, comprise one dimension each, namely brand value and corporate brand image.

Table 7.4 below explains the dimensions included in the two all-inclusive levels of the *brand equity category*.

Table 7.4: The dimensions included in the all-inclusive levels of the *brand equity category*

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level
Brand loyalty	Brand value
Brand reputation	Corporate brand image

7.6 SELECTION OF THE Q STATEMENTS BASED ON THE DIMENSIONS INCLUDED IN THE INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

Table 7.5 below depicts the selection of the Q statements based on the various categories, their levels and various dimensions. The final set of Q statements was adopted based on information obtained from a thorough literature review in the field of corporate and marketing communication.

7.6.1 Selection of statements based on the dimensions included in the *transformational leadership and management category*

Table 7.5 below depicts the selection of statements based on the *transformational leadership and management category*, its three levels and various dimensions.

Table 7.5: The selection of statements in the *transformational leadership and management category*

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level	Statement number
Brand philosophy	Brand personality	1
	Brand mission and vision (brand purpose, brand objectives, brand values)	2, 3
	Brand culture (brand origin, brand founder, geographical area)	1, 46
Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments	External environmental influences (demographics, marketing conditions and strategies for example, purchase price, price promotions, globalisation, political, social, economic, technological, ecological, socio-cultural and natural environments after-sales support and costs, distribution and logistics)	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 18, 37, 43
	Internal environmental influences (organisational structure) for example, strategic control systems, resource transformation, quality control management, performance measurement, product and service delivery)	7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Stakeholder relations management	Employee and management behaviour Corporate behaviour (internal and external stakeholder relationships, and industrial relations)	10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 48, 49

7.6.2 Selection of statements based on the dimensions included in the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*

Table 7.6 below explains the selection of statements based on the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*, its two levels and various dimensions. The final set of Q statements was adopted based on information obtained from a thorough literature review in the field of corporate and marketing communication.

Table 7.6: The selection of statements in the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level	Statement number
Internal and external branding	Brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand associations, brand architecture and corporate structure, brand essence, brand strength, brand stewardship, brand messages	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 41
Visual corporate brand identity elements	Name, graphics (logotype, typography, symbols, colour), architecture	24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 44
Integrated planned and unplanned communication	Advertising, marketing, and internal and external communication	21, 22, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 42

7.6.3 Selection of statements based on the dimensions included in the *brand equity category*

Table 7.7 below explains the selection of statements based on the *brand equity category*, its two levels and various dimensions. The final set of Q statements was adopted based on information obtained from a thorough literature review in the field of corporate and marketing communication.

Table 7.7: The selection of statements in the *brand equity category*

All-inclusive level	Dimensions that constitute this level	Statement number
Brand loyalty	Brand value	37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 52, 54
Brand reputation	Corporate brand image	41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53

The 54 statements and their grouping under each of the three categories discussed above are attached as Annexure A.

7.7 ONLINE Q SORT AS ONE OF THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

In this section, the online Q sort which was one of the primary sources of data collection is discussed in detail under the following headings:

- Selection of the person-sample for the Q-sorting process
- The response format
- The condition of instruction and Q-sorting process
- The online Q-sorting interface
- Steps for completing the online Q sort and questionnaire

7.7.1 Selection of the person sample for the online Q-sorting process and recruitment of participants

Once the categories and statements had been finalised, the person sample was selected. The method of sampling used to select participants for this study is discussed in the next section. The study uses an extensive person sample, because the participants were requested to do the online Q sort under an identical condition of instruction.

The researcher selected a broad cross-section of organisations for inclusion in the person sample from a database provided by iFeedback Consulting cc. The person sample consisted of employees from different positions and functional areas in South African organisations across various business sectors. iFeedback Consulting cc identified 3,700 participants from the database who are directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in their organisation. These included employees in the marketing or communication divisions in the respective organisations. A number of these employees serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. This strategy was followed, since it was critical to include participants who had different and well-formed opinions on the topic under investigation in the person sample and to ensure an adequate number of responses would be received. Participants from various major business sectors were recruited to participate in the research. The various business sectors were selected to be broadly representative of the product and services industries, and included the retail industry, the financial services sector, the vehicle manufacturing industry, petroleum industry and mobile industry. Of the 3,700 prospective participants, 118 participants from 106 organisations submitted a response to the Q study, which constituted the P set for this study. The size of this P set is significantly larger than the sample size suggested in the literature (Brown 1980b), since part of the investigation is aimed at determining which

elements of corporate brand identity might be perceived as more significant than others by particular organisations, depending on aspects such as the industry in which the organisation operates, or the size of the organisation. In addition, a larger person sample was used to ensure it reflects a diverse group of organisations, positions and functional areas (Melewar et al 2005:68). Using a larger sample size to conduct a Q study is not totally unusual; a number of previous studies have used a larger sample size (for example, Hogan 2008). The following media were used to recruit employees from the various South African organisations for participation in the online Q-sorting process:

- E-mails were sent to 3,700 prospective participants selected from the database from iFeedback Consulting cc explaining the purpose of the research and inviting them to participate in the research.
- Follow-up telephone calls were made to the selected prospective participants who received e-mails to encourage them to participate in the research.

7.7.2 The response format

Prior to the online Q-sorting process, the researcher selected a response format and a condition of instruction. The response format selected to conduct this study was “agreement”. Therefore, the response format consisted of rankings of “most agree”, “neutral” to “most disagree”. Participants were required to order statements using a continuum of “agree most”, “neutral” to “disagree most”. Much of the literature on Q methodology presumes that the sorting instruction asks the participant to sort from disagree to agree. This corresponds with the requirement that the Q sort should have a midpoint with a zero salience. Furthermore, it presumes that the participants who rank-order the items will disagree and agree with some statements (Brown, Durning & Selden 2007).

7.7.3 The condition of instruction and Q-sorting process

A forced-choice condition of instruction was used in this study, since a fixed number of statements were allocated to each rank on the continuum. As explained in Chapter 1, section 1.9.2, using a forced-choice distribution yields more information while promoting higher test-retest reliability (Livson & Nichols 1956; Bracken & Fischel 2006:421).

For the purpose of conducting the Q sort, a Q-sort diagram was developed. The format of the Q-sort diagram was an inverted bell-shaped curve and the completed Q sort thus represented a symmetrical quasi-normal distribution. This format forced participants to arrange fewer items on the extremes of the continuum, but more items to the middle. The

rating scale ranged from +5 to -5, from +4 to -4, from +3 to -3, from +2 to -2, from +1 to -1 and neutral (0).

The rationale for using a quasi-normal distribution is provided by the Gauss' Law of Error which is based on the principle that random variables of real value have a higher tendency to be distributed around a single mean value than less significant variables (Adams 2009:39).

7.7.4 The online interface

FlashQ, an online tool developed by Hackert and Braehler (2007), was used to complete the online Q sort. Although FlashQ is an online tool, it simulates the manual Q-sorting process. In the case of the manual Q-sorting process, the Q-sort diagram is printed on an A2-sized board, while each statement is printed on a separate card almost the size of a business card. Each participant receives a copy of the Q-sort diagram and a set of cards to complete the Q sort by hand. In the case of FlashQ, the Q-sort diagram is displayed on the computer screen and the statements are displayed individually by means of a pop-up screen. However, the same processes and principles apply for conducting the Q-sorting process.

The FlashQ software was updated by iFeedback Consulting cc to be compatible with the most recent version of Adobe Flash. In the case of the manual Q-sorting process which is conducted in the presence of the researcher, participants can ask the researcher to clarify any uncertainties they may have regarding the Q-sorting process or the statements included in the Q sample. To simulate the manual Q-sorting process as closely as possible in this regard, an e-mail address link was provided which offered participants open access to the researcher to enable them to ask any questions they might have before starting the online research. As explained in Chapter 6, section 6.5, participants were required to complete a short questionnaire incorporating five open-ended responses to obtain contextual clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study. The questionnaire was added at the end of the online Q sort as the final question in the online research. The link to the online research was posted on the website of iFeedback Consulting cc.

For the purpose of this study, FlashQ was preferred instead of the manual Q-sorting process for a number of reasons:

- The link to the research website was sent by e-mail to employees of South African organisations. Therefore, those interested in participating in the research could do

so at a time and place convenient for them to complete the online survey. The link posted on the research website was made available for an indefinite period, thus offering participants considerable time to complete the research.

- Having the Q sort done manually would have required the researcher to visit the various organisations in person, resulting in considerable travelling expenses. Since FlashQ is an online tool, no travelling expenses were incurred.
- Using FlashQ saved time, as the researcher was not required to visit the various participating organisations in person, as would have been the case had the Q sort been done manually.
- The use of the research website was aimed at creating a trusting relationship with the prospective participant and to encourage the e-mail recipient to proceed with the research. Furthermore, it was believed to establish the credibility and authority of the researcher. As a result, using an online tool to complete the Q sort significantly increased the number of organisations that participated in the research. In addition, South African organisations across various business sectors could be recruited and included in the study.
- Since the use of FlashQ significantly increased the number of organisations that participated in the research, the researcher was able to include participants in the Q study from various South African organisations who have different and well-formed opinions on the role of the various corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation.
- FlashQ provides a screen that displays the three statements which the participant concerned sorted under the “Disagree most” (-5) column and the “Agree most” (+5) column respectively on the Q-sort diagram. Each participant who participated in the research was required to enter the reasons why he or she had sorted these statements on either end on the Q-sort diagram (+5 and -5). This feature is not available with the manual Q sort and enables the researcher to gain additional information from the participants who completed the Q sort. The answers to this part of the survey would provide contextual clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study (see Figure 13, Annexure F). Excerpts from the verbatim statements in the FlashQ tool were used to substantiate the consolidated findings of the study.

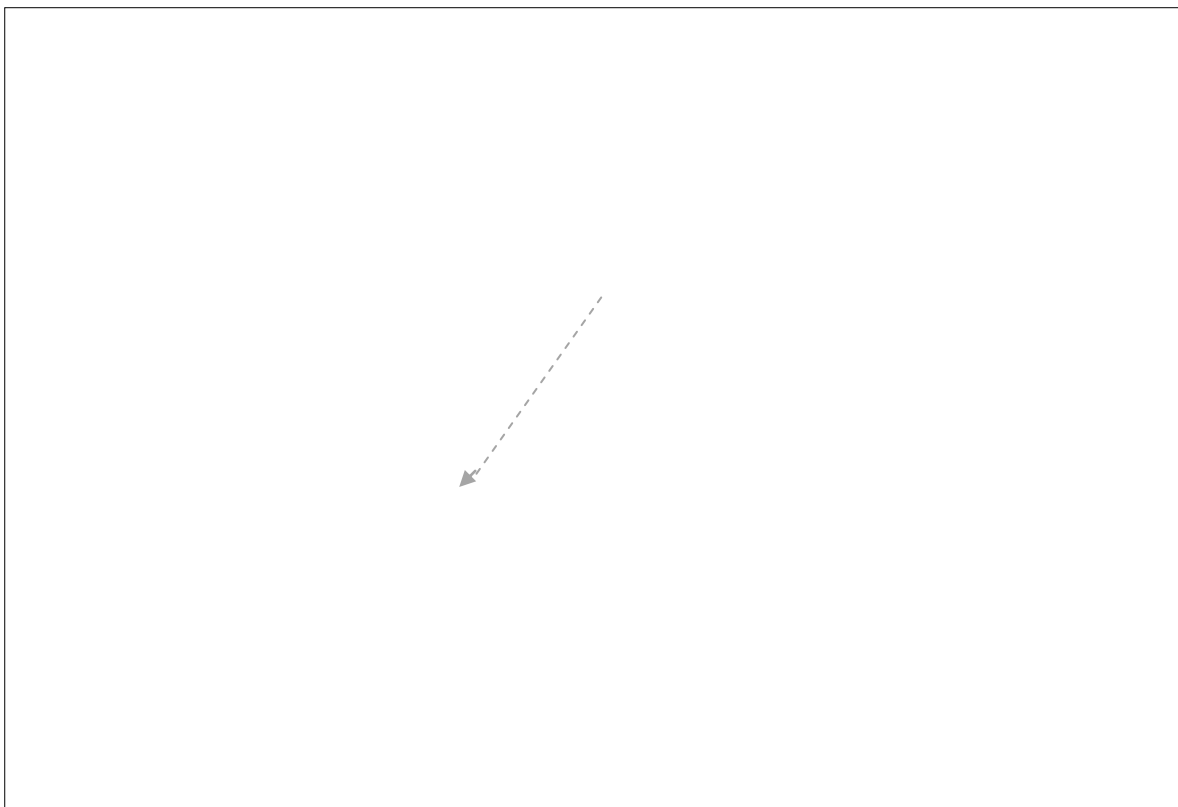
- The quality of results produced by means of data collection techniques via the Internet compared to more traditional methods of data collection has been questioned in the past decade. According to the findings of research conducted on this matter over the past decade, the quality of data obtained by means of electronic methods of data collection are in no respect inferior to information obtained by means of non-electronic methods of data collection. Instead, the research indicates that Web-based surveys are superior to paper surveys in a number of respects (Andrews, Nonnecke & Preece 2003; Yun & Trumbo 2000).
- Using an online tool for the Q-sorting process minimises data collection errors. In the case of Q sorts that are done manually, the researcher must transcribe the ratings for each individual Q sort and enter the data into the appropriate software application for analysis. Although this is a relatively simple process, it is possible that transcription errors and data entry errors may occur, or that the researcher could lose the data. In the case of an online tool, participants complete their Q sort and submit the information electronically. As such, the computerised process contributes to greater data integrity and better data management (Hogan 2008:292).

7.7.4.1 Features of the online interface

As indicated in section 7.7.4, FlashQ is analogous to the manual Q-sorting process and enabled participants to use a drag-and-drop method to simulate the traditional Q-sorting process. Participants could complete the entire Q sort by dragging the items.

Figure 7.1 below illustrates the functioning of the drag-and-drop method for completing the Q sort.

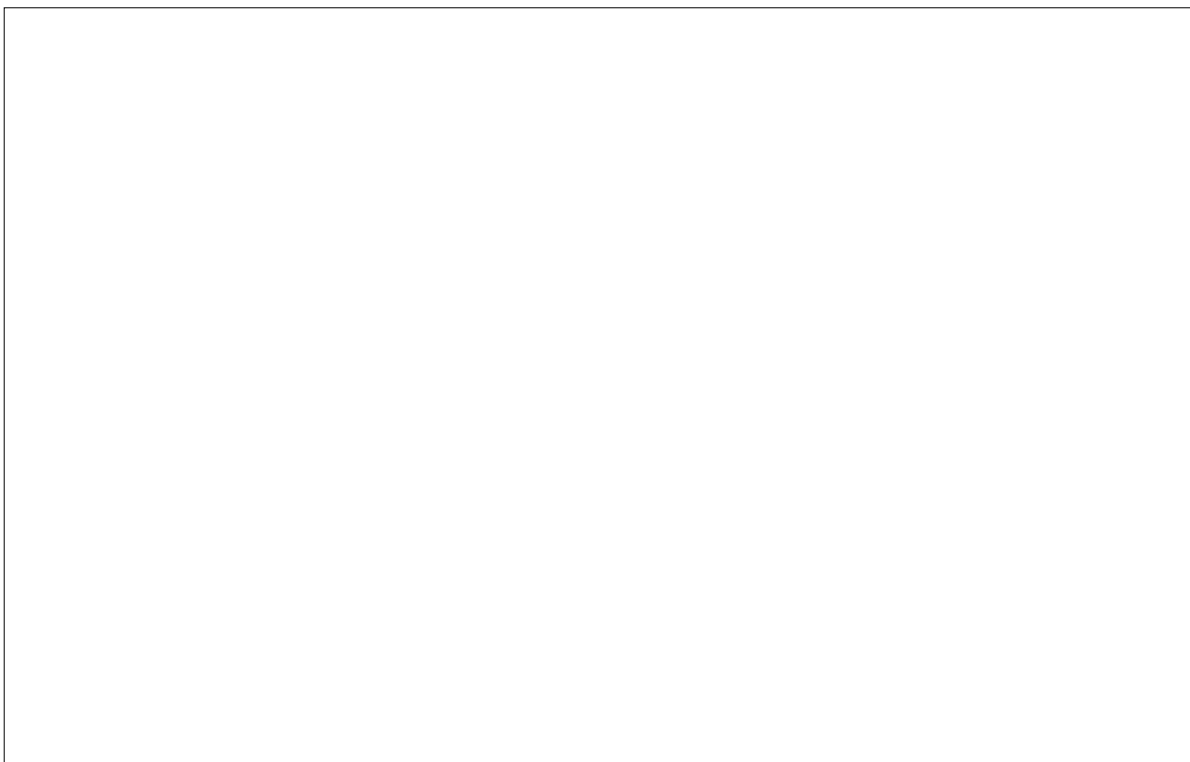
Figure 7.1: Drag-and-drop method for completing the Q-sorting process



As is illustrated in Figure 7.1 above, the items in the Q sort were first dragged individually to one of the appropriate intermediate storing areas (for statements rated as negative, neutral or positive). Secondly, the items were dragged to the relevant open spaces on the Q-sort diagram. These features ensured that the online Q-sorting process most closely simulated the traditional offline Q sort.

Furthermore, FlashQ enabled participants to enlarge the text of each pop-up item on the screen. Figure 7.2 below illustrates the steps participants were required to follow to have a copy of the specific item displayed in enlarged print on the screen:

Figure 7.2: Enlargement of text displayed in individual statements



As is evident in Figure 7.2 above, a separate box was displayed on the screen that contained a copy of the specific item in enlarged print if the cursor was hovered over the printed text of each individual item. This feature facilitated the reading of each individual statement.

7.7.5 Steps for completing the online Q sort

Data collection commenced on 23 March 2011 and was terminated on 4 July 2011. An e-mail was sent to selected prospective participants inviting them to visit the research website and complete the online Q sort and online questionnaire (see section 7.7.1 for a detailed explanation of the selection of the person sample and recruitment of participants). To enhance participation and to establish the credibility and authority of the researcher, the message included in the e-mail provided information about the researcher, briefly explained the purpose of the study, and described what participation would involve (see Annexure F, Figure 1). Furthermore, the message guaranteed the anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants. By assuring the prospective participants that the information provided would be used strictly for the purpose of the study, the validity of the study was enhanced in that they were encouraged to give relevant, comprehensive information on the topic under investigation, which reflects their organisation's view on

the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation as accurately as possible. In addition, an e-mail address link provided open access to the researcher to enable participants to ask any questions they may have before starting the survey (Cho & LaRose 1999). The latter feature further enhanced simulation of the manual Q-sorting process. By providing this information, prospective participants could make informed decisions based on the content, length and design of the questionnaire prior to participation in the research. The URL of the research website was included in the e-mail message. Participants could click on this hypertext link, or type the URL into the address bar to access the homepage of the research website. The use of the research website was aimed at creating a trusting relationship with the prospective participants and to encourage the e-mail recipients to proceed with the research. Clear instructions on how to complete the online Q sort were given to the participants throughout the data collection process. Should participants have required clarification on any of the statements or the online questionnaire, they could send an e-mail to the address link provided to enable them to ask the researcher any questions directly.

Online research poses the disadvantage of a rather unpredictable range of technological resources. Varied configurations of computer software and hardware are available, which may impact on users' ability to access and complete the online survey successfully. Aspects such as Internet connection methods and speeds as well as browser and screen configurations can cause participants to either submit an incomplete response or to abandon the survey altogether. To ensure the maximum number of completed Q sorts were returned to the researcher, participants could also report any technical difficulties which they experienced while completing the online Q sort to the e-mail address link for assistance.

The full instructions for completing the online Q sort as indicated on the separate screens are explained in Annexure F.

7.8 ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

An online questionnaire and an interview schedule for the CATI to gain additional insight were used as follows:

7.8.1 Online questionnaire

A short online questionnaire incorporating only five open-ended responses followed the online Q sort which participants were also required to complete (see Annexure B). Since the purpose of the data obtained from the online questionnaire were to provide insight into

the results of the online Q sort, the questions included in the online questionnaire were formulated to be broadly representative of the Q sample (see section 7.4). As a result, the questions deal with all three of the identified all-inclusive categories and the levels and dimensions constituting the respective categories (see section 7.4).

7.8.1.1 Pretesting of the online questionnaire: a pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in order to refine the online questionnaire. To recruit participants in the pilot study an e-mail was sent to the senior manager of the Research and Product Development Division of an organisation with a well-established brand in the financial services sector. This group of employees was selected based on their knowledge of research methodology. Five of the six employees from this division were selected to participate in the pilot study. Participants were required to give feedback in respect of three domains, namely the presentation, comprehensibility, and comprehensiveness of the questions included in the online questionnaire. The participants included in the pilot study were also asked to give their opinion on the methodology and research and to make suggestions to improve these. The online questionnaire was then revised as follows:

- The participants of the pilot study identified a number of areas in which the wording and content of the online questionnaire could be improved. These areas were improved based on the suggestions made by the participants.
- Questions with overlapping meaning which could result in ambiguous interpretation were excluded from the revised questionnaire.

Other strategies that were used to ensure the reliability of the data obtained by means of the online questionnaire included the following:

- The methods for data collection and analysis applied in this study were discussed in detail to explain the procedures used in the study (Babbie & Baxter 2004; Durrheim & Terre Blanche 2002).
- The researcher described the context in which the research was conducted (Du Plooy 2001). These factors were made overt, since they influenced data collection and analysis.
- An e-mail address link provided open access to the researcher to enable participants to ask any questions they might have before starting the survey (Cho & LaRose 1999).

Apart from the strategies discussed above, the researcher applied specific measures to ensure trustworthiness and validity of interpretations or conclusions based on the results of the online questionnaire (Stiles 1993:594). These are briefly discussed below.

- The researcher carefully considered how the themes that emerged from the data based on a thematic analysis could provide a deeper understanding of the experience of the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation.
- Interpretations and themes were grounded by relating them to excerpts from the answers received from the respondents who completed the online questionnaire in full (Durrheim & Terre Blanche 2002).
- Coherent conclusions that were made based on the interpretation of data were supported by informal reasoning (Babbie & Baxter 2004). The argument was based on likelihood, not certainty or statistical probability (Babbie & Baxter 2004).
- The researcher continuously evaluated the interpretation of the data collected for the study resulting in ongoing change in the researcher's interpretations. This ensured reflexive validity (Stiles 1993) (see Chapter 8, sections 8.4, 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7).
- The researcher ensured coherence of the interpretation of the data in consultation with a supervisor (Rapmund 1996; MacLiam 2003).

7.8.1.2 Procedure for conducting the online questionnaire

The same sampling method was followed for the online questionnaire and the Q study, since the online questionnaire was part of the Q study (see section 7.7.1). The questionnaire was added at the end of the online Q sort as the final question in the online research. Respondents entered their responses to each of the questions in the online questionnaire in the given space and no limit applied to the length of written responses. Respondents who required clarification on any of the questions included in the online questionnaire could send an e-mail to the address link provided to ask the researcher any questions directly. To ensure the maximum number of completed online questionnaires was received, respondents could also report any technical difficulties which they experienced while completing the online questionnaire to the e-mail address link for assistance. The full instructions for completing the online questionnaire as indicated on the separate screens are explained in Annexure F. The response rate of the online questionnaire is indicated in section 7.9.3.

7.8.2 Interview schedule for CATI

As indicated in Chapter 6, section 6.4.2, CATI were conducted with the brand managers or senior brand managers of 10 South African organisations across various business sectors.

Since the purpose of the data obtained from the CATI was to elucidate the results of the online Q sort, the questions included in the interview schedule were formulated to be broadly representative of the Q sample (see section 7.4). As a result, the questions deal with all three of the identified all-inclusive categories and the levels and dimensions constituting the respective categories (see section 7.4).

7.8.2.1 Pretesting of the interview schedule for CATI: a pilot study

Pretesting to refine the interview schedule was done in the same manner as pretesting of the online questionnaire (see section 7.8.1.1). Based on the suggestions made by the participants in the pilot study, the wording and content of the interview schedule were improved, and questions with overlapping meaning were excluded from the revised interview schedule. The same strategies used to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of the data in the online questionnaire were also applied in the case of the interview schedule (see section 7.8.1.1).

7.8.2.2 Procedure for conducting CATI

To enhance internal validity of the study, the researcher selected a broad cross-section of organisations for inclusion in the person sample, and not just one organisation or organisations in one business sector only to ensure it reflects a diverse group of organisations, positions and functional areas (Melewar et al 2005:68). The person sample for the CATI was selected from the person sample used for the online Q sort (see section 1.8.1). 80 brand managers and senior brand managers across various business sectors were included in the person sample for the online Q sort. These 80 brand managers and senior brand managers were identified from the database from iFeedback Consulting cc and were also included in the person sample for the CATI. Telephone calls were made to these brand managers and senior brand managers to recruit them for participating in the CATI and to arrange a suitable date and time to conduct the CATI. To enhance participation and to establish the credibility and authority of the researcher, the purpose of the study was briefly explained, and the anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants were guaranteed. Of the 80 prospective participants, a realised sample of 10 brand managers or senior brand managers (12.5%) was obtained to participate in the CATI.

A CATI was conducted with the brand managers or senior brand managers of these 10 organisations. A computerised questionnaire comprising 12 questions had to be covered in a specific sequence during the interview (Greeff 2002:302) (see Annexure C). The computerised questionnaire provided a set of clear instructions in order to ensure that reliable, comparable qualitative data were obtained during the interview. Since the open structure of this type of interviewing allowed the interviewer to follow leads should it be deemed necessary, unexpected facts or attitudes observed during the interview could be investigated. Each CATI lasted approximately 30 minutes. CATI as method for data collection commenced on 4 May 2011 and were terminated on 4 July 2011. The participants' answers were recorded directly into the computer's memory bank providing interim reports and update reports on the data collection. These reports enabled the researcher to identify the viewpoints that participants regarded as most significant and to determine different categories according to which to interpret the data (Andreassen & Wyller 2005:1311). The response rate for the CATI is indicated in section 7.9.4.

7.9 RESPONSE RATES FOR THIS STUDY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis for the online Q sort, the online questionnaire and the CATI is discussed in the sections below.

7.9.1 Response rate for the Q study

A total of 3,700 e-mails were sent to selected prospective participants (see section 7.7.1 for a detailed explanation of the selection of the person sample and recruitment of participants). Of the 3,700 prospective participants, 118 participants from 106 organisations submitted a response to the Q study, resulting in a 3% realised sample. The completed Q sorts submitted electronically were first screened for multiple submissions, frivolous responding or missing data. Of the 118 responses received, 10 participants failed to indicate the reasons why they had sorted the relevant statements under the extremes of the Q-sort diagram (+5 and -5). However, these participants completed the Q-sorting process in full. Since the online Q sorts would be analysed separately, the online Q sorts of these participants could be included in the process of data analysis. The process of data analysis is discussed below.

7.9.2 Data analysis of the Q study

Q-factor analysis was done using the PCQ for Windows Academic Edition. PCQ Windows is a statistical programme specifically designed for data analysis of Q studies. Once all the steps in the PCQ for Windows software were completed, a comprehensive report was

generated for interpretation of the data (see Annexure G). The steps for analysing data using the PCQ for Windows software are discussed in more detail below.

7.9.2.1 Steps for analysing data by using the PCQ for Windows software

a Entering statements

The 54 statements included in the Q sample were entered into the PCQ for Windows software.

b Entering sorts

The first time the software was used, the researcher was required to enter each individual sort and a Q-sort label was allocated. This label provided a description of each sort and served as reference during the varimax rotation and interpretation of the results indicated in the report.

c Factor extraction

PCQ for Windows provides for centroid factor analysis as a means of extracting factors as recommended by Brown (1980a) and Stephenson (1943). The software limited the number of factors that could be extracted to a maximum of nine factors, since it is argued that a communication situation will most likely not have more than nine dimensions (Stricklin & Almeida 2004).

d Rotating the centroids

PCQ for Windows applies two methods for factor rotation. The first is a mathematical procedure referred to as varimax. The alternative method is a theoretically-based procedure known as theoretical, manual or judgemental rotation. The researcher can select one or both methods for factor rotation. For the purpose of this study, a varimax rotation was performed to obtain a mathematical solution.

e Flagging the factors

Once factor extraction and rotation were satisfactorily completed, the researcher flagged the Q sorts to be used for calculating factor scores. Factor loadings represent the degree to which an individual's Q sort correlates with a factor. To determine which factor loadings must be considered significant, the following calculation was used, based on the number of statements included in the Q sample:

Standard Error (SE) = $1/\text{SQRT}(N)$, where N is the number of Q-sort statements, while SQRT represents the square root function.

In this study, 54 Q sort items were used. Therefore, $SE = 1/\sqrt{54} = 1/7.34 = 0.13$. Loadings in excess of 2.58 (SE) are statistically significant at the .01 level. This implies that loadings in excess of $2.58 (0.13) = 3354$, rounded off to 0.34. In such a case, Brown (1991) suggests that the value be adjusted to 0.35. Thus, in this study, factor loadings in excess of 0.35 (irrespective of the positive or negative sign) were considered statistically significant.

Negative loadings are equally important in defining the meaning of a factor. Most factors produced in Q analyses are uni-polar, which implies that participants subscribe *to a degree* to the beliefs that comprise that factor. If participants *oppose* the beliefs that comprise a factor, the factor is referred to as “bipolar” (also see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7 and Chapter 8, section 8.2).

f Q analysis

PCQ for Windows generates a report which is formatted as tables indicating the following information for data analysis:

- Features and parameters of the study
- Original and reflected correlation matrix for all participants
- Unrotated factors loadings
- Rotated factor loadings
- Individual summary for each factor
- Q sort values for each statement on all factors
- A list of differentiating statements and consensus statements
- Eigen values and percentage of variance
- Correlations between factors and factor reliabilities

(Stricklin & Almeida 2004)

In the next section, the data analysis of the online questionnaire and CATI is discussed.

7.9.3 Response rate for the online questionnaire

All participants who completed the online Q sorts were required to also complete the online questionnaire. Of the 118 participants who completed the online Q sort, only 108 respondents completed the online questionnaire in full, resulting in a 92% realised sample.

7.9.4 Response rate for the CATI

A total of 80 telephone calls were made to South African organisations in various business sectors to conduct CATI with the brand managers or senior brand managers of organisations with an established brand. Not all the brand managers or senior brand managers who participated in the Q sort agreed to be interviewed for a number of reasons. These included time constraints as well as the organisation's policy on the non-disclosure of its intellectual capital. A sample of 10 brand managers or senior brand managers was obtained to participate in the CATI resulting in a response rate of only 12.5%.

7.9.5 Data analysis for the online questionnaire

Data analysis of the online questionnaire was done by means of thematic analysis, which is explained below.

7.9.5.1 Thematic analysis of the online questionnaire

For the purpose of this study, the responses to the online questionnaire and interview schedule were analysed by means of an inductive thematic analysis at latent level following an essentialist framework to identify both common and distinct themes (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.5.2). The thematic analysis involved interpretation of exactly how different organisations integrate the elements of corporate brand identity to contribute to corporate brand image formation (as identified in Chapters 4 and 5).

The first step in the interpretation involved reading the responses to each of the five questions in the online questionnaire several times in order to obtain a sense of the overall content. In this way, the researcher gained a preliminary understanding of the topic under investigation and its context, and determined the most fundamental features of the content (Braun & Clarke 2006). In the second step of the data analysis the essence or main issue for each of the responses to the online questionnaire was identified. Each main issue identified was grouped in one of the following three categories constituting the structure of the Q sample (see sections 7.5 and 7.6) according to the respective levels and dimensions concerned.

- Transformational leadership and management
- Positioning and differentiation strategy
- Brand equity

In the third step of the interpretation, a topic from the data for each of the five questions as grouped according to the above categories was selected and all relevant passages from

the data were identified. These were combined with relevant information known to the researcher to develop knowledge that can be comprehended by an outsider. These core meanings are referred to as themes. Data analysis was continued in this manner until the meaning of the entire text could be understood in terms of the interrelated themes emerging from the text (Patton 2002:453). This process involves tracing the thinking patterns of respondents by searching for meaningful patterns and themes that connect (Henning et al 2004:109). The researcher combined the understanding of the topic under investigation by reading the text to form a new comprehensive understanding. A central theme was identified for each question included in the online questionnaire based on the categories, their respective levels and dimensions identified from the responses. Excerpts from the data obtained by means of the online questionnaire, CATI as well as the verbatim statements taken from the FlashQ tool were used to substantiate the discussion of the findings (see Chapter 8). The number and types of categories and themes identified from the responses to the online questionnaire and CATI are discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

7.9.6 Data analysis for the CATI

The data analysis for the CATI involved two steps, namely transcription of data and thematic analysis, which are explained below.

7.9.6.1 Transcription of data

As explained in section 7.8.2.2, CATI were conducted with the brand managers or senior brand managers of 10 South African organisations. The participants' answers were recorded directly into the computer's memory bank providing interim reports and update reports on the data collection.

7.9.6.2 Thematic analysis of the CATI

A thematic analysis was used for analysing the responses to the questions in the interview schedule. The same procedure that was followed for the thematic analysis for the online questionnaire was also applied in this instance (see section 7.9.5.1).

7.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the measuring instruments used for data collection have been discussed. This included an explanation of the three data collection methods that were used. These are the following:

- An online Q sort which served as one of the primary sources of data collection. The Q sample comprised 54 statements. The Q sort was completed online by using the FlashQ software developed by Hackert and Braehler (2007).
- An online questionnaire comprising five open-ended questions following the Q sort was used as an additional primary source of data collection.
- CATI were conducted with the brand managers or senior brand managers of the South African organisations from the various business sectors who participated in the research. The interview consisted of 12 open-ended questions and was also used as an additional primary source of data collection.

The Q sample technique used to select statements for the Q sort has also been explained. Furthermore, this chapter outlines how data collection took place and provides an overview of the methods of data analysis used for the purpose of this study.

In the next chapter, Chapter 8, the findings of the Q study, the online questionnaire and the CATI are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings of the study are first discussed and explained in detail. This includes the strategy that was followed to calculate factor scores for the Q study, data analysis of the online questionnaire and the CATI, and the theoretical importance of the consolidated findings of the study in terms of perceptions of corporate brand image formation. Next, an additional absolute category for corporate brand image formation is identified and explained. Finally, a revised categorisation is provided based on the research findings.

8.2 STRATEGY FOLLOWED TO CALCULATE FACTOR SCORES FOR THE Q STUDY

The researcher had to calculate the factor scores for each Q sort in order to examine and interpret each factor meaningfully (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7). Factor scores indicate the prominent items to which specific attention must be given when the factor is described and interpreted.

After completing a varimax rotation (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7) a column of numbers for the individual Q sorts was produced. The individual columns reflect the loadings of the Q sorts onto each factor. These loadings serve as an indication of the extent to which each Q sort is connected with the individual factors. Q sorts that have a high loading onto a factor are usually considered defining sorts for the factor. Participants who produce Q sorts that do not load significantly onto any factor have idiosyncratic perspectives. These participants' viewpoints are excluded from the results of the Q-factor analysis (Schmolck 1998). Q sorts that load significantly on two or more factors, referred to as bipolar or confounded Q sorts, are also excluded from data analysis as indicated in Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7.

To calculate factor scores the following criteria were applied for including Q sorts in the factors as proposed by Brown (2000a, b; 2001; 2002; 2003):

- Only pure loadings were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The concept of pure loadings refers to Q sorts that produced a significant loading on one factor only.

- To calculate the factor scores for the nine factors that emerged following the varimax rotation, factor loadings of 0.35 and higher, irrespective of sign, were considered as significant, as proposed by Brown (2000a b, 2001, 2002, 2003).

A total of nine factors emerged from the concourse following varimax rotation. The nine factors accounted for 49% of the variance, which is indicated in Annexure G.

For the purpose of examining the factor array (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7) that was yielded for each factor, the procedures outlined by Stephenson (1953), Brown (1980a) and Du Plessis (2005) were followed. As specified by these procedures, the researcher used the same factor analytic procedure as that applied in factor analysis after collecting and correlating the Q sorts. Factor analysis is a statistical technique which is used to simplify complex data into all-inclusive patterns. By using factor analysis a larger number of variables are reduced to a smaller number of factors in order to reveal the hidden structure of a dataset (Hogan 2008:100). This enabled the researcher to identify the number of factors that emerged from the perspectives of the participants included in this Q study.

With regard to the analysis of factor arrays, McKeown (1990) maintains that no definite strategy exists according to which factor arrays must be interpreted. Factor arrays are the result of how participants conducted the Q-sorting task. Consequently, understanding depends on the expression of meaning in a particular situation, and may fluctuate according to circumstances. In this regard, Stephenson (1983:75, 82) explains that each statement may have a different meaning to individual participants. In addition, each statement may have a different meaning to the same participant in different circumstances. Therefore, statements in a concourse may have different meanings in different factors. The different meanings are interpreted from the viewpoints of the people who experience these meanings.

In the next section, the overall findings resulting from the Q-factor analysis are discussed.

8.3 OVERALL FINDINGS RESULTING FROM THE Q-FACTOR ANALYSIS

In this section, the overall findings resulting from the Q-factor analysis are first discussed based on the characteristics of the emerging factors.

Figure 8.1 below provides information on a number of characteristics of the nine factors that emerged from the concourse following varimax rotation.

Figure 8.1: Characteristics of emerging factors

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Number of participants	41	22	6	23	11	10	14	21	13	
Percentage variance	11	7	3	7	4	3	4	6	4	49
Number of defining variables	25	7	6	7	6	3	3	5	5	
Average reliability coefficient	0,800	0,800	0,800	0,800	0,800	0,800	0,800	0,800	0,800	
Composite reliability	0,990	0,960	0,950	0,960	0,950	0,920	0,920	0,950	0,950	
Standard error of Factor scores	0,280	0,520	0,560	0,520	0,560	0,780	0,780	0,610	0,610	
Eigenvalues	13.31	7.87	3.69	8.37	4.18	3.87	5.14	6.52	4.81	57.76

Figure 8.1 above depicts the number of participants who loaded on each of the nine factors. According to Figure 8.1, 41 participants loaded on factor 1; 22 participants loaded on factor 2; six participants loaded on factor 3; 23 participants loaded on factor 4; 11 participants loaded on factor 5; 10 participants loaded on factor 6; 14 participants loaded on factor 7; 21 participants loaded on factor 8, while 13 participants loaded on factor 9. Figure 8.1 reveals that the variance for factor 1 is 11%, for factor 2, 7%, for factor 3, 3%, for factor 4, 7%, for factor 5, 4%, for factor 6, 3%, for factor 7, 4%, for factor 8, 6%, and for factor 9, 4%.

Figure 8.1 also indicates the number of defining variables (Q sorts) for each of the nine factors. According to Figure 8.1, the number of defining variables (Q sorts) for factor 1 is 25; for factor 2, seven, for factor 3, six; for factor 4, seven; for factor 5, six, for factor 6, three; for factor 7, three; for factor 8 five and for factor 9, five.

Furthermore, the composite reliability for factor 1 is 99%, for factor 2, 96%, for factor 3, 95%, for factor 4, 96%, for factor 5, 95%, for factor 6, 92%, for factor 7, 92%, for factor 8, 95% and for factor 9, 95%. The composite reliability of a specific factor is calculated based on the number of participants who loaded significantly on that factor. A minimum number of five participants must define a factor, resulting in a factor reliability of 0.95 (Brown 2000b).

Figure 8.1 also depicts the standard error of factor scores, which is as follows: the standard error for factor 1 is 0.28, for factor 2, 0.52, for factor 3, 0.56, for factor 4, 0.52, for factor 5, 0.56, for factor 6, 0.78, for factor 7, 0.78, for factor 8, 0.61 and for factor 9, 0.61. The standard error reflects the magnitude of error which is associated with a specific factor's scores. The standard error and the factor reliability are directly related as higher factor reliability yields lower magnitude of error pertaining to the factor's scores.

In view of the characteristics of the factors explained in Figure 8.1, seven prominent factors were identified. Less than five participants defined factor 6 and factor 7, resulting in factor reliability lower than 0.95 as recommended by Brown (2000b). Due to lower factor reliability, the standard error for these two factors is marginally higher than those for the remaining seven factors. This yields higher magnitude of error associated with these factors' scores. As a result, factor 6 and factor 7 were excluded from the interpretation of the findings of this study. To ensure chronology when referring to the seven prominent factors identified, factor 8 and factor 9 will be referred to as factor 6 and factor 7 respectively in the rest of the study.

8.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: Q STUDY

In section 8.4 the findings of the Q study are discussed in detail.

8.4.1 Overall findings of the Q-factor analysis

In this section, the findings of the Q-factor analysis for the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements that are considered compulsory in corporate brand image formation are discussed as follows for each of the seven factors:

- The Q sorts that were included in the seven factors
- The composite factor array for each of the seven factors that were identified following the statistical analysis
- The statements that define each factor
- The distinguishing statements for each factor
- The consensus statements for each factor

8.4.1.1 Factor 1: *Trustworthiness of the brand*

This factor is defined by 41 participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. 26 Q sorts are associated with factor 1 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 1 is 11%. The reliability coefficient for factor 1 is 0.99, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 1 includes the viewpoint of 26 participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- Five participants from the multidisciplinary construction and engineering industry
- Four participants from the financial services industry
- Three participants from the pharmaceutical industry
- Three participants from the tourism industry
- Two participants from the petroleum industry
- Two participants from the food and beverage industry
- Two participants from the IT industry
- One participant from the audit, tax and legal advisory services industry
- One participant from the home decor industry
- One participant from the mining industry
- One participant from the office automation industry
- One participant from the paper manufacturing industry

The composite factor array for factor 1 is illustrated in Figure 8.2 below.

Figure 8.2: The factor array for factor 1: trustworthiness of the brand

Most disagree		Neutral					Most agree			
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
27	2	4	3	10	1	6	21	7	5	26
37	15	12	8	14	16	11	24	22	25	44
43	17	13	9	32	29	38	28	36	51	46
	31	19	18	35	34	47	30	39	53	
		20	23	42	45	49	33	41		
			40	54	50	52	48			

The information depicted in Figure 8.2 is explained below:

Factor 1 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24):

- The brand name symbolises stability (+5, statement 26)
- The brand name enhances consumer trust (+5, statement 44)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (+5, statement 46)
- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (-5, statement 27)
- If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately (-5, statement 37)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (-5, statement 43)
- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (+4, statement 5)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (+4, statement 25)
- Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability (+4, statement 51)
- The organisation's brand drives promises to customers (+4, statement 53)
- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (-4, statement 2)
- Telephone calls are returned promptly (-4, statement 15)
- Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries (-4, statement 17)
- Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile (-4, statement 31)

Factor 1 is labelled *trustworthiness of the brand* because the statements that loaded on +5 and +4 reveal a tendency towards creating a reputation of stability and trust, compared to the perspectives displayed in the remaining factors. The statements rated +5 and +4 indicate awareness of the importance of establishing a proven track record of stability and reliability. These statements mainly deal with consumers' preference for brands with a well-established reputation and their need to interact with a reliable business partner.

Factor 1 reveals a strong perception that consumers prefer doing business with a brand that has an established reputation as a well-managed, financially stable entity. Establishing a reputation of transparency, honesty and trust is achieved by using visual brand elements, for example the brand name and brand colours, to reflect these characteristics.

The statements rated on the most agree side of the Q-sort diagram also display the need for implementing an integrated business strategy in order to establish a reputable brand. In addition to visual brand elements, the brand promise directs the way business is conducted with all relevant stakeholders. In this regard, factor 1 emphasises a strong awareness for aligning employees' behaviour with the business strategy to ensure they know how to meet the brand's promise. Furthermore, the statements rated +5 and +4 indicate that creating a reputation of a stable, reliable business partner requires sound financial management to ensure the continued viability of the brand. An integrated business strategy for creating an established reputation ensures that consumers come to associate the brand with a stable business partner which meets consumers' expectations as depicted by means of its visual corporate brand identity elements.

Factor 1 recognises alignment of employees' behaviour with the business strategy to meet the brand's promise. However, this appears to be mainly applicable to delivering the actual product or service. Factor 1 shows a lower awareness of attending to administrative issues pertaining to customer enquiries.

Although factor 1 shows awareness of an integrated business strategy, this factor disregards amendments to the business strategy to provide for changes in customer preference. This factor opposes a pricing structure that ensures the brand is available to all income groups. Factor 1 also disregards a proactive approach to ensure it remains a market leader and to expand its business among new clients. Therefore, factor 1 reveals a necessity to reinforce the brand's reputation by means of visual corporate brand identity elements and its management and interaction with stakeholders, instead of customising the brand's product offering according to consumers' preference.

The following statements were rated moderately:

- Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs (+3, statement 7)
- The organisation's print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness (+3, statement 22)
- Employees trust the information published on the internal website (+3, statement 36)
- Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money (+3, statement 39)
- The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery (+3, statement 41)

- The organisation is too expensive (-3, statement 4)
- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (-3, statement 12)
- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (-3, statement 13)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (-3, statement 19)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (-3, statement 20)

The following statements were rated very low:

- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (+2, statement 21)
- Employees are proud of the organisation's logo (+2, statement 24)
- The organisation's style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence (+2, statement 28)
- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (+2, statement 30)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (+2, statement 33)
- Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele (+2, statement 48)
- The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business (-2, statement 3)
- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (-2, statement 8)
- Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective (-2, statement 9)
- Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them (-2, statement 18)
- The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele (-2, statement 23)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (-2, statement 40)
- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (+1, statement 6)
- Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction. (+1, statement 11)
- This organisation's services improve clients' quality of life (+1, statement 38)

- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (+1, statement 47)
- The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material (+1, statement 49)
- This organisation's esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far (+1, statement 52)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (-1, statement 10)
- Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures (-1, statement 14)
- The organisation's brand values champions enhance employees' performance (-1, statement 32)
- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (-1, statement 35)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (-1, statement 42)
- The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation (-1, statement 54)

No statements distinguish factor 1 from the remaining factors. Distinguishing items refer to the Q-sort items which differentiate between a pair of factors by identifying the items in the configuration that are most significant to examine (see also chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7). For example, a Q-sort item would be considered a distinguishing item if it was ranked highly (in the +5 position) in a specific factor, but ranked lower (in the -3 position) on another factor. The different placements of a specific Q-sort item indicate different perspectives on it.

8.4.1.2 Factor 2: Creative marketing

This factor is defined by 22 participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. Seven Q sorts are associated with factor 2 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 2 is 7%. The reliability coefficient for factor 1 is 0.96, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 2 includes the viewpoint of seven participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication

portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- One participant from the petroleum industry
- One participant from the food and beverage industry
- One participant from the electrical equipment supplier industry
- One participant from the legal advisory services industry
- One participant from the research consulting industry
- One participant from the integrated construction services, materials and infrastructure investment industry
- One participant from the multidisciplinary engineering and science consulting industry

The composite factor array for factor 2 is illustrated in Figure 8.3 below.

Figure 8.3 The factor array for factor 2: creative marketing

Most disagree		Neutral					Most agree			
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
41	10	3	6	7	1	24	5	4	2	23
48	15	49	8	14	9	25	11	16	19	27
50	17	51	13	18	22	29	12	36	31	35
	39	52	21	30	26	32	20	40	33	
		54	44	34	37	42	28	43		
			47	46	45	53	38			

The information depicted in Figure 8.3 is explained below:

Factor 2 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24):

- The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele (+5, statement 23)
- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (+5, statement 27)

- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (+5, statement 35)
- The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery (-5, statement 41)
- Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele (-5, statement 48)
- Clients who deal with this organisation experience world-class customer service (-5, statement 50)
- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (+4, statement 2)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (+4, statement 19)
- Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile (+4, statement 31)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (+4, statement 33)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (-4, statement 10)
- Telephone calls are returned promptly (-4, statement 15)
- Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries (-4, statement 17)
- Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money (-4, statement 39)

This factor is labelled *creative marketing*. The statements that were highly rated show strong recognition of the role of internal and external print media to enhance the brand's image. These statements mainly deal with using the various external communication media to grow the brand's customer base among all income level groups (statements 2, 19, 23, 27 and 31) and to streamline administrative processes (statement 35). Factor 2 reveals the need for an internal communication medium to create an awareness of the brand's core values (statement 33). Such an internal communication medium serves as a useful instrument for instilling a sound knowledge of the values and beliefs of the organisation's core business among employees and is vital for creating organisational alignment. Factor 2 suggests that strategies for internal communication most frequently apply techniques for IMC. When these strategies are executed in tandem with external marketing communications, organisational promises made in advertising material are more likely to be fulfilled to the required level of performance, since employees are more prepared to deliver on these promises.

Despite the fact that factor 2 shows strong awareness of harmonising the brand values with employees, policies and processes in order to meet customer needs effectively, it opposes statements dealing with customer satisfaction. These include affordable product offerings (statement 39) and service delivery (statements 10, 15, 17, 41, 48 and 50).

The following statements were rated moderately:

- The organisation is too expensive (+3, statement 4)
- The organisation's employer benefits help recruit skilled employees (+3, statement 16)
- Employees trust the information published on the internal website (+3, statement 36)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (+3, statement 40)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (+3, statement 43)
- The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business (-3, statement 3)
- The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material (-3, statement 49)
- Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability (-3, statement 51)
- This organisation's esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far (-3, statement 52)
- The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation (-3, statement 54)

The following statements were rated very low:

- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (+2, statement 5)
- Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction (+2, statement 11)
- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (+2, statement 12)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (+2, statement 20)
- The organisation's style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence (+2, statement 28)

- This organisation's services improve clients' quality of life (+2, statement 38)
- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (-2, statement 6)
- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (-2, statement 8)
- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (-2, statement 13)
- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (-2, statement 21)
- The brand name enhances consumer trust (-2, statement 44)
- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (-2, statement 47)
- Employees are proud of the organisation's logo (+1, statement 24)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (+1, statement 25)
- The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily (+1, statement 29)
- The organisation's brand values champions enhance employees' performance (+1, statement 32)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (+1, statement 42)
- The organisation's brand drives promises to customers (+1, statement 53)
- Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs (-1, statement 7)
- Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures (-1, statement 14)
- Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them (-1, statement 18)
- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (-1, statement 30)
- The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs (-1, statement 34)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (-1, statement 46)

No statements distinguish factor 2 from the other factors. This means no Q-sort item in the configuration has different perspectives in the other six factors. Therefore, no Q-sort items in factor 2 are considered most significant to examine.

8.4.1.3 Factor 3: Effective management and administration

This factor is defined by six participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. Six Q sorts are associated with factor 3 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 3 is 3%. The reliability coefficient for factor 3 is 0.95, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 3 includes the viewpoint of six participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- One participant from the financial services industry
- One participant from the pharmaceuticals industry
- One participant from the food and beverage industry
- One participant from the communication and media industry
- One participant from the training industry
- One participant from the risk management, insurance broking and HR solutions industry

The composite factor array for factor 3 is illustrated in Figure 8.4 below.

Figure 8.4 The factor array for factor 3: effective management and administration

Most disagree		Neutral							Most agree	
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
38	3	8	7	2	18	9	1	13	4	14
39	36	21	16	10	22	26	5	19	6	15
51	46	30	23	11	31	27	29	24	12	20
	50	34	33	25	49	28	32	45	17	
		41	35	42	52	44	37	47		
			40	48	54	53	43			

The information depicted in Figure 8.4 is explained below:

Factor 3 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24):

- Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures (+5, statement 14)
- Telephone calls are returned promptly (+5, statement 15)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (+5, statement 20)
- This organisation's services improve clients' quality of life (-5, statement 38)
- Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money (-5, statement 39)
- Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability (-5, statement 51)
- The organisation is too expensive (+4, statement 4)
- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (+4, statement 6)
- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (+4, statement 12)
- Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries (+4, statement 17)
- The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business (-4, statement 3)
- Employees trust the information published on the internal website (-4, statement 36)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (-4, statement 46)
- Clients who deal with this organisation experience world-class customer service (-4, statement 50)

Factor 3 is labelled *effective management and administration*, since it reveals a greater awareness of rendering a reliable service when dealing with customers' administrative enquiries than perspectives in the remaining factors. The statements that loaded on +5 and +4 show consideration of customers' need to have their enquiries and complaints solved promptly and satisfactorily. These statements mainly deal with effective resolving of customers' written and telephone enquiries. Factor 3 recognises the role of brand

positioning activities and regards involvement in corporate social initiatives as a meaningful instrument for establishing a favourable image of the brand. However, factor 3 disregards the internal website as a useful instrument for communicating with internal stakeholders and aligning corporate behaviour. This factor also opposes statements on the brand's affordability, and its reputation as a stable brand. Although factor 3 recognises prompt feedback when attending to administrative issues pertaining to customers' written and telephone enquiries, it shows a lower awareness of customer satisfaction when delivering the actual product or service. These include affordable product offerings (statements 3 and 39), and service delivery (statements 38 and 50).

The following statements were rated moderately:

- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (+3, statement 13)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (+3, statement 19)
- Employees are proud of the organisation's logo (+3, statement 24)
- The organisation clearly explains the terms and conditions of its services (+3, statement 45)
- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (+3, statement 47)
- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (-3, statement 8)
- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (-3, statement 21)
- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (-3, statement 30)
- The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs (-3, statement 34)
- The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery (-3, statement 54)

The following statements were rated very low:

- The organisation's policy of personalised service increases members' attachment to the organisation (+2, statement 1)
- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (+2, statement 5)
- The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily (+2, statement 29)

- The organisation's brand values champions enhance employees' performance (+2, statement 32)
- If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately (+2, statement 37)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (+2, statement 43)
- Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs (-2, statement 7)
- The organisation's employer benefits help recruit skilled employees (-2, statement 16)
- The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele (-2, statement 23)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (-2, statement 33)
- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (-2, statement 35)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (-2, statement 40)
- Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective (+1, statement 9)
- The brand name symbolises stability (+1, statement 26)
- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (+1, statement 27)
- The organisation's style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence (+1, statement 28)
- The brand name enhances consumer trust (+1, statement 44)
- The organisation's brand drives promises to customers (+1, statement 53)
- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (-1, statement 2)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (-1, statement 10)
- Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction (-1, statement 11)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (-1, statement 25)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (-1, statement 42)
- Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele (-1, statement 46)

One item distinguishes factor 3 in terms of the reliability of the information published on the organisation’s internal website, as depicted in Table 8.1 below:

Table 8.1: Distinguishing statements for factor 3: elements of corporate brand identity that are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
Number of statement	Statement	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score
36	Employees trust the information published on the internal website	3	3	-4	0	2	3	3

The internal website is inadequate in communicating reliable information to internal stakeholders. This indicates awareness that the information published on the internal website must be reliable to enhance the effectiveness of this internal communication medium. The internal website can only be successfully employed as a useful instrument for establishing a favourable image of the brand if internal stakeholders regard its contents as a reliable source of information.

8.4.1.4 Factor 4: Stability through business innovation

Factor 4 reflects perspectives on how organisations establish the brand as a stable entity among internal and external stakeholders by integrating various innovative business initiatives. The perspectives reflected by this factor show strong similarities with the perspectives included in factor 1 in that both factors reveal a strong perception that consumers prefer doing business with a trustworthy brand that has an established reputation as a well-managed, financially stable entity. However, upon investigation it appears that perspectives reflected by these two factors emphasise different components of the business strategy that are deemed significant for establishing the brand as a reputable, trustworthy organisation. These include the brand’s product offering, customer satisfaction, technology and administration.

This factor is defined by 23 participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. Seven Q sorts are associated with factor 4 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 4 is 7%. The reliability coefficient for factor 4 is 0.96, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 4 includes the viewpoint of seven participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in

which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- One participant from the construction, mining, engineering and property development industry
- One participant from the retail industry
- One participant from the business communication industry
- One participant from the home appliances industry
- One participant from the mining solutions industry
- One participant from the pharmaceuticals industry
- One participant from the tyre manufacturing industry

The composite factor array for factor 4 is illustrated in Figure 8.5 below.

Figure 8.5 The factor array for factor 4: stability through business innovation

Most disagree		Neutral						Most agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	4	9	12	15	11	1	21	8	5	6
13	18	20	25	19	16	3	38	24	7	40
14	35	29	27	22	17	10	42	26	46	51
	43	33	30	28	32	23	44	41	48	
		47	34	31	36	50	49	45		
			39	37	52	53	54			

The information depicted in Figure 8.5 is explained below:

Factor 4 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a: 23-24):

- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (+5, statement 6)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (+5, statement 40)

- This organisation's esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far (+5, statement 51)
- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (-5, statement 2)
- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (-5, statement 13)
- Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures (-5, statement 14)
- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (+4, statement 5)
- Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs (+4, statement 7)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (+4, statement 46)
- Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele (+4, statement 48)
- The organisation is too expensive (-4, statement 4)
- Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them (-4, statement 18)
- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (-4, statement 35)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (-4, statement 43)

Factor 4 is labelled *stability through business innovation*, since it displays a stronger tendency towards creating a reputation of stability and trust through innovative leadership compared to the perspectives displayed in the other factors. The statements rated +5 and +4 show consciousness of the importance of establishing a reputation as a stable and reliable brand which is achieved through innovative product offering, sound financial management and customer service. These statements mainly deal with consumers' preference for using brands with a well-established reputation that offers a variety of innovative products, supported by technological advancement and high-quality service delivery.

The statements rated +5 and +4 reveal that establishing a reputation of transparency, honesty and trust is achieved by implementing an integrated business strategy. In addition to a diverse product range, this factor shows strong consideration for applying sound financial management to ensure the continued viability of the brand. Factor 4 also

emphasises a strong awareness of aligning employees' behaviour with the business strategy to ensure they know how to meet clients' needs. This factor also reflects the need for implementing modern technology and effective administration as part of an integrated business strategy.

This factor opposes a loyalty programme that offers financial rewards as part of value-added product offerings. Although factor 4 recognises service delivery and administrative efficiency as part of an integrated business strategy, it rejects the necessity of providing external communication media that explain business processes in order to facilitate administration. In addition, factor 4 negates the importance of having a call centre available after hours as part of exceptional service delivery. Despite the fact that this factor emphasises the significance of implementing advanced technology as part of an innovative business strategy, it opposes an effective dedicated online client account for viewing transactions as a means of reinforcing the stability of the brand. Factor 4 also rejects the statement on low-income earners' preference for the brand over the competition, despite sound financial management.

The following statements were rated moderately:

- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (+3, statement 8)
- Employees are proud of the organisation's logo (+3, statement 24)
- The brand name symbolises stability (+3, statement 26)
- The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery (+3, statement 41)
- The organisation clearly explains the terms and conditions of its services (+3, statement 45)
- Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective (-3, statement 9)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (-3, statement 20)
- The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily (-3, statement 51)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (-3, statement 33)
- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (-3, statement 47)

The following statements were rated very low:

- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (+2, statement 21)
- This organisation's services improve clients' quality of life (+2, statement 38)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (+2, statement 42)
- The brand name enhances consumer trust (+2, statement 44)
- The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material (+2, statement 49)
- The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation (+2, statement 54)
- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (-2, statement 12)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (-2, statement 25)
- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (-2, statement 27)
- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (-2, statement 30)
- The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs (-2, statement 34)
- Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money (-2, statement 39)
- The organisation's policy of personalised service increases members' attachment to the organisation (+1, statement 1)
- The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business (+1, statement 3)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (+1, statement 10)
- The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele (+1, statement 23)
- Clients who deal with this organisation experience world-class customer service (+1, statement 50)
- The organisation's brand drives promises to customers (+1, statement 53)
- Telephone calls are returned promptly (-1, statement 15)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (-1, statement 19)

- The organisation's print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness (-1, statement 22)
- The organisation's style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence (-1, statement 28)
- Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile (-1, statement 31)
- If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately (-1, statement 37)

No statements distinguish factor 4 from the other factors. This means no Q-sort item in the configuration has different perspectives in the other six factors. Therefore, no Q-sort items in factor 4 are considered most significant to examine in relation to the other six factors.

8.4.1.5 Factor 5: *Customer satisfaction*

This factor is defined by 11 participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. Six Q sorts are associated with factor 5 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 5 is 4%. The reliability coefficient for factor 5 is 0.95, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 5 includes the viewpoint of six participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- Three participants from the financial services industry
- One participant from the petroleum industry
- One participant from the shoe manufacturing industry
- One participant from the agricultural industry

The composite factor array for factor 5 is illustrated in Figure 8.6 below.

Figure 8.6: The factor array for factor 5: customer satisfaction

Most disagree			Neutral					Most agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	12	3	1	2	4	13	22	27	5	17
8	16	21	9	7	28	15	36	30	10	20
11	29	31	23	19	38	18	43	40	14	46
	32	34	25	24	41	42	45	47	39	
		37	35	26	44	53	48	49		
			52	33	50	54	51			

The information depicted in Figure 8.6 is explained below:

Factor 5 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24):

- Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries (+5, statement 17)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (+5, statement 20)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (+5, statement 46)
- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (-5, statement 6)
- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (-5, statement 8)
- Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction (-5, statement 11)
- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (+4, statement 5)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (+4, statement 10)
- Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures (+4, statement 14)
- Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money (+4, statement 39)
- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (-4, statement 12)

- The organisation's employer benefits help recruit skilled employees (-4, statement 16)
- The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily (-4, statement 29)
- The organisation's brand values champions enhance employees' performance (-4, statement 32)

Factor 5 is labelled *customer satisfaction*, since it shows a stronger consideration of satisfying customers' needs at all points of contact with the brand than perspectives in the remaining factors. As indicated in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.2, the importance of non-functional benefits of a brand is increasing continuously. This aspect is most prominently reflected in factor 5. The statements that loaded on +5 and +4 reveal consumers' need for doing business with a brand that has an established reputation as a well-managed, financially stable entity. The statements that loaded on +5 and +4 reveal awareness that customer satisfaction is achieved by meeting customers' needs with regard to product and service delivery. This factor puts less emphasis on the functional benefits of a product or service as elements that determine the continued viability of the brand. The statements that loaded highly mainly deal with customers' need for cost-effective products, the need to have their enquiries and complaints dealt with promptly and satisfactorily as well as the need for administrative efficiency to enhance customer satisfaction. Factor 5 recognises the role of brand positioning activities and regards involvement in corporate social initiatives as a meaningful instrument to establish a favourable image of the brand. In addition, the perspectives reflected by factor 5 provide an elaborate view of the findings in the factors labelled effective management and administration as well as effective integrated communication. The latter two factors represent perspectives on the role of efficient administration and communication in corporate brand image formation, which are both regarded as significant elements in creating customer satisfaction when included as part of an integrated branding strategy. Furthermore, factor 5 explains that consumers' preference for a brand depends on how they experience the behaviour and the attitude of the organisation's internal stakeholders, thus the entire organisational culture.

Factor 5 opposes statements that regard technological development (statement 6) and a proactive approach towards shifts in product offerings (statement 8) as significant measures in achieving customer satisfaction. This factor disregards the role of skilled employees (statement 16) and an internal reward system (statement 11) as means of ensuring customers receive the level of service they expect. The factor does not reveal

the necessity for brand values champions (statement 32) to align employees' behaviour according to the organisational objectives. Factor 5 also negates the role of a website (statement 29) that provides logical navigation to enable customers to obtain the required information easily. This factor also rejects perceptions that customer satisfaction is enhanced if customers gain financially from savings effected by the organisation. In view of the factor's strong emphasis on customer satisfaction and the measures to achieve this, the low ratings of statements 6, 8, 11, 16 and 29 are unexpected. The measures implied in these five statements are effective means of enhancing customer satisfaction, and therefore it would be anticipated that these statements should have been rated much higher. It appears the low rating of these statements reflects a relative unconcern about the brand's position as a market leader with regard to technology and product offering. The low rating is also indicative of ignorance with regard to the role of skilled employees in customer retention.

The following statements were rated moderately:

- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (+3, statement 27)
- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (+3, statement 30)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (+3, statement 40)
- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (+3, statement 47)
- The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material (+3, statement 49)
- The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business (-3, statement 3)
- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (-3, statement 21)
- Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile (-3, statement 31)
- The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs (-3, statement 34)
- If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately (-3, statement 37)

The following statements were rated very low:

- The organisation's print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness (+2, statement 22)
- Employees trust the information published on the internal website (+2, statement 36)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (+2, statement 43)
- The organisation clearly explains the terms and conditions of its services (+2, statement 45)
- Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele (+2, statement 48)
- Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability (+2, statement 51)
- The organisation's policy of personalised service increases members' attachment to the organisation (-2, statement 1)
- Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective (-2, statement 9)
- The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele (-2, statement 23)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (-2, statement 25)
- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (-2, statement 35)
- This organisation's esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far (-2, statement 52)
- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (+1, statement 13)
- Telephone calls are returned promptly (+1, statement 15)
- Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them (+1, statement 18)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (+1, statement 42)
- The organisation's brand drives promises to customers (+1, statement 53)
- The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation (+1, statement 54)
- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (-1, statement 2)

- Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs (-1, statement 7)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (-1, statement 19)
- Employees are proud of the organisation's logo (-1, statement 24)
- The brand name symbolises stability (-1, statement 26)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (-1, statement 33)

No statements distinguish factor 5 from the other six factors. This means no Q-sort item in the configuration has different perspectives in the other six factors. Therefore, no Q-sort items in factor 5 are considered most significant to examine.

8.4.1.6 Factor 6: *Effective integrated communication*

This factor is defined by 21 participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. Five Q sorts are associated with factor 6 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 6 is 6%. The reliability coefficient for factor 6 is 0.95, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 6 includes the viewpoint of five participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- Two participants from the food and beverage industry
- One participant from the financial services industry
- One participant from the electrical infrastructure development industry
- One participant from the home appliances industry

The composite factor array for factor 6 is illustrated in Figure 8.7 below.

Figure 8.7: The factor array for factor 6: effective integrated communication

	Most disagree			Neutral				Most agree			
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	44	10	1	8	15	9	14	3	6	2	
7	48	24	11	28	16	12	18	4	20	19	
41	51	26	17	32	22	13	30	21	35	27	
	54	46	29	33	23	25	34	31	42		
		50	43	37	39	38	40	36			
			45	53	49	52	47				

The information depicted in Figure 8.7 is explained below:

Factor 6 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24):

- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (+5, statement 2)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (+5, statement 19)
- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (+5 statement 27)
- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (-5, statement 5)
- Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs (-5, statement 7)
- The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery (-5, statement 41)
- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (+4, statement 6)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (+4, statement 20)
- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (+4, statement 35)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (+4, statement 42)
- The brand name enhances consumer trust (-4, statement 44)
- Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele (-4, statement 48)

- Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability (-4, statement 51)
- The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation (-4, statement 54)

This factor is labelled *effective integrated communication*, since the statements that were highly rated show a stronger recognition of the role of integrating various communication media to enhance the brand's image than perspectives in the remaining factors. The statements rated +5 and +4 reveal strong awareness of using various external communication media to grow the brand's customer base among all income level groups. These statements deal with the publication of an organisational magazine to reinforce the principles for sound financial management of the brand (statement 27), integrated communication media to establish trust in the brand (statement 42), and the use of an external newsletter to streamline administrative processes (statement 35). Factor 6 also recognises the role of brand positioning activities used in addition to external communication media and regards involvement in corporate social initiatives as a meaningful instrument for establishing a favourable image of the brand. Factor 6 reveals that a premium brand implements state-of-the-art technology and is associated with a wealthy lifestyle.

Despite the fact that factor 6 shows strong awareness of using integrated communication media to establish trust among external stakeholders, it opposes the perception that the brand name enhances consumer trust (statement 44). Factor 6 also opposes statements on good corporate governance. These include a competent management team (statement 7), service delivery (statements 41 and 48), and considering the potential impact of business decisions on customers' perception of the brand (statement 54). This factor also rejects the perception that a brand is recommended to prospective clients based on its reliability.

The following statements were rated moderately:

- The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business (+3, statement 3)
- The organisation is too expensive (+3, statement 4)
- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (+3, statement 21)
- Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile (+3, statement 31)

- Employees trust the information published on the internal website (+3, statement 36)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (-3, statement 10)
- Employees are proud of the organisation's logo (-3, statement 24)
- The brand name symbolises stability (-3, statement 26)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (-3, statement 46)
- Clients who deal with this organisation experience world-class customer service (-3, statement 50)

The following statements were rated very low:

- Telephone calls are returned promptly (+2, statement 14)
- Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them (+2, statement 18)
- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (+2, statement 30)
- The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs (+2, statement 34)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (+2, statement 40)
- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (+2, statement 47)
- The organisation's policy of personalised service increases members' attachment to the organisation (-2, statement 1)
- Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction (-2, statement 11)
- Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries (-2, statement 17)
- The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily (-2, statement 29)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (-2, statement 43)
- The organisation clearly explains the terms and conditions of its services (-2, statement 45)
- Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective (+1, statement 9)

- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (+1, statement 12)
- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (+1, statement 13)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (+1, statement 25)
- This organisation’s services improve clients’ quality of life (+1, statement 38)
- This organisation’s esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far (+1, statement 52)
- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (-1, statement 8)
- The organisation’s style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence (-1, statement 28)
- The organisation’s brand values champions enhance employees’ performance (-1, statement 32)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (-1, statement 33)
- If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately (-1, statement 37)
- The organisation’s brand drives promises to customers (-1, statement 53)

One item distinguishes factor 6 in terms of the financial management of the organisation’s affairs, as depicted in table 8.2 below:

Table 8.2: Distinguishing statements for factor 6: elements of corporate brand identity that are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
Number of statement	Statement	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score
5	The organisation’s financial affairs are well managed	4	2	2	4	4	-5	1

The rating of factor 6 indicates that the sound financial management of business affairs is considered unimportant and is not regarded a prerequisite for establishing a favourable image of the brand.

8.4.1.7 Factor 7: Strategic positioning of the brand

This factor is defined by 13 participants with significant loadings of 0.35 and more. Five Q sorts are associated with factor 7 and were taken into consideration for calculating factor scores. The variance for factor 7 is 4%. The reliability coefficient for factor 7 is 0.95, resulting in a well-defined factor.

Factor 7 includes the viewpoint of five participants whose duties require them to be directly or indirectly involved in corporate brand image formation in the organisations in which they are employed. These include employees in a marketing or communication portfolio, some of whom serve in a managerial capacity in one of these portfolios. These participants serve in organisations in the following business industries:

- Two participants from the food and beverage industry
- One participant from the fashion industry
- One participant from the municipal services industry
- One participant from the research consulting industry

The composite factor array for factor 7 is illustrated in Figure 8.8 below.

Figure 8.8: The factor array for factor 7: strategic positioning of the brand

Most disagree		Neutral							Most agree	
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	9	12	6	16	3	5	1	8	20	7
4	27	18	11	23	24	10	13	15	29	30
52	47	25	14	31	44	21	26	28	39	40
	54	38	17	32	45	37	33	36	42	
		43	19	35	48	41	34	49		
			22	46	50	53	51			

The information depicted in Figure 8.8 is explained below:

Factor 7 is defined by the following statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24):

- Top management is competent to look after the organisation’s affairs (+5, statement 7)

- The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry (+5, statement 30)
- Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings (+5 statement 40)
- Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition (-5, statement 2)
- The organisation is too expensive (-5, statement 4)
- This organisation's esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far (-5, statement 52)
- The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development (+4, statement 20)
- The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily (+4, statement 6)
- Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money (+4, statement 39)
- Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material (+4, statement 42)
- Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective (-4, statement 9)
- The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover (-4, statement 27)
- The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers (-4, statement 47)
- The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation (-4, statement 54)

This factor is labelled *strategic positioning of the brand*, because it reveals greater awareness of implementing a well-conceived business strategy to position the brand's products and/or services than perspectives in the remaining factors. In this regard, factor 7 provides a more integrated, dynamic perception of the mechanisms which organisations use to create an understanding of what the brand represents. The statements rated +5 and +4 reveal a strong awareness of the need to implement an integrated business strategy. These statements mainly deal with applying sound financial management to ensure the continued viability of the brand and providing a diverse product range that offers value for money. Factor 7 also emphasises a strong awareness of IMC to establish a reputation of transparency, honesty and trust. These statements mainly deal with integrating communication media to enhance brand awareness, a user-friendly website as

well as involvement in corporate social initiatives to enhance the corporate brand's image. This factor supports the perspective that the way corporate activities, marketing mix activities and marketing communications promote the brand must be integrated into a holistic image of the brand's emotional and functional attributes in the consumer's mind.

Although factor 7 shows strong consideration of implementing an integrated business strategy, it disregards the necessity of considering the potential impact of business decisions on customers' perception of the brand. This factor opposes a pricing structure that ensures the brand is available to all income groups. In spite of recognition to IMC, this factor disregards an organisational magazine as an effective communication medium to increase profit. Furthermore, this factor opposes communication activities aimed at counteracting negative publicity. Therefore, factor 7 does not reveal the necessity for applying a conservative pricing structure in order to position the brand favourably in the market. Furthermore, it disregards communication activities aimed at reinforcing the business principles applied for sound financial management and restoring consumers' trust in the brand.

The following statements were rated moderately:

- The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry (+3, statement 8)
- Telephone calls are returned promptly (+3, statement 15)
- The organisation's style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence (+3, statement 28)
- Employees trust the information published on the internal website (+3, statement 36)
- The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material (+3, statement 49)
- Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation (-3, statement 12)
- Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them (-3, statement 18)
- The brand colours symbolise dynamism (-3, statement 25)
- This organisation's services improve clients' quality of life (-3, statement 38)
- Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours (-3, statement 43)

The following statements were rated very low:

- The organisation's policy of personalised service increases members' attachment to the organisation (+2, statement 1)
- The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly (+2, statement 13)
- The brand name symbolises stability (+2, statement 26)
- The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values (+2, statement 33)
- The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs (+2, statement 34)
- Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability (+2, statement 51)
- The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry (-2, statement 6)
- Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction. (-2, statement 11)
- Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures (-2, statement 14)
- Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries (-2, statement 17)
- Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle (-2, statement 19)
- The organisation's print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness (-2, statement 22)
- The organisation's financial affairs are well managed (+1, statement 5)
- Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation (+1, statement 10)
- The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation (+1, statement 21)
- If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately (+1, statement 37)
- The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery (+1, statement 41)
- The organisation's brand drives promises to customers (+1, statement 53)
- The organisation's employer benefits help recruit skilled employees (-1, statement 16)
- The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele (-1, statement 23)

- Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile (-1, statement 31)
- The organisation's brand values champions enhance employees' performance (-1, statement 32)
- The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration (-1, statement 35)
- Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation (-1, statement 53)

No statements distinguish factor 7 from the other six factors. This means no Q-sort item in the configuration has different perspectives in the other six factors. Therefore, no Q-sort items in factor 7 are considered most significant to examine in relation to the other six factors.

In the next section, the overall findings for the answers to the online questionnaire are explained and discussed.

8.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

For the purpose of this study, the responses to the online questionnaire and interview schedule were analysed by means of an inductive thematic analysis at latent level following an essentialist framework to identify both common and distinct themes (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.5.2). During the thematic analysis the essence or main issue for each of the responses to the online questionnaire was identified. Each theme identified was grouped into one of the following three categories constituting the structure of the Q sample (see Chapter 7, sections 7.5 and 7.6):

- Transformational leadership and management
- Positioning and differentiation strategy
- Brand equity

The contents of the answers to each of the five questions were analysed individually. The researcher combined the understanding of the topic under investigation by reading the text to form a new comprehensive understanding. A central theme was identified for each question included in the online questionnaire based on the categories and their respective levels and dimensions identified from the responses. The themes identified for each of the five questions for the online questionnaire are as follows:

- Question 1: brand preference relies on internal and external customer satisfaction
- Question 2: effective internal communication reinforces a uniform business strategy

- Question 3: effective internal branding strategies oriented towards an organisation's priorities and the external environment require regular, unambiguous and personal communication
- Question 4: a reputable brand invests in business innovation and employer branding as means of creating brand value
- Question 5: inside-out branding is a strategic measure for engaging employees in the organisational cause and realising the brand promise

The objective of the online questionnaire was to provide contextual clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study with regard to the three categories and their respective levels and dimensions on which the structured Q sample (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7) is based. These were used to substantiate the findings of the Q study as discussed in section 8.7. The online questionnaire is enclosed as Annexure B.

The number and types of categories, levels and dimensions identified from the answers to the five questions included in the online questionnaire are discussed below.

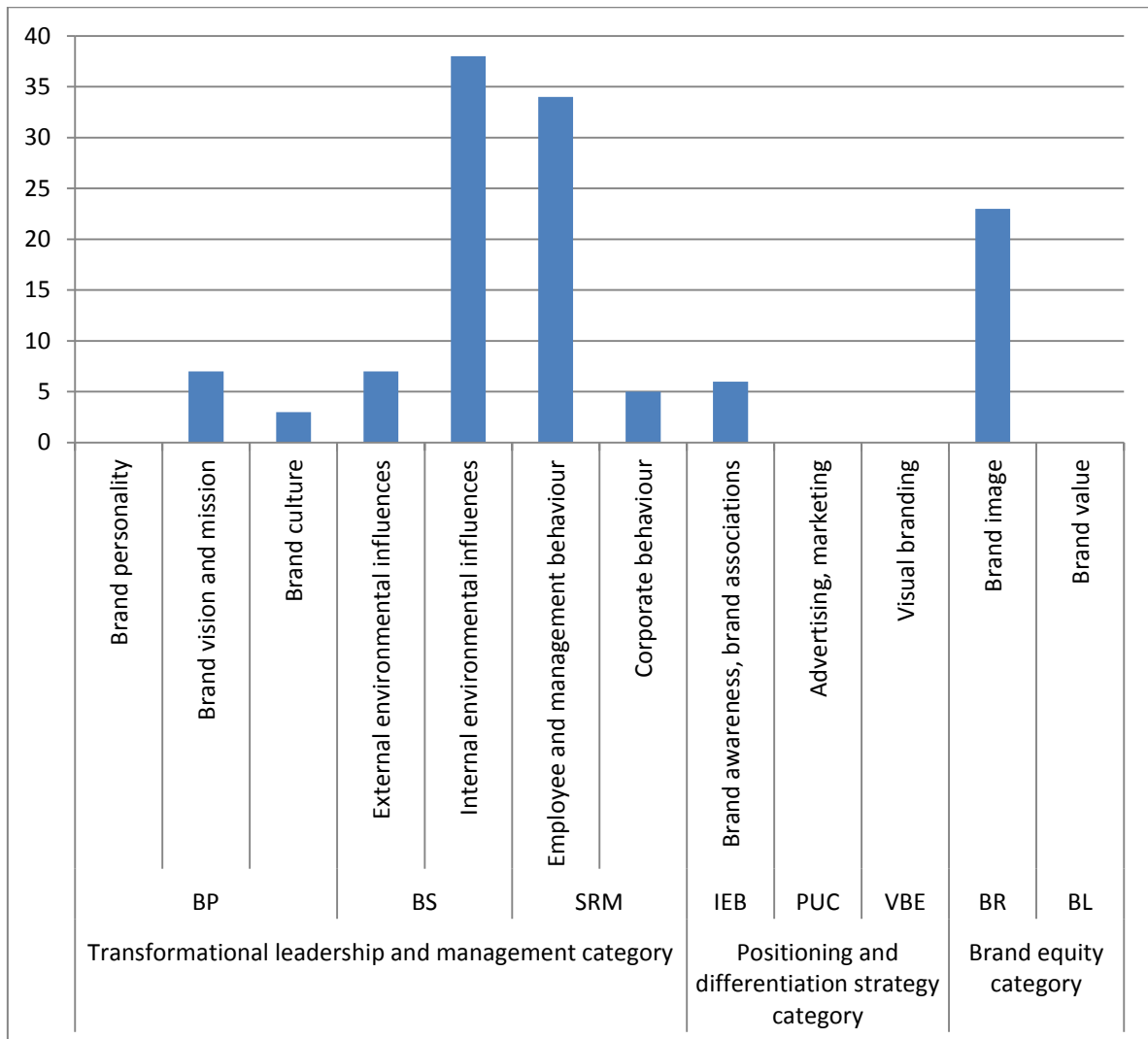
8.5.1 Question 1: brand preference relies on internal and external customer satisfaction

Question 1 of the online questionnaire investigated what respondents like most about the organisation in which they are employed. The purpose of this question was to gain a better understanding of the benefits which the organisation offers employees, how employees experience the behaviour of their colleagues and management and the circumstances that create a pleasant working environment for employees. Furthermore, this question was included in the questionnaire to gain a better understanding of how the brand culture, the organisation's business strategy, its internal and external branding practices as well as the organisation's image and reputation create an affinity towards the organisation among internal and external stakeholders.

A total of 118 participants completed the online Q sort. Of these, one respondent did not complete Question 1 of the online questionnaire, resulting in a realised sample of 117 respondents. The answers of the 117 respondents who completed Question 1 were analysed for the purpose of reporting the findings for Question 1 of the online questionnaire.

Figure 8.9 below illustrates the all-inclusive levels, the various dimensions that emerged with regard to each of the five levels identified, as well as the categories represented in the responses to Question 1 of the online questionnaire.

Figure 8.9: Dimensions, levels and categories represented in responses to Question 1



Legend:

BP – Brand philosophy

SRM – Stakeholder relations management

PUC – Integrated planned and unplanned communication

BR - Brand reputation

BS – Business structure for the micro- and macro-environment

IEC – Internal and external branding

VBE - Visual corporate brand identity elements

BL - Brand loyalty

According to the information indicated in Figure 8.9, the results of the thematic analysis show that all three categories are represented in the responses to Question 1 of the online questionnaire. Five of the eight all-inclusive levels are represented, namely brand philosophy, brand reputation, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, internal and external branding, and stakeholder relations management. The majority of responses deal with the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, followed by stakeholder relations management and brand reputation. The levels of brand philosophy and internal and external branding are represented to a lesser extent, while no

responses deal with the levels of integrated planned and unplanned communication as well as visual corporate brand identity elements.

With regard to the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, both external and internal environmental influences are included in this level. However, the data analysis has revealed that internal environmental influences are represented markedly higher than external environmental influences. According to the findings for Question 1, internal environmental influences play a significant role in establishing the organisation as a preferred brand in consumers' minds. Consumers are more likely to use a stable, esteemed brand that displays integrity in its business dealings. Respondents identified innovation as well as superior product and service delivery as major determinants of brand preference. In addition, quality product and service delivery depends on the extent to which employees experience internal customer satisfaction. By offering competitive conditions of service and employer benefits in the form of financial remuneration and opportunities for career development, the organisation is associated with a leading, trustworthy brand that values its employees. Positive employee relations supported by solid leadership establish a secure working environment that promotes the effective execution of the branding strategy. The analysis of the responses to Question 1 of the online questionnaire according to the all-inclusive levels, the various dimensions that emerged with regard to each of the five levels identified, as well as the categories represented in the responses to Question 1 of the online questionnaire is indicated in Annexure H.

The findings of the responses to Question 1 support the findings of factors 1 to 7 with regard to the *transformational leadership and management category*. These findings emphasise the perspectives included in the seven factors that corporate brand image formation relies on a well-planned business strategy that provides for the implementation of measures in the micro- and macro-environments to ensure proper management and sustainability of the brand. The findings also indicate that measures are required to enhance administrative efficiency by using modern technology and to establish solid relationships with internal and external stakeholders. According to the perspectives included in the seven factors, organisations need to remain informed of product developments in order to create an affordable product offering that meets consumers' needs effectively. These findings are also reflected in the responses to Question 1 of the online questionnaire.

8.5.2 Question 2: effective internal communication reinforces a uniform business strategy

Question 2 of the online questionnaire investigated the level of interaction between management and employees. The purpose of this question was to determine the frequency of interaction between management and employees, whether employees are kept informed of work-related matters to enable them to do their work effectively, problems that impact negatively on communication between management and employees, and the organisation's policy on communication between management and employees (for example, transparency, secrecy and maintaining an open-door policy). The purpose of this question was also to determine to which extent communication can be used as a management tool to mentor and train subordinates regarding the organisation's business strategy, thereby aligning employee behaviour with the organisation's objectives and values in order to ensure they reflect the distinct attributes of the organisation to external stakeholders.

Of the 118 respondents, one respondent did not complete Question 2 of the online questionnaire, resulting in a realised sample of 117 respondents. The answers of the 117 respondents to Question 2 were analysed for the purpose of reporting the findings for Question 2 of the online questionnaire. The responses to this question were categorised based on their description of the level of interaction between management and employees. The majority of respondents described the interaction between management and employees as highly effective. A small number of respondents were of the opinion that interaction between management and employees is inadequate and ineffective. Respondents' description of the level of interaction between management and employees according is indicated in Annexure H.

According to the results of the data analysis of Question 2, effective communication between management and employees is essential in reinforcing a uniform business strategy. The organisations that participated in the research regard an interactive communication style between management and employees as an essential strategic component for enhancing employees' commitment to achieving corporate goals. In turn, an interactive communication style promotes the implementation of an organisation's strategic objectives. Consequently, effective corporate communication is a prerequisite for effective strategy implementation.

These findings are supported by the findings of the seven factors that emerged from the Q sorts. According to the perspectives in the seven factors as revealed by the *positioning*

and differentiation strategy category, internal print and electronic media are used to communicate strategic matters and organisational values to employees. The findings for Question 2 supplement the findings of the seven factors in that it indicates that organisations realise the need for using various internal communication media to establish the brand effectively among internal stakeholders, thereby aligning employee behaviour with the organisation's objectives and values in order to ensure they reflect the distinct attributes of the organisation to external stakeholders.

8.5.3 Question 3: effective internal branding strategies oriented towards an organisation's priorities and the external environment require regular, unambiguous and personal communication

Question 3 of the online questionnaire expands on Question 2 of the online questionnaire by enquiring about respondents' opinions on the measures that could be implemented to improve communication in the organisation in which they are employed. The purpose of this question was to determine which improvements are required from employees' point of view to ensure effective communication as part of an integrated business strategy in terms of the frequency and method of communication between management and employees, as well as the purpose for which communication should be used to enable employees to do their work effectively. In addition, the purpose of the question was to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's internal branding practices and how these impact on external stakeholders' perception of the organisation, its products and services.

A total of 118 respondents completed Question 3 of the online questionnaire. The responses were analysed for the purpose of reporting the findings for Question 3. 104 respondents indicated that improvements in respect of their organisation's communication could be beneficial and made various suggestions on how to improve communication. The suggestions made by the 104 respondents were analysed for the purpose of reporting the results of respondents' answers to Question 3. The data were grouped according to three categories identified from the responses to Question 3. These categories are the methods suggested by respondents for improving communication, media which respondents deemed significant for improving the organisation's communication, and the purpose for which communication should be used, according to the respondents' views (see Annexure H).

The responses to Question 3 of the online questionnaire reflect the need for the implementation of policies, procedures and structures to enhance effective internal

communication. With regard to the methods that should be implemented for improvement of communication, the majority of respondents indicated that regular, structured and reliable communication to all employees – not only those with e-mail facilities – is required. The responses also revealed that communication should be initiated by management.

Regarding the media suggested for improvement of communication, the majority of respondents indicated that more personal communication in addition to electronic and print media is required. The personal communication should take the form of meetings and one-on-one communication (see Annexure H). In this regard, internal communication serves as an essential instrument for enhancing employee development which is used to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters, to explain reasons for organisational decisions, and to communicate important organisational matters. In addition, communication requires a consultative management style in order to obtain input from employees and to encourage open, two-way communication between employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation (see Annexure H).

A smaller number of responses dealing with the purpose of communication regard communication as a useful instrument which management should use to help employees gain better understanding of strategic measures (see Annexure H). Regarding internal communication on strategic measures, the research findings indicate the need for well-defined communication strategies to align employees' behaviour with the business goals and values of the organisation in order to establish a uniform pattern of thinking among the organisation's employees. This requires a high degree of interpersonal communication across all organisational units.

The above findings suggest that an effective internal communication strategy requires the use of a variety of internal communication media. These include written, electronic and one-on-one communication channels which are used in an integrated manner. Implementing an effective internal communication strategy enables organisations to establish a culture that treasures the organisation's core values, and attaches importance to internal communication practices and employee involvement in order to create alignment between internal branding, organisational values and the image the organisation portrays to the external environment. The findings to Question 3 indicate the need for organisations to establish a coherent corporate communication strategy in which strategic communication is oriented towards an organisation's priorities as well as the external environment.

The above findings support the findings of the Q sort in that the perspectives included in the seven factors reveal that organisations which align all organisational activities and communication are better able to create and enhance internal synergy. Information obtained in this way enables employees to fully understand the values of their brand and to know which behaviour is expected of them. The purpose of organisational communication is to establish a specific meaning which characterises the organisation and influences the way it interacts with external stakeholders. The image which the organisation reflects to the external environment should mirror its internal culture and climate in order to ensure that the organisation functions optimally.

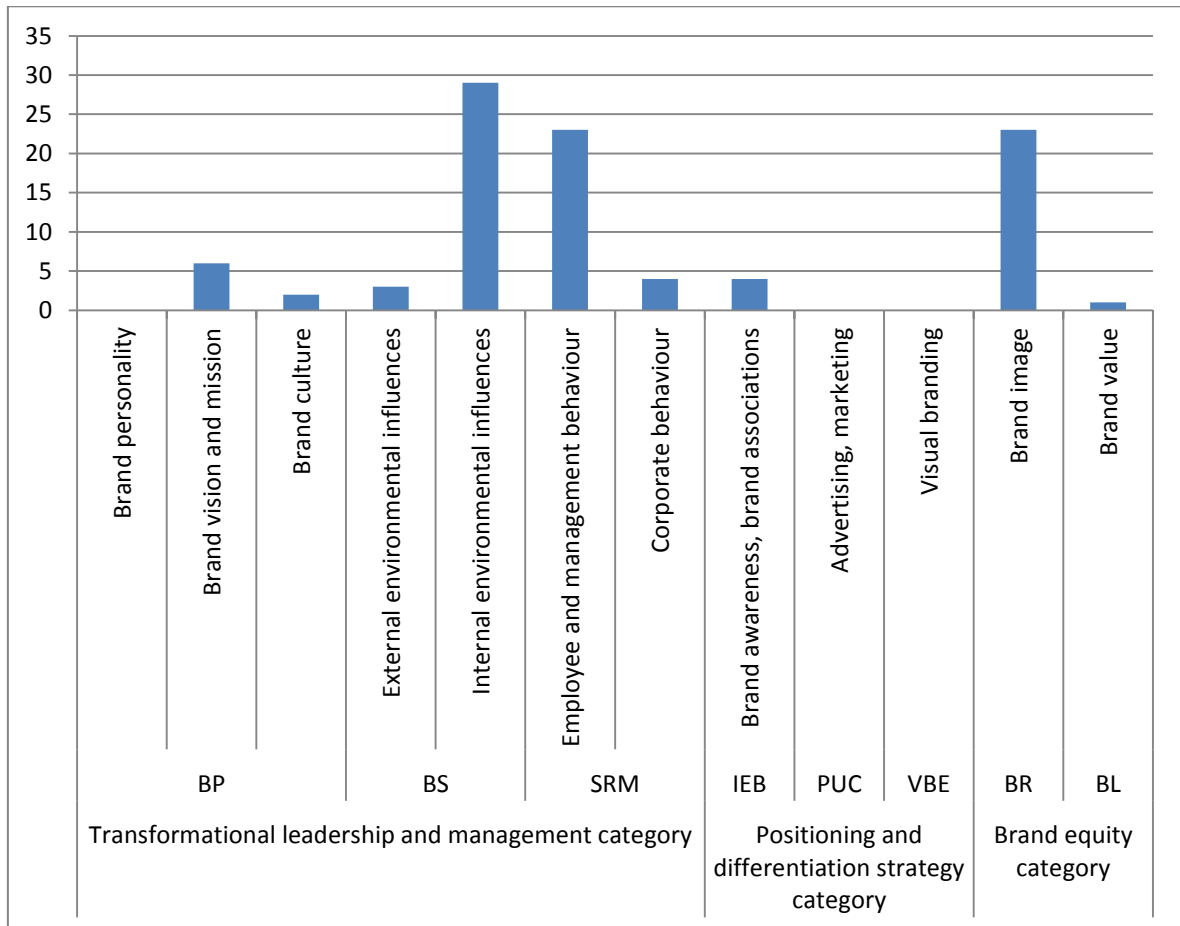
8.5.4 Question 4: a reputable brand invests in business innovation and employer branding as means of creating brand value

Question 4 of the online questionnaire deals with why respondents would recommend the organisation as an employer of choice to friends. The purpose of this question was to gain an understanding of the elements of the character of the organisation – properties such as the organisation's key values and the guiding principles that determine how the organisation functions as a collective entity and the impact of these on the brand's reputation among internal and external stakeholders.

A realised sample of 91 respondents completed Question 4 in full and these responses were analysed for the purpose of reporting the findings of Question 4.

Figure 8.10 below illustrates the six all-inclusive levels, the various dimensions that emerged with regard to each of the six levels identified from respondents' answers to Question 4 as well as the categories represented in the responses to Question 4 of the online questionnaire.

Figure 8.10: Dimensions, levels and categories represented in responses to Question 4



Legend:

BP – Brand philosophy

SRM – Stakeholder relations management

PUC – Integrated planned and unplanned communication

BR - Brand reputation

BS – Business structure for the micro- and macro-environment

IEC – Internal and external branding

VBE - Visual corporate brand identity elements

BL - Brand loyalty

According to the information indicated in Figure 8.10, the results of the thematic analysis show that all three categories are represented in the responses to Question 4 of the online questionnaire. Six of the eight all-inclusive levels are represented. These are brand loyalty, brand philosophy, brand reputation, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, internal and external branding, and stakeholder relations management. The majority of responses deal with the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, followed by brand reputation and stakeholder relations management. The levels of brand philosophy as well as internal and external branding are represented to a lesser extent, while no responses deal with the levels of integrated planned and unplanned communication as well as visual corporate brand identity elements. The analysis of the responses to Question 4 of the online questionnaire according to the all-

inclusive levels, the various dimensions that emerged with regard to each of the five levels identified, as well as the categories represented in the responses to Question 4 of the online questionnaire is indicated in Annexure H.

According to the findings for Question 4, internal environmental influences play a significant role in establishing the brand as an employer of choice in order to recruit and retain high-calibre staff. Skilled workers prefer employment in a stable, well-managed organisation. An expanding business is characteristic of dynamic, strong leadership, ethical business standards, good corporate governance and a challenging business environment. In addition, a leading organisation provides career prospects and offers competitive working conditions to recruit and retain expertise. Furthermore, a dynamic business environment requires the use of state-of-the-art technology, which results in high-quality product and service delivery. In turn, this reinforces the image of the organisation as a reputable, esteemed brand.

The findings of the responses to Question 4 support the findings of the seven factors with regard to the *transformational leadership and management category*. These findings emphasise the perspectives included in factors 2, 4 and 6 that corporate brand image formation relies on a well-planned business strategy that provides for the implementation of measures in the micro- and macro-environments to ensure proper management and sustainability of the brand. A stable organisation is managed effectively according to ethical business standards to secure the viability of the brand. The findings of Question 4 of the online questionnaire also support the perspectives included in the seven factors that measures are required to establish solid relationships with internal stakeholders in order to recruit and retain expertise. Furthermore, the findings correspond with the perspectives included in factors 2, 4 and 6 in that business processes must be streamlined to enhance administrative efficiency and increase customer satisfaction. A dynamic business environment requires the use of state-of-the-art technology, which results in high-quality product and service delivery.

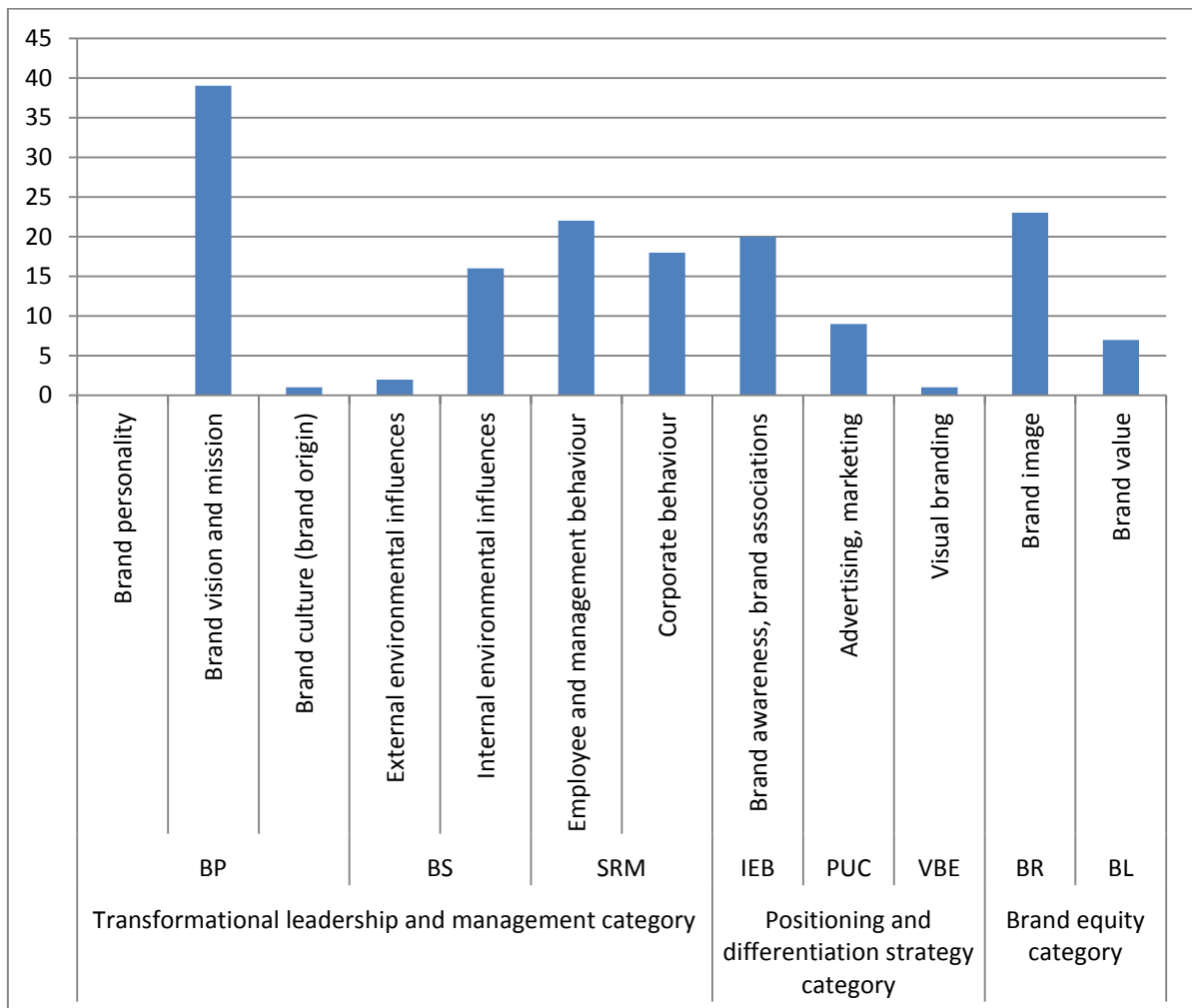
8.5.5 Question 5: inside-out branding is a strategic measure for engaging employees in the organisational cause and realising the brand promise

This question investigated which measures should be implemented to engage employees in the organisational branding process in order to create a single corporate identity and to enable them to contribute effectively to corporate brand image formation. The purpose of this question was to summarise the information provided in Questions 1 to 5.

Two of the 118 respondents did not complete Question 5 of the online questionnaire, resulting in a realised sample of 116 respondents. The answers of the 116 respondents who completed Question 5 were analysed for the purpose of reporting the findings for Question 5 of the online questionnaire.

Figure 8.11 below illustrates the seven all-inclusive levels, the various dimensions that emerged with regard to each of the seven levels identified as well as the categories represented in the responses to Question 5 of the online questionnaire.

Figure 8.11: Dimensions, levels and categories represented in responses to Question 5



Legend:

BP – Brand philosophy

SRM – Stakeholder relations management

PUC – Integrated planned and unplanned communication

BR - Brand reputation

BS – Business structure for the micro- and macro-environment

IEC – Internal and external branding

VBE - Visual corporate brand identity elements

BL - Brand loyalty

According to the information indicated in Figure 8.11, the results of the data analysis show that all three categories are represented in the responses to Question 5 of the online

questionnaire. Seven of the eight all-inclusive levels are represented. These are brand loyalty, brand philosophy, brand reputation, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, internal and external branding, stakeholder relations management, and visual corporate brand identity elements.

The majority of responses deal with brand philosophy, followed by brand reputation, stakeholder relations management, internal and external branding, and the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. The levels of integrated planned and unplanned communication as well as visual corporate brand identity elements are represented to a lesser extent. The analysis of the responses to Question 5 of the online questionnaire according to the all-inclusive levels, the various dimensions that emerged with regard to each of the five levels identified, as well as the categories represented in the responses to Question 5 of the online questionnaire is indicated in Annexure H.

According to the responses to Question 5, consistent employee behaviour towards internal and external stakeholders is required to realise organisational objectives. The results also reveal that well-known organisations expect employees to have a sound knowledge of the brand as well as its products and services. In addition, employees must be aware of the importance of their job in delivering the brand promise to customers. They must realise that they are brand ambassadors in every interaction with internal and external stakeholders and that their behaviour conveys the values of the brand and influences the perception which customers form of the brand. Employees also have the responsibility to improve their skills and competence in order to achieve the organisational values and objectives when performing their duties and meet customers' needs effectively. In addition to internal branding initiatives aimed at establishing the brand values and organisational goals among employees, external branding and communication initiatives are required to market the brand's products and services among clients and prospective clients. The organisation must also implement the necessary measures to ensure continuous improvement of business processes in order to enhance customer satisfaction. The way the organisation interacts with its stakeholders as well as its marketing material must communicate the most prominent features of the brand effectively to all stakeholder groups, since customers' perception of the brand ultimately enhances brand loyalty.

The findings of Question 5 reveal that organisations follow an integrated approach towards internal and external branding to build trust and to create a climate for acceptance of the organisation's products and services among consumers. In this regard,

internal communication fulfils an essential function. Internal branding requires the effective exchange of information between the organisation and its employees in order to enable the organisation to meet its business objective in respect of external stakeholders. To ensure effective communication and alignment of internal and external communication, employees should be actively involved in the organisational branding process. This implies that organisations must establish an effective internal branding strategy in order to create a single corporate identity by equipping employees with insight into the overall philosophy of the organisation and its strategic direction. In addition, internal branding strategies should be aimed at motivating and cultivating commitment by implementing measures to ensure employees understand the organisation's objectives and goals. Organisations must implement measures to create a culture of fostering the needs of the consumer at every level in the organisation in order to enhance overall levels of satisfaction. These measures include tools to enhance employees' skills and competence to help them meet the required work standards. An effective communication strategy must incorporate all communication activities that involve an organisation as a corporate entity. A holistic approach requires organisations to align the form and content of all messages with the purpose of enhancing the efficacy of the organisation's total communication effort.

The findings of the responses to Question 5 support the findings of the seven factors with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* as well as the *brand equity category*. Communication which is used to involve employees in strategy formulation enables them to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. Exceptional product and service delivery ultimately enhances brand loyalty.

8.6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: CATI

The data collected by means of the CATI were also analysed by means of a thematic analysis in order to gain an understanding of the underlying meaning of the content.

The researcher first read the responses to the 12 questions in order to obtain a sense of the overall content. In this way, the researcher gained a preliminary understanding of the topic under investigation and its context, and determined the most fundamental features of the content (Ricoeur 1976, 1981; Talseth, Lindseth, Jacobsson & Norberg 1997; Rasmussen 1999). This enabled the researcher to detect patterns in the answers provided by participants.

For the purpose of the thematic analysis of the responses to the questions in the CATI, the same procedure was followed as for the online questionnaire (see section 8.5). During

the thematic analysis of the responses the essence or main issue was identified for each of the responses to the questions included in the interview schedule. Each main issue identified was grouped in one of the three categories constituting the structure of the Q sample (see Chapter 7, sections 7.5 and 7.6). The contents of the responses to each of the 12 questions were analysed individually. The researcher combined the understanding of the topic under investigation by reading the text to form a new comprehensive understanding. A central theme was identified for each question included in the interview schedule based on the categories, their respective levels and dimensions identified from the responses. The themes identified for each of the 12 questions in the interview schedule are as follows:

- Question 1: corporate brand image formation is centred on a volatile business environment
- Question 2: business innovation, effective management and administration enhance corporate brand image formation in a volatile business environment
- Question 3a and Question 3b: consistency in internal and external branding reflects a uniform brand culture
- Question 4: consistent employee behaviour in accordance with the brand values realises the brand promise
- Question 5: brand positioning requires the appropriate use of unifying marketing communication tools
- Question 6: creating consistent brand perceptions requires the use of IMC
- Question 7: online communication facilitates internal branding as part of an interactive communication style
- Question 8: an effective branding strategy incorporates transparent corporate actions
- Question 9: consistent communication that reflects the business identity instills a sense of trust
- Question 10: internal branding creates a unified brand culture
- Question 11: consistent brand philosophy creates a uniform business strategy
- Question 12: a business strategy that reinforces stakeholder relationships enhances brand equity

The objective of the CATI was to provide contextual clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study with regard to the three categories and their respective levels and dimensions on which the structured Q sample was based as explained in Table 7.1, section 7.5 in Chapter 7. These were used to substantiate the findings of the Q study as discussed in section 8.7. The interview schedule is enclosed as Annexure C.

The number and types of categories, levels and dimensions identified from the answers to the 12 questions included in the interview schedule are discussed below.

8.6.1 Question 1: corporate brand image formation is centred on a volatile business environment

Question 1 of the CATI focused specifically on the biggest challenges pertaining to the macro-environment in which the organisation operates and how these impact on the organisation. The macro-environment refers to the external environment and includes all factors that impact on the organisation and which cannot be directly controlled by the organisation. The business environment in which brands function often necessitates continuous adjustment to strategy to respond effectively to the actions of customers and other stakeholders and competitors, and to ensure its business culture, systems, structures and strategies remain functional and relevant. The responses to Question 1 provided contextual clues for the interpretation of the results of the Q study with regard to the corporate brand identity elements of the three categories, their respective levels and dimensions on which the structured Q sample is based. In Question 1, these are demonstrated in the level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. The all-inclusive level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments is dominated by the dimension of external environmental influences, while internal environmental influences represent this level to a much lesser extent. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 1 are explained in Annexure I.

According to the responses to Question 1 of the CATI, the current economic climate in which organisations operate is the biggest challenge that affects sales of the brand's products and services. As a result of difficult economic conditions, consumers tend to consider the cost of products and services when selecting a specific brand. Consequently, organisations function in a competitive environment where a variety of value-added products and services must be offered at affordable prices.

Question 1 supports the findings of the seven factors with regard to the *transformational leadership and management category*. These findings emphasise that organisations

function in a volatile business environment which poses a variety of challenges that may impact on the continued viability of the organisation.

8.6.2 Question 2: business innovation, effective management and administration enhance corporate brand image formation in a volatile business environment

Question 2 of the CATI was aimed at obtaining information on specific measures which the organisation implements to counteract the challenges pertaining to the macro-environment in which the organisation operates in order to enhance corporate brand image formation in the organisation. Therefore, this question aimed to understand which adjustments organisations make to internal strategy according to developments in the external environment to ensure their business culture, systems, structures and strategies remain updated and functional. The majority of responses to Question 2 of the CATI deal with the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. The all-inclusive level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments is almost equally represented by the dimension of external environmental influences and the dimension of internal environmental influences. Stakeholder relations management as well as planned and unplanned communication aimed at advertising and marketing the brand were regarded less relevant by participants.

According to the responses to Question 2, organisations implement a variety of strategies to counteract the challenges of the macro-environment and their impact on the brand's viability. These strategies include a value-added product offering that provides for consumers' needs and quality service delivery aimed at effective complaints-handling processes, system automation, quality assurance and increased customer satisfaction. Other strategies that are implemented to a lesser extent include marketing initiatives, establishing the organisation as a stable brand, and quality brand communication.

The findings of Question 2 indicate that organisations are subject to changes in the task and remote environment. As a result, organisations are required to implement measures to counteract these changes. Various components pertaining to the micro- and macro-environments can affect a brand positively or negatively. To counteract the impact of components that influence the brand negatively, strategic measures must be implemented to strengthen the effect of the components that enhance a brand, while eliminating the components that impede the organisation's brand. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 2 are explained in Annexure I.

Question 2 supports the findings of the seven factors with regard to the *transformational leadership and management category*. These findings emphasised the perspectives included in the identified factors that corporate brand image formation relies on a well-planned business strategy that provides for the implementation of measures in the micro- and macro-environments to ensure proper management and sustainability of the brand. According to the findings of the seven factors corporate brand image formation requires a well-planned business strategy, based on the unique challenges of the industry in which the organisation operates, to ensure proper management and sustainability of the brand.

8.6.3 Question 3a and Question 3b: consistency in internal and external branding reflects a uniform brand culture

Question 3a of the CATI focused on the measures which the organisation applies in order to ensure that the brand's core values contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants to Question 3a of the CATI dealt with internal and external branding. The all-inclusive level of internal and external branding is dominated by the dimension of brand associations, while the dimensions of brand awareness and brand essence represent this level to a much lesser extent. The lowest number of responses to Question 3a identified brand philosophy, represented by the dimension of brand personality, as one of the measures applied in order to ensure the brand's core values contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 3a are explained in Annexure I.

Question 3b of the CATI was aimed at determining the measures which the organisation applies in order to ensure the brand's mission and vision contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants in Question 3b of the CATI deals with the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. The all-inclusive level of the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments is composed of an equal number of responses dealing with internal and external environmental influences. The lowest number of responses to Question 3b identified integrated planned and unplanned communication represented by the dimension of advertising and marketing as one of the measures applied in order to ensure the brand's core values contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 3b are explained in detail in Annexure I.

The responses to Questions 3a and 3b indicate that organisations establish the brand values among stakeholders by using a variety of internal and external branding initiatives. These branding initiatives are aimed at establishing and reinforcing the brand by creating a network of associations of the most distinct attributes of the brand in consumers' minds. In this regard, the brand's growth strategy is aimed at establishing the organisation's products and services as a preferred brand in the market in a number of ways. Consumers' associations with the brand are based on a variety of brand characteristics, including product attributes and benefits, people and relationships, corporate social initiatives and the brand's credibility.

The findings to Questions 3a and 3b reveal that an effective marketing strategy is aimed at influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour by incorporating the brand values in a coherent manner to establish the brand in the dominant position in stakeholders' minds. These brand associations must be incorporated as a set of distinct brand features which relate to one another, and which are composed of multiple ideas and facts that are used in an organised way in the internal and external branding strategy to promote the goals of the organisation. If all employees have a shared knowledge and understanding of brand values, this will become apparent in consistent behaviour. In addition, employees who are familiar with the values of the brand understand the organisational strategy too. Employees' commitment to enact the brand values reinforces the brand values which should result in increased sales and customer satisfaction.

The findings to Questions 3a and 3b of the CATI supplement the findings of the Q sort with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* for factor 1 in that internal communication as a reliable source of information is deemed significant in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders. The findings to Questions 3a and 3b of the CATI also supplement the findings of the Q sort with regard to the *brand equity category* for factor 7 in that trustworthiness of the information provided in communication material enhances the brand's reputation. Furthermore, the extent to which the organisation meets the promises on product and service delivery in its advertising material also contributes to establish the organisation as a reputable brand. The findings of the Q sort as well as the findings to Questions 3a and 3b of the CATI reveal that brand engagement involves the process of harmonising the brand values with the organisation's employees, policies and processes in order to ensure that the organisation is able to meet customer needs effectively.

8.6.4 Question 4: consistent employee behaviour in accordance with the brand values realises the brand promise

Question 4 of the CATI centred on the measures which the organisation incorporates in its brand positioning strategy to ensure the corporate brand encapsulates the organisational culture in terms of the characteristics and attributes that make the brand unique and differentiate it from its competitors. Furthermore, the purpose of this question was to determine how ideas and associations embodied by the corporate culture are reflected in the quality, performance and services of products. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants in Question 4 of the CATI dealt with internal and external branding. The all-inclusive level of internal and external branding is composed of responses dealing with creating brand associations and brand awareness. The lowest number of responses to Question 4 identified stakeholder relations management, represented by one dimension of corporate behaviour and one dimension of employee and management behaviour respectively, as measures applied in order to ensure the corporate brand image reflects the most important aspects of the organisation's culture. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 4 are explained in Annexure I.

The responses to Question 4 of the CATI identified consistent employee behaviour that reveals a set of uniform values as the most significant aspect of reflecting the organisation's culture. Consistent employee behaviour is cultivated mainly by means of teamwork and, to a lesser extent, in the form of formal or informal training.

According to the findings for Question 4, organisations establish the brand's value proposition among employees when they incorporate the brand values into the way they interact with internal and external stakeholders. Organisational values provide guidelines for establishing the characteristics that should be displayed in employee behaviour. In this regard, communication functions as a mechanism for aligning internal and external organisational functions.

The findings of the responses to Question 4 support the findings of factor 2 and factor 5 with regard to the *transformational leadership and management category* as well as the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* respectively. The findings pertaining to the *transformational leadership and management category* reveal that organisations that define factor 5 are values-driven brands. In addition, the findings of factor 2 pertaining to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* indicate that internal print and electronic communication media are a powerful instrument for promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders in order to align employee behaviour.

8.6.5 Question 5: brand positioning requires the appropriate use of unifying marketing communication tools

Question 5 of the CATI enquired into the type of integrated communication practices used by the organization to create impressions among stakeholders, which result in images about how stakeholders perceive the organisation, as well as whether a holistic approach is followed for the strategic management of internal and external communication. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants dealt with internal and external branding, followed by integrated planned and unplanned communication. The all-inclusive level of internal and external branding is composed of responses dealing with creating brand awareness, while the all-inclusive level of integrated planned and unplanned communication is represented by one dimension of advertising and marketing as a measure to contribute to corporate brand image formation. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 5 are explained in Annexure I.

The responses to Question 5 indicate that an effective marketing strategy is aimed at influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour by using brand associations strategically to create positive feelings towards the brand and to establish the brand in the dominant position in consumers' mind by suggesting how consumers would benefit from using the specific brand. Consumers' associations with a brand can be based on a variety of brand characteristics, including common product attributes and benefits, people and relationships, values and corporate social responsibility programmes, and the brand's credibility. According to the responses to Question 5, organisations use different media channels in an integrated manner to communicate the brand message, to enhance brand awareness and visibility and to increase sales. Furthermore, organisations use different communication media to inform consumers about the brand's unique features and benefits by explaining how these features and benefits are different and superior to competitive brands. In this way, organisations create a mental structure of the brand's prominent attributes to help consumers consider the benefits of the brand at the point of purchase. Advertising, sales promotion and other marketing communications methods are used based on the purpose of the advertising campaign to familiarise consumers with the brand attributes. In addition, an effective marketing strategy incorporates brand associations that are used in an organised way in the advertising and marketing strategy to create a well-established network of brand knowledge among an organisation's target audience. Consequently, promoting the brand's products and services involves unifying marketing communication tools and strategies in order to send a consistent, persuasive message to specific target markets, which will promote the goals of the organisation.

Regarding internal and external branding, organisations use internal and external corporate communication as a persuasive strategy to influence stakeholder relationships. Organisations use various internal marketing initiatives for creating a positive perception of the brand among internal stakeholders.

Corporate brand image formation relies on using the visual corporate brand identity elements to create awareness of the brand. This is done by identifying a set of values which reflects the competencies of the brand that address consumers' needs. In this regard, a style guide that determines the requirements for using the brand's visual elements in an integrated manner to communicate the brand's distinct qualities to stakeholders is significant in reinforcing the corporate brand image. Participants' responses to Question 5 are explained in Annexure I.

The findings for Question 5 of the CATI support the findings for factor 1, factor 2, factor 3, factor 4 and factor 6 pertaining to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*. The findings for these factors reveal that a renowned brand uses different communication media in an integrated manner to position the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders.

8.6.6 Question 6: creating consistent brand perceptions requires the use of IMC

Question 6 of the CATI investigated how the specific communication practices used by the 10 organisations included in the CATI contribute to corporate brand image formation. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants dealt with internal and external branding. The all-inclusive level of internal and external branding is composed of responses dealing with creating brand associations and brand awareness and, to a lesser extent, brand messages. The lowest number of responses to Question 6 identified stakeholder relations management represented by one dimension of corporate behaviour used as a measure to contribute to corporate brand image formation. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 6 are explained in Annexure I.

According to the findings of Question 6, organisational communication is used as a tactical instrument to differentiate organisations from competitors and to gain competitive advantage. In this regard, organisations use integrated messages to increase consumers' awareness of an organisation and its products and services in order to achieve the organisation's marketing objectives. In addition, an effective integrated communication strategy enhances an organisation's competitive advantage as it enables the organisation

to transmit information on its most distinct attributes to the target audience, thereby contributing to positioning and differentiating the organisation in the marketplace. Furthermore, organisations follow an integrated strategy for communicating messages to stakeholders in order to evoke the necessary mental activities to combine the corporate brand identity elements in consumers' minds in the most effective information environment.

The findings of Question 6 of the CATI support the findings of factor 5 pertaining to internal and external branding as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. Organisations use internal and external corporate communication as a persuasive strategy to influence stakeholder relationships and promoting the core values of the brand. These findings support the perspectives included in factor 5 revealing that visual corporate brand identity elements are deemed significant to create an awareness of the brand by identifying a set of values that reflects the competencies of the brand and the extent to which these address the needs of the organisation's customers. In this regard, a style guide which determines the requirements for using the brand's visual elements in an integrated manner to communicate the brand's distinct qualities to stakeholders is significant in reinforcing the corporate brand image. In this way, organisational communication is used as a strategic tool to help establish synergy and to create consistency of messages across all types of communication methods.

8.6.7 Question 7: online communication facilitates internal branding as part of an interactive communication style

Question 7 of the CATI investigated the internal communication practices used by the 10 organisations included in the CATI to contribute to corporate brand image formation. This question aimed to determine which internal communication practices are employed by organisations as a determinant of the brand's value to better align the capabilities of internal stakeholders to ensure they realise the brand messages through their actions and the behaviour they demonstrate to customers and other stakeholders, and to ensure the organisation will be better able to respond to conditions in the external market. Since the purpose of Question 7 was to gather specific data on the internal branding practices implemented by the organisation, only one level is applicable to this question, namely internal branding. Therefore, the responses to this question were not analysed according to the levels and dimensions as explained in Chapter 7, section 7.5, Table 7.1. Participants' answers to Question 7 are explained in Annexure I.

According to the responses to Question 7, all organisations implement internal branding strategies to maintain interpersonal communication across all organisational units. The purpose of maintaining a high degree of interpersonal communication between internal stakeholders is to communicate the organisation's strategic objectives to employees (see Annexure I). The majority of organisations prefer online communication media to promote the brand among internal stakeholders. These include e-mail and the organisation's intranet. Participants regard online communication media as an essential strategic component for establishing an interactive communication style between management and employees in order to align employees' behaviour with the business goals and values of the organisation. In this manner, internal online communication serves as a measure to commit employees to achieve corporate goals.

The responses to Question 7 of the CATI support the findings of Question 3 of the online questionnaire. The findings of Question 7 of the CATI dealing with internal communication practices indicate that online branding is most often used to create positive associations of the brand among internal stakeholders and reflect the need for the implementation of policies, procedures and structures to enhance effective internal communication. Online communication enables management to initiate regular, structured and reliable communication to employees, provided that all employees have e-mail facilities. The responses have also revealed that communication should be initiated by management.

In addition, online communication can be used as a useful instrument as part of an interactive communication style to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters, to explain reasons for organisational decisions, and to communicate important organisational matters. In addition, online communication can be used by employees to give input regarding strategic matters, which encourages open, two-way communication between employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation.

The findings for Question 7 of the CATI support the findings for factor 1 and factor 2 in respect of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*. According to the perspectives included in factor 1 and factor 2, internal print and electronic communication media are deemed significant in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders in order to align employees' behaviour with the business goals and values of the organisation.

8.6.8 Question 8: an effective branding strategy incorporates transparent corporate actions

The purpose of Question 8 was to determine how secondary communication, which includes the organisation's strategy for planned communication, is used strategically by organisations' management as a tool to harmonise all forms of external communication to project the corporate brand identity to stakeholders. Furthermore, this question attempted to discover the type of communication policies, such as transparency, open dialogue or secrecy to which the organisation might subscribe. This question attempts to discover the type of communication policies such as transparency, open dialogue or secrecy to which the organisation might subscribe. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants in Question 8 of the CATI deals with brand reputation. The all-inclusive level of brand reputation comprises corporate brand image. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 8 are explained in Annexure I.

The results of the responses to Question 8 indicate that organisations regard candidness in their business dealings with external stakeholders as a primary factor in corporate brand image formation. To achieve this objective, organisations implement well-conceived policies that govern organisational communication and provide requirements which must be met in all communication to external stakeholders.

According to the findings for Question 8, reputable organisations need to display transparency in the entire spectrum of corporate activities and behaviour. As a result, these organisations subscribe to a policy in which the brand's core mission and identity is conveyed in a coherent manner. In this regard, communication to external stakeholders must contain comprehensive information about the brand's product offering, operations and identity. The research results indicate that it is increasingly difficult to separate the product and service elements; as a result, the brand will increasingly become the main discriminator on which purchase decisions are based, rather than the functional benefits offered by the organisation. In addition, the branding strategy provides for strategic measures that are aligned with the corporate culture to display candidness in all corporate actions. In this regard, employees are given sufficient guidelines regarding the standard of performance required of them. If employees receive adequate information about how their work contributes to executing the organisation's mission and its position in respect of the macro-environment in which it operates, they will contribute more effectively to accomplishing the brand mission.

The findings for Question 8 of the CATI support the findings for factor 1 with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*. Organisations that define this factor use visual corporate brand identity elements combined with internal and external marketing initiatives to reflect a consistent image of distinctness. The business strategy of organisations that define this factor is aimed at implementing measures to establish the brand as a respected, ethical entity among internal and external stakeholders. An integrated business strategy for creating an established reputation ensures that consumers come to associate the brand with a stable business partner which meets consumers' expectations as depicted by means of its visual corporate brand identity elements.

8.6.9 Question 9: consistent communication that reflects the business identity instills a sense of trust

Question 9 of the CATI investigated how the organisation's communication policies affect its relationships with its employees and external stakeholders. The purpose of this question was to determine how the organisation's communication activities are organised as a single, well-planned entity to produce a set of coherent messages internally and externally to create a favourable basis for establishing relationships with the organisation's stakeholder groups, and to establish a favourable image and ultimately a good reputation among internal and external stakeholders. The majority of measures indicated by the 10 participants in Question 9 of the CATI deals with brand reputation. The all-inclusive level of brand reputation is composed of responses dealing with corporate brand image. The lowest number of responses to Question 9 identified three levels with regard to the way in which organisations' policies on internal and external communication affect the quality of relationships with the organisational stakeholders. These are internal branding represented by brand awareness, business strategy represented by internal environmental influences, and integrated planned and unplanned communication represented by advertising and marketing. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 9 are explained in Annexure I.

The results of the responses to Question 9 indicate that organisations regard transparency in communication with external stakeholders as a primary factor in corporate brand image formation. To achieve this objective, organisational policies are implemented to govern all communication to external stakeholders. In addition, good employee practices are used to create strategic consistency in order to ensure the content of organisational messages are appropriate for their respective audiences, while consistency is applied in the way the organisation presents corporate values, the organisation's

performance in terms of product and service delivery, and how the brand is identified and positioned.

According to the findings of Question 9, organisations acknowledge that consumers increasingly base their purchase decisions upon the reputation expressed by the organisation's external communication. For this reason, the decisive factor in managing stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation effectively is to ensure that the form and content of all messages delivered by the entire organisation meet the requirement of strategic consistency. In this regard, internal communication fulfils an essential function. Internal branding requires the effective exchange of information between the organisation and its employees in order to enable the organisation to meet its business objective in respect of external stakeholders. Impressions of the organisation that are formed in this way reinforce brand relationships, provided that the brand messages communicated to the various stakeholder groups are consistent. Failure to integrate internal and external communication activities may increase an organisation's risk for communicating inconsistent messages to its various stakeholder groups. Incoherence in brand messages may create distrust in the brand, which could impede corporate brand image formation.

The findings for Question 9 of the CATI support the findings for factor 1 with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* in that corporate brand image formation is perceived to be enhanced if print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness.

8.6.10 Question 10: internal branding creates a unified brand culture

Question 10 of the CATI aimed to determine participants' opinions on whether internal branding serves as a successful tool for creating favourable relationships with employees in order to establish internal organisational alignment. The largest number of reasons provided by the 10 participants dealt with brand mission and vision. The all-inclusive level of brand mission and vision is composed of responses dealing with establishing the brand values among internal stakeholders in order to align employee behaviour. The lowest number of responses to Question 10 identified stakeholder relations management represented by one dimension of employee and management behaviour as one of the effects resulting from internal branding. No participants indicated that internal branding does not serve a purposeful role for establishing internal organisational alignment. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 10 are explained in Annexure I.

The findings for Question 10 indicate that internal branding is an imperative strategic measure to align employee behaviour with the organisation's objectives and values.

Internal branding serves as useful instrument to influence the behaviour which employees display towards internal and external customers so they will act as brand ambassadors of the organisation. An effective internal branding strategy requires senior management to communicate the organisation's values, corporate vision and strategy to employees in an unambiguous manner to align their behaviour accordingly in order to reflect the distinct attributes of the organisation to external stakeholders.

The findings for Question 10 of the CATI support the findings for factor 7 with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* in that electronic media, specifically the organisation's website, are deemed a functional medium for internal brand positioning.

8.6.11 Question 11: consistent brand philosophy creates a uniform business strategy

Question 11 of the CATI aimed to determine how important the respondents believe internal organisational alignment is to establish internal stakeholder relationships in order to ensure effective functioning of the organisation. The majority of reasons provided by the 10 participants in Question 11 of the CATI deals with brand mission and vision. The all-inclusive level of brand philosophy is composed of responses dealing with establishing the brand mission, brand vision and brand values among internal stakeholders in order to align employee behaviour. Second, this level includes responses dealing with aligning corporate goals and objectives. The lowest number of responses to Question 11 identified internal and external branding represented by one dimension of brand messages as a necessity for internal organisational alignment. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 11 are explained in Annexure I.

The responses to Question 11 indicate that internal organisational alignment is imperative to create a uniform business strategy, since it creates coherence between organisational goals and objectives which ensure employees embody the same values. In this manner, uniform messages about the brand, its products and services are communicated, resulting in systematic functioning of the brand.

According to the findings for Question 11, internal organisational alignment requires a formal, well-defined business strategy, developed according to a uniform brand philosophy. The brand philosophy constitutes the mission and vision statements which represent goals that the organisation aims to achieve in the long term. In addition, the brand vision should consist of quantified objectives stipulating the business direction of the brand. These involve decisions on implementing strategies and values that will

influence employees' behaviour to achieve the organisational objectives. Setting a business direction for the brand also involves providing guidelines about the behaviour required from employees towards other employees and external stakeholders of the organisation. Furthermore, all internal stakeholders of the organisation should be involved in activities aimed at enhancing corporate brand image formation in order to realise the strategic decision to achieve competitive advantage by rendering high-level customer service.

The findings for Question 11 of the CATI support the findings for factor 5 and factor 7 with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*. According to the findings for factor 5 and factor 7, electronic media, specifically the organisation's website, are deemed functional for achieving internal organisational alignment in order to create a uniform business strategy.

8.6.12 Question 12: a business strategy that reinforces stakeholder relationships enhances brand equity

Question 12 of the CATI aimed to determine the process and steps the organisation uses to create unique, enduring and favourable impressions in consumers' minds in order to enhance their brand knowledge and enable them to distinguish between the brand's products and services in response to marketing initiatives, thereby enhancing brand equity. The largest number of methods indicated by the 10 participants deals with the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, represented by the dimension of internal environmental influences. The level of integrated planned and unplanned communication, represented by the dimension of advertising and marketing, is represented to a lesser extent. The levels of brand reputation, represented by the dimension of corporate brand image, as well as the levels of stakeholder relations management and internal and external branding are equally represented in the responses to Question 12. The level of stakeholder relations management is represented by the dimension of employee and management behaviour, while the level of internal and external branding is represented by the level of brand associations. The levels and dimensions identified from participants' answers to Question 12 are explained in detail in Annexure I.

The responses to Question 12 identified continuous research as well as quality control measures to improve product offerings, high-calibre staff and the organisation's ability to meet customers' expectations as elements that create brand equity. In addition, consistent brand communication and CSI campaigns establish brand equity.

According to the findings for Question 12, corporate brand image formation requires a well-planned business strategy to establish the organisation as a preferred brand in consumers' minds. Systems implemented by an organisation to ensure quality control serve as a critical tool for connecting strategy execution and strategy adjustment.

The responses to Question 12 also indicate that an effective marketing strategy is aimed at influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour by using brand associations strategically to create positive feelings towards the brand and to establish the brand in the dominant position in consumers' mind. Promoting the brand's products and services involves unifying marketing communication tools and strategies in order to send a consistent, persuasive message to specific target markets, which will promote the goals of the organisation.

The findings for Question 12 of the CATI support the findings for factor 1 with regard to the *transformational leadership and management category* in that a competent management team who possesses the necessary business acumen to ensure the sustained viability of the brand is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. In addition, the findings for Question 12 of the CATI also support the findings for factor 1 with regard to the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* in that organisations use various internal marketing initiatives in an integrated manner for creating a positive perception of the brand among internal stakeholders.

8.7 INTERPRETATION OF THE THEORETICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSOLIDATED FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY FOR CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

The theoretical importance of the findings for the Q study, the online questionnaire and CATI for corporate brand image formation is now discussed in accordance with each factor and the categories and levels of the structured Q sample (see Chapter 7, section 7.5, Table 7.1).

The statements used to support the consolidated findings for the seven factors are those three statements which participants placed on the Q-sort diagram under the "Disagree most" (-5) column and the "Agree most" (+5) column respectively. The discussion is also supported by verbatim responses from the online questionnaire and CATI. Each quoted, unedited verbatim response is indicated by means of the same user ID that was used for the data capturing and analysis.

As indicated in Chapter 7, section 7.7.1, the researcher selected the person sample to reflect a diverse group of organisations, positions and functional areas (Melewar et al 2005:68). The researcher included participants across various business sectors in the P set who have different perspectives and well-formed opinions on the role of the various corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. For this reason, verbatim statements obtained from the responses to the online questionnaire and CATI which the researcher used to substantiate the findings of the Q study are not limited to the results of the participants who define the seven factors. Where deemed necessary, the researcher included relevant responses to the online questionnaire and CATI of participants other than those who define the seven factors in order to substantiate the findings of the Q study as complementary data that describe and analyse the widest possible range of opinions that were expressed among participants (Melewar et al 2005:66). This enabled the researcher to exhaust the full range of attitudes towards this topic.

8.7.1 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 1: Trustworthiness of the brand

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 1 are further elucidated below.

Figure 8.12 below indicates the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are embedded in factor 1 and which are perceived to be essential for corporate brand image formation. This factor emphasises the importance of establishing a proven track record of stability and reliability in order to grow business. The most prominent perception of the trustworthiness of the brand involves the category of brand equity, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.12: Factor 1: trustworthiness of the brand (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	PD	BE
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	BE	PD	PD	BE	BE
	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	BE	PD	BE	BE	
		PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	PD	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The *transformational leadership and management category* does not feature as prominently as the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* and the *brand equity category*. The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

This factor is defined by dynamic, expanding and financially stable organisations in their respective fields, as indicated in the following verbatim statement given in response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire dealing with the reasons why respondents regard the organisation as an employer of choice (see Annexure B).

Response user ID no: 4140320

“Company values, vision of long-term sustainability, track record and geographical base across RSA [...].”

This statement emphasises that corporate brand image formation is perceived to rely on a well-planned business strategy that provides for the implementation of measures in the micro- and macro-environments to ensure sound financial management of the brand. The following response to Question 1 of the CATI, dealing with the impact of external environmental factors on the organisation, supports this finding (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6090159

“Economic environment [...] impacts how people choose to spend.”

To secure the viability of the brand, a management team who possesses the necessary skill and expertise to take care of the brand’s business is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. The role of skilful management of the organisation to build its brand is confirmed in the following verbatim statement obtained from Question 1 of the online questionnaire dealing with the organisational attributes valued most by the respondents (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 3250302

“Very dynamic - up with the trends and allways in the lead showing the way for others to follow.”

In addition, a well-planned business strategy enables the organisation to grow its business, as indicated in the following verbatim statement taken from Question 1 of the CATI (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Biggest macro-environment challenges is the high number of competitors locally and global players who partake in local/African markets.”

Furthermore, skilful management of organisations to ensure financial security requires the implementation of quality control measures for connecting strategy execution and strategy adjustment in order to remain viable in a dynamic business environment. This finding is supported by the following response to Question 12 of the CATI dealing with the methods used by the organisation to create brand equity (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270420

“[...] is already a powerful brand and is renowned for its consistent identity worldwide. One of the key things that the [...] Company does is maintain a consistent high quality across all its products ensure its products are the best among competitor brand products; consistent delivery to consumer expectations. To sustain this [...] frequently tests all its products to ensure the quality assurance is sustained, and the products are safe for consumption.”

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy* category that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of internal and external branding, visual corporate

brand identity elements as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

Organisations use internal corporate communication as a persuasive strategy to influence internal stakeholder relationships. Employees are more likely to show a supportive attitude towards the organisation if they identify strongly with the organisation's beliefs and values. This requires an internal branding strategy aimed at the marketing of external communications among employees, so they will recognise, understand and take pride in the organisation's business principles. Organisations that define this factor use various internal marketing initiatives in an integrated manner to establish the brand favourably.

Response user ID no: 6060442

“(s28) Over the last 10 years, massive investments have been made in the quality and consistency of the brand's voice and positioning.”

The business strategy of organisations that define this factor is aimed at implementing measures to establish the brand as a respected, ethical entity, driven by excellence among internal and external stakeholders. In this regard, reliable information published on the internal website is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation, as explained in the following verbatim statement taken from Question 7 of the CATI dealing with the internal branding practices used by the organisation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Internal intranet: It is updated with latest news, corporate identity manuals (condensed version) and other brand books. The content is constantly changing (it serves as a resource with industry news and enables relationship building with employees [...]).”

In addition, the use of internal print communication media is deemed significant, although to a lesser extent, in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders. This finding is supported in the following response to Question 7 of the CATI (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Staff magazine: The publication talks about projects, people, promotions, (gives people a feeling of things happening in the company). Employees' remarks point to the sense of pride in their association with the company as a direct result of the magazine content.”

The findings on the significance of using an internal branding strategy in establishing the organisation's values and goals among employees are emphasised in the following

verbatim statement taken from Question 3 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B), dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation:

Response user ID no: 4140209

"[Internal communication] is being constantly reviewed - is a key issue with all levels of leadership."

Since organisations that define this factor acknowledge the role of communication to ensure employees identify with their beliefs and values, the internal communication practices of these organisations vary from medium to good and very good. In addition, internal communication practices focus mainly on an interactive communication approach and an open-door policy to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. These findings are supported by the following verbatim statement taken from Question 2 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B), dealing with the level of interaction between management and employees as well as Question 7 of the CATI (see Annexure C), which focuses on the role of internal communication practices in corporate brand image formation. The findings reveal the need for personal communication in addition to print communication channels.

Response user ID no: 4140607

"Open-door policy and regular feedback meetings from management, as well as internal newsletter announcements."

Response user ID no: 6270856

"Brand champions in all offices: They are like brand ambassadors. They must know the Corporate Identity and ensure compliance of their business units. The 'champions' are nominated from the business unit, when they accept the nomination they are sent on training, and have discussions on how to build the brand internally."

Although the largest number of participants who define this factor perceive their organisation's internal communication as fairly good and it appears that these organisations use a variety of internal communication media, participants indicated a need for more frequent, structured and direct communication.

This need expressed by participants supports their view that organisations that align all organisational activities and communication are better able to create and enhance internal synergy. This view is supported by participant feedback from two different organisations to

Question 11 of the CATI dealing with the role of internal organisational alignment in creating brand loyalty (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6090159

"... it aligns all departments and streamlines all endeavours towards a common goal."

In addition to the need for regular, effective communication, participants indicated that communication should be accessible to all employees, not only those with e-mail facilities:

Response user ID no: 4140320

"Finding a way to communicate effectively and efficiently to all i.e. quicker, overcoming literacy barriers and communication medium as 70% of employees do not have access to email."

Furthermore, participants who define factor 1 suggested more social networks and a more interactive intranet to improve organisational communication:

Response user ID no: 4200546

"Various social network sites for younger generation, more face-to-face feedback."

The need for regular, clear and direct communication expressed by participants indicates that the more effective employees perceive the organisation's communication practices to be, the more positive the image they will have of the organisation. In this regard, an internal branding strategy serves as a strategic measure to ensure employees realise the brand messages through their actions and the behaviour they demonstrate to customers and other stakeholders in order to establish the brand as a trustworthy entity. Internal communication initiatives are aimed at aligning employees' behaviour to ensure their actions reinforce the brand messages of stability, honesty, transparency and trustworthiness.

To ensure employees' behaviour reflects a uniform brand message, participants who define this factor indicated that internal marketing constitutes a fundamental aspect of an organisation's overall marketing strategy. Internal marketing initiatives must be aligned with the brand philosophy to encourage employees to act as brand ambassadors by being passionate about the brand and living the brand values of integrity and customer focus, as reflected in the following statement::

Response user ID no: 4140320

"Being ambassadors for the company in all they do and at all times from operations to administration, etc. Live the vision of the company and strive towards achieving the company's strategic objectives."

The above perspective is confirmed by two verbatim statements provided by participants from two different organisations in response to Question 3 of the CATI, dealing with measures applied by the organisation to ensure the brand's mission and vision contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“The quality of the people and work that is delivered is key to the brand and enables the living of the vision and mission which are in turn central to the [...] brand.”

Response user ID no: 4210945

“Strong company values, inspiring leadership, great brand and excellence in delivery.”

This viewpoint of participants indicate that a consistent corporate brand image is also achieved by means of the behaviour displayed by the organisation's employees, its customers and other stakeholders as well as the quality of relationships maintained among these groups of stakeholders. In order to align employees' behaviour, participants hold the viewpoint that employees must be involved in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. These findings are supported by the following verbatim statement taken from responses to Question 4 of the CATI (see Annexure C), dealing with the organisational measures that are implemented to reflect the most important aspects of the organisation's culture:

Response user ID no: 6270848

“It's ‘a shared thing’. Leadership, the ‘Brand Blue Print’, team work, efficient execution across all categories of the business i.e. systems and processes, supplier relations, training and staff development.”

The perspectives that represent this factor reveal how these organisations' business strategy incorporates the use of selected visual corporate brand identity elements to create synergy between these elements. Corporate brand image formation is deemed to rely on using the visual corporate brand identity elements in an integrated manner to create an awareness of the brand by identifying a set of values that reflects the competencies of the brand which address the needs of the organisation's customers. In this regard, a style guide providing requirements on integrating the visual brand elements is deemed significant to create awareness of the unique qualities of the brand. The following verbatim statement taken from a response to Question 3a of the CATI verifies this finding (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Company values are = relevance, integrity, knowledge service innovation. These are provided in the Visual Identity guidelines and applied to qualify the brand communication.”

Regarding integrated planned and unplanned communication, corporate brand image formation is perceived to be enhanced if print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness, as indicated in the following verbatim statement quoted from the response to Question 7 of the CATI dealing with the role of internal communication practices in corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Quality Management System (it’s about ‘how the brand is used from an inspiration perspective’): This is ISO certified. All things are assessed regarding [...] communication, language use, written and spoken tones; it’s a practical review of how the brand speaks to stakeholders (e.g. how specific communication attributes are used to inspire thoughts and behaviour due to exposure and consistent use).”

To achieve the objective of conveying a consistent image by means of the organisation’s communication media, the content of the various communication channels is managed to reflect a favourable corporate brand image based on the specific target market or the purpose of the marketing campaign, as revealed in the following response to Question 6 of the CATI dealing with the role of specific communication practices in corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Client communication: client events (targeting specific business units or specific projects) are used to share knowledge (sometimes invite industry specialists) and insight in a personalised format to generate new business.”

The above statement reiterates the use of various external communication initiatives to reinforce customer relationships, to network with experts in the business field, as well as to inform and to educate in order to create new business opportunities.

To further enhance the message of distinctness conveyed by the brand’s various communication media, organisations implement policies on internal and external communication to prevent inconsistencies in organisational communication. This finding is reiterated in the following verbatim statement obtained from Question 8 of the CATI, dealing with the role of organisational communication policies in stakeholder relations management respectively (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“Policies exist to govern how the organisation communicates externally (there are only 3 appointed persons). Policies also provide advertising procedures, specific words / terminology to be used in communication.”

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand loyalty and brand reputation. These are explained below.

With regard to brand loyalty, only one statement is deemed significant. Brand loyalty among existing and prospective clients is perceived to depend on the extent to which the brand offers value for money.

Organisations that define factor 1 create synergy between corporate brand identity elements to establish a corporate brand image that conceptualises consumers' belief about the brand based on their real experience, and which corresponds to the brand understanding. These organisations combine the various corporate brand identity elements to establish an image of trustworthiness in order to enhance corporate brand image formation. With regard to brand reputation, an esteemed brand with a long-standing history as a stable organisation is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement taken from a response to Question 2a of the CATI (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270856

“The long-standing history in the industry practice provides credibility.”

Furthermore, a brand with an established reputation is known for its reliability and the trust instilled by the brand name, as is reiterated by the following verbatim statement from a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4140826

“Brand means something to customers. If they like the brand and they get value then they trust the product.”

In addition, the organisation's brand drives promises to customers. A proven track record of achievements in service delivery is also deemed significant in corporate brand image

formation, as confirmed by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statements indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum.

Response user ID no: 4140818

“(s44) *The company has build a good reputation as the best service deliverer in the industry. [...].*”

Figure 8.13 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity categories which are deemed insignificant for corporate brand image formation according to the perspectives included in factor 1.

The perspectives included in factor 1 provide insight into how selected corporate brand identity elements are strategically combined to disclose the real potential of a brand in consumers’ minds based on their experience of the brand over time.

This factor includes the levels of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments categorised under *transformational leadership and management*, integrated planned and unplanned communication categorised under *positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as brand loyalty categorised under *brand equity*. However, this factor rejects specific statements in these three categories. These are discussed below.

Figure 8.13: Factor 1: trustworthiness of the brand (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	PD	BE
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	BE	PD	PD	BE	BE
	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	BE	PD	BE	BE	
		PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	PD	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements in the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments as well as stakeholder relations management. This is explained below.

With regard to brand philosophy, the pricing structure of the brand's products and services is deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation. The brand does not need to be affordable for consumers of all income levels.

Regarding the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, corporate brand image formation is not dependent upon prompt and effective solving of clients' enquiries. Customer complaints need not receive the highest priority in the organisation. In addition, easy-to-use technology that facilitates administrative efficiency is not deemed a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation.

With regard to the level of stakeholder relations management, consumers need not share in the prosperity of the organisation to hold a positive perception of the brand, as is evident from the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statements indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4140702

"Strong brands do sometimes have different profit motives and cost savings are rarely passed on to the consumer."

Instead, effective stakeholder relations management is achieved by means of strong leadership, creating a favourable relationship between internal stakeholders, and offering competitive employer benefits and opportunities for career development, as is reflected in participant feedback to Question 4 of the online questionnaire dealing with the reasons why the respondents view the organisation as an employer of choice.

Response user ID no: 4280100

"It is a business that has employed great leaders who in turn are attracting good new talent, it has an excellent reward system that drives performance and it is a dynamic company that embraces change and innovation."

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of integrated planned and unplanned communication as well as internal and external branding. These are explained below.

This factor shows that the information provided in print media need not reinforce the principles followed for sound financial management of the organisation. The following verbatim quotation from a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statements indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum proves that no direct relationship exists between an organisation’s magazine and increased sales and a higher profit margin:

Response user ID no: 4130907

“(s27) Our sales have no relationships with any publication whether internal or external.”

Furthermore, the information published in the company profile is deemed insignificant for expanding the brand’s customer base. This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statements indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 6060442

“(s31) Company profiles are almost irrelevant and they say nothing about how any particular customer will derive benefit. We prefer to focus on the customer’s business rather than our own.”

This factor also expresses, to a lesser extent, the perspective that marketing initiatives for creating brand awareness and positive associations about the functionality of the brand are insignificant in establishing the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are deemed to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Brand loyalty is not dependent on the brand’s ability to remain informed of the latest developments in the industry and to implement business solutions to counteract competition. The following verbatim quotation by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the

statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum supports this perspective:

Response user ID no: 4140917

“(s37) We are the market leader, and don't necessarily chase other organisations' strategies.”

Brand loyalty does not rely on offering extended business hours to solve customers' enquiries and complaints. This perspective is supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum.

Response user ID no: 3240915

“(s43) Our call centres only operate during normal business hours.”

8.7.1.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 1: Trustworthiness of the brand

The perspectives included in factor 1 reveal that dynamic, expanding and financially stable organisations rely on a well-planned business strategy and skilful management to ensure financial security. These findings support the literature in that the mission and vision statements of the organisation represent the long-term purposes of the organisation. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, the brand mission and vision determine the strategic management of the business (Abratt 1989; Collins & Porras 1996:67; Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-40; Keller & Lehmann 2009). An effective vision provides a system of principles that guide the way the organisation conducts business, based on the most fundamental reason for the organisation's existence (Ind & Bjerke 2007:195). The brand mission describes the basic point of departure from where all activities of the organisation are initiated.

Furthermore, the business strategy of organisations that define this factor is aimed at implementing measures to establish the brand as a respected, ethical entity driven by excellence among internal and external stakeholders. The findings on the direct relationship between a well-planned business strategy and business growth in this factor underpin the role of brand vision in executing the business strategy. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, brand vision provides a distinct direction for corporate brand growth in that it explains the objectives which the organisation aims to achieve in future (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35; Jones 2010:45). The long-term

aspiration which management envisages for the brand is formulated by the mission and vision statements of an organisation. As explained in section 5.3.1.2, the mission and vision statements serve as prescriptive measures that provide knowledge to govern employees' choices about strategies, customers, products, services and the market in which the organisation operates (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35).

Internal marketing constitutes a fundamental aspect of an organisation's overall marketing strategy. The findings on the role of internal branding in establishing consistent employee behaviour support the literature dealing with this topic. Roper and Davies (2007:77) regard internal stakeholders, for example the organisation's employees, and how they perceive the organisation, as the most fundamental element in the corporate image formation process. These findings also support studies dealing with the topic of intellectual capital or inside-out branding. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, inside-out branding is aimed at implementing organisational measures to create a cultural environment where employees participate in organisational renewal. Establishing alignment between organisational members requires organisations to create opportunities for employees to acquire a sound knowledge of the values and beliefs of the organisation's core business. Employees whose behaviour is aligned with organisational values can contribute to obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage by having external stakeholders experience these values (Punjaisri & Wilson 2007:60).

The relationship between employee behaviour and a consistent corporate brand image implied in the above findings are reiterated in the literature in that the mission and vision serve as guidelines for employees' behaviour. As indicated in Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1.2 and 5.3.2.2, employees should interpret and realise the corporate principles for the various areas of business activity and functions based on the brand mission and brand vision. These guidelines explain how the corporate principles apply to the actions and behaviour of all employees, departments and functions (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35). By implementing strategic measures, employees' behaviour is coordinated to consistently convey the essence of the brand, its values, objectives, products and services to external stakeholders (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000:7; Chandon 2003:1; Ind & Bjerke 2007:114). As such, organisational alignment is a strategic measure that enables organisations to coordinate activities across all departments, thereby increasing competitive advantage (Forman & Argenti 2005:257; Kalla 2005:311; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:215). Furthermore, activities aimed at enhancing corporate brand image formation require engagement from all internal stakeholders of the

organisation in order to realise the strategic decision to achieve competitive advantage through high-level customer service (De Chernatony 2006:46).

In addition, corporate brand image formation is deemed to rely on using the visual corporate brand identity elements in an integrated manner to create an awareness of the brand by identifying a set of values that reflects the competencies of the brand to address the needs of the organisation's customers. Various literature studies provide well-researched confirmation of the role of visual corporate brand identity elements in brand image formation. Visual elements used consistently reinforce the message conveyed by each individual symbol, thus unifying the complete process of image formation and building. Furthermore, visual corporate brand identity elements used in combination with other elements create synergy in the marketing mix to reinforce groups of functional and emotional elements associated with the brand, establish a brand's positioning, and maintain its equity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000:17; Tan Tsu Wee & Chua Han Ming 2003:213; Ind & Bjerke 2007:114; Aaker & Joachimsthaler in Ghodeswar 2008:6; Verma 2010:105). The research findings also concur with arguments in branding literature that corporate brand identity elements serve as an object to which target markets can relate perceptions and values in their minds. A brand that evokes an emotional association among customers in addition to its functional benefit contributes to the brand's differentiation and has stronger qualities to attract and retain customers. Moreover, aligning the values, organisational culture and strategy with the organisation's visual style communicates a single set of values to internal and external stakeholders (Dowling 2001:180-181; Pilch 2005:39; Daw & Cone 2011:23). Literature studies have also proven that consumers associate personality traits with a brand in an indirect way by means of the brand name, symbol or logo, among other things (Batra et al 1993). As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, the corporate brand name or symbol serves as the most influential element with which consumers associate a brand (Aaker 2008:21-22; Buckingham 2009:56; Bresciani & Eppler 2010:359).

Regarding integrated planned and unplanned communication, corporate brand image formation is perceived to be enhanced if organisational communication reflects a consistent image of distinctness. To achieve this objective, the content of the various communication channels is managed to reflect a favourable corporate brand image based on the specific target market or the purpose of the marketing campaign. As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.2, messages initiated as part of the organisation's marketing mix in order to create brand awareness must also be strategically planned and managed to

ensure consistency. Marketing communication messages that convey a consistent meaning are a prerequisite for building trust and ensuring uniform stakeholder perceptions. If communication reveals transparency and honesty in an organisation's business dealings, shareholders gain a more informed understanding of the organisation's operations, and this helps them ascribe a better reputation to the organisation (Nandan 2005:275-276).

Moreover, consistency is applied in the way the organisation identifies and positions its brand, how it presents its corporate values, and how products perform. Coherence between internal and external communication is an essential strategic aspect in the development of competitive advantage, since messages characterised by a consistent style and quality create unity between the various forms of communication, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the corporate brand (Burke 1998:8; Dolphin & Fan 2000:104; Forman & Argenti 2005:248-249; Bick et al 2008:17).

The research findings support the literature that views corporate brand image as the result of the organisation's product and service offering, its behaviour, attitudes (corporate culture) and corporate communications (Veljković & Petrović 2011:78). All these aspects influence public perceptions of what the organisation represents. Corporate image comprises a cognitive (logical) component, which involves tangible elements such as observable product quality, packaging, colour, logo and symbols. In addition to the observable characteristics, image is also made up of a connotative (emotional) component, which is revealed in its ability to induce a specific emotional state, for example excitement, among consumers. Furthermore, the corporate image is embedded in the organisation's history, beliefs and business philosophy, its employees, its ethical and cultural value system and the nature of its technology.

The above findings are also in agreement with the literature on brand equity which indicates that consumers increasingly evaluate organisations on their attitudes and the way they conduct business. As explained in Chapter 4, section 4.2.8.11, enhancing brand equity can result in an increase in both the amount of the product purchased as well as the price which the consumer pays for a product. (Keller & Lehmann 2009:15-16; Lehmann et al 2008:50).

These days, the purpose of brand management is to position the brand favourably in consumers' minds. (Blombäck 2009:228-229). This shift in focus requires brand theory to become less production centred and to focus more on brand consumption and the way in

which consumers give meaning to and make use of a brand to shape and express their identities (Leitch & Davenport 2008:47).

8.7.2 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 2: Creative marketing

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 2 are explained below.

Figure 8.14 below indicates the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are embedded in factor 2 and which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. This factor emphasises the importance of creative marketing for creating brand awareness and positive associations about the functionality of the brand in order to establish the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders. The most prominent perception of creative marketing involves the category of positioning and differentiation strategy, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.14: Factor 2: creative marketing (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD
BE	TLM	BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	PD
BE	TLM	BE	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	PD
	BE	BE	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	PD	
		BE	BE	PD	BE	BE	PD	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand philosophy,

business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments and stakeholder relations management. This is explained below.

The organisations that define factor 2 are innovative, financially secure brands. Corporate brand image formation relies on a brand philosophy which is based on the vision to provide less expensive, quality products that are accessible to consumers of all income levels. This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4140257

“(s4) Because of our buying power, we are able to negotiate favourable rates from suppliers and thereby offer these good prices to our clients. We don't seek to deal in the 'backpacking' market; we work with quality products at good prices.”

With regard to stakeholder relations management, an employer of choice offers competitive employer benefits to recruit employees who have the necessary skill and expertise for a specific position. Corporate brand image formation is also enhanced to a lesser extent by a rewards system that gives recognition to employees who render exceptional customer service. The following statement in response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire indicate the relationship between good employer benefits and providing a product and service offering that meets consumers' needs:

Response user ID no: 4130656

“We are a value-based organisation that appreciates the contribution each employee can make and we want to make our customers happy people.”

This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 6060442

“(s16) [...]. People are attracted to the company because of its global stature and the opportunity to learn and embellish their careers by working with the industry's leader.”

The direct relationship that exists between a comprehensive remuneration system and employees' performance is confirmed in the following response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire dealing with the reasons why the respondents view the organisation as an employer of choice:

Response user ID no: 4130607

“Interesting and challenging work, competitive remuneration, opportunities for performers.”

In addition, stakeholders’ perception of the brand is also positively influenced, although to a lesser extent, if consumers share in the prosperity of the organisation.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the positioning and differentiation strategy that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of integrated planned and unplanned communication as well as internal and external branding. These are explained below.

Print media are a powerful instrument for establishing the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders. The information provided in these media is deemed significant for reinforcing the principles followed for sound financial management of the organisation. Corporate brand image formation is dependent upon marketing brochures to expand the organisation’s business. Print media are also an effective means for facilitating administrative functions in the organisation, resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction. In addition, print media serve as a marketing tool to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. In this way, the brand is established as a leader among internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, the use of internal print communication media is deemed significant in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders. In addition, corporate brand image formation relies on publishing reliable information on the internal website.

All participants who define this factor regard their organisation’s internal communication as very good and it appears that these organisations use a variety of internal communication media. These findings correspond with the findings of factor 2 in terms of the positioning and differentiation strategy. The following responses to Question 2 of the online questionnaire emphasise the significance of using an integrated communication approach in corporate brand image formation:

Response user ID no: 4150336

“Very high levels of interaction and very deep levels as well.”

Response user ID no: 4280100

“Very good - through intranet, newsletters, feedback sessions and direct interaction.”

The responses to Question 4 of the CATI, dealing with the organisational measures aimed at reflecting the most important aspects of the organisation's culture, support these findings (see Annexure I). The majority of participants indicated that internal and external branding initiatives are most frequently used to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. In this regard, the majority of responses to Question 7 of the CATI, dealing with internal communication practices (see Annexure C), indicated that online branding is most often used to create positive associations of the brand among internal stakeholders (see Annexure I). The responses to Question 3 of the online questionnaire, which enquired about respondents' opinion on the measures that could be implemented to improve communication in the organisation in which they are employed, add to these perspectives (see Annexure B). A large number of respondents indicated a need for more personal communication and better communication and feedback between management and employees to ensure consistent communication. These findings are supported by the following responses to Question 3 of the online questionnaire dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4130607

"More personal/verbal communication, as opposed to electronic."

Response user ID no: 4150336

"Increased face-to-face interactions."

Respondents also indicated that communication should be used by management to help employees gain better understanding of the brand strategy (see Annexure H). The following response to Question 3 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B) supports employees' need for formal communication on strategic and organisational matters:

Response user ID no: 4130453

"[Separate communication] into strategic tactical and management info. and using e-mail and team meetings to discuss rather than just report."

Communication which is used to involve employees in strategy formulation enables them to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. The need for effective communication on strategic and organisational matters is reflected by the following response to Question 3 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4131157

"Better understanding of directions and development plans, better understanding responsibilities."

This need expressed by respondents supports their view that organisations which align all organisational activities and communication are better able to create and enhance internal synergy. Information obtained in this way enables employees to fully understand the values of their brand and to know which behaviour is expected of them. This perspective is supported by participant feedback to Question 5 of the online questionnaire dealing with employees' role in enhancing the organisation's brand (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4280100

"It is all to do with each employee recognising their role as brand ambassadors with each and every interaction with customers, suppliers and fellow employees."

Corporate brand image formation relies to a lesser extent on the visual corporate brand identity and personal communication to create awareness of the qualities of the brand. In this regard, corporate brand image formation relies on a style guide providing requirements on integrating the visual brand elements to create awareness of the unique qualities of the brand. Brand positioning activities that show participation in community initiatives enhance the perception of the brand as a caring entity, although to a lesser extent.

The above perspectives are supported in participants' responses to Question 5 of the CATI dealing with the type of integrated communication practices used to enhance corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C). All participants indicated that their organisation uses unifying marketing tools to convey the brand message, to create awareness of the brand in stakeholders' minds, and to increase sales (see Annexure I).

Brand equity

The *brand equity category* does not feature as prominently as the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* and the *transformational leadership and management category*. The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Brand loyalty among existing and prospective clients depends on the extent to which the brand offers a variety of products. Brand loyalty is also enhanced to a lesser extent if the brand's service adds to consumers' quality of life.

In addition, employees' behaviour conveys the values of the brand and influences the perception which customers form of the brand. Consistent employee behaviour towards internal and external stakeholders contributes to achieving organisational objectives. As a

result, employees are required to act as brand ambassadors in every interaction with internal and external stakeholders, as reflected in the following response to Question 10 of the CATI dealing with the role of internal branding as a tool for promoting internal organisational alignment (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270420

“To align employee perceptions of the company. To ensure employees understand the brand. To influence how employees relate with one another and how they express themselves toward customers or any other stakeholders that make up their personal lives. Employees are therefore able to defend the company and the brands. The underlying intend is to ensure the employees are able to be brand ambassadors for the company.”

Figure 8.15 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements which are deemed insignificant by factor 2 for corporate brand image formation, namely (1) transformational leadership and management, and (2) brand equity.

This factor includes the level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments categorised under *transformational leadership and management*, as well as brand loyalty and brand reputation categorised under *brand equity*. However, this factor rejects specific statements in these two categories. These statements are discussed below.

Figure 8.15: Factor 2: creative marketing (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD
BE	TLM	BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	PD
BE	TLM	BE	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	PD
	BE	BE	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	PD	
		BE	BE	PD	BE	BE	PD	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

LM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements in the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

Corporate brand image formation appears not to be affected by the extent to which the brand amends its business strategy to provide for changes in customer preferences and to counteract competition. Corporate brand image formation does not appear to be dependent upon a business strategy that provides for exceptional customer service and measures to ensure clients' complaints receive the highest priority and are solved promptly and satisfactorily. Furthermore, modern, easy-to-use technology that facilitates administrative procedures is not perceived a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

No corporate brand identity elements of the positioning and differentiation strategy are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of brand equity that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand loyalty and brand reputation. This is explained below.

Client service satisfaction is deemed insignificant in creating brand loyalty. Furthermore, offering value for money does not seem to guarantee brand loyalty.

With regard to brand reputation, a proven track record for rendering exceptional customer service is deemed insignificant in enhancing the brand's esteem among clients. The brand reputation is deemed not affected if the brand is not known for its achievements in service delivery. The effect of business decisions on consumers' perception of the brand is also regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

8.7.2.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 2: Creative marketing

The perspectives included in factor 2 reveal that innovative, financially secure brands rely on a brand philosophy which is based on the vision to market the brand among internal

and external stakeholders in terms of the financial benefits associated with using the organisation's products and services. These findings support the literature in that the brand mission and vision contribute to corporate brand image formation as they determine the strategic management of the business (Abratt 1989; Collins & Porras 1996:67; Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-40; Keller & Lehmann 2009). As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, the mission and vision statements serve as prescriptive measures that provide knowledge to govern employees' choices about strategies, customers, products, services and the market in which the organisation operates (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35). Furthermore, these research findings concur with the literature which regards the organisation's ability to attract and retain expertise and motivated employees as one of the key elements contributing to sustained competitiveness. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.7.2, a respected, established brand is more likely to recruit qualified, talented employees who are potentially committed, because these organisations provide greater opportunities for the realisation of personal goals (Buckingham 2009:50). Employees who identify with the organisation are more likely to demonstrate behaviour that supports the organisation's strategy and to act as brand ambassadors when engaging with the public (Fombrun & Van Riel 2004).

These organisations use a variety of internal and external branding initiatives to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. These research findings support literature studies maintaining that a well-planned communication strategy ensures that knowledge is communicated effectively to internal and external stakeholders. As indicated in Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1.2 and 5.3.3.2, alignment of messages conveyed to internal and external stakeholders serves as a powerful mechanism to combine internal stakeholders' need for identification and motivation with the expectations that external stakeholders set for the performance of the organisation's brand. Therefore, the organisation's branding and advertising messages must be aimed at multiple audiences that communicate a consistent meaning to all stakeholders concerned (Burnett & Moriarty 1998:354; Dolphin 2005:173). Coordinating communications and media to create synergistic effects is one of the most powerful ways of increasing the productivity of marketing communications (Keller 2009c:153-154).

Communication serves as an important instrument used by management to help employees gain better understanding of the brand strategy which is aimed at offering a variety of products and rendering superior customer service. With regard to an internal communication strategy, it was indicated in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2 that internal

communication is predominantly aimed at establishing relationships between the organisation and its internal audience through corporate branding and advertising, as these media are concerned with creating unified corporate messages (Forman & Argenti 2005:257).

Consistent employee behaviour towards internal and external stakeholders contributes to realising the organisational objectives. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.5.2, the literature presents numerous examples of the vital role of employees in contributing to services brand building at an operational and strategic level (Harris & De Chernatony 2001; Ind 2001). At an operational level, customer relationships are enhanced through encounters with high-quality service (Lovelock 2000; Ind & Bjerke 2007:6). At a strategic level, employees whose behaviour is aligned with the brand values convey these brand values to colleagues and customers through their actions (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001, 2003; Hawabhay et al 2009:5; Keller 2009b:15-16). Employees' interaction with stakeholders significantly affects a brand's relationship with its consumers (Bergstrom et al 2002:136). As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, brand strength and the competitive advantages offered by the brand will be largely influenced by delivering products and services that are better designed than those of competitors in order to provide more comprehensive and compelling consumer benefits (Ind & Bjerke 2007:118).

8.7.3 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 3: Effective management and administration

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 3 are explained below.

Figure 8.16 below indicates the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are embedded in factor 3 and which are perceived to be required for corporate brand image formation. This factor emphasises the importance of implementing measures to enhance administrative efficiency. The most prominent perception of effective administration involves the *transformational leadership and management category*, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.16: Factor 3: effective management and administration (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM
BE	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM
BE	BE	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD	TLM	PD
	BE	PD	PD	PD	BE	PD	PD	BE	TLM	
		BE	PD	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, and stakeholder relations management. This is explained below.

The organisations that define factor 3 are leading brands with well-planned business strategies that focus on displaying the brand values in their dealerships. In addition, a well-planned business strategy enables the organisation to expand its business, as indicated in the following verbatim statement taken from Question 1 of the online questionnaire dealing with the organisational attributes valued most by the respondents (see Annexure B).

Response user ID no: 3230240

“Good ethics and good growth strategies.”

The above statement is further reiterated by the perspectives reflected in factor 3. According to the findings for factor 3, corporate brand image formation appears to rely on a brand philosophy which is based on the vision to provide less expensive, quality products as an esteemed brand.

Corporate brand image formation is perceived to be dependent upon a business strategy that provides for measures to enhance administrative efficiency and to ensure clients' complaints receive the highest priority and are solved promptly and satisfactorily. This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 3240307

"(14) The only difference between organisations is the service and poor service will force clients to go to competitors."

Furthermore, modern, easy-to-use technology that facilitates administrative procedures is regarded as a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation. The relationship between customer service and administrative efficiency and how these contribute to client retention is reflected in the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4141052

"(s14) I want customer service when I shop and effective administration is part of that service to me. I would support someone else if I wasn't getting the customer service I expected."

In addition to customer satisfaction, modern technology offers the added benefit of reducing operating costs, as reflected in the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4280100

"(s6) [Modern technology] Positions the business as a product leader within a dynamic market place. It assumes that the business will remain competitive as it strives for global lowest cost service to its identified target market."

These findings are in agreement with the responses to Question 2 of the CATI dealing with measures applied by the organisation to overcome obstacles in the macro-environment in which the organisation functions in order to enhance corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C). A number of participants regarded effective management and administration as a measure to counteract the challenges pertaining to the macro-environment in which

the organisation operates in order to enhance corporate brand image formation (see Annexure I).

With regard to the level of stakeholder relations management, stakeholders' perception of the brand is positively influenced if consumers share in the prosperity of the organisation. The following statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum proves the significance of applying measures to curtail costs in order to effect savings for customers:

Response user ID no: 3240307

"(s19) We are on a continuous drive to cut cost so as to provide wealth for our shareholders/clients."

In addition, organisations regard consistent corporate behaviour as a means of maintaining effective stakeholder relationships, as supported in the following response to Question 1 of the online questionnaire dealing with the organisational attributes valued most by the respondents (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4141111

"The way we treat our customers."

Furthermore, the findings of factor 3 indicate, although to a lesser extent, that organisations that aim to meet customers' expectations also tend to apply measures to ensure the organisation recruits and retains skilled staff,. The following response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire emphasises the connection between effective business administration and recruiting high-calibre staff as a measure for delivering on the brand promise (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4130446

"Employees are well taken care off. [The organisation] ensures taht work-life balance is maintained and lverage is given to staff to perform."

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The *positioning and differentiation strategy category* does not feature as prominently as the *transformational leadership and management category*. The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the positioning and differentiation strategy that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of internal and external branding as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

With regard to internal and external branding, corporate brand image formation relies on marketing initiatives to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. In this way, the brand is associated with a wealthy lifestyle and is perceived to be established as a leading organisation among external stakeholders. The brand is deemed to be positioned more prominently in the market by its involvement in corporate social initiatives. Brand positioning activities that show participation in community development is deemed significant for enhancing the perception of the brand as a caring entity.

Electronic media, specifically the organisation's website, are deemed functional for brand positioning. The largest number of participants who define this factor regard their organisation's internal communication as very good. Organisations aim to maintain open dialogue with employees to establish the brand values among their internal stakeholders in order to align corporate behaviour. These findings are supported by the following verbatim statement in response to Question 2 of the online questionnaire dealing with the level of interaction between management and employees (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4130446

"Very diverse, the organisation strives to improve staff moral [morale] and places its values on key principles."

Although organisations that define this factor use a variety of internal communication media, participants indicated a need for more frequent, structured and direct communication to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. In addition, implementing the suggested internal communication practices will help internal stakeholders understand the strategic direction of their organisation. These findings are supported by the following verbatim statement taken from Question 3 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B), which reveals the need for personal communication in addition to electronic communication channels:

Response user ID no: 4140804

"More consultaive [consultative] management style to ensure that skills and capabilities of employees are also considered in decision making of managers."

In addition, corporate brand image formation is perceived to be enhanced if the layout of the website logically navigates clients to obtain the required information easily.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand reputation and brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Brand loyalty relies on offering extended business hours to solve customers' enquiries and complaints. Brand loyalty is perceived to be dependent upon the brand's ability to remain informed of the latest developments in the industry and to implement business solutions to counteract competition.

Regarding brand reputation, an esteemed brand is transparent in its business dealings. The communication activities of a stable brand are aimed at enhancing consumers' trust. In addition, a reputable brand implements actions to deliver on the brand promise, as indicated in the following verbatim quotation provided by a participant who sorted the relevant statement on the "Most agree" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4130509

"(s45) The organisation does not offer its services without defining Ts [terms] & Cs [conditions]."

This viewpoint of participants indicated that a consistent corporate brand image is also achieved by means of the behaviour displayed by the organisation's employees, its customers and other stakeholders as well as the quality of relationships maintained among these groups of stakeholders. In order to align employees' behaviour, participants hold the view that employees must be involved in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. These findings are supported by the following verbatim statements taken from the responses from two different organisations to Question 5 of the CATI dealing with the type of integrated communication practices used by the organisation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 4130447

"Understand their role in the growth of the company and embark on continuous improvement fo[r] their own jobs."

Response user ID no: 4141111

"Participate in continuous business process improvement for ability to meet changing customer needs."

Figure 8.17 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are deemed insignificant by factor 3 for corporate brand image formation.

This factor includes the levels of brand philosophy and business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments categorised under *Transformational leadership and management*, internal and external branding categorised under *Positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as brand loyalty and brand reputation categorised under *Brand equity*. However, this factor rejects specific statements in these three categories. These statements are discussed below.

Figure 8.17: Factor 3: effective management and administration (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM
BE	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM
BE	BE	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD	TLM	PD
	BE	PD	PD	PD	BE	PD	PD	BE	TLM	
		BE	PD	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand philosophy. This is explained below.

With regard to brand philosophy, the extent to which the brand amends its business strategy to provide for changes in customer preferences and to counteract competition is perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of internal and external branding. These are explained below.

Integrated communication media are regarded an insignificant element of corporate brand image formation. The visual corporate brand identity elements do not need to be used in an integrated manner to create awareness of the brand among internal and external clients.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand reputation. This is explained below.

Corporate brand image formation appears to be not compromised if the brand does not have a long-standing history as a stable organisation and if it is not recommended to others for its reliability.

8.7.3.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 3: Effective management and administration

The perspectives included in factor 3 reveal that leading brands facilitate implementation of a well-planned business strategy that focuses on displaying the brand's values in its dealerships. The literature supports these findings and indicates that brand values reveal the organisation's identity, organisational performance, corporate behaviour, as well as the type and quality of its products and services. As stated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, the perceived role of brand values in corporate brand image formation is to provide greater direction about the organisation's business objectives and the means it employs to achieve its goals. As such, values reinforce the purpose and strategy of the organisation (De Chernatony 2001c:34-36).

Organisations regard consistent corporate behaviour as a means of maintaining effective stakeholder relationships. In addition, these organisations aim to maintain transparency in their business dealings and implement actions to deliver on the brand promise. This perspective supports arguments in the literature that the value of the brand is measured according to the strength and quality of relationships with its customers. As indicated in

Chapter 5, section 5.3.5.2, organisations increasingly realise that the brand building process must be aimed at establishing firm relationships with customers and other key stakeholders to enhance brand loyalty and increase sales (Nandan 2005:273).

To achieve the objective of maintaining effective stakeholder relationships, organisations aim to maintain open dialogue with employees to establish the brand values among their internal stakeholders in order to align corporate behaviour. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.5.2, corporate brands that encourage feedback from consumers in order to promote interactivity between stakeholders and organisations contribute to customer loyalty and build customer value (Mukherjee & Balmer 2008:10). This ensures the long-term financial performance and economic viability of the organisation (Brink & Berndt 2004:32).

Furthermore, organisations that aim to meet customers' expectations follow a business strategy that provides for measures to implement business solutions to counteract competition and to enhance administrative efficiency. These findings concur with arguments in the literature briefly discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, that brand strength and the competitive advantages offered by the brand will be largely influenced by delivering products and services that offer more comprehensive and compelling consumer benefits than those of competitors (Ind & Bjerke 2007:118). These organisations also tend to apply measures to ensure they recruit and retain skilled staff, although to a lesser extent.

With regard to internal and external branding, corporate brand image formation relies on marketing initiatives to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. In this regard, electronic media, specifically the organisation's website, are deemed functional for brand positioning. In Chapter 5, section 5.3.6.1 it is indicated that using advanced technology is a prerequisite for delivering prompt, quality customer service. In addition, employing technological innovation to enhance product development may offer consumers greater practicality at lower cost (Cateora & Graham 2007:375). An organisation can also include innovation as part of its corporate strategy to ensure sustained competitive advantage. Innovation as an attribute of service dimensions not related to product delivery, imagery, distribution or creative pricing may enhance brand differentiation (Shocker et al 1994:152; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2010:262-263).

8.7.4 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 4: Stability through business innovation

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 4 are explained below.

Figure 8.18 indicates the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity, which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation by participants who define factor 4. This factor emphasises the importance of establishing the brand as a stable entity through business innovation. The most prominent perception of stability through business innovation involves the category of brand equity, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.18: Factor 4: Stability through business innovation (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM
TLM	TLM	PD	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	BE	PD	TLM	BE
TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	BE	PD	BE	BE
	BE	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	
		BE	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

The organisations that define factor 4 are innovative, financially secure brands. To function in a competitive environment, leading brands are deemed to keep abreast of developments in product offerings in the industry and to follow a proactive approach to

ensure they remain market leaders. The following verbatim quotation provided by a participant who sorted the relevant statement on the “Most agree” (+5) dimension of the continuum indicates that a dynamic brand offers an extensive product range:

Response user ID no: 4130927

“(s40) We have a wide variety of products.”

Furthermore, corporate brand image formation is perceived to rely on modern, easy-to-use technology that facilitates administrative procedures.

In addition, the effective financial management of the organisation is deemed to be a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation, as reflected in the following response to Question 1 of the online questionnaire dealing with the organisational attributes valued most by the respondents (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4181056

“...innovative products and financial strength.”

These findings are in agreement with the responses to Question 1 of the CATI dealing with the environment in which the organisation operates and the factors impacting thereupon (see Annexure C). The highest number of responses deal with various factors that require the sound financial management of organisations in order to remain viable (see Annexure I). Similarly, responses to Question 2 of the CATI dealing with the measures applied by organisations to counteract the challenges of the environment in which they function indicated that organisations apply various measures to manage costs, including occasionally discounting prices and providing economical products that offer value for money (see Annexure C & Annexure I).

A competent management team is also deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. In this regard, the management principles of a stable brand are aimed at establishing the brand as a values-driven organisation, as emphasised in the following response to Question 1 of the online questionnaire dealing with the organisational attributes valued most by the respondents (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140854

“[...] The fact that it is a well-known company with values and morals.”

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The *positioning and differentiation strategy* category does not feature as prominently as the *transformational leadership and management* category and the *brand equity* category.

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the positioning and differentiation strategy that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of visual corporate brand identity elements. These are explained below.

The visual corporate brand identity elements, specifically the brand name and logo, are deemed to be the most significant elements in creating awareness among internal and external clients of the brand's reputation, its values and product offering as well as stakeholder relationships. In this regard, the brand's visual corporate identity elements are regarded significant for creating awareness of the brand among internal and external clients, while the brand name is deemed the most powerful visual brand element to convey a message on the brand's qualities. The logo is considered a significant element of the brand's visual identity for contributing to corporate brand image formation among internal stakeholders. Participants are of the opinion that internal and external branding practices should focus on the stability of the brand, the trust instilled by a respected brand, its values and product offering, relationships between employees and the employer benefits offered by the organisation.

No perceptions of corporate brand identity elements of the positioning and differentiation strategy that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation are demonstrated in the level of integrated planned and unplanned communication. The following response to Question 3 of the online questionnaire supports this finding of factor 3 by indicating the need for more structured, formal communication to employees on strategic and organisational matters (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4141243

"... formalise the dissemination of information downwards."

Despite this shortcoming, participants who define this factor regard the internal communication practices applied by their organisations as very good. Therefore, these organisations regard internal communication initiatives as a significant dimension in establishing the organisation as a stable brand. In this regard, internal communication serves as a means of cultivating a culture of innovation, establishing interpersonal relationships between employees so they will treat their co-workers as internal clients and offering benefits that distinguish the organisation as an employer of choice. The following verbatim statements taken from Question 2 and Question 3 respectively of the online questionnaire emphasise the relationship between regular, clear and high-quality

communication on reinforcing relationships between internal stakeholders (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4181056

“High quality and regular. Blue chip company with small personnel number for size of business allows closeness.”

Response user ID no: 4140257

“Regular newsletters to keep staff updated with changes. Head office sending representatives to their other offices to meet with staff in various capacities to listen to feedback and interact.”

In addition to providing frequent, unambiguous communication, these organisations follow an interactive communication approach to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives as well as marketing techniques used to position the brand as an ethical, respected organisation and employer of choice. However, participants are of the opinion that internal communication is a management initiative and, therefore, they seem to require more personal interaction in the form of meetings, seminars and face-to-face communication. The following response to Question 3 of the online questionnaire dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation (see Annexure B) verifies this finding:

Response user ID no: 4140750

“We are living in a new age of communication, more personal contact would be handy.”

Personal engagement between employees provides a forum for regular feedback about the goals and objectives of the organisation, new developments, activities and organisational achievements. Information obtained in this way enables employees to fully understand the values of their brand and to know which behaviour is expected of them. In addition, communication between employees serves as a useful instrument for creating trust among internal stakeholders, as reflected in the following response to Question 3 of the online questionnaire dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140448

“Communication is generally good, but mutual trust between all levels can improve communication further.”

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand loyalty and brand reputation. This is explained below.

With regard to brand loyalty, the extent to which the brand offers a variety of products is perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation, as indicated in the following verbatim quotation provided by a participant who sorted the relevant statement on the “Most agree” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4140750

“(s40) Solutions to fit their business processes and decision making.”

In addition, brand loyalty appears to be enhanced if the brand’s service meets customers’ expectations, as indicated in the following verbatim quotation provided by a participant who sorted the relevant statement on the “Most agree” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4130501

“(s51) At first service promises may appear to be mere promises but after they experience the great service, they remain a loyal customer.”

With regard to brand reputation, a long-standing history as a stable organisation is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation, as reflected in the following verbatim quotation provided by a participant who sorted the relevant statement on the “Most agree” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4140750

“(s50) Operate currently on a 24/6 basis over the globe in four continents.”

In addition to high-quality service and stability, the extent to which the brand demonstrates transparency in business dealings is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation, as supported in the following verbatim statement obtained from Question 4 of the online questionnaire dealing with the reasons why the respondents view the organisation as an employer of choice (see Annexure B).

Response user ID no: 4141243

“Financially strong and a driven but fair player.”

Transparency in the brand’s business dealings is also demonstrated in the way in which employees’ behaviour reflect an image of an ethical, respected organisation, as indicated in

the following response to Question 5 of the online questionnaire dealing with employees' role in enhancing the organisation's brand (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4181056

"Live the brand - quality, ethics, innovation."

Excellence in service delivery is also perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation.

Figure 8.19 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements which are deemed insignificant by factor 4 for corporate brand image formation, namely (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity.

This factor includes the levels of brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments as well as stakeholder relations management categorised under *transformational leadership and management*; internal and external branding as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication categorised under *positioning and differentiation strategy*; and brand loyalty categorised under *brand equity*. However, this factor rejects specific statements in these three categories. These are discussed below.

Figure 8.19: Factor 4: Stability through business innovation (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM
TLM	TLM	PD	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	BE	PD	TLM	BE
TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	BE	PD	BE	BE
	BE	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	
		BE	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be

insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments and stakeholder relations management. This is explained below.

Corporate brand image formation appears not to be compromised by the pricing structure of the brand's products and services. The brand philosophy need not be based on the vision to make the brand's products and services accessible to consumers of all income levels as is proven in the following statement obtained from participant feedback in the Q sort:

Response user ID no: 4181056

“(s2) Innovatative [innovative] branded [...] comes at a cost which is not affordable to sections of the propu.ation [population], particularly in a resource-constrained environment such as South Africa.”

Regarding stakeholder relations management, stakeholders' perception of the brand is not negatively influenced if consumers do not share in the prosperity of the organisation, as indicated in the following verbatim quotation provided by a participant who sorted the relevant statement on the “Most agree” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4181056

“(s13) Financial systems with wholesalers are good, but customer relationship management tool used is cumbersome. Healthcare is highly regulated so there are restrictions on some of the information that can be shared with customers (and held).”

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

Print and electronic media are deemed ineffective means for enhancing the organisation's administrative efficiency, as reflected in the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4280100

“(s35) It can only play a small and reasonably insignificant part in facilitating administration. The company’s administration must be led by a competent team who use a number of other channels outside of the external newsletter to facilitate administration.”

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of the *brand equity category* that is perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Only one statement is deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation. Brand loyalty does not rely on offering extended business hours to solve customers’ enquiries and complaints.

8.7.4.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 4: Stability through business innovation

In summary, factor 4 comprises perspectives revealing that innovative, stable brands require effective financial and technological management to remain market leaders in a competitive environment. The visual corporate brand identity elements, specifically the brand name and logo, are deemed to be the most significant elements to create awareness of the stability of the brand, the trust instilled by a respected brand, its values and product offering as well as stakeholder relationships among internal and external clients. These findings concur with the literature stating that the long-term aspiration which management envisages for the brand is formulated by the mission and vision statements of an organisation. As stated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, the mission and vision statements serve as prescriptive measures that provide knowledge to govern employees’ choices about strategies, customers, products, services and the market in which the organisation operates (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35). As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, a strong culture enhances the performance of an organisation in that it motivates employees to achieve higher ideals and values based on a set of meaningful, unified goals. In addition, a strong culture provides a set of shared values and norms to create awareness among employees of priorities which direct their behaviour and decision-making (Schultz et al 2005; De Chernatony 2006:124).

Internal communication initiatives are regarded a significant dimension in establishing the organisation as a stable brand. Information obtained in this way enables employees to fully

understand the values of their brand and to know which behaviour is expected of them. These findings support literature dealing with the topic of internal communication stating that symmetrical two-way communication promotes communication between internal line managers and team peers (Welch & Jackson 2007). In addition, organisations use internal communication to encourage internal stakeholders to display the organisation's values in their daily interaction with its stakeholders. In this regard, strategic communication in an organisation involves the process of recognising and transferring values communicated by external stakeholders, and aligning employees' attitudes with these values through the processes of internal branding. This concept is also referred to as inside-out branding (see section Chapter 5; section 5.3.2.2). The alignment between the organisation's attitude and the values of external stakeholders results in changes in the organisation's values and priorities which consequently affect the organisation's performance and efficiency (Burke 1998; Harrop & Varey 1998; Kim & Mauborgne 1999; Riesenbeck & Perry 2007:215; Hawabhay et al 2009:5; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007:60).

In addition to high-quality service and stability, the extent to which the brand demonstrates transparency in business dealings is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.7.2, the real potential of a brand is created in the minds of consumers or customers based on their experience of the brand over time. The knowledge consumers have gained about the brand determines their response to different brands resulting in brand equity and hence marketplace results (Keller & Lehmann 2006). The operationalisation of consumer-based brand equity suggests that high brand equity is achieved if customers have strong associations related to the brand, perceive the brand as of high quality, and are loyal to the brand (Brink & Berndt 2004:32).

8.7.5 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 5: Customer satisfaction

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 5 are explained below.

Figure 8.20 below indicates the corporate brand identity elements which are embedded in factor 5 and which are perceived to be required for corporate brand image formation, namely (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity. This factor emphasises the importance of customer satisfaction in order to enhance corporate brand image formation. The most

prominent perception of customer satisfaction involves the brand equity category, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.20: Factor 5: customer satisfaction (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	TLM
TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD
TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	TLM	BE	BE	TLM	BE
	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	
		BE	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	BE		
			BE	PD	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

This factor is largely defined by organisations in the product and service sectors. Organisations that define factor 5 establish the brand as a well-managed, dynamic organisation. These findings are supported in the following response to Question 2 of the CATI (see Annexure C). This question of the CATI deals with the measures applied by the organisation to counteract the negative impact of these factors and to enhance corporate brand image formation:

Response user ID no: 3230200

“The biggest challenge in the macro-environment is awareness of the brand in the global market; the brand needs to be more prominent, and achieving such prominence is a challenge.”

In addition to good corporate governance, sound financial management is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation as is revealed in the following verbatim statement

obtained from Question 1 of the online questionnaire dealing with the organisational attributes valued most by the respondents (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4141100

“The stability and the financial strength.”

Factor 5 comprises perspectives on customer satisfaction as a decisive component of an organisation’s business strategy to enhance corporate brand image formation. Organisations that define this factor implement innovative business principles aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction. These organisations position the brand as a market leader among internal and external stakeholders in terms of innovative product and service offerings. Furthermore, corporate brand image formation relies on administrative efficiency and employees’ commitment to render exceptional customer service. The organisation’s ability to respond quickly to clients’ enquiries and to solve all enquiries satisfactorily is perceived to be a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation. These findings are reiterated in the feedback to Question 4 of the CATI dealing with organisational measures that are implemented with the purpose of reflecting the most important aspects of the organisation’s culture (see Annexure C).

Response user ID no: 3230200

“Employees’ consciousness on customer focus and overall brand awareness is important. To this end the company does regular surveys relating to values. The findings are then taken into consideration.”

This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the “Agree most” (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4130656

“(s48) Client interaction with employees is a very important part of the relationship clients have with the brand (or company). As a result, if employees have a can do attitude this will have positive impact on client view of brand/company.”

In addition, the above findings pertaining to the *transformational leadership and management category* reveal that these organisations are values-driven brands as emphasised in feedback to the Q sort:

Response user ID no: 3230200

“(s46) Members trust the organisation will do the right thing based on a well-established set of company values and ethics. [...]”

Organisations that define this factor also position the organisation as a market leader among internal and external stakeholders in terms of providing a pleasant working environment and competitive employer benefits. To render exceptional customer service, it is expected that the organisation aims to retain expertise by maintaining good internal relationships and offering competitive employer benefits, as reflected in the following responses to Question 1 and Question 4 of the online questionnaire respectively (see Annexure B):

Question 1 of the online questionnaire:

Response user ID no: 4140826

“Provides employment in good atmosphere.”

Question 1 of the online questionnaire:

Response user ID no: 3241048

“This company recognises talent and rewards it.”

Question 4 of the online questionnaire:

Response user ID no: 4140826

“Very stable and one can get valuable experience.”

In addition, measures to provide employment in a good atmosphere also include using advanced technology to enhance product and service delivery, as revealed in a response to Question 2 of the CATI (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 3230200

“New technology is used in the production process and making of the product itself; where the technology can impact the consumers and improve the product, such information is used in the marketing.”

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of internal and external branding as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

With regard to internal and external branding, the brand is deemed to be positioned more prominently in the market by its involvement in corporate social initiatives. This finding on internal and external branding is reiterated by responses to Question 5 and Question 6 of

the CATI which indicate that organisations use corporate social initiatives as part of an integrated marketing strategy to raise awareness of the brand (see Annexure C).

With regard to integrated planned and unplanned communication, these organisations rely on the public website to communicate the extent to which the brand promise is met in respect of its product and service offerings. A website which contains detailed product information is perceived to be a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation.

In addition to electronic communication, the responses to Question 5 and Question 6 of the CATI indicate that organisations also use integrated marketing techniques to raise awareness of the brand (see Annexure C). These include print media and broadcast media.

Since employees are regarded one of the stakeholder groups of an organisation and internal marketing is aimed at reinforcing relationship with employees in order to create internal customer satisfaction, it would be expected that the internal communication practices of organisations that define this factor would follow an interactive approach. Such interactive approach would be aimed at including employees at all job levels for the purpose of informing them of the organisation's strategic direction and could involve internal communication material and electronic newsletters as indicated in the response to Question 7 of the CATI dealing with the role of internal communication practices in corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C). In addition, internal branding must be well managed to ensure the brand messages have the desired impact and yield positive results, as indicated in the response to Question 10 of the CATI dealing with the role of internal branding as a tool for promoting internal organisational alignment (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 3230200

"When there are too many initiatives the critical aspects of the content loses its impact."

However, the internal communication practices of organisations that define this factor are regarded either very good (50%) or poor (50%) by participants. Participants who rated the internal communication of the organisation as poor all indicated that management should be more visible and accessible, that management should communicate the organisation's objectives to all employees, and that meetings which include employees at more junior levels are required. These findings are supported by the following responses to Question 3 of the online questionnaire dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140826

“More small meetings on the factory floor.”

Response user ID no: 4141100

“Management should be more approachable.”

Response user ID no: 3230200

“Senior managers could [could] walk around a little more ...”.

These perspectives indicate the need for additional means of communication to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. In addition, implementing the suggested internal communication practices would help internal stakeholders understand the strategic direction of their organisation, as emphasised in Question 5 and Question 9 respectively of the CATI (see Annexure C) by an organisation that follows this approach with regard to internal branding:

Response user ID no: 3230200

“Feedback session and forums which stress the brand are held twice a year. These are done with the whole company where middle to higher level staff is typically in attendance. An ‘open-invitation’ session, where there is typically a specific section of the company staff in attendance.”

Response user ID no: 3230200

“Openness: Employees are free to ask questions to their line managers. [However, should there be issues that they cannot address to their line managers] there are appointed people that they can contact and are assured confidentiality.”

Following an interactive approach with regard to the internal branding strategy creates more effective work practices and serves as a profound principle for maintaining a competitive advantage, as indicated in the following response to Question 3 of the online questionnaire:

Response user ID no: 4211108

“Have a definite goal with a time line and tell us. Updates regularly. Walk around and talk to staff once in a while.”

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand reputation and brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Brand loyalty depends on the extent to which the brand offers a variety of products. Furthermore, offering value for money guarantees brand loyalty. In addition, brand loyalty appears to rely, to a lesser extent, on offering extended business hours to solve customers' enquiries and complaints. This perspective is supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4140825

"(s41) Reputation is achieved by offering value for money products and service."

With regard to brand reputation, an organisation is perceived to be a reputable brand if it delivers on the brand promises made on service delivery in its marketing material, as indicated in the following response to Question 3a of the CATI (see Annexure C).

Response user ID no: 3230200

"Customer service and quality of the product in practice and highlighted in the marketing is important."

This perspective is further supported by the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4151043

"(s53) The brand is well known and respected in the market as reliable and committed to delivering on its promises."

Establishing a customer-centred culture plays an essential role in the organisation's branding strategy, since reinforcing relationships by means of marketing strategies is based on the commitment, attitude and performance of the organisation's employees as explained in the following response to Question 5 of the CATI dealing with the type of integrated communication practices used by the organisation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 3230200

"Employees' consciousness on customer focus and overall brand awareness is important. To this end the company does regular surveys relating to values. The findings are then taken into consideration."

To achieve this objective, participants indicate the need for combining organisational activities aimed at creating customer satisfaction and sustaining brand equity. In this regard, employees are required to act as brand ambassadors by being passionate about

the brand and living the brand values of integrity and customer focus, as reflected in the following statement taken from Question 5 of the online questionnaire dealing with employees' role in enhancing the organisation's brand (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 3230200

“Stand wholeheartedly by the company values of integrity and customer focus.”

In addition, the following verbatim statement obtained from Question 5 of the online questionnaire emphasises the need for employees to cultivate a learning culture to render more effective customer service:

Response user ID no: 4211108

“Become more motivated in order to give better and quicker service to clientele. Do your work to the best of your ability and often learn something new. Ask to go on courses. Ask to study.”

These perspectives provide evidence that in addition to IMC which were used traditionally to enhance brand equity, the major effect of direct customer experience on developing brand equity must be taken into account. Organisations that define factor 5 regard positive customer experience as a primary factor affecting customers' brand awareness, brand associations, the perceived quality of the brand and their brand loyalty, as indicated in the following response to Question 12 of the CATI dealing with the methods used by the organisation to create brand equity (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270420

“There is a relentless approach to understand consumers in their natural lives, and to developing strategies that integrate the brand into the daily lives of consumers. Interaction with the brand is strategised around the real lives of consumers; [...] has a unique positioning because of how easily it fit into the lives of consumers.”

Figure 8.21 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements which are deemed insignificant by factor 5 for corporate brand image formation, namely (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity.

This factor includes the levels of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments as well as stakeholder relations management categorised under *transformational leadership and management*; internal and external branding categorised under *positioning and differentiation strategy*; and brand loyalty and brand reputation categorised under

brand equity. However, this factor rejects specific statements in these three categories. These are discussed below.

Figure 8.21: Factor 5: customer satisfaction (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	TLM
TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD
TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	TLM	BE	BE	TLM	BE
	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	
		BE	PD	PD	BE	BE	BE	BE		
			BE	PD	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments and stakeholder relations management. This is explained below.

Corporate brand image formation seems not to be dependent upon the brand’s ability to remain updated with developments in product offerings in the industry as a result of changes in customer preferences. Corporate brand image formation also appears not to require amendments to an organisation’s business strategy to provide for changes in customer preferences and to counteract competition.

Furthermore, modern, easy-to-use technology that facilitates administrative procedures is regarded not a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation, as indicated in the following viewpoint taken from feedback on the Q sort:

Response user ID no: 4141100

“(s8) There is too much red tape so before any changes are made regarding product change is a long drawn-out process.”

With regard to the level of stakeholder relations management, stakeholders' perceptions of the brand appear not to be negatively influenced if they do not share in the prosperity of the organisation. A competitive brand need not recruit employees who have the necessary skill and expertise for a specific position. A rewards system that gives recognition to employees who execute their duties in a way that establishes the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders is regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the positioning and differentiation strategy that are deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of internal and external branding as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

Only one statement is deemed insignificant in the level of internal and external branding. Brand values champions are regarded insignificant in enhancing employees' performance.

With regard to integrated planned and unplanned communication, a brand identity which reflects a sense of innovation is deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation. In addition, the information provided in the company profile is perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of the *brand equity category* that is perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand reputation and brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Only one statement is deemed insignificant in the level of brand equity. Brand loyalty appears not to be compromised if an organisation does not implement a business solution in response to an innovative product strategy launched by a competitor.

With regard to brand reputation, considering the effect of business decisions on consumers' perception of the brand is also deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

Factor 5 is bipolar (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7 and section 8.2) since two of the five Q sorts loaded negatively on this factor, reflecting opposite views of the perspectives described above.

8.7.5.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 5: Customer satisfaction

In summary, factor 5 includes perspectives revealing that well-managed, dynamic organisations are characterised by good corporate governance and sound financial management. These findings on the direct relationship between a well-planned business strategy and sound financial management underpin the role of brand vision in executing the business strategy. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2, brand vision provides a definite direction for corporate brand growth in that it explains the objectives which the organisation aims to achieve in future (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001c:34-35; Jones 2010:45). Furthermore, the literature emphasises that ethics are becoming increasingly important. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.3.2, ethics require organisations to be able to justify their actions and decisions from an ethical and moral point of view (Mukherjee & Balmer 2008:5). Organisations realise that corporate social initiatives support an organisation's visibility in the market, its image among internal stakeholders and enhance customer loyalty (Hawabhay et al 2009:14). In this regard, Appel-Meulenbrock et al (2010:47) explain that in competitive markets product differentiation no longer serves as the only means for maintaining a trustworthy position in the market. As a result, organisations increasingly rely on strategies aimed at positioning the entire business, including its tangible and intangible elements, to enhance competitive advantage.

Customer satisfaction is a decisive component of an organisation's business strategy to enhance corporate brand image formation. These organisations position the brand as a market leader among internal and external stakeholders in terms of innovative product and service offerings. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, the process of creating products that will continue to meet customers' needs at functional and emotional level, and rendering satisfactory customer services have been the principal object of management initiatives (Hammer & Champy 1993 in Maklan & Knox 1997:125). Furthermore, these initiatives include total quality management (TQM) in which measures are applied to ensure quality control, continuous revision of the extent to which products and services meet consumers' needs, and business process reengineering which is

applied to improve products and services and to ensure they remain competitive in the market.

These organisations aim to recruit and retain expertise by maintaining good internal relationships, providing a pleasant working environment, and offering competitive employer benefits. In this way, organisations translate their internal corporate brand identity into a positive and valuable corporate image.

Measures to provide employment in a favourable environment also include using advanced technology to enhance product and service delivery. In addition, these organisations require an interactive approach with regard to the internal branding strategy in order to create more effective work practices and maintain a competitive advantage.

In addition to electronic communication to convey the extent to which the brand promise is met in respect of its product and service offerings, these organisations also use integrated marketing techniques to raise awareness of the brand. These include print media, broadcast media and corporate social initiatives. As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.3.2, the way corporate activities, marketing mix activities and marketing communications promote the brand must be integrated into a holistic image of the brand's emotional and functional attributes in the consumer's mind. In this way, an integrated marketing approach creates brand messages that will reinforce the brand essence and enhance corporate brand image formation (De Chernatony 2001a:5; Grimaldi 2003:1; Keller 2009d:296). In addition, as explained in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.2, traditional brand management in respect of products largely involved planned marketing communications and design, for example product and packaging. However, an important trend in contemporary marketing theory is a growing focus on corporate-level marketing rather than product-level marketing (Blombäck 2009:228-229). In essence, the focus of the corporate communication process is to carefully organise the organisation's communication activities as a single well-planned entity to produce a set of coherent messages internally and externally (Nandan 2005:275-276). As such, the purpose of corporate communication as management instrument is to create a favourable basis for establishing relationships with the organisation's stakeholder groups.

Apart from IMC which were used traditionally to promote the organisation's products and services, the major effect of direct customer experience on developing brand equity is taken into account. Organisations that define factor 5 regard positive customer experience

as a primary factor affecting customers' brand awareness, brand associations, the perceived quality of the brand and their brand loyalty.

These research findings are firmly supported in the literature in that brand positioning activities are aimed at differentiating a brand from competitors' brands or offerings. This holistic approach to corporate branding assumes that brands are created by establishing synergy among all the elements in the marketing mix to reflect the actual identity of the organisation. In this way, a coherent brand network will be established that does not contain contradictory elements (cf. Balmer 1998; Balmer 2001; Balmer & Gray 2003b).

8.7.6 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 6: Effective IC

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 6 are explained below.

Figure 8.22 below indicates the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy and (3) brand equity which are embedded in factor 6 and which are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation. This factor emphasises the importance of effective IC in corporate brand image formation. The most prominent perception of effective IC involves the category of positioning and differentiation strategy, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.22: Factor 6: Effective IC (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM
TLM	BE	PD	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD
BE	BE	PD	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD
	BE	BE	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	
		BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	PD		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand philosophy and the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

Factor 6 is defined by dynamic, expanding organisations, as indicated in the response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4260421

“For the right calibre person there are opportunities to grow.”

Growing organisations are better able to offer a competitive pricing structure. In this regard, a brand philosophy based on the vision to provide less expensive, quality products that are affordable for consumers of all income levels is regarded significant in corporate brand image formation. Furthermore, modern, easy-to-use technology that facilitates administrative procedures is deemed a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to be significant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of internal and external branding as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

With regard to internal and external branding, marketing initiatives to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand are deemed a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation. In this way, the brand is associated with a wealthy lifestyle and is perceived to be established as a leading organisation among external stakeholders. The brand is deemed to be positioned more prominently in the market by its involvement in corporate social initiatives. Brand positioning activities that show participation in community development are considered significant for enhancing the perception of the brand as a caring entity.

An organisational magazine to reinforce the principles followed for sound financial management of the organisation in order to improve its financial performance is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. Print media are also regarded an effective means of facilitating administrative functions in the organisation. A company profile is considered a significant marketing tool for expanding the organisation's business. The internal website as a reliable source of information is thought necessary for positioning the

brand favourably among internal stakeholders. A website, which contains detailed product information to enable customers to make an informed decision when selecting a product or service most suitable for their needs, is a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation. A renowned brand is created by integrating different communication media to market the distinct features of the brand. In addition, the use of internal print communication media are considered significant in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders.

The majority of participants who define this factor are employed by small-sized organisations. These organisations follow an interactive communication style as a result of a flat organisational structure, which facilitates administration. Participants regard their organisations' internal communication as medium to very good and it appears that these organisations use a variety of internal communication media. These findings correspond with the findings of factor 6 in terms of the positioning and differentiation strategy. The following responses to Question 1 and Question 3 respectively of the online questionnaire support these findings (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4170555

"Flat organisational structure."

Response user ID no: 4130634

"Small with quick decision-making process."

Response user ID no: 4130634

"Lots of interaction as we are a small organisation. CEO knows most of the staff."

It is expected that an interactive approach would be aimed at including employees at all job levels for the purpose of informing them of the organisation's strategic direction. However, a number of participants indicated a need for more regular, structured, personal communication to reinforce the internal branding initiatives of current print and electronic media, as emphasised by the following verbatim statements taken from participants' responses to Question 3 of the online questionnaire dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140430

"Having more structured and informative feedback sessions with all staff in the company at montly [monthly] gatherings."

Response user ID no: 4170555

"Bringing lower levels of staff into management meetings."

Response user ID no: 4260421

“Concentrate on important issues when communicating.”

In addition to an interactive communication approach, participants are of the opinion that internal and external branding practices should focus on the unique features of the organisation as a leading brand, as indicated in the following response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire dealing with the reasons why the respondents regard the organisation as an employer of choice (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4170555

“Knowledgeable, trendsetters, compensation is above normal, flexible.”

Furthermore, internal marketing initiatives must be aligned with the brand philosophy to encourage employees to act as brand ambassadors by living the brand values, as reflected in the following response to Question 5 of the online questionnaire dealing with employees' role in enhancing the organisation's brand (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4170555

“Wear the brand name with pride. Act the vales of the organisation.”

Brand equity

The *brand equity category* does not feature as prominently as the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* and the *transformational leadership and management category*. The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand reputation. This is explained below.

Communication material as a reliable source of information is considered a significant element of corporate brand image formation. Communication activities in response to negative publicity in order to restore consumers' trust in the brand are deemed significant for corporate brand image formation.

Figure 8.23 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are deemed insignificant by factor 6 for corporate brand image formation.

This factor includes the levels of business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments as well as stakeholder relations management categorised under *transformational leadership and management*; internal and external branding categorised under *positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as brand reputation categorised under *brand equity*.

However, this factor rejects specific statements in these three categories. These are discussed below.

Figure 8.23: Factor 6: effective IC (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	BE	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM
TLM	BE	PD	TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD
BE	BE	PD	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	PD	PD	PD	PD
	BE	BE	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	BE	
		BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	PD		
			BE	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

The effective financial management of the organisation is deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation. A competent management team to look after the organisation’s affairs is also considered insignificant in enhancing the brand’s image among internal and external stakeholders.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to be insignificant to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of internal and external branding. This is explained below.

The visual corporate brand identity elements are deemed insignificant in creating awareness of the brand among internal and external clients. The various visual corporate brand identity elements need not be used in an integrated manner to establish

associations of the brand's functional and emotional qualities among the brand's stakeholder group. A style guide providing requirements on the organisation's brand identity is also regarded insignificant in reinforcing the corporate brand image.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of brand reputation. This is explained below.

A proven track record for rendering exceptional customer service is not deemed significant to enhance the brand's esteem among clients. The brand reputation is not compromised if the brand is not known for its achievements in service delivery. The brand also appears not to be affected by employees' attitudes towards solving clients' complaints and enquiries. Furthermore, the brand name is not considered significant for instilling a sense of trust among consumers. The reputation of the brand is also deemed not to be compromised if it does not have a long-standing history as a stable organisation. Considering the effect of business decisions on consumers' perception of the brand is also deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

Factor 6 is bipolar (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7 and section 8.2) since all five Q sorts loaded negatively on this factor. As a result, the above perspectives reflect opposite views of the perspectives included in factor 6.

8.7.6.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 6: Effective IC

In summary, the perspectives included in factor 6 reveal that growing organisations regard marketing initiatives, including a competitive pricing policy, as a prerequisite for creating brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. A renowned brand is created by integrating different communication media as a reliable source of information to market the distinct features and core values of the brand. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, well-positioned brands occupy particular status in consumers' minds. Therefore, brand building initiatives are aimed at changing consumer perceptions, reinforcing attitudes, and creating and fostering customer relationships. Consequently, the purpose of corporate branding is to create positive brand knowledge in the minds of all relevant target communities, and to differentiate it from its competitors by enhancing trust in the organisation, its products, services and actions (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:44).

The majority of participants who define this factor are employed by small-sized organisations. These organisations follow an interactive communication style as a result of a flat organisational structure, which facilitates administration. In this regard, organisations that define factor 6 require internal marketing initiatives to be aligned with the brand philosophy to encourage employees to act as brand ambassadors. In addition to an interactive communication approach, participants are of the opinion that internal and external branding practices should focus on the unique features of the organisation as a leading brand. These findings concur with the arguments of various communication specialists that corporate communication is a management tool used to harmonise all forms of internal and external communication with the aim of achieving a specific purpose. As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.2, organisations use various cues to project the corporate identity to stakeholders. As such, the purpose of corporate communication as management instrument is to create a favourable basis for establishing relationships with the organisation's stakeholder groups. In addition, coordinating communications and media as part of an effective IMC strategy in order to create synergy and enhanced effects is one of the most powerful ways of increasing productivity of marketing communications (Keller 2009c:153-154).

8.7.7 Theoretical importance of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation: Factor 7: Strategic positioning of the brand

The consolidated findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI for factor 7 are explained below.

Figure 8.24 below indicates the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are embedded in factor 7 and which are perceived to be significant for corporate brand image formation. This factor emphasises the importance of strategic positioning of the brand in order to enhance corporate brand image formation. The most prominent perception of the strategic positioning of the brand involves the category of positioning and differentiation strategy, but embraces all three categories.

Figure 8.24: Factor 7: Strategic positioning of the brand (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	LM
TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD
BE	BE	PD	TLM	PD	BE	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE
	BE	BE	TLM	PD	BE	BE	PD	PD	BE	
		BE	PD	PD	BE	BE	PD	BE		
			PD	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the level of the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments. This is explained below.

This factor is defined by organisations offering consumer products. The business strategies of these organisations are aimed at implementing measures to offer quality products that meet consumers' needs effectively. These organisations implement a business strategy that is aimed at positioning the brand in the market by revealing the organisation's identity, organisational performance, corporate behaviour, its product offering and the quality of its product range. To achieve this objective, a competent executive team who manages the organisation's affairs effectively and remains updated with developments in product offerings in the industry is deemed a vital element of corporate brand image formation. These findings are reiterated in the following verbatim statement taken from a response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140549

"Great culture, opportunity to make a difference as you are local and not reliant on expertise from 'the USA' or 'Europe' and the fact that we compete successfully for consumers hearts and minds despite not being a global organisation."

Corporate brand image formation is also achieved by attending to customer complaints and solving clients' enquiries promptly and satisfactorily, as indicated in the following response to Question 4 of the online questionnaire dealing with the reasons why the respondents regard the organisation as an employer of choice (see Annexure B).

Response user ID no: 4190250

“Profesional company with expertize to react promptly to assit people in need.”

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of internal and external branding, visual corporate brand identity elements as well as integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

Regarding internal and external branding, organisations use internal corporate communication as a persuasive strategy to influence internal stakeholder relationships. Organisations that define this factor use various internal marketing initiatives in an integrated manner to establish the brand favourably. These organisations regard electronic media a particularly useful instrument for cultivating a strong culture in which employees are motivated to realise a set of meaningful, unified goals in order to enhance the performance of an organisation. These internal marketing initiatives result in a superior product offering, combined with prompt service delivery. In this regard, the reliability of information published on the internal website is deemed a useful tool for creating a positive perception of the brand among internal stakeholders. In addition, the use of internal print communication media is regarded significant in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders. Furthermore, these internal marketing initiatives result in a superior product offering, combined with prompt service delivery. Brand positioning activities that show participation in community development enhance the perception of the brand as a caring entity.

Corporate brand image formation appears to rely on visual corporate brand identity elements to create an awareness of the brand by identifying a set of values that reflects the competencies of the brand which address the needs of the organisation's customers. In this regard, a style guide which determines the requirements for using the brand's visual elements in an integrated manner to communicate its distinct qualities to stakeholders is regarded significant in reinforcing the corporate brand image.

With regard to integrated planned and unplanned communication, selected external communication media that convey the distinguishing attributes of the brand are deemed the most significant element of corporate brand image formation. A renowned brand uses different communication media in an integrated manner to position the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders. Electronic media, specifically the organisation's website, are regarded as a functional medium for brand positioning. Corporate brand image formation appears to be enhanced if the layout of the website enables clients to obtain information easily. The brand's image also seems to benefit if the website contains comprehensive information to help clients make informed decisions on the most appropriate product or service for their needs.

The largest number of participants who define this factor regard their organisation's internal communication as fairly good and it appears that these organisations use a variety of internal communication media. Since strategic brand positioning involves internal branding in order to establish the brand effectively among external stakeholders, it would be expected that the internal communication practices of organisations that define this factor would follow an interactive approach. Such interactive approach would be aimed at including employees at all job levels for the purpose of informing them of the organisation's strategic direction. However, despite the use of various internal marketing initiatives in an integrated manner, no participants indicated that their organisation follows an interactive communication style. Instead, participants indicated a need for more personal communication, visibility of management, and the effective use of electronic and social media to reinforce the internal branding initiatives of current print and electronic media. These findings are supported by the following responses to Question 3 of the online questionnaire dealing with measures for improving communication in the organisation (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140549

"More two-way dialogue."

Response user ID no: 4190250

"Use email effectively and have an electronic display board at reception or several places in the building to display relevant information."

These perspectives are supported by the following feedback received in response to Question 10 of the CATI dealing with participants' views on whether internal branding is a successful tool for promoting internal organisational alignment.

Response user ID no: 6270848

"[...] It is [...] emphasised in communication across all levels of the organisation to ensure all staff think of the brand confidently."

In view of the above findings with regard to the positioning and differentiation strategy, internal branding strategy serves as a strategic measure to ensure employees realise the brand messages through their actions and the behaviour they demonstrate to customers and other stakeholders in order to position the brand strategically among internal and external stakeholders. To ensure employees' behaviour reflects a uniform brand message, participants who define this factor indicated that internal marketing constitutes a fundamental aspect of an organisation's overall marketing strategy. This requires an internal communication strategy in which marketing initiatives are aligned with the brand philosophy to encourage employees to live the brand values, to take pride in the brand, to act as brand ambassadors and to engage in brand-changing initiatives as reflected in the following verbatim statement taken from Question 5 of the online questionnaire dealing with employees' role in enhancing the organisation's brand (see Annexure B):

Response user ID no: 4140549

"Think and act like you are consumers of the brand yourself."

In addition, feedback received in response to Question 11 of the CATI confirms the role of internal organisational alignment to create brand loyalty (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270848

"Assessments are sent to all the staff to gauge how they see the alignment of the business. Leadership, management, opportunities and brand are included in the assessment to review alignment as it is experienced and perceived by staff."

This perspective indicates that successful brands are aligned with the corporate culture. If congruence is established between the organisation's advocated values, the brand values and employees' values, synergy is created which results in a solid brand reflecting the most distinguishing qualities of the brand. In the case of organisations defining this factor, these qualities include the stability of the brand, the added value offered by the brand, prompt service delivery and competitive employer benefits. This factor explains that the process of brand management engages the entire organisation in which branding initiatives are aimed at turning the organisation into a brand.

Furthermore, corporate branding is a well-ordered process, which relies on IC techniques to create congruency between communication messages sent to internal and external

stakeholders. Creating alignment between the internal and external corporate brand messages requires the organisation to communicate the organisational values to a network of internal and external stakeholders by integrating corporate as well as marketing communication initiatives in order to ensure a coherent brand image. This implies that the branding process should be fully incorporated into the overall strategic plan with systemic support throughout the organisation.

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *brand equity category* that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand reputation and brand loyalty. This is explained below.

The extent to which the brand offers a variety of products is regarded significant in creating brand loyalty among existing and prospective clients. Furthermore, offering value for money is regarded a prerequisite for guaranteeing brand loyalty.

Trustworthiness of the information provided in communication material enhances the brand's reputation. Furthermore, the extent to which the organisation meets the promises on product and service delivery in its advertising material is also deemed significant in establishing the reputation of the brand. The following verbatim statements in response to Question 3 of the CATI dealing with measures which organisations apply to ensure the brand's core values, mission and vision contribute optimally to corporate brand image formation supports the role of the brand philosophy in enhancing corporate brand image formation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 6270848

“Emphasis is on quality, engaging with suppliers, seeking timeless quality clothing, credit retailing benefits, the store environment, and brilliant customer service.”

“Emphasis on being the ‘preferred destination for top quality men’s clothing’ is applied throughout the organisation marketing operations.”

The above perspective indicates that a consistent corporate brand image is also achieved by means of the behaviour displayed by the organisation's employees, its customers and other stakeholders as well as the quality of relationships maintained among these groups of stakeholders. In order to align employees' behaviour, participants hold the viewpoint that employees must be involved in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. These findings are supported by the following

verbatim statement in response to Question 5 of the CATI dealing with the type of integrated communication practices used by the organisation (see Annexure C):

Response user ID no: 4140425

“Involve employees in changing the brand.”

Figure 8.25 below outlines the corporate brand identity elements of (1) transformational leadership and management, (2) positioning and differentiation strategy, and (3) brand equity which are deemed insignificant by factor 7 for corporate brand image formation.

This factor includes the levels of brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments as well as stakeholder relations management categorised under *transformational leadership and management*, integrated planned and unplanned communication categorised under *positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as brand loyalty and brand reputation categorised under *brand equity*. However, this factor rejects specific statements in these three categories. These are discussed below.

Figure 8.25: Factor 7: Strategic positioning of the brand (elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	TLM
TLM	PD	TLM	TLM	PD	PD	TLM	TLM	TLM	PD	PD
BE	BE	PD	TLM	PD	BE	PD	PD	PD	BE	BE
	BE	BE	TLM	PD	BE	BE	PD	PD	BE	
		BE	PD	PD	BE	BE	PD	BE		
			PD	BE	BE	BE	BE			

Legend:

TLM = Transformational leadership and management

PD = Positioning and differentiation strategy

BE = Brand equity

Transformational leadership and management

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *transformational leadership and management category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments as well as stakeholder relations management. This is explained below.

The pricing structure of the brand's products and services is regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation. The brand philosophy does not need to be based on the vision to provide less expensive, quality products that are accessible to consumers of all income levels.

With regard to the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments, administrative efficiency is deemed not a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation.

Regarding stakeholder relations management, clients need not share in the prosperity of the organisation. In addition, offering clients financial rewards for using the organisation's service is deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

Positioning and differentiation strategy

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* that are perceived to be insignificant in corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of integrated planned and unplanned communication. These are explained below.

Only one statement in the level of integrated planned and unplanned communication is deemed insignificant in corporate brand image formation. The information published in the organisation's magazine need not reinforce the principles followed for sound financial management of the organisation to improve the financial performance of the organisation and enhance corporate brand image formation, as confirmed in the following verbatim statement by a participant of the Q sort who sorted the statement indicated in brackets on the "Agree most" (+5) dimension of the continuum:

Response user ID no: 4280100

"(s27) The company magazine has become less of marketing tool and is seldom effectively used besides building on overall business brand."

Brand equity

The most dominant perception of corporate brand identity elements of the brand equity category that are perceived not to contribute to corporate brand image formation is demonstrated in the levels of brand reputation and brand loyalty. This is explained below.

Brand loyalty seems to be not affected by the extent to which the organisation's service adds quality to consumers' life. Consumers do not value a brand that offers extended business hours to assist them with administrative matters.

With regard to brand reputation, only one statement is deemed insignificant in the brand equity category. Considering the effect of business decisions on consumers' perception of the brand is regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation.

Factor 7 is bipolar (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.7 and section 8.2), with a minority of one participant who holds the opposite viewpoint of the perspectives reflected by this factor.

8.7.7.1 Summary of the consolidated findings for corporate brand image formation and supporting evidence from the literature: Factor 7: Strategic positioning of the brand

In summary, factor 7 is defined by organisations offering consumer products. These organisations implement a business strategy that is aimed at positioning the brand in the market by revealing the organisation's identity, organisational performance, corporate behaviour, its product offering and the quality of its product range. These research findings are firmly supported in the literature. Brand positioning activities are aimed at differentiating a brand from competitors' brands or offerings. As explained in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, consumers' preference for a specific brand is based on the extent to which the particular brand's products or services meet their needs or expectations. Consequently, brand positioning is related with creating perceptions of a brand in customers' minds (Verma 2010:105; 132-135). For this reason, the brand positioning process must incorporate the organisational values, strengths, corporate brand culture, corporate style and future direction as measures to differentiate the organisation from its competitors. In addition, customer value and customer loyalty are influenced by corporate reputation, since consumers tend to regard an organisation with a good reputation as more credible and trustworthy than one with a poor reputation (Aaker 1996; Keller 2003; Blombäck 2009:244). This implies that strong brands serve as a decisive selling attribute for customers who distinguish their product from equivalents based on unique and distinct characteristics. To achieve the objective of effective brand positioning, a competent executive team who manages the organisation's affairs effectively and remains updated with developments in product offerings in the industry is deemed a vital element of corporate brand image formation. Internal branding strategy serves as a strategic measure to ensure employees realise the brand messages through their actions and the behaviour they demonstrate to customers and other stakeholders. In this regard, organisations that define this factor integrate various internal marketing initiatives to establish the brand favourably. In order to align employees' behaviour, employees must be involved in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in

service delivery. As indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2, stimulating dialogue with groups of employees contributes to employee alignment. This is aimed at discussing the organisational strategy and motivating them to discuss the conditions which they regard as imperative for the successful execution of the strategy (Van Riel 2008:354). This factor thus explains that the process of brand management engages the entire organisation in which branding initiatives are aimed at turning the organisation into a brand. To achieve strong and favoured reputations, branding should be a strategic management function of the entire organisation. As such, branding should guide an organisation's activities in order to provide consistency in its positioning strategy, communication and employees' working style or behaviour.

Factor 7 reflects the perspectives of organisations of which the business strategy involves a contemporary approach in positioning the brand effectively in the market. The perspectives included in factor 7 reflect a deeper dimension of corporate branding in which the emphasis is no longer restricted to a marketing and campaign perspective. For this reason factor 7 provides insight into a growing focus on corporate branding in creating an innovative corporate brand image. In this regard, Kitchen and Schultz (2003:75) maintain that consumers increasingly form an opinion of the organisations whose products and services they purchase. Consumers do not merely purchase products with a specific functional or symbolic benefit. Instead, they also evaluate the attributes which they associate with a brand from their subjective viewpoint, based on their holistic experience of the brand qualities. In this manner, they form a set of accumulated impressions of an organisation's products, services, communication activities and business practices. For this reason, integration of all communication activities at product level is inadequate. Rather, all communication activities at business or corporation level must be integrated to create meaning coordination of an organisation's visual corporate brand identity elements, communication, procedures and behaviours. This objective requires a complete internal corporate cultural system to create brands with specific emotional attributes to meet consumers' emotional or spiritual needs and establish brands with powerful associations which determine the products and services used by consumers. The core ideas embedded in corporate culture can be demonstrated in all business operations of the organisation to establish a unique connotation and meaning which will enhance consumers' favourable impressions and associations of the brand. Brands in which the organisation's strategic objectives are connected with social benefits and consumers' needs will appeal to consumers, resulting in increased brand loyalty (Yang 2010:223).

8.8 SUMMARY OF THE CONSOLIDATED FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the consolidated findings for the Q study, the online questionnaire and the CATI are summarised according to the three categories and their respective levels which constitute the Q sample (see Chapter 7, section 7.5, Table 7.1).

The seven factors serve as abstract representations of the subjective perceptions of various South African organisations that define these factors. This implies that each factor is an abstract construct of different perceptions. Conclusions with regard to the findings of this study are based on the perspectives reflected by the various factors as well as the findings of the responses to the online questionnaire and the CATI. The viewpoint reflected by a specific factor may not be similar to the viewpoints of individual participants as reflected in these responses. For this reason, conclusions with regard to the findings of the Q study are supplemented with the findings of the online questionnaire and the CATI. The online questionnaire and the CATI were used as additional primary sources of data collection in order to enable the researcher to gain a better understanding of why participants conducted the Q sort in a specific manner. As explained in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2, a sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design was deemed appropriate for this study, since the results of different data collection techniques can disclose various diverse, but also interlinking perspectives on a phenomenon, resulting in a condensed description of the topic under investigation (Boeije 2010:176) (see also Chapter 6, section 6.5 for a more detailed discussion of mixed-methods research).

No statements were regarded as significant in corporate brand image formation by all seven factors emerging from the Q sort. Similarly, no statements were regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation by all seven factors. As a result, all statements that loaded highly on at least one factor were included in the summary of the research findings if the findings of the online questionnaire and/or CATI provided substantial proof that these statements should be considered by organisations as a measure to enhance their corporate brand image. However, statements that loaded highly on one or more factors, but which were rejected by an equal number or a larger number of factors were excluded from the summary of the research findings, if the findings of the online questionnaire and/or CATI did not provide substantial proof that these statements should be considered by organisations as a measure to enhance their corporate brand image. The responses to the online questionnaire and CATI are used to substantiate the findings of the Q study in order to describe and analyse the widest possible range of

opinions that were expressed among participants (Melewar et al 2005:66). In this manner, the researcher was able to exhaust the full range of attitudes towards this topic.

A summary of the research findings regarding the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation is given below according to the three categories and their various levels which constitute the Q sample.

8.8.1 Transformational leadership and management category

The elements of corporate brand identity that are deemed significant and which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation according to the levels that constitute the *transformational leadership and management category* are explained as follows:

8.8.1.1 Business philosophy

According to the results of the Q sort, no elements of the level of business philosophy are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation by the majority of the participating South African organisations included in the study. Although statements 2 and 4 dealing with the organisation's pricing structure are highly loaded on a number of factors, these statements are rejected by an equal or a higher number of factors. These statements are as follows:

Statement No 2: Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition

Statement No 4: The organisation is too expensive.

However, the results of the responses to Question 2 of the CATI (see Annexure C and Annexure I) indicate that pricing of an organisation's products and services is one of the aspects that must be considered by organisations as a measure to enhance their corporate brand image. Although the results of the Q sort indicate that organisations do not primarily aim to provide affordable products and services to consumers from all income levels, responses to the CATI indicate that organisations apply various measures to manage costs, including occasional discount prices and providing economical products that offer value for money.

8.8.1.2 Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments

Organisations require a competent management team to look after the organisation's affairs and to ensure its financial affairs are well managed. Advanced technology and effective administrative procedures are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. Two statements grouped in the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments are regarded significant and insignificant by an equal number of factors. The statements deal with organisations' levels of service delivery and are as follows:

Statement No 15: Telephone calls are returned promptly.

Statement No 17: Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries.

These statements are regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation according to the perspectives included in two factors. However, since these statements are also regarded significant by the perspectives in two different factors, they cannot be merely rejected. The research findings of Question 5 of the online questionnaire (see Annexure B and Annexure H) emphasise the importance of delivering the brand promise to customers. Employees are brand ambassadors in every interaction with internal and external stakeholders and their behaviour conveys the values of the brand and influences the perception which customers form of the brand. Organisations must implement measures to create a culture that fosters the needs of the consumer at every level in the organisation in order to enhance overall levels of satisfaction. In addition, the responses to Question 12 of the CATI (see Annexure C and Annexure I) identified continuous research as well as quality control measures to improve product offerings, high-calibre staff and the organisation's ability to meet customers' expectations as elements that create brand equity.

The contradictory perspectives regarding the role of these elements in corporate brand image formation embedded in the factors indicate that, although service delivery is an aspect of an organisation's business strategy that contributes to corporate brand image formation, a large number of organisations fail to implement measures to ensure the required level of service delivery is met.

8.8.1.3 Stakeholder relations management

The research results of the level of stakeholder relations management are linked to the research findings of the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments in that effective stakeholder relations management is achieved by means of strong leadership. Organisations position the brand as a market leader among internal and external

stakeholders in terms of providing a pleasant working environment and competitive employer benefits. Furthermore, measures to provide employment in a congenial atmosphere include using advanced technology to enhance product and service delivery. In addition to customer satisfaction, modern technology offers the added benefit of reducing operating costs. Effective management and administration are regarded as a measure to counteract the challenges pertaining to the macro-environment in which the organisation operates in order to enhance corporate brand image formation. The relationship between customer service and administrative efficiency and how these contribute to client retention is reflected in the responses to the online questionnaire and the CATI (see Annexure H and Annexure I). Organisations that aim to meet customers' expectations also tend to apply measures to retain expertise by maintaining good internal relationships and offering competitive employer benefits. These measures include tools to enhance employees' skills and competence to help them meet the required work standards. In this manner, consistent corporate behaviour is established as a means of maintaining effective stakeholder relationships. An employer of choice also offers competitive employer benefits to recruit employees who have the necessary skill and expertise for a specific position. Corporate brand image formation is enhanced to a lesser extent by offering a rewards system to give recognition to employees who render exceptional customer service. The results of the online questionnaire emphasise the direct relationship that exists between a comprehensive remuneration system and employees' performance.

With regard to the level of stakeholder relations management, the following statement is rejected by three of the seven factors:

Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation.

The subjective perception of the various South African organisations that define these factors is that clients need not share in the prosperity of the organisation in order to enhance corporate brand image formation.

8.8.2 Positioning and differentiation strategy category

The elements of corporate brand identity that are deemed significant and which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation by the majority of the participating South African organisations according to the levels which constitute the *positioning and differentiation strategy category* are explained as follows:

8.8.2.1 Internal and external branding

The findings of the responses to the online questionnaire and CATI show that a variety of internal and external branding initiatives are used to establish the brand values among stakeholders and to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. The research results reveal that an effective marketing strategy incorporates the brand values in a coherent manner to establish the brand in a dominant position in stakeholders' minds. These brand associations must be incorporated as a set of distinct brand features which relate to one another, and which are composed of multiple ideas and facts that are used in an organised way in the internal and external branding strategy to promote the goals of the organisation. In this regard, the brand is associated with a wealthy lifestyle and is perceived to be established as a leading organisation among external stakeholders. Brand positioning activities that show participation in community development are considered significant for enhancing the perception of the brand as a caring entity. The research results reveal that promoting the brand's products and services involves unifying marketing communication tools and strategies in order to send a consistent, persuasive message to specific target markets, which will promote the goals of the organisation.

The research findings indicate that organisations use various internal marketing initiatives in an integrated manner for creating a positive perception of the brand among internal stakeholders. The research findings also indicate that online branding is most often used to create positive associations of the brand among internal stakeholders (see Annexure I). Corporate brand image formation is enhanced if internal stakeholders trust the information published on the internal website. Online communication enables management to initiate regular, structured and reliable communication to employees, provided that all employees have e-mail facilities. In addition, online communication can be used as a useful instrument as part of an interactive communication style to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters, to explain reasons for organisational decisions, and to communicate important organisational matters. In addition, online communication enables employees to give input regarding strategic matters, which encourages open, two-way communication among employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation. Furthermore, the use of internal print communication media is also regarded significant, to a lesser extent, in promoting the core values of the brand among internal stakeholders.

The findings of the responses to the CATI (see Annexure I) also indicate that internal branding is an imperative strategic measure to align employee behaviour with the organisation's objectives and values. Internal branding serves as a useful instrument to influence the behaviour which employees display towards internal and external customers

so they will act as brand ambassadors of the organisation. An effective internal branding strategy requires senior management to communicate the organisation's values, corporate vision and strategy to employees in an unambiguous manner to align their behaviour accordingly in order to reflect the distinct attributes of the organisation to external stakeholders. In addition, internal branding must be well managed to ensure the brand messages have the desired impact and yield positive results.

The findings of the Q sort (see Chapter 8, section 8.4) as well as the responses to the CATI (see Annexure I) reveal that brand engagement involves the process of harmonising the brand values with the organisation's employees, policies and processes in order to ensure that the organisation is able to meet customer needs effectively. In this regard, the research findings of the CATI reflect the need for the implementation of policies, procedures and structures to enhance effective internal communication.

8.8.2.2 Visual corporate brand identity elements

According to the findings of the responses to the CATI (see Annexure I), organisational communication is used as a tactical instrument to differentiate organisations from competitors and to gain competitive advantage. In this regard, organisations use integrated messages to increase stakeholders' awareness of an organisation and its products and services in order to achieve the organisation's marketing objectives. Furthermore, organisations follow an integrated strategy for communicating messages to stakeholders in order to evoke the necessary mental activities to combine the corporate brand identity elements in consumers' minds in the most effective information environment. In this regard, a style guide which determines the requirements for using the visual corporate brand identity elements in an integrated manner to communicate the brand's distinct qualities to stakeholders is significant in reinforcing the corporate brand image. The brand name and brand colours are deemed the most powerful visual corporate brand identity elements to convey a message on the brand's qualities. The logo is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation among internal stakeholders.

One statement grouped in the level of visual brand elements is regarded significant and insignificant by an equal number of factors. The statement deals with the image reflected by the visual corporate brand identity elements and is as follows:

Statement No 21: The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation.

This statement is regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation according to the perspectives included in one factor. However, this statement is also regarded significant by the perspectives in a different factor. In addition, the findings of the Q sort indicate that organisations follow an integrated strategy for communicating messages to stakeholders (see Chapter 8, section 8.4). The purpose of the integrated communication strategy is to evoke the necessary mental activities to combine the corporate brand identity elements in consumers' minds in the most effective information environment. This includes the use of select visual corporate brand identity elements according to requirements described in a style guide to communicate the brand's distinct qualities to stakeholders.

8.8.2.3 Integrated planned and unplanned communication

According to the findings of the responses to the telephone interview, a renowned brand integrates different communication media to position the brand as a leading organisation among stakeholders. In addition to electronic communication, findings of the responses to the CATI reveal that organisations also use a variety of print media and broadcast media.

Print media are a powerful instrument for establishing the brand favourably among internal and external stakeholders. The information provided in these media is deemed significant for reinforcing the principles followed for sound financial management of the organisation. Corporate brand image formation is dependent upon marketing brochures to expand the organisation's business. Print media are also an effective means of facilitating administrative functions in the organisation, resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction. In addition, print media serve as a marketing tool to create brand awareness and positive associations of the brand. In this way, the brand is established as a leading organisation among internal and external stakeholders. A company profile is deemed a significant marketing tool for expanding the organisation's business.

In addition to print media, a website that contains detailed product information is a prerequisite for corporate brand image formation. Corporate brand image formation is enhanced if the layout of the website enables clients to obtain information easily.

Three statements grouped in the level of integrated planned and unplanned communication are regarded significant and insignificant by an equal number of factors. The statements deal with the use of print and electronic communication and are as follows:

Statement No 27: The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover.

Statement No 29: The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily.

Statement No 30: The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry.

These statements are regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation according to the perspectives included in one or two factors. However, these statements are also regarded significant by the perspectives in one or two different factors. In addition, the findings of the Q sort indicate that organisations use integrated messages to increase consumers' awareness of an organisation and its products and services in order to achieve the organisation's marketing objectives (see Chapter 8, section 8.4). These findings are supported by the responses to Question 5 of the CATI which reveal that organisations use different media channels to promote different product brands depending on the purpose of the campaign. According to the findings of Question 6, organisations use integrated messages to increase consumers' awareness of an organisation and its products and services in order to achieve the organisation's marketing objectives.

In view of these findings, statements 27, 29 and 30 are regarded significant in corporate brand image formation as part of an integrated strategy for communicating messages to stakeholders.

In addition, the responses to the CATI have revealed that changes in the macro-environment require organisations to identify which media forms are most efficient for brand message delivery, as well as which media most effectively communicate with consumers.

8.8.3 Brand equity category

The elements of corporate brand identity that are deemed significant and which are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation by South African organisations included in the research according to the levels that constitute the *brand equity category* are explained as follows:

8.8.3.1 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty among existing and prospective clients depends on the extent to which the brand offers value for money and a variety of products.

8.8.3.2 Brand reputation

An esteemed brand with a long-standing history as a stable organisation contributes to corporate brand image formation. A brand with an established reputation is known for its reliability and demonstrates transparency in its business dealings, while its communication activities are aimed at enhancing consumers' trust in the brand. Furthermore, a reputable brand delivers on the brand promises made on service delivery in its marketing material. In addition, the organisation's brand drives promises to customers.

Three statements grouped in the level of integrated planned and unplanned communication are regarded significant and insignificant by an equal number of factors. The statements deal with establishing the organisation as a reliable brand and are as follows:

Statement No 41: The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery.

Statement No 44: The brand name enhances consumer trust.

Statement No 51: Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability.

These statements are regarded insignificant in corporate brand image formation according to the perspectives included in one or two factors. However, these statements are also regarded significant by the perspectives in one or two different factors. In addition, the findings of the responses to the online questionnaire reflect that a stable organisation is managed effectively according to ethical business standards to secure the viability of the brand. An expanding business is characteristic of dynamic, strong leadership, ethical business standards, good corporate governance and a challenging business environment. Furthermore, consumers are more likely to use a stable, esteemed brand that displays integrity in its business dealings. In view of these findings, statements 41, 44 and 51 are regarded significant in corporate brand image formation.

The research findings have also revealed that an established organisation provides career prospects and offers competitive working conditions to recruit and retain expertise which, in turn, enhances the brand's reputation. Transparency in the brand's business dealings is also demonstrated in the way in which employees' behaviour reflects an image of an ethical, respected organisation. Consistent employee behaviour towards internal and external stakeholders contributes to realising organisational objectives. As a result,

employees are required to act as brand ambassadors in every interaction with internal and external stakeholders. In order to align employees' behaviour, participants hold the view that employees must be involved in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery.

The participants embrace all the levels of the brand equity category, but three of the seven factors reject the following statement:

Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours.

The subjective perception held by participants who defined three of the seven factors is that an organisation need not offer extended business hours to solve clients' enquiries and complaints in order to enhance corporate brand image formation.

The information provided in Table 8.3 below provides a summary of the categories as well as the statements that are deemed significant in contributing to corporate brand image formation by South African organisations included in the research.

Table 8.3: Categories and statements that are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation

Category	Level	Statements that are deemed significant in contributing to corporate brand image formation
Transformational leadership and management	Brand philosophy	(S2) Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition. (S4) The organisation is too expensive.
	Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments	(S5) The organisation's financial affairs are well managed. (S6) The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry. (S7) Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs. (S14) Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures. (S15) Telephone calls are returned promptly. (S17) Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries.

Category	Level	Statements that are deemed significant in contributing to corporate brand image formation
	Stakeholder relations management	<p>(S11) Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction.</p> <p>(S16) The organisation's employer benefits help recruit skilled employees.</p>
Positioning and differentiation strategy	Internal and external branding	<p>(S19) Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle.</p> <p>(S20) The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development.</p> <p>(S33) The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values.</p> <p>(S36) Employees trust the information published on the internal website.</p>
	Visual corporate brand identity elements	<p>(S21) The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation.</p> <p>(S24) Employees are proud of the organisation's logo.</p> <p>(S25) The brand colours symbolise dynamism.</p> <p>(S26) The brand name symbolises stability.</p> <p>(S28) The organisation's style guide on its corporate brand identity reinforces the image of excellence.</p>
	Integrated planned and unplanned communication	<p>(S22) The organisation's print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness.</p> <p>(S23) The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele.</p> <p>(S27) The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover.</p> <p>(S29) The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily.</p> <p>(S30) The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry.</p>

Category	Level	Statements that are deemed significant in contributing to corporate brand image formation
		<p>(S31) Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile.</p> <p>(S34) The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs.</p> <p>(S35) The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration.</p>
Brand equity	Brand reputation	<p>(S41) The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery.</p> <p>(S42) Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material.</p> <p>(S44) The brand name enhances consumer trust.</p> <p>(S45) The organisation clearly explains the terms and conditions of its services.</p> <p>(S46) Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation.</p> <p>(S47) The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers.</p> <p>(S49) The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material.</p> <p>(S51) Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability.</p> <p>(S53) The organisation's brand drives promises to customers.</p>
	Brand loyalty	<p>(S39) Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money.</p> <p>(S40) Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings.</p>

The information in the above table indicates that all three categories according to which the Q sample was structured are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation, namely *transformational leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as *brand equity*. These categories are perceived as absolute categories

for corporate brand image formation, since all the levels constituting each of these three categories are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation.

8.9 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE THE INDIVIDUAL ABSOLUTE CATEGORIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LEVELS

The consolidated findings of this study provide insight into the relevance of each category in corporate brand image formation. These findings indicate which aspects of the three categories constituting the Q sample are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. By relating the findings to the general theory of the study, it is determined which of the categories are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation by the organisations defining the seven factors.

The three categories constituting the Q sample, namely *transformational leadership and management*, *positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as *brand equity* are perceived to be absolute categories that are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation.

8.9.1 Category one: transformational leadership and management

According to the consolidated findings of this study, the category of *transformational leadership and management* is perceived as an absolute category for enhancing corporate brand image formation. The findings of the Q study for the *transformational leadership and management* category, the online questionnaire and the CATI coincide with the general theory of the study which was developed from an extensive literature review of the research topic.

The findings indicate that the level of brand philosophy included in the category of leadership and management is perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation. These findings for the category of *transformational leadership and management* coincide with discussions in the literature maintaining that the brand philosophy forms the most fundamental part of the corporate image management process (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81-82). *Brand philosophy* is formulated according to the unique qualities of the organisation. Consequently, a well-articulated brand philosophy will enable the organisation to reflect its actual nature as the complete set of the organisational characteristics (De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81-82). These unique attributes form the basis from which an organisation's corporate brand identity is developed and include the organisation's product offering, culture and services.

The brand philosophy constitutes the mission and vision statements which represent goals that the organisation aims to achieve in the long term. These involve decisions on implementing strategies and values that will influence employees' behaviour to achieve the organisational objectives. An effective vision exemplifies the core ideology of the organisation. The mission and vision statements serve as prescriptive measures that provide knowledge to govern employees' choices about strategies, customers, products, services and the market in which the organisation operates. In addition, the mission and vision serve as guidelines for employees' behaviour according to which they should interpret and realise the corporate principles for the various areas of business activity and functions. The verbal articulation of the brand's purpose enables employees to understand how their jobs contribute to the organisation's success (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony 2001:34-35).

The findings concur with arguments by scholars in the field of branding that a pricing structure based on the organisation's vision of providing affordable product and service offerings to consumers across all income levels enhances corporate brand image formation (Abratt 1989:70; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81-82). In addition, the findings are in accordance with arguments in the literature that the added value of the brand offered in terms of financial benefits enhances corporate brand image formation (Keller 2003). The findings for the category of *transformational leadership and management* also coincide with discussions in the literature maintaining that the business strategy applied for effective functioning in the micro- and macro-environments enhances corporate brand image formation (Kuei 1999:784; Dev 2008; Ghodeswar 2008:7; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81).

Furthermore, the findings for the category of *transformational leadership and management* coincide with discussions in the literature maintaining that employees' behaviour towards consumers contributes significantly to corporate image formation as a result of the increased interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders (Paswan et al 2005:4; Andreassen & Lanseng 2010:213). In addition, a strong corporate brand identity facilitates the recruitment of qualified, talented employees who are potentially committed, because such organisations provide greater opportunities for the realisation of personal goals (Buckingham 2009:50). Employees who have these competencies possess the necessary skill to build good relationships with customers (Ind & Bjerke 2007:141). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004:502) refer to this process as employer branding, which involves the differentiation of an organisation's features as an employer from those of its competitors by considering the total set of tangible and intangible reward features which an

organisation offers its employees (Edwards 2010:7). It is assumed that if organisations carefully manage their “employment experience” this would help create brand value (Edwards 2010:18) and influence employees’ common perceptions of the central, enduring and distinctive characteristics of an organisation (Albert & Whetten 2003).

It follows from the above discussion that the business strategy should provide for activities aimed at reinforcing relationships with stakeholders, as this aspect constitutes an essential element of the brand building process. As a result of commoditisation of the traditional marketing mix elements, organisations increasingly realise that establishing firm relationships with customers and other key stakeholders is the most valuable activity in the brand building process. Building stakeholder relationships creates loyalty, which contributes to the economic viability of the organisation, as it ensures long-term financial performance (Brink & Berndt 2004:32). Positive customer experience is proven to be an important factor influencing consumers’ brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and ultimately brand loyalty. Creating a more positive customer experience could therefore result in more favourable reactions of customers to a brand and increased value of the brand in the future (Biedenbach & Marell 2010:455-456).

The consolidated findings of this study are in accordance with the overall theory of the study, since all levels of *transformational leadership and management* are deemed significant for enhancing corporate brand image formation with regard to the levels of *brand philosophy, the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments* as well as *stakeholder relations management* as explained in detail in Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.5.

8.9.2 Category two: positioning and differentiation strategy

According to the consolidated findings of this study, the category of *positioning and differentiation strategy* is perceived as an absolute category for enhancing corporate brand image formation. The findings of the Q study for the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*, the online questionnaire and the CATI coincide with the general theory of the study. The findings indicate that using a variety of visual corporate brand identity elements as well as internal and external communication media in a planned, integrated manner creates awareness and positive associations of the brand, which enhance corporate brand image formation (Keller 2009c:141-143; 146; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:315; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:851). The *positioning and differentiation strategy category* creates awareness and positive associations of the brand by using a variety of visual corporate brand identity elements and communication media in a

planned, integrated manner. In this regard, corporate design is perceived as a mechanism aimed at achieving specific economic goals. By creating a unique corporate design, the organisation establishes itself in the market by means of clearly distinctive visual characteristics. These visual characteristics enable the organisation to differentiate itself from its competitors by creating a basis to market its products and services to the relevant target publics.

Marketing communications activities create awareness of the brand by providing clues to establish a set of associations with the brand image in consumers' memory (Keller 2007). A brand constitutes both emotional and rational or functional elements. Therefore, brands are associated with specific values that meet consumers' functional and symbolic needs. Advertising that promotes the brand's benefits at an emotional or symbolic level is primarily aimed at creating a particular personality or character for the brand in consumers' minds by connecting the brand to specific associations or values. In addition, Keller (2009c:153-154) emphasises the need for an understanding of the role of different communication media and how communication programmes complement and substitute one another. Furthermore, effective IMC requires a clear picture as to how different communication options should be combined to create enhanced effects. Ultimately, comprehensive, concrete guidelines are required to develop fully integrated communication programmes to ensure that the most suitable marketing communication options are used to create maximum interaction effects for each marketing communication option that is employed. All corporate activities, marketing mix activities and marketing communications fulfil a meaningful purpose in the corporate communication process (Keller 2009c:153-154).

Marketing communication messages that convey a consistent meaning are a prerequisite for building trust and ensuring uniform stakeholder perceptions. Consistency in the strategic management of an organisation's communication means the meanings transmitted by the messages are appropriate for the various audiences for which they are intended. Moreover, consistency is applied in the way the organisation identifies and positions its brand, how it presents its corporate values, and how products perform. In this regard, coherence between internal and external communication is an essential strategic aspect in the development of competitive advantage, since messages characterised by a consistent style and quality create unity between the various forms of communication which enhances the effectiveness of the corporate brand (Dolphin & Fan 2000:104; Hawabhay et al 2009:14).

The consolidated findings of this study are in accordance with the overall theory of the study, since all aspects of the positioning and differentiation strategy are deemed significant for enhancing corporate brand image formation with regard to the levels of *internal and external branding*, *visual corporate brand identity elements* as well as *integrated planned and unplanned communication* as explained in detail in Chapter 5, sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4.

8.9.3 Category three: brand equity

According to the findings of the Q study, *brand equity* is perceived as an absolute category for corporate brand image formation. The findings for the *brand equity category* concur with the overall theory of the study in that coherence between internal and external communication is an essential strategic aspect in the development of competitive advantage. Messages characterised by a consistent style and quality create unity between the various forms of communication which enhance the effectiveness of the corporate brand. If communication reveals transparency and honesty in an organisation's business dealings, shareholders are enabled to gain a more informed understanding of the organisation's operations. In this manner, they can ascribe a better reputation to the organisation. The corporate communication process is focused on managing the impressions created among an organisation's constituencies in order to enhance the organisation's reputation (Burke 1998:8; Forman & Argenti 2005:248-249; Bick et al 2008:17). Brand equity occurs when consumers regard a brand as distinctive in some important and positive ways. Although consumers initially link a brand with the product it makes, a series of attachments may come to be associated with the product through advertising, usage experience, and other activities and influences over time. These attachments and associations exist over and beyond the objective product. Since a brand represents an organisation's guarantee of satisfaction to customers, the nature of associations about the brand in consumers' minds has important consequences for the business prospects which the brand can achieve in the marketplace.

The findings of the Q study are in accordance with the general theory of the study, since all aspects of brand equity are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation with regard to the levels of *brand loyalty* and *brand reputation* as explained in detail in Chapter 5, section 5.3.7.

In addition to these three absolute categories for corporate brand image formation, a fourth category was identified which is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation based

on the results of the online questionnaire and the CATI. In the next section, the fourth category is briefly explained.

8.10 IDENTIFICATION OF AN ADDITIONAL ABSOLUTE CATEGORY FOR CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

The findings of this study indicate a gap in the literature with regard to the use of specific unifying marketing communication tools and strategies to promote the goals of the organisation. The responses to the online questionnaire and the CATI (see Annexure H and Annexure I) have revealed a need for more direct, personal communication between internal stakeholders to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives used in the organisation. In view of these findings, a fourth category is identified. This category is deemed significant in corporate brand image formation based on the research results. The category is named *employee orientation and mentorship* and constitutes the levels of corporate behaviour alignment through personal and interactive communication, employee empowerment through management interaction and employee involvement in strategy formulation through social media. This category is explained below according to its various levels based on the findings of the online questionnaire and the CATI.

8.10.1 Employee orientation and mentorship

The fourth category, namely *employee orientation and mentorship* that is deemed significant and which is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation by the majority of South African organisations is explained as follows according to its various levels:

8.10.1.1 *Corporate behaviour alignment through personal and interactive communication*

The internal communication practices used by the participating organisations are mainly focused on an interactive communication approach and an open-door policy to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. The findings of the responses to the online questionnaire indicate that internal branding practices should focus on the unique features of the organisation as a leading brand. Organisations aim to maintain open dialogue with employees to establish the brand values among their internal stakeholders in order to align corporate behaviour. An interactive communication style also facilitates organisational administration. To ensure employees' behaviour reflects a uniform brand message, the findings of the research emphasise that internal marketing constitutes a fundamental aspect of an organisation's overall marketing strategy. Internal marketing

initiatives must be aligned with the brand philosophy to encourage employees to act as brand ambassadors by being passionate about the brand and living the brand values of integrity and customer focus. Online communication, specifically social media, enables employees to give input regarding strategic matters and hence encourages open, two-way communication between employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation.

8.10.1.2 Employee empowerment through management interaction

The research findings reveal a need for more personal communication and better communication and feedback between management and employees to ensure consistent communication (see Annexure H). More frequent, structured and direct communication is required to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. The responses to the online questionnaire indicate that employees view internal communication as a management initiative. Managers should therefore consciously create opportunities for more informal communication between themselves and subordinates to promote interpersonal relationships and teambuilding. Management should be more visible and accessible and communicate the organisation's objectives to all employees. In addition, meetings which include employees at more junior levels are required in which they are empowered to contribute to the discussions. Internal communication should focus on building open, trusting and mutual relationships. Managers should actively listen to staff and establish an environment that facilitates and encourages personal communication in order to empower employees so they have the required skills and knowledge to contribute to achieving the organisational goals. Implementing the suggested internal communication practices will help internal stakeholders understand the strategic direction of their organisation.

Communication which is used to involve employees in strategy formulation enables them to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. This need expressed by participants supports their viewpoint that organisations that align all organisational activities and communication are better able to create and enhance internal synergy. The need for regular, clear and direct communication also indicates that the more effective employees perceive the organisation's communication practices to be, the more positive the image they will have of the organisation.

In addition to direct, personal interaction, online branding is often used to create positive associations of the brand among internal stakeholders (see Annexure I).

8.10.1.3 Employee involvement in strategy formulation through social media

Online communication is identified as a useful instrument as part of an interactive communication style to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters, to explain reasons for organisational decisions, and to communicate important organisational matters. In addition, online communication, specifically social media, enables employees to give input regarding strategic matters, thus encouraging open, two-way communication between employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation.

8.11 REVISED CATEGORIES FOR CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

Following the consolidated findings of this study, all three categories comprising the Q structure are identified as absolute categories for enhancing corporate brand image formation. A category is classified as an absolute category if all levels of the category as identified in the structured Q sample (see Chapter 7, section 7.5) are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation according to the research results. In view of the findings of the online questionnaire and the CATI, a fourth category is identified as deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. These four categories are elucidated below:

8.11.1 Category one: transformational leadership and management

According to the consolidated findings of this study, the category of *transformational leadership and management* is perceived as an absolute category for enhancing corporate brand image formation. The findings of the Q study for the *transformational leadership and management* category, the online questionnaire and the CATI coincide with the general theory of the study which was developed from an extensive literature review of the research topic. The findings indicate that the level of brand philosophy included in the category of leadership and management is perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation. These findings for the category of *transformational leadership and management* coincide with discussions in the literature maintaining that the brand philosophy forms the most fundamental part of the corporate image management process (Tosti & Jackson 2000:3; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81-82). The findings concur with arguments by scholars in the field of branding that a pricing structure based on the organisation's vision of providing affordable product and service offerings to consumers across all income levels enhances corporate brand image formation (Abratt 1989:70; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81-82). In addition, the findings are in accordance with arguments in the literature that the added value of the brand

offered in terms of financial benefits enhances corporate brand image formation (Keller 2003). The findings for the category of *transformational leadership and management* also coincide with discussions in the literature maintaining that the business strategy applied for effective functioning in the micro- and macro-environments enhances corporate brand image formation (Kuei 1999:784; Dev 2008; Ghodeswar 2008:7; De Chernatony & Cottam 2009:81). Furthermore, the findings for the category of *transformational leadership and management* coincide with discussions in the literature maintaining that employees' behaviour towards consumers contributes significantly to corporate image formation as a result of the increased interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders (Paswan et al 2005:4; Andreassen & Lanseng 2010:213).

The consolidated findings of this study are in accordance with the overall theory of the study, since all levels of *transformational leadership and management* are deemed significant for enhancing corporate brand image formation with regard to the levels of *brand philosophy, the business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments* as well as *stakeholder relations management* as explained in detail in Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.5.

8.11.2 Category two: positioning and differentiation strategy

According to the consolidated findings of this study, the category of *positioning and differentiation strategy* is perceived as an absolute category for enhancing corporate brand image formation. The findings of the Q study for the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*, the online questionnaire and the CATI coincide with the general theory of the study. The findings indicate that using a variety of visual corporate brand identity elements as well as internal and external communication media in a planned, integrated manner creates awareness and positive associations of the brand, which enhance corporate brand image formation (Keller 2009c:141-143; 146; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006:315; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006:851).

The consolidated findings of this study are in accordance with the overall theory of the study, since all aspects of the positioning and differentiation strategy are deemed significant for enhancing corporate brand image formation with regard to the levels of *internal and external branding, visual corporate brand identity elements* as well as *integrated planned and unplanned communication* as explained in detail in Chapter 5, sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4.

8.11.3 Category three: brand equity

According to the findings of the Q study, *brand equity* is perceived as an absolute category for corporate brand image formation. The findings for the *brand equity category* concur with the overall theory of the study in that coherence between internal and external communication is an essential strategic aspect in the development of competitive advantage. Messages characterised by a consistent style and quality create unity between the various forms of communication which enhance the effectiveness of the corporate brand. If communication reveals transparency and honesty in an organisation's business dealings, shareholders are enabled to gain a more informed understanding of the organisation's operations. In this manner, they can ascribe a better reputation to the organisation. The corporate communication process is focused on managing the impressions created among an organisation's constituencies in order to enhance the organisation's reputation (Burke 1998:8; Forman & Argenti 2005:248-249; Bick et al 2008:17).

The findings of the Q study are in accordance with the general theory of the study, since all aspects of brand equity are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation with regard to the levels of *brand loyalty* and *brand reputation* as explained in detail in Chapter 5, section 5.3.7.

8.11.4 Category four: employee orientation and mentorship

According to the research findings, the internal communication practices used by the participating organisations focus mainly on an interactive communication approach and an open-door policy to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. Organisations aim to maintain open dialogue with employees to establish the brand values among their internal stakeholders in order to align corporate behaviour. Personal engagement between employees provides a forum for regular feedback about the goals and objectives of the organisation, new developments, activities and organisational achievements. Information obtained in this way enables employees to fully understand the values of their brand and to know which behaviour is expected of them.

The research findings have also revealed a need for more personal communication and better communication and feedback between management and employees to ensure consistent communication. More frequent, structured and direct communication is required to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. The responses to the online questionnaire indicate that employees view internal communication as a management initiative. Internal communication serves as a means of cultivating a culture of innovation,

establishing interpersonal relationships between employees so they will treat their co-workers as internal clients and offering benefits that distinguish the organisation as an employer of choice. In addition, communication should be used by management to help employees gain better understanding of the brand strategy (see Annexure H). In addition to direct, personal interaction, online branding is often used to create positive associations of the brand among internal stakeholders (see Annexure I). Online communication enables management to initiate regular, structured and reliable communication to employees, provided that all employees have e-mail facilities.

Furthermore, employees must be involved in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. Online communication is identified as a useful instrument as part of an interactive communication style to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters, to explain reasons for organisational decisions, and to communicate important organisational matters. In addition, online communication, and social media in particular, enables employees to give input regarding strategic matters, which encourages open, two-way communication among employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation.

8.12 SUMMARY

In this chapter the findings of the Q study, online questionnaire and CATI were discussed and explained. The strategy followed to calculate factor scores for the Q study was also discussed. In addition, data analysis of the online questionnaire and the CATI was explained. The themes identified for each of the questions included in the online questionnaire and the interview schedule were indicated and discussed. Lastly, the theoretical importance of the consolidated findings of this study in terms of perception of corporate brand image formation was elucidated and supported by well-researched substantiation in the literature.

In Chapter 9, a theoretical framework is proposed for the development of a measuring instrument for corporate brand identity elements that are perceived significant in corporate brand image formation based on the consolidated findings for the study. The findings of the study are further assessed considering the objectives of the study (see Chapter 1) to determine the extent to which the objectives of the study have been achieved. Recommendations are also made for testing the theoretical framework for developing a measuring instrument to assess the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In the final chapter of this thesis a theoretical framework is proposed for the development of a measuring instrument for corporate brand identity elements that are perceived significant in corporate brand image formation based on the consolidated findings for the study. In this way, Chapter 9 highlights the contribution to both theory and application represented by this thesis. Recommendations are also made for testing the proposed theoretical framework for developing a measuring instrument to assess the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. Finally, the extent to which the main objectives of the study have been achieved as well as the limitations of the study are briefly discussed.

9.2 PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING INSTRUMENT FOR CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION

In this section, a theoretical framework is proposed for the development of a measuring instrument for corporate brand identity elements that are perceived significant in corporate brand image formation. The proposed theoretical framework is based on the consolidated findings for the three absolute categories, their levels and dimensions according to the results of the Q study, the online questionnaire and the CATI. In addition, the fourth category that was identified from the research results is also included in the theoretical framework. Therefore, the proposed theoretical framework comprises the four absolute categories identified from the consolidated findings of the study. These are *transformational leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy, employee orientation and mentorship, and brand equity*. The purpose of providing a theoretical framework for the development of a measuring instrument is twofold: to enable organisations to assess the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among stakeholder groups, as well as to determine to which extent there is a gap between its corporate brand identity and anticipated corporate brand image.

The categories in the theoretical framework are connected, since each category involves the production of specific functions and benefits which can be transmitted to the next

category where further value is added. Furthermore, the categories work in synergy in that the successful execution of each category is a prerequisite for effectively controlling the elements in each category.

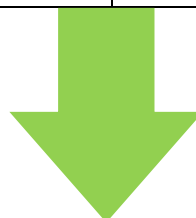
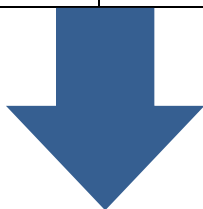
The theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 9.1 below, followed by a brief discussion of the four absolute categories comprising the theoretical framework.

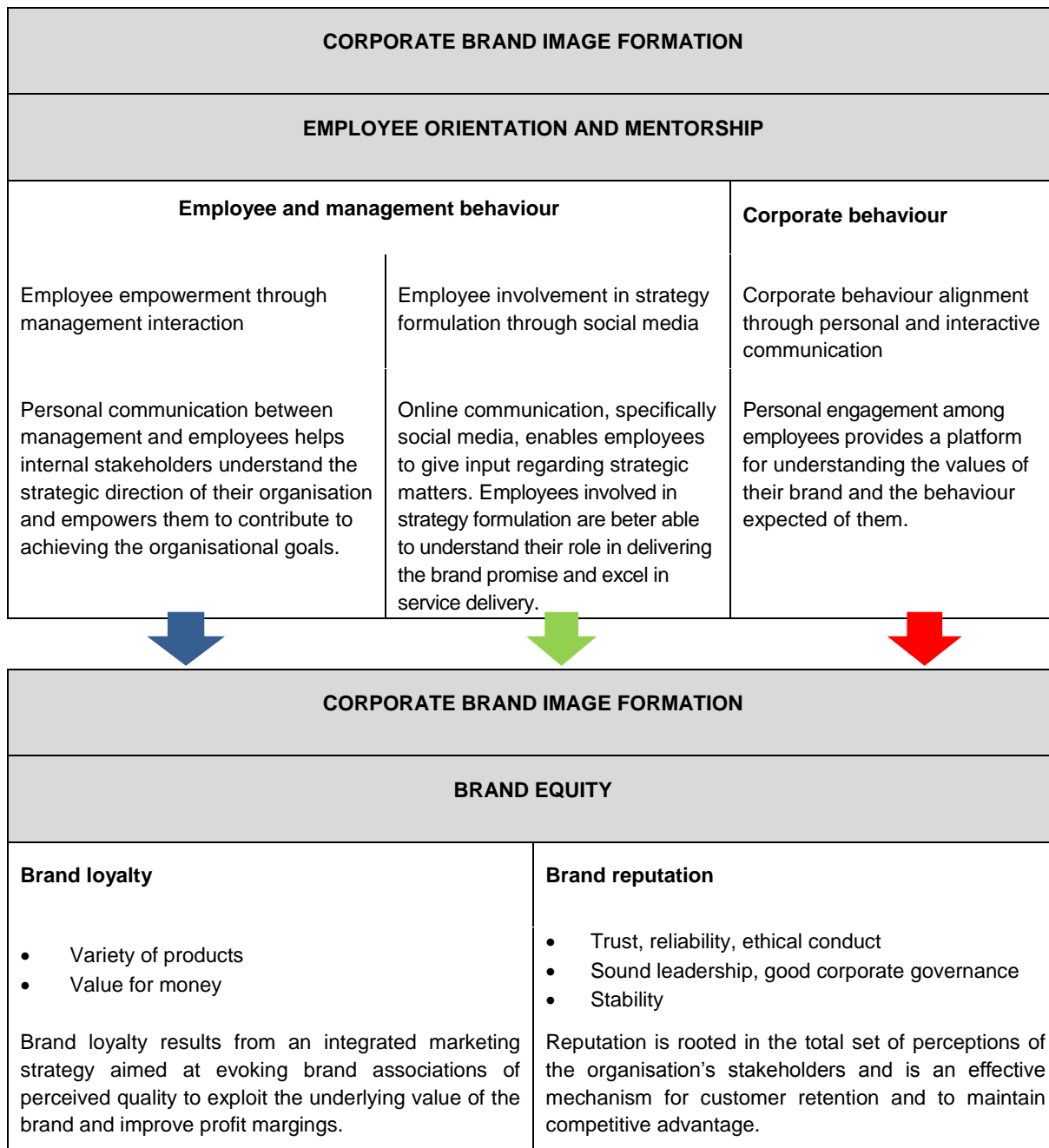
Table 9.1: Proposed theoretical framework of corporate brand identity elements deemed significant in corporate brand image formation

CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION		
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT		
<p>Brand philosophy</p> <p>Brand personality, brand mission and brand vision</p> <p>Brand purpose</p> <p>Brand objectives</p> <p>Brand values</p> <p>An effective vision is purposeful to all organisational stakeholders in terms of financial benefit.</p>	<p>Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments</p> <p>External and internal environmental influences</p> <p>External environmental influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase price and price promotions • Advanced technology <p>Internal environmental influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound financial management of the brand • Quality control management • Product and service delivery • Administrative efficiency <p>Effective organisational management and administration requires measures to efficiently manage the influences of the internal and external environments in which the organisation functions.</p>	<p>Stakeholder relations management</p> <p>Internal relationships management</p> <p>Human resources practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive conditions of service, for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration • Training • Career opportunities • Advanced technology <p>Meeting external customers' expectations effectively requires management to maintain good internal relationships and to enhance internal service delivery by means of human resources practices to recruit and retain a skilled workforce.</p>



CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE FORMATION		
POSITIONING AND DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGY		
<p>Internal and external branding</p> <p>Creating brand messages that communicate the brand essence to evoke brand awareness, brand knowledge and brand associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The brand represents a lifestyle • The brand is associated with involvement in CCI initiatives • The organisation uses reliable sources of information to promote the core brand values <p>Creating distinctiveness of the organisation in the minds of internal and external stakeholders by evoking strategic associations through appropriate marketing mix strategies based on an effective corporate branding strategy in which aspects of the organisation's vision and strategy are combined to communicate a well-reflected and shared idea of the corporate brand identity among all internal and external stakeholders in order to build the business and effectively meet the intended outcome.</p>	<p>Visual corporate brand identity elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand name • Logo • Brand colours <p>A style guide that prescribes the use of select visual corporate brand identity elements and elements of corporate branding in an integrated manner to reflect the brand qualities and the extent to which these meet consumers' needs in a condensed form.</p>	<p>Integrated planned and unplanned communication (IC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal communication • External communication • Digital communication <p>An integrated communication strategy that involves online and off-line communication media which contains consistent, reliable, trustworthy information appropriate for the various target audiences promotes the brand values in relation to the requirements and needs of the various stakeholder groups.</p>





Transformational leadership and management. Successful execution of this category is a prerequisite for the successful execution of the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*, *employee orientation and mentorship category* and *brand equity category*.

Positioning and differentiation strategy. Successful execution of this category depends on the successful execution of the *transformational leadership and management category* and is a prerequisite for the successful execution of the *employee orientation and mentorship category* and *brand equity category*.

Employee orientation and mentorship. Successful execution of this category depends on the successful execution of the *transformational leadership and management category* and the *positioning and differentiation strategy category*, and is a prerequisite for the successful execution of the *brand equity category*.

9.2.1 Transformational leadership and management category

A pricing structure based on the organisation's vision to provide affordable product and service offerings to consumers across all income levels is perceived as significant to enhance corporate brand image formation. A skilled workforce is also regarded a measure that contributes to corporate brand image formation. In addition, corporate brand image formation relies on effective management and administration of the brand. Administrative efficiency is considered significant in corporate brand image formation. Modern technology also appears to serve as a tool for enhancing corporate brand image formation. Transformational leadership and management comprise business philosophy, business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments and stakeholder relations management, which are explained below:

9.2.1.1 Business philosophy

A well-considered business philosophy requires management to formulate a vision and mission that is unique and based on the core attributes of the organisation. A well-articulated vision embodies the organisational values and provides a framework for decision making, since it gives direction to the organisation and guides management towards a common goal. Core values that are aligned with the organisation's promises are guiding themes to establish a specific brand personality among the organisation's stakeholders. The vision serves as common point of reference for all internal and external stakeholders: an effective vision is specific enough to define a definite business objective that guides management towards a common goal, but also general enough to appeal to a diverse group of stakeholders. In this regard, a pricing structure based on the organisation's vision to provide affordable product and service offerings to consumers across all income levels is deemed to enhance corporate brand image formation.

In addition, a vision that is communicated to the organisation's various stakeholders in a way that reflects the value that the vision creates for them enhances corporate brand image formation. All strategic business decisions varying from product-related matters to internal or external communication within organisations are based on well-established core values. These brand values are communicated to the organisation's different stakeholder groups by means of a communication programme initiated by management. To ensure the various stakeholder groups derive meaning from these values, a distinct set of values which is relevant to each specific audience is formulated, based on the vision. As a result, core values that are aligned with the organisation's promises are guiding

themes to establish a specific brand personality among the organisation's stakeholders. Therefore, consumers should perceive the vision in terms of their experiences with the organisation, its products and service offerings. In this regard, a vision which is purposeful to all organisational stakeholders in terms of financial benefit is deemed to enhance corporate brand image formation.

9.2.1.2 Business strategy for the micro- and macro-environments

The strategic planning for effective corporate brand image formation requires a sound knowledge of the organisation's business strategy. Corporate brand image formation is a complex process, incorporating external as well as internal drivers. The organisation's business strategy is a long-term process based on its mission, vision and core competencies and is aimed at developing the organisation's overall competitive advantage in the marketplace. As such, the business strategy is a significant factor in the financial performance of an organisation. In this regard, a business strategy based on decisions taken by the organisation's leadership to meet the business objectives of sound financial management of the brand and expanding the organisation's business contributes to corporate brand image formation. In addition, a competent management team who possesses the necessary business acumen to realise the vision of sound financial management of the brand in order to ensure its sustained viability is regarded significant in corporate brand image formation.

An effective business strategy also provides direction for operational positioning of the brand. It requires management to implement deliberate and proactive measures to develop the organisation's competitive position based on its operational dimensions rather than promotional efforts. Selecting an appropriate business strategy is influenced by the external environment, such as availability of internal resources and core competences, and the expectations of various internal and external stakeholders. In this regard, the implementation of quality control measures, including modern technology, for connecting strategy execution and strategy adjustment is regarded significant in corporate brand image formation. Administrative efficiency as a means to enhance service delivery is also significant in corporate brand image formation.

9.2.1.3 Stakeholder relations management

Stakeholder relations management depends on effective employee and management behaviour, corporate behaviour as well as maintaining internal and external stakeholder relationships and industrial relations.

Effective stakeholder relations management is aimed at delivering the highest gains to all stakeholders and corporate publics. Brand experiences that are designed, influenced, managed and monitored across all stakeholder groups build strong corporate brands and reputations, resulting in effective stakeholder relationships. A successful organisation is responsive to the needs of its internal and external stakeholders and meets their expectations. In addition, it assesses and understands their needs and expectations continually and anticipates their changeable expectations.

Employees play an important role in influencing a brand's relationship with its customers and other stakeholders. As a result, meeting external customers' expectations effectively requires management to maintain good internal relationships and to enhance internal service delivery. As such, stakeholder relations management depends on the organisation's management style, human resource management practices and cross-functional coordination. In this regard, tools to enhance employees' skills and competence help them meet the required work standards are regarded significant in corporate brand image formation. In this manner, consistent corporate behaviour is established as a means of maintaining effective stakeholder relationships. Offering competitive employer benefits, including a rewards system is perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation, since it enables organisations to recruit employees who have the necessary skill and expertise for a specific position. By offering competitive conditions of service and employer benefits in the form of financial remuneration and opportunities for career development, the organisation is associated with a leading, trustworthy brand that values its employees. In addition, providing a pleasant working environment with advanced technology enhances product and service delivery, reduces operating costs and increases customer satisfaction. Positive employee relations supported by solid leadership establish a secure working environment that promotes the effective execution of the branding strategy.

9.2.2 Positioning and differentiation strategy category

The second aspect of corporate brand image formation that builds on strategic management of the brand is corporate expression. Positioning and differentiation strategy constitutes the decisions regarding internal and external branding, as well as the use of visual corporate brand identity elements and integrated planned and unplanned communication to ensure the commitment of organisational stakeholders to realise the brand promise. These are explained below:

9.2.2.1 Internal and external branding

Internal and external branding is focused on creating distinctiveness of the organisation in the minds of customers and other stakeholders. Creating a unique position in the marketplace requires a well-run promotion campaign following an effective corporate branding strategy, which increases the organisation's profitability and sales, and reduces its costs. In this regard, effective internal and external branding as an element to enhance corporate brand image formation requires appropriate marketing mix strategies aimed at changing customer perceptions, reinforcing attitudes, and creating loyalty. This is done by evoking strategic associations through various means of communication.

Internal and external branding as an element of corporate brand identity depends on strategic alignment in which aspects of the organisation's vision and strategy are combined to build the business. Consequently, corporate brand image formation requires an integrated corporate branding strategy to communicate a well-reflected and shared idea of the corporate brand identity among all internal and external stakeholders in order to effectively meet the intended outcome. Therefore, an effective branding strategy involves the actual production and delivery of the products and services, their accompanying messages to consumers, and the actual product or service experience. As such, corporate brand image formation relies on an aligned, relevant brand promise that will meet stakeholders' functional and/or emotional needs. In this regard, branding initiatives are aimed at creating a network of associations of the most distinct attributes of the brand in consumers' minds in order to establish and reinforce the brand. An effective marketing strategy is aimed at changing customer perceptions, reinforcing attitudes, and creating loyalty by using brand associations strategically to create positive feelings towards the brand and to establish the brand in the dominant position in consumers' minds. In this regard, a brand associated with a specific lifestyle is perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation. In addition, an organisation's involvement in corporate social responsibility programmes is perceived to enhance its corporate brand image among internal and external stakeholders.

An internal and external branding strategy develops brands at organisational level, which requires managing interactions with multiple stakeholders. Although marketing programmes establish favourable and unique associations in stakeholders' minds, these associations are also controlled through direct experience, brand information, word of mouth, assumptions of the brand itself and employee behaviour. An effective internal and external branding strategy requires management to mobilise and train the entire

organisation to deliver the brand promise expected by stakeholders. In this regard, internal organisational alignment requires a formal, well-defined business strategy, developed according to a uniform brand philosophy. Setting a business direction for the brand also involves creating a shared knowledge and understanding of brand values among employees. Employees who are familiar with the values of the brand understand the organisational strategy too. As such, internal branding is aimed at encouraging employees to realise the strategic decision to achieve competitive advantage by rendering high-level customer service. This enables employees to live the brand in executing their duties and to be true ambassadors of the brand. As such, internal and external branding relies on the alignment between the strategic goals developed by top management (strategic vision), the behaviour of employees based on their knowledge of the organisation's strategic direction (corporate culture) and external stakeholders' perception of the corporate brand (corporate brand image). In this regard, an effective internal and external branding strategy in which strategic goals are aligned with the corporate culture and the perceptions of key stakeholders enhances corporate brand image formation. In addition, an integrated communication strategy in which the organisation promotes the brand values in relation to the requirements and needs of the various stakeholder groups is perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation. In this regard, internal communication media that communicate information that is reliable and trustworthy and which promotes the core brand values are perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation among internal stakeholders.

9.2.2.2 Visual corporate brand identity elements

Corporate brand image formation relies on a visual corporate brand identity that reflects the essence of the organisation – its culture, aims and business objectives – and eventually comes to represent the organisation. Using the various visual corporate brand identity elements in an integrated manner enables the organisation to transmit information on the most distinct attributes of the brand's products and services to the target audience, thereby contributing to positioning and differentiating the organisation in the marketplace and enhancing its competitive advantage. An effective visual corporate brand identity is aimed at creating a valuable message that is intentionally transformed to target customers by evoking brand-specific associations through various means of communication. A unique and well-communicated visual identity that enables stakeholders to associate an experience with a specific brand enhances the organisation's reputation. In addition, a well-planned visual corporate brand identity represents a promise that is designed to address both employees and external stakeholders and matches the organisation's

strategy. As such, an effective visual corporate brand identity combines elements of corporate branding with the visual corporate brand identity to assure consumers of the qualities of the brand's products and services in a condensed form. In this regard, an organisational identity that reflects a distinct message on the brand properties and the extent to which these meet consumers' needs is perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation. Furthermore, corporate brand image formation relies on using select visual corporate brand identity elements to create an awareness of the brand's manifestations and contribute to achieving the organisation's marketing objectives. A brand name, logo and brand colours that incorporate a distinct set of values reflecting the competencies of the brand which address the functional and emotional needs of customers are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. In addition, an organisation's style guide on its corporate brand identity reinforces the image of excellence. Building a coherent corporate brand image requires a distinct visual corporate identity which is used as part of total corporate communications to communicate all the facets of the corporate strategy to the relevant target markets in order to reflect the actual identity of the organisation. In this manner, a distinct visual corporate identity used as an element of the corporate brand positioning strategy is credible in that it reflects the distinguishing characteristics of the organisation, durable in order to be maintained in the long term, and meaningful in order to be valued by customers and stakeholders for its emotional qualities.

9.2.2.3 Integrated planned and unplanned communication

Successful corporate brand image formation is reliant on developing satisfactory integrative communication systems within the organisation. In addition, corporate communications directed at internal and external stakeholders that are aligned with the business identity contribute to corporate brand image formation. Consistency in the strategic management of an organisation's communication requires the use of a range of messages appropriate for the organisation's various target audiences, where the corporate and product brand propositions are based on a single, uniform strategy. To this end, effective corporate communication requires a total communication approach according to which all communications are combined to reflect the organisation as a corporate entity in a coherent and synergistic way. In addition, consistency in communication media resulting in a uniform corporate brand expression internally and externally enhances transparency and organisational credibility, since it reduces the chances of conflict, which increases the profile of the organisation. In this regard, an integrated communication strategy that enables organisations to evoke the necessary

mental activities to combine the corporate brand identity elements in consumers' minds is perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation. Furthermore, brand messages that adequately reflect contemporary reality and accurately describe the corporate brand identity are perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation.

Communication media can achieve different objectives, and have strengths and weaknesses. As a result, an effective IMC strategy in which different communication media are combined to complement each other is perceived to be significant in corporate brand image formation. Therefore, an effective integrated communication strategy combines communication channels in a way that maximises their joint effects. Promoting the brand's products and services involves unifying marketing communication tools and strategies to convey the distinguishing attributes of the brand in order to send a consistent, persuasive message to specific target markets to promote the goals of the organisation. Similarly, a well-integrated communication channel strategy aimed at maximising coverage and minimising conflict in a way that increases consumers' propensity to use the brand is perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation.

9.2.3 Employee orientation and mentorship category

This category is new, because it focuses purely on reaching employees by means of an interactive, personal communication approach, particularly via social media, as part of an integrated communication strategy. It supplements the *positioning and differentiation strategy* category in that an interactive communication approach is used to empower employees to be involved in strategy formulation. Furthermore, it is a useful tool to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters and to communicate important organisational matters in addition to written and electronic branding initiatives.

Employee orientation and mentorship constitutes corporate behaviour alignment through personal and interactive communication, employee empowerment through management interaction, and employee involvement in strategy formulation through social media. These are discussed below:

9.2.3.1 Corporate behaviour alignment through personal and interactive communication

Effective internal communication practices require an interactive communication approach and an open-door policy to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. To ensure employees' behaviour reflects a uniform brand message, internal marketing constitutes a fundamental aspect of an organisation's overall marketing strategy. Internal marketing initiatives that are aligned with the brand philosophy encourages employees to act

as brand ambassadors by being passionate about the brand and living the brand values of integrity and customer focus. In this regard, internal communication serves as a means of cultivating a culture of innovation, establishing interpersonal relationships between employees so they will treat their co-workers as internal clients, and offering benefits that distinguish the organisation as an employer of choice. Personal engagement among employees provides a forum for regular feedback about the goals and objectives of the organisation, new developments, activities and organisational achievements. Information obtained in this way enables employees to fully understand the values of their brand and to know which behaviour is expected of them.

9.2.3.2 Employee empowerment through management interaction

Effective internal communication practices require management to implement more frequent, structured and direct communication to reinforce the effect of written and electronic branding initiatives. Opportunities for more personal and informal communication between managers and subordinates promote interpersonal relationships and teambuilding. In addition, formal, structured communication (meetings) that involve employees at more junior levels empower them to contribute to strategic decision making. An environment that facilitates and encourages personal communication helps internal stakeholders understand the strategic direction of their organisation and empowers them to contribute to achieving the organisational goals. Communication which is used to involve employees in strategy formulation enables them to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery.

9.2.3.3 Employee involvement in strategy formulation through social media

Effective internal communication practices are aimed at involving employees in strategy formulation to understand their role in delivering the brand promise and excel in service delivery. Online communication as part of an interactive communication style is a useful instrument to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters, to explain reasons for organisational decisions, and to communicate important organisational matters. In addition, online communication, specifically social media, enables employees to give input regarding strategic matters, thus encouraging open, two-way communication between employees across all divisions and at all levels of the organisation.

9.2.4 Brand equity category

Brand equity constitutes brand loyalty and brand reputation. These three elements require sound leadership, good management practices and corporate governance to contribute effectively to corporate brand image formation. Moreover, the success with which a brand

is positioned in the market depends on the elements selected to reflect the corporate brand identity and the development of the corporate brand image based on the selected elements of corporate brand identity. The corporate communication process is focused on managing the impressions created among an organisation's constituencies in order to enhance the organisation's reputation. Furthermore, acceptance of the brand is based on the guarantee that the corporate brand identity, which the organisation selected to differentiate it from competitors, is adequately transferred by the image in order to respond to a desired consumer's equity. Brand loyalty and brand reputation are discussed below:

9.2.4.1 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty results from profitable brand strategies that are developed to exploit the underlying value of the brand in order to improve profit margins. Furthermore, brand loyalty requires an integrated marketing strategy that is aimed at evoking brand associations of perceived quality based on the extent to which the product or service meets customers' utilitarian and symbolic needs. Moreover, the extent to which consumers are satisfied with the brand's products and services results in a specific price premium which the consumer is willing to pay for the brand in comparison with another brand offering similar benefits. In this regard, corporate brand image formation relies on product and service offerings that are trusted by consumers to provide unique added value which match their needs closely.

9.2.4.2 Brand reputation

Establishing a favourable brand reputation relies on the execution of all the corporate brand identity elements in the preceding three categories.

The main drivers of reputation emanate from the organisation's corporate brand identity as these all involve strategic choices made by top management. Dimensions used to assess corporate reputation include sound leadership and good management practices including the personal reputation of top management, investments in good governance and displaying high ethical values.

Strong corporate reputations depend on successful organisational relationships with clients. Reputation is rooted in the total set of perceptions of the organisation's stakeholders and is an effective mechanism for customer retention and to maintain competitive advantage. Establishing a customer-centred culture plays an essential role in the organisation's branding strategy, since reinforcing relationships by means of marketing strategies is based on the commitment, attitudes and performance of the

organisation's employees. Consumers are more likely to use a brand that is associated with a well-managed, ethical and reliable entity which is also reflected in employees' behaviour. To achieve these objectives, a human resources policy is required that provides for the implementation of measures to recruit and retain expertise, including competence development and training as well as offering relevant compensation packages.

In addition, ethical conduct and good corporate governance as is evident in the organisation's performance, production processes that lower costs, innovation in product and service offerings, citizenship activities and service delivery contribute to establishing a sound reputation, which enhances corporate brand image formation. Strategic choices in which decisions are aligned with strategy, culture and corporate communication are perceived to enhance corporate brand image formation. In addition, marketing communication, human resources and operations functions that are coordinated to communicate and deliver brand experiences are perceived to build strong reputations across stakeholders. In this regard, a reputable brand obtains favourable media coverage and uses its marketing material to clearly set out the business principles and good corporate governance according to which the organisation functions, thereby enhancing consumers' trust in the organisation. A brand with a customer-centered culture, which is candid in its business dealings and which applies transparency in its communication material is more likely to be recommended to consumers.

9.3 CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion on the categories that are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation as revealed from the consolidated findings of this study, the following conclusions emerge:

- All three categories according to which the Q sample was structured are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation, namely the *transformational leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy* as well as *brand equity* categories. These categories are perceived as absolute categories for corporate brand image formation, since all the levels constituting each of the three are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation.
- Four categories are regarded significant in corporate brand image formation based on the findings of the study. These categories are labelled *transformational*

leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy, brand equity as well as *employee orientation and mentorship*.

- The *transformational leadership and management category* is considered significant in corporate brand image formation, since it provides for a business philosophy that stipulates the principles for sound financial management and effective administration of the brand.
- The *positioning and differentiation strategy category* is regarded significant in corporate brand image formation since it creates an awareness of the most distinct functional, rational and emotional elements of the brand among internal and external stakeholders by means of selected elements of the marketing mix.
- The *brand equity category* is deemed to contribute to corporate brand image formation since the corporate brand image adequately conveys the corporate brand identity which the organisation selected to differentiate it from competitors in order to respond to a desired consumer's equity.
- The new category, *employee orientation and mentorship*, is regarded significant in corporate brand image formation since it provides for an interactive communication approach in the form of personal communication and internal online communication by means of social media. In addition, it provides for management involvement aimed at empowering employees to participate in strategy formulation, and mentoring and training subordinates regarding strategic matters.

9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section puts forward several recommendations with regard to the four categories identified as significant in corporate brand image formation. The recommendations are intended to refine and improve these categories through further research in this field. Furthermore, recommendations are made in terms of a theoretical framework for a measuring instrument which includes corporate brand identity elements that are perceived to be mandatory in corporate brand image formation among stakeholder groups. This theoretical framework also provides the opportunity to determine to which extent a gap exists between an organisation's corporate brand identity and its anticipated corporate brand image.

These recommendations are the following:

9.4.1 Testing the four categories identified as significant in corporate brand image formation

The theoretical position proposed in this study provides for a theoretical framework within which to assess the perceived role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. To determine the soundness of the four categories identified as significant in corporate brand image formation, it is recommended that they be tested in practice or in further studies for improvement.

9.4.2 Further studies

It is recommended that a larger sample of organisations be selected to conduct further studies in order to generalise the findings to the entire business population in South Africa. The research must be conducted among the various business sectors and the results reported according to the findings for each individual business sector.

9.4.3 Recommendations for the development of a measuring instrument

This study consists of both a qualitative and quantitative component, although it is mainly qualitative and exploratory in nature. As such, it employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design. In the case of the online Q sort, credibility was attained by compiling the statements for the Q sample systematically, while considering the entire spectrum of the theory dealing with the role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation to ensure they are broadly representative of the topic under investigation (see Chapter 7, sections 7.3. and 7.4). Furthermore, the credibility of the statements within the context of the scope of this study were attained by having the initial 72 statements for the Q study reviewed by two research and branding specialists prior to the finalisation of the statements (see Chapter 7, section 7.4). A revised set of Q statements was compiled based on the information obtained from the specialist review and the suggestions made by the research specialists. In addition, the verification of the data obtained from the Q sort and the online questionnaire was done through interviewing people who are knowledgeable about the topic under investigation to gain their opinion and knowledge on the topic, which further enhanced the credibility of the research results (see Chapter 7, section 7.8.2). In this manner, the researcher ensured the trustworthiness of the measuring instruments used in this study. However, the process of corporate brand image formation in each organisation is unique, since the elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation vary, to a lesser or greater extent, depending on the industry in which the organisation functions. As a result, the theoretical framework proposed in this study should not be dogmatised into

prescriptive measures on how organisations must apply the various mandatory elements of corporate brand identity to enhance corporate brand image formation.

Although the theoretical framework proposed in this study can serve as an important guideline for assessing the role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation, it does not propose a single methodology that can be universally applied by organisations across all business sectors for assessing the extent to which each of these elements contributes to corporate brand image formation. Instead, the theoretical framework is aimed at serving as a theoretical guideline for assessing the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation, based on the revised categories as explained in section 8.11. In terms of the revised categories, corporate brand image formation must be aimed at conveying an appealing and distinct identity in a coherent manner to the target market (Janonis & Virvilaitė 2007:81).

Moreover, the success with which a brand is positioned in the market depends on the elements selected to reflect the corporate brand's identity, and the development of the corporate brand image based on the selected elements of corporate brand identity. In addition, these elements must conceptualise consumers' belief about the brand based on their real experience, and must correspond to the brand understanding (Janonis & Virvilaitė 2007:81). Brand equity is established when consumers regard a brand as distinctive in some important and positive ways as a result of synergy created by the various corporate brand identity elements. Since a brand represents an organisation's guarantee of satisfaction to customers, the nature of associations about the brand in consumers' minds have important consequences for the business prospects which the brand can achieve in the marketplace (Keller & Lehmann 2006:745).

9.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY BASED ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study was to assess the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation. The purpose was to determine which of the corporate brand identity elements identified and discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this study are perceived to be mandatory in corporate brand image formation. The main research objective has been achieved and represents the largest contribution to the field of study. The findings indicate that four categories are deemed significant in corporate brand image formation. These categories are *transformational leadership and management, positioning and differentiation strategy, brand equity* as well as *employee orientation and mentorship*.

These categories are perceived as absolute categories for corporate brand image formation. The fourth category has been added based on the research findings which identified a gap in the literature with regard to the use of specific unifying marketing communication tools and strategies to promote the goals of the organisation. The findings have revealed the need for internal communication practices that focus mainly on an interactive, personal communication approach and management involvement aimed at empowering employees to participate in strategy formulation, and to mentor and train subordinates regarding strategic matters. For this reason, the categories were revised as explained in section 8.11.

In addition, this study aimed to provide a theoretical framework for the development of a measuring instrument based on the findings of this study. The theoretical framework must provide for all the elements which the results of the study have proven to be perceived as mandatory to the concept of corporate brand identity. The objective of providing a theoretical framework for the development of a measuring instrument is twofold: to enable organisations to assess the role of their corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation among stakeholder groups, and to determine to which extent there is a gap between its corporate brand identity and anticipated corporate brand image. This objective was achieved in Chapter 9 of this study (see section 9.4.3).

9.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has the following limitations:

- Although the person sample of 118 participants used in the Q study is larger than the person sample normally included in a Q study, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to the entire business population in South Africa. The reason why the size of the P set selected for this study is significantly larger than the sample size suggested in the literature (Brown 1980b) is explained in Chapter 7, section 7.7.1. As indicated in this section, using a larger sample size to conduct a Q study is not totally unusual as is evident in a number of previous studies (for example, Hogan 2008). The factors extracted by means of varimax rotation reflect participants' subjective views on how their organisation uses selected corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation. For this reason, findings can only be generalised to the perspectives reflected by a factor and not to the entire population of South African organisations in the various business sectors.

- This study is mainly qualitative and exploratory in nature. To ensure the best possible content validity is attained, the arguments dealing with the perceived role of corporate brand identity elements in corporate brand image formation were formulated based on information obtained from a comprehensive literature review to grasp the essence of the topic under investigation. The Q statements were based on the information obtained from the literature review. The researcher had to consider the entire spectrum of the theory dealing with the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation to ensure that the statements included in the Q sample are broadly representative of the topic under investigation. However, the process of corporate brand image formation in each organisation is unique, since the elements of corporate brand identity that are perceived to contribute to corporate brand image formation vary, to a lesser or greater extent, depending on the industry in which the organisation functions. As a result, the theoretical framework proposed in this study should not be dogmatised into prescriptive measures. Although the theoretical framework proposed in this study can serve as an important guideline for assessing the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation, it does not propose a single methodology that can be universally applied by organisations across all business sectors for assessing the extent to which each of these elements contributes to corporate brand image formation.
- The categories proposed in section 8.11 have not yet been empirically tested. However, the purpose of this study was not to test the revised categorisation in practice. Instead, this study was rather aimed at investigating, on a theoretical level, the role of corporate brand identity in corporate brand image formation, as this represents a cutting edge contribution in the field of branding in South African organisations. For the theoretical framework proposed in this study to have any empirical value, it should be refined for the specific context of the business industry to be able to assess the extent to which the four categories contribute to corporate brand image formation.
- Q sort is a time-consuming research method which could have had a negative effect on the participants' responses.

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ANNEXURE A: STATEMENTS FOR THE Q STUDY

Category One: Transformational leadership and management

1. The organisation's policy of personalised service increases members' attachment to the organisation.
2. Low-income earners select the organisation over the competition.
3. The organisation's ability to detect changes in customer preferences quickly is a major factor in getting new business.
4. The organisation is too expensive.
5. The organisation's financial affairs are well managed.
6. The organisation is in the forefront of technological development in the industry.
7. Top management is competent to look after the organisation's affairs.
8. The organisation is quick to detect shifts in product offerings in the industry.
9. Procedures for changing clients' personal details are effective.
10. Customer complaints receive the highest priority in this organisation.
11. Employees are rewarded for enhancing customer satisfaction.
12. Clients benefit from administrative savings effected by the organisation.
13. The dedicated online client account for viewing transactions is user-friendly.
14. Clients switch to other organisations due to ineffective administrative procedures.
15. Telephone calls are returned promptly.
16. The organisation's employer benefits help recruit skilled employees.

17. Customers receive quick, quality feedback on all written queries.
18. Financial rewards for using the organisation's services make clients feel the organisation values doing business with them.

Category Two: Positioning and Differentiation Strategy

19. Consumers associate this organisation with a wealthy lifestyle.
20. The organisation is well known for its involvement in community development.
21. The organisation's identity reflects a sense of innovation.
22. The organisation's print media reflect a consistent image of distinctness.
23. The information in the marketing brochures expands the organisation's clientele.
24. Employees are proud of the organisation's logo.
25. The brand colours symbolise dynamism.
26. The brand name symbolises stability.
27. The information in the organisation's magazine increases its turnover.
28. The organisation's style guide on its brand identity reinforces the image of excellence.
29. The layout of the website enables clients to obtain the correct information easily.
30. The way the organisation integrates different communication media ensures that it is one of the most well-known brands in the industry.
31. Clients prefer this organisation over the competition based on the information provided in its company profile.

32. The organisation's brand values champions enhance employees' performance.
33. The internal newsletter promotes the core brand values.
34. The information on the website enables clients to choose the most appropriate service for their needs.
35. The information in the organisation's external newsletter facilitates its administration.
36. Employees trust the information published on the internal website.

Category Three: Brand Equity

37. If a major competitor were to launch an innovative product strategy the organisation would implement a response immediately.
38. This organisation's services improve clients' quality of life.
39. Clients remain loyal to the organisation since it offers value for money.
40. Consumers would likely switch to this organisation for its diversity in product offerings.
41. The organisation has an established reputation for its achievements in service delivery.
42. Clients trust this organisation based on the information in its communication material.
43. Clients prefer doing business with this organisation as a result of the call centre's availability after hours.
44. The brand name enhances consumer trust.
45. The organisation clearly explains the terms and conditions of its services.

46. Members trust this organisation based on its long-standing history as a stable organisation.
47. The way the organisation responds to negative, unplanned communication counteracts adverse perceptions among consumers.
48. Employees' willingness to solve clients' problems contributes to the organisation's ability to retain its clientele.
49. The organisation meets the promises on customer service made in its advertising material.
50. Clients who deal with this organisation experience world-class customer service.
51. Clients would recommend this organisation to others for its reliability.
52. This organisation's esteem among clients exceeds that of its competitors by far.
53. The organisation's brand drives promises to customers.
54. The organisation would consider the potential impact of all decisions on customers' experience of the organisation.

ANNEXURE B: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1: What do you like most about this organisation?

The purpose of this question was to gain a better understanding of the benefits which the organisation offers employees, how employees experience the behaviour of their colleagues and management and the circumstances that create a pleasant working environment for employees. In addition, the purpose of this question was to gain a better understanding of how the brand culture, the organisation's business strategy, its internal and external branding practices as well as the organisation's image and reputation create an affinity towards the organisation among internal and external stakeholders.

Question 2: What is the level of interaction between management and employees?

The purpose of this question was to determine the frequency of interaction between management and employees, whether employees are kept informed of work-related matters to enable them to do their work effectively, problems that impact negatively on communication between management and employees, and the organisation's policy on communication between management and employees (for example, transparency, secrecy and maintaining an open-door policy). The purpose of this question was also to determine to which extent communication can be used as a management tool to mentor and train subordinates regarding the organisation's business strategy, thereby aligning employee behaviour with the organisation's objectives and values in order to ensure they reflect the distinct attributes of the organisation to external stakeholders.

Question 3: How could communication be improved in the organisation?

The purpose of this question was to determine which improvements are required from employees' point of view to ensure effective communication as part of an integrated business strategy in terms of the frequency and method of communication between management and employees as well as the purpose for which communication should be used to enable employees to do their work effectively. In addition, the purpose of the question was to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's internal branding practices and how these impact on external stakeholders' perception of the organisation, its products and services.

Question 4: Why would you recommend the organisation as an employer of choice to friends?

The purpose of this question was to gain an understanding of the elements of the character of the organisation – properties such as the organisation's key values and the guiding principles that determine how the organisation functions as a collective entity and the impact of these on the brand's reputation among internal and external stakeholders.

Question 5: What can employees do to improve the organisation's brand?

This question investigated which measures should be implemented to engage employees in the organisational branding process in order to create a single corporate identity and to enable them to contribute effectively to corporate brand image formation.

ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COMPUTER-ASSISTED TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS (CATI)

1. Briefly describe the nature of the industry in which the organisation functions by referring specifically to the biggest challenges pertaining to the macro-environment in which the organisation operates.

The purpose of this question was to gain a better understanding of the environment in which the organisation operates and the factors in the remote and task environment impacting thereupon which may influence corporate brand image formation.

2. Which strategic measures does your organisation implement in respect of the following to overcome these obstacles and enhance the image of the brand?
 - a) The products offered by the organisation
 - b) The organisation's service (for example, call centre, online service, complaints-handling processes, professional advice)
 - c) The marketing initiatives of the organisation
 - d) Annual increase in product and service costs
 - e) Technological development
 - f) Manpower

This question aimed to understand which adjustments organisations make to internal strategy according to developments in the external environment to ensure their business culture, systems, structures and strategies remain updated and functional.

3. Which measures does your organisation apply to ensure the following aspects contribute to enhancing the brand's image optimally?
 - a) The brand's core values?
 - b) The brand's mission and vision?

This question aimed to understand how the organisation assesses the role of the brand's mission, vision and core values in corporate brand image formation and which steps are taken to employ these aspects to their full potential in order to enhance corporate brand image.

4. Which measures does the organisation implement to ensure the corporate brand reflects the most important aspects of the organisation's culture?

This question attempted to establish which measures the organisation incorporates in its brand positioning strategy to ensure the corporate brand encapsulates the organisational culture in terms of the characteristics and attributes that make the brand unique and differentiate it from its competitors. Furthermore, the purpose of this question was to determine how ideas and associations embodied by the corporate culture are reflected in the quality, performance and services of products.

5. Discuss the communication practices used by your organisation.

This question attempted to identify the communication practices used by the organisation to create impressions among stakeholders, which result in images about how stakeholders perceive the organisation, as well as whether a holistic approach is followed for the strategic management of internal and external communication.

6. Explain how these specific communication practices contribute to creating a favourable impression of your organisation among internal and external stakeholders.

The purpose of this question was to expand on the previous question and to obtain a better understanding of the reasons why the specific communication practices are used and how these are used in an integrated manner to enhance corporate brand image formation.

7. Describe the internal branding (internal communication) practices used by your organisation.

The purpose of this question was to gather specific data on the organisation's internal branding practices. This question aimed to determine which internal communication practices are employed by organisations as a determinant of the brand's value to better align the capabilities of internal stakeholders to ensure they realise the brand messages through their actions and the behaviour they demonstrate to customers and other stakeholders, and to ensure the organisation will be better able to respond to conditions in the external market.

8. Describe the external branding (external communication) practices used by your organisation.

The purpose of this question was to determine how secondary communication, which includes the organisation's strategy for planned communication, is used strategically by organisations' management as a tool to harmonise all forms of external communication to project the corporate brand identity to stakeholders. Furthermore, this question attempted to discover the type of communication policies, such as transparency, open dialogue or secrecy to which the organisation might subscribe.

9. How do your organisation's policies on internal and external communication affect the quality of relationships with the organisational stakeholders?

This question aimed to understand how the organisation's communication policies affect its relationships with its employees and external stakeholders. The purpose of this question was to determine how the organisation's communication activities are organised as a single, well-planned entity to produce a set of coherent messages internally and externally to create a favourable basis for establishing relationships with the organisation's stakeholder groups, and to establish a favourable image and ultimately a good reputation among internal and external stakeholders.

10. From your experience, briefly explain the role internal branding as a successful tool for promoting internal organisational alignment.

This question aimed to get the respondents' personal views on whether internal branding is a successful tool for establishing favourable relationships with employees in order to establish internal organisational alignment.

11. From your experience, briefly explain the role of internal organisational alignment in an organisation to create brand loyalty.

The purpose was to gauge how important the respondents believe internal organisational alignment is to establish internal stakeholder relationships in order to ensure effective functioning of the organisation.

12. Which additional methods does your organisation use for creating brand equity to set the organisation apart?

The purpose of this question was to determine the process and steps the organisation uses, with the intent to create unique, enduring and favourable impressions in consumers' minds to enhance their brand knowledge and enable them to distinguish between the brand's products and services in response to marketing initiatives, thereby enhancing brand equity.

ANNEXURE D: CLASSIFICATION OF STATEMENTS ACCORDING TO BRAND ATTRIBUTES

L & M: The Leadership and Management Category

V & C: The Visual Brand Identity and Integrated Marketing Communications Category

S & R: The Stakeholder Relations Management Category

BE: The Brand Equity Category

Brand attributes (17) of 72 statements

L&M 8) Brand - symbolises lifestyle

L&M 10) Brand - high credibility

L&M 11) Brand - publishing info in web

V&C 24) Brand - Logo

V&C 25) Brand - Colours

V&C 26) Brand - symbolises good cover

V&C 27) Magazine - reinforce brand

V&C 34) Brand reputation - media coverage

V&C 37) Communication - branding guide

S&R 42) Brand champions - employees

S&R 44) Brand - employees portray

S&R 49) Brand performance - employee assistance programme

BE 57) Brand name - enhances trust

BE 61) Brand reputation - quality

BE 62) Brand equity - Magazine enhances

BE 71) Brand loyalty - diversity in products

V&C 35) Brand identity - reflects safety

Product (7)

S&R 51) Product launch - brokers

S&R 52) Low cost benefit option - attracts new members

BE 58) Product marketing - customer loyalty

BE 59) Benefits - consumers' needs

BE 63) Published info - on products

V&C 29) Different media - products

BE 64) Identify gaps - product offering

BE 66) Additional benefits - competitive advantage

Service (6)

- L&M 4) Service - employee performance
- L&M 5) Employees - customer service
- L&M 21) Service - complaints handling
- S&R 50) Customer service - guaranteed
- BE 67) Claims turnaround time - enhances reputation
- BE 72) Claims payment - enhances reputation

Cost and consumer support (6)

- L&M 17) Cost - comprehensive benefits
- L&M 18) Cost - discount - less comprehensive benefits
- L&M 19) Cost - low increase
- L&M 13) Customer satisfaction - remains competitive
- BE 65) Customer base increases - comprehensive cover
- S&R 53) Network providers - retain consumers

Communication (9)

- V&C 32) Communication material - not trustworthy
- V&C 33) Media communication - products
- V&C 36) Communication on finances
- V&C 38) External newsletter - facilitates administration
- V&C 39) Internal newsletter - core values
- S&R 45) Internal newsletter - motivates employees
- S&R 48) Internal communication - unreliable
- S&R 56) Information sessions - relationships
- S&R 54) Keep consumers informed - industry developments

Website (4)

- L&M 6) Website information - membership growth
- L&M 20) Website - value
- V&C 28) Website - product info
- L&M 2) Management principles - website

Advertising (5)

- V&C 22) Advertisements - print informative
- V&C 23) Brochures - product offering
- BE 68) Effective advertising - quality sales staff
- BE 69) Advertisements - increases profitability
- L&M 1) Corporate wellness days

Employees (7)

- L&M 12) Employees - effectiveness in job
- L&M 15) Employees - skills - high service levels
- V&C 40) Employees - organisation's achievements
- S&R 41) Employee PA - customer satisfaction
- S&R 43) Employees work - organisation's success
- S&R 46) Employees satisfaction - client service
- S&R 47) Employees - use full potential

Scheme finances (2)

- BE 60) Financial stability - credibility
- BE 70) Portfolios in organisation - financial results

Company profile (2)

- V&C 30) Company profile - differentiates from competitors
- V&C 31) Company profile - info on charitable events

Product value (2)

- L&M 7) Additional, related benefits - enhance organisation's success
- L&M 9) Products - investment

Giveaways and loyalty programme (2)

- L&M 14) Loyalty programme - added value
- S&R 55) Giveaways - attracting new consumers

Other (2)

- L&M 3) Brokers - share vision
- L&M 16) Leadership - organisation values it

ANNEXURE E: REVIEW OF STATEMENTS

No	Category One: The Leadership and Management Category	Summary	Less brand relevant	Negative statement	Double concept
1		L&M 1) Corporate wellness days			
2		L&M 2) Management principles - website			
3		L&M 3) Brokers - share vision		1	
4		L&M 4) Service - employee performance	1	1	
5		L&M 5) Employees - customer service	1		
6		L&M 6) Website information - membership growth	1	1	
7		L&M 7) Additional, related benefits - enhance organisation's success		1	
8		L&M 8) Brand - symbolise lifestyle	To a lesser extent		
9		L&M 9) Products - investment			
10		L&M 10) Brand - high credibility	To a lesser extent		
11		L&M 11) Brand - publishing info in web	To a lesser extent	1	1
12		L&M 12) Employees - effectiveness in job		1	
13		L&M 13) Customer satisfaction - remains competitive	1		
14		L&M 14) Loyalty programme - added value		1	
15		L&M 15) Employees - skills - high service levels	1		1
16		L&M 16) Leadership - organisation values it			
17		L&M 17) Cost - comprehensive benefits	1		
18		L&M 18) Cost - discount - less comprehensive benefits	1		1
19		L&M 19) Cost - low increase	1		
20		L&M 20) Website - value			
21		L&M 21) Service - complaints handling	1		
	Category Two: The Visual Brand Identity and Integrated Marketing Communications Category				
22		V&C 22) Advertisements - print informative			
23		V&C 23) Brochures - product offering		1	
24		V&C 24) Brand - Logo	To a lesser extent		
25		V&C 25) Brand - Colours	To a lesser extent	1	
26		V&C 26) Brand - symbolises good cover	To a lesser extent		
27		V&C 27) Magazine - reinforces brand	To a lesser extent		
28		V&C 28) Website - product info			
29		V&C 29) Different media - products		1	
30		V&C 30) Company profile - differentiates from competitors		1	
31		V&C 31) Company profile - info on charitable events			
32		V&C 32) Communication material - not trustworthy		1	
33		V&C 33) Media communication - products			
34		V&C 34) Brand reputation - media coverage	To a lesser extent		

35	V&C 35) Brand identity - reflects safety			
36	V&C 36) Communication on finances			
37	V&C 37) Communication - branding guide	To a lesser extent		
38	V&C 38) External newsletter - facilitates administration			
39	V&C 39) Internal newsletter - core values			
40	V&C 40) Employees - organisation's achievements		1	
Category Three: The Stakeholder Relations Management Category				
41	S&R 41) Employee PA - customer satisfaction		1	
42	S&R 42) Brand champions - employees	To a lesser extent	1	1
43	S&R 43) Employees work - organisation's success		1	
44	S&R 44) Brand - employees portray	To a lesser extent		
45	S&R 45) Internal newsletter - motivates employees		1	
46	S&R 46) Employees satisfaction - client service		1	
47	S&R 47) Employees - use full potential		1	1
48	S&R 48) Internal communication - unreliable		1	
49	S&R 49) Brand performance - employee assistance programme	To a lesser extent		
50	S&R 50) Customer service - guaranteed		1	
51	S&R 51) Product launch - brokers			
52	S&R 52) Low-cost products - attract consumers		1	
53	S&R 53) Network providers - retain consumers		1	
54	S&R 54) Keep consumers informed - industry developments			
55	S&R 55) Giveaways - attracting consumers		1	1
56	S&R 56) Information sessions - relationships		1	1
Category Four: The Brand Equity Category				
57	BE 57) Brand name - enhances trust	To a lesser extent		
58	BE 58) Product marketing - member loyalty		1	
59	BE 59) Benefits - consumers' needs		1	1
60	BE 60) Financial stability - enhances credibility		1	
61	BE 61) Brand reputation - quality	To a lesser extent		
62	BE 62) Brand equity - Magazine enhances	To a lesser extent		
63	BE 63) Published info - on products		1	
64	BE 64) Identify gaps - product offering		1	
65	BE 65) Customer base increases - comprehensive cover		1	
66	BE 66) Additional benefits - competitive advantage		1	1
67	BE 67) Claims turnaround time - enhances reputation			
68	BE 68) Effective advertising - quality sales staff			
69	BE 69) Advertisements - increases profitability		1	
70	BE 70) Portfolios in organisation - financial results			
71	BE 71) Brand loyalty - diversity in products	To a lesser extent		
72	BE 72) Claims payment - enhances reputation			

ANNEXURE F: STEPS IN COMPLETING THE ONLINE Q STUDY AND QUESTIONNAIRE

In Annexure F, screen shot examples of the online research are included to provide a visualised explanation of the online Q-sorting process and questionnaire.

As indicated in section 7.7.1, an e-mail was sent to selected prospective participants inviting them to visit the research website and complete the online Q sort and online questionnaire. A screen shot example of the e-mail sent to selected e-mail lists to recruit participants for the study is provided in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: E-mail prompt for participation in the research



The full instructions for completing the online Q sort and questionnaire as displayed on the separate screens are explained below:

On the first screen a brief explanation of the purpose of the study was provided. Participants were instructed to maximise their browser and to click on the “continue” button to proceed to the next screen.

Figure 2 below provides a screen shot example of the explanation of the purpose of the study and instructions to participants on how to start the research.

Figure 2: Purpose of the research



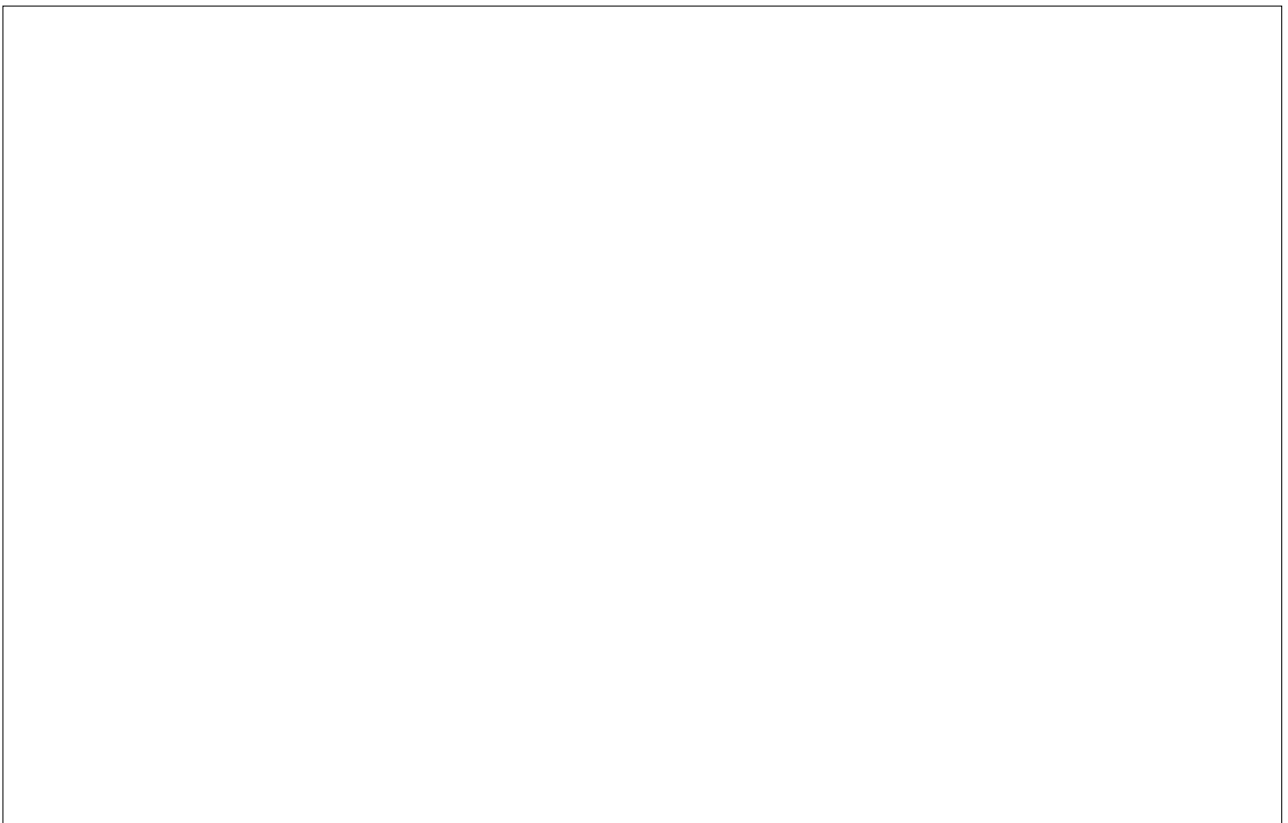
On the second screen the format of the research was explained. All questions were compulsory and participants' attention was drawn to the fact that they were required to complete all questions included in the online survey. Recipients of the e-mail were also guaranteed that all responses would be treated in the strictest confidence. Participants were instructed to click on the "continue" button to proceed with the research. Figure 3 below provides a screen shot example of the introduction to the online survey.

Figure 3: Format of the online survey

FlashQ is designed to complete the Q sort in stages in order to simulate the standard practice for Q methodological studies. In the first stage of the Q-sorting process, the 54 statements and the statement number were displayed individually by means of a pop-up card on the screen. The sequence of the numbers in which the statements printed on the pop-up cards appeared on the screen was random. Participants were instructed to begin the Q-sorting process by initially dividing the statements into three piles: those statements with which participants disagreed most, those statements with which participants agreed most, and the remainder of statements which participants felt “neutral” or uncertain about in a third pile.

Following the above instruction, a screen was displayed for sorting the statements into three large boxes in the following way: those statements with which participants disagree most in the left box, those statements with which participants agree most in the right box, and the remainder in a third box in the middle, labelled the “neutral” pile.

Figure 4: Piles in the Q-sorting process



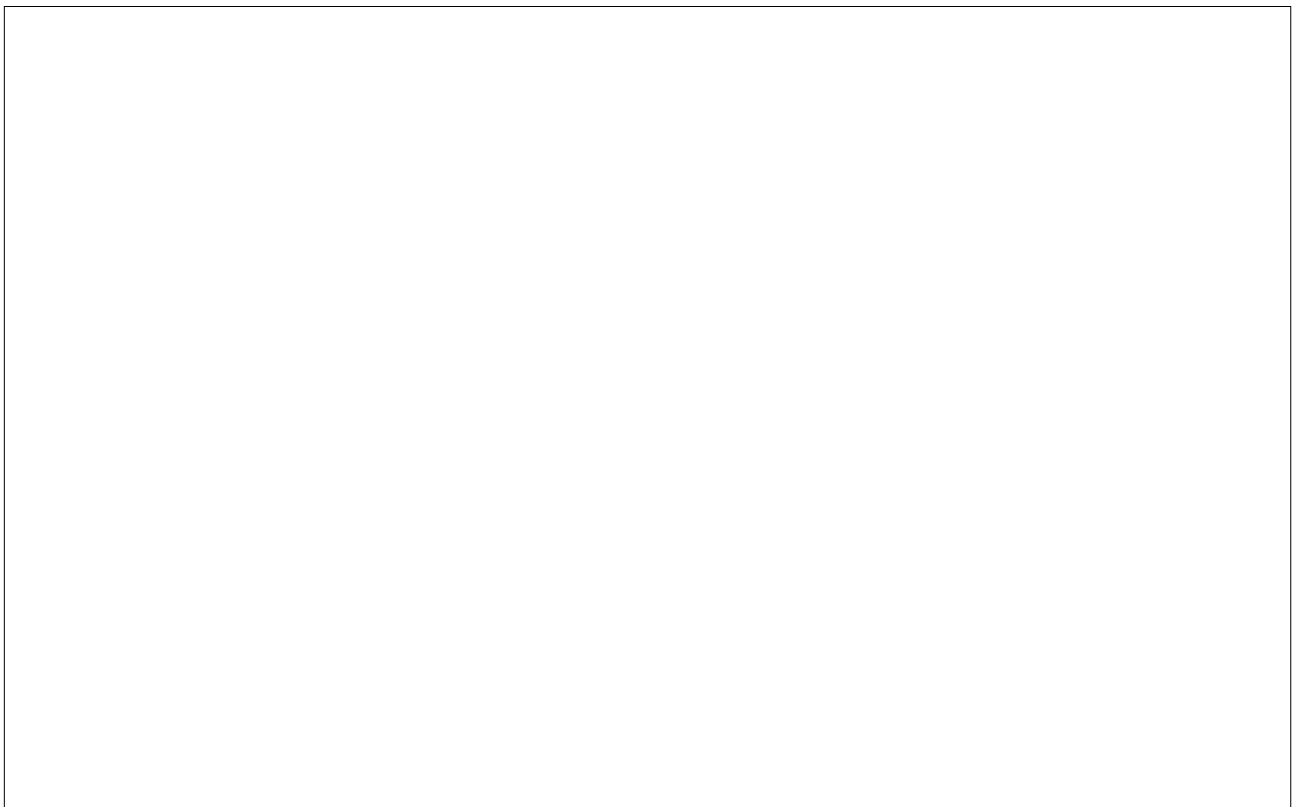
After sorting the statements into three piles, participants clicked on the “continue” button to display the next set of instructions for completing the second stage of the Q-sorting process. In this stage, participants were instructed to arrange the statements from the three piles in order of preference on the Q sort diagram. As indicated in section 7.7.3, participants were given a forced-choice condition of instruction. They were required to start the Q-sorting process by reading the statements grouped in the box labelled “disagree most”. Next, participants had to select the three statements with which they disagree most and place them on the left side of the Q sort diagram (-5). This step had to be repeated for the statements grouped in the box labelled “agree most” and “neutral” respectively.

Figure 5: Instructions for sorting the Q statements on the diagram



The second stage therefore required participants to sort the statements grouped into the “Disagree most” box, the “Agree most” box and the “Neutral” box on the Q sort diagram by clicking on the relevant statement and dragging it to the selected space on the diagram. The Q sort diagram comprised an 11-point continuum according to which participants could rank items from -5 (disagree most), through 0 to +5 (agree most). Figure 6 below illustrates the Q sort distribution and also reflects the number of items that could be assigned to each ranking position in a screen shot.

Figure 6: Q sorting on the “disagree most” side of the diagram



After completing the Q-sorting process for the statements in the “Disagree most” box, participants were required to follow the same procedure to arrange the statements in the “Agree most” box on the Q sort diagram.

Figure 7 below illustrates the procedure to arrange the statements in the “Agree most” box on the Q sort diagram.

Figure 7: Q sorting on the “agree most” side of the diagram



After completing the Q-sorting process for the statements in the “Agree most” box, the participants were required to arrange the statements in the “Neutral” box in the remaining open spaces on the Q sort diagram.

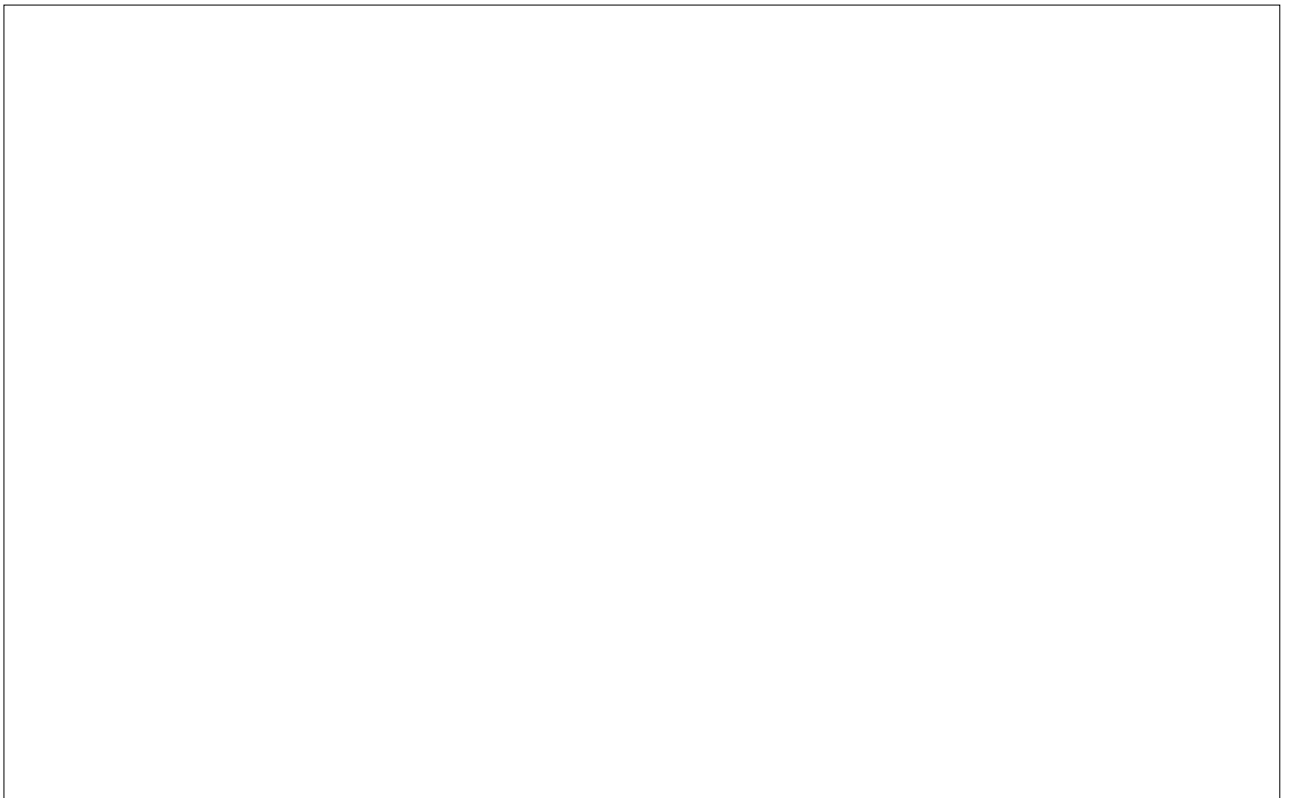
Figure 8 below illustrates the procedure to arrange the statements in the “Neutral” box on the Q sort diagram.

Figure 8: Q sorting on the “neutral” side of the diagram



Once the statements in the “Neutral” box had been sorted on the diagram, the Q-sorting process was completed. Figure 9 below provides a screen shot example of the completed Q sort.

Figure 9: The completed Q sort diagram



After completing the entire Q-sorting process, a screen was displayed requesting participants to review the sort and rearrange the distribution of statements until they were convinced that the sort reflected their personal view on how each statement included in the Q sample contributes to brand image formation in their own organisation.

Figure 10: Rearranging the distribution of statements

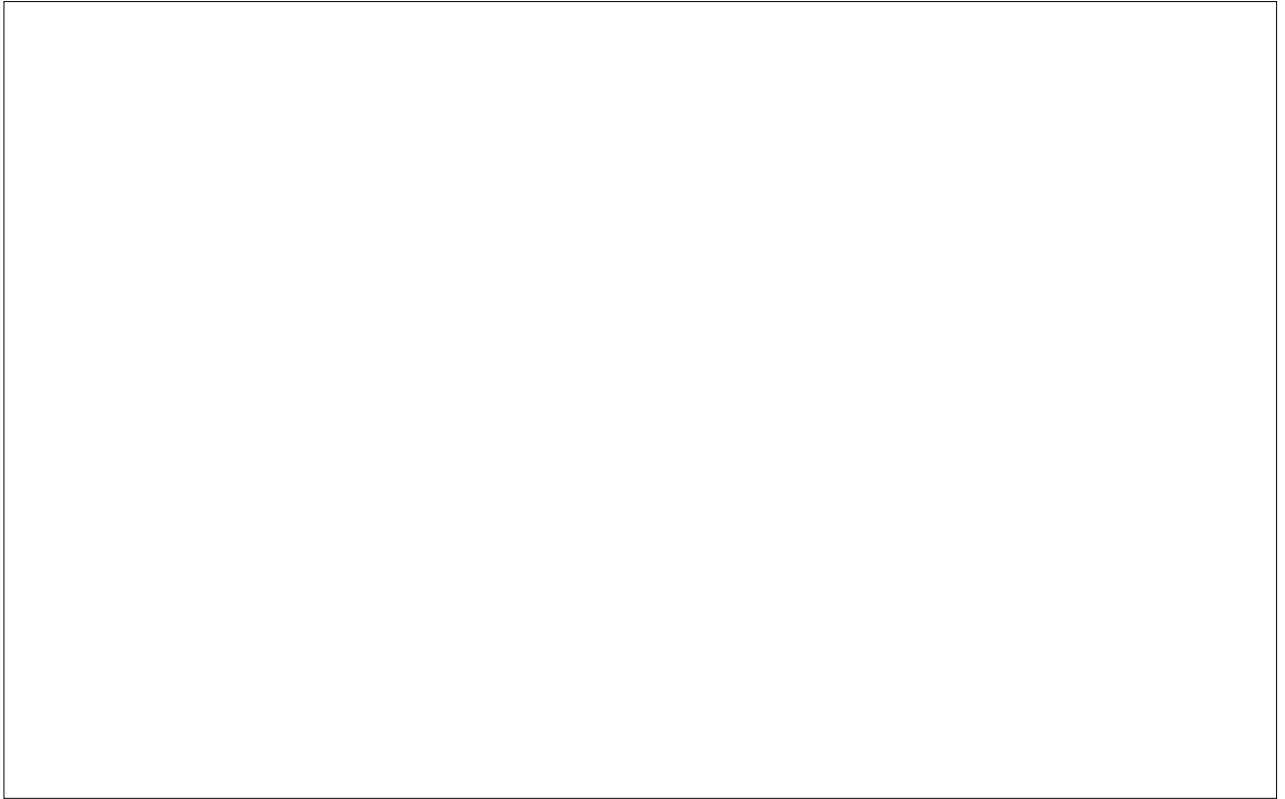
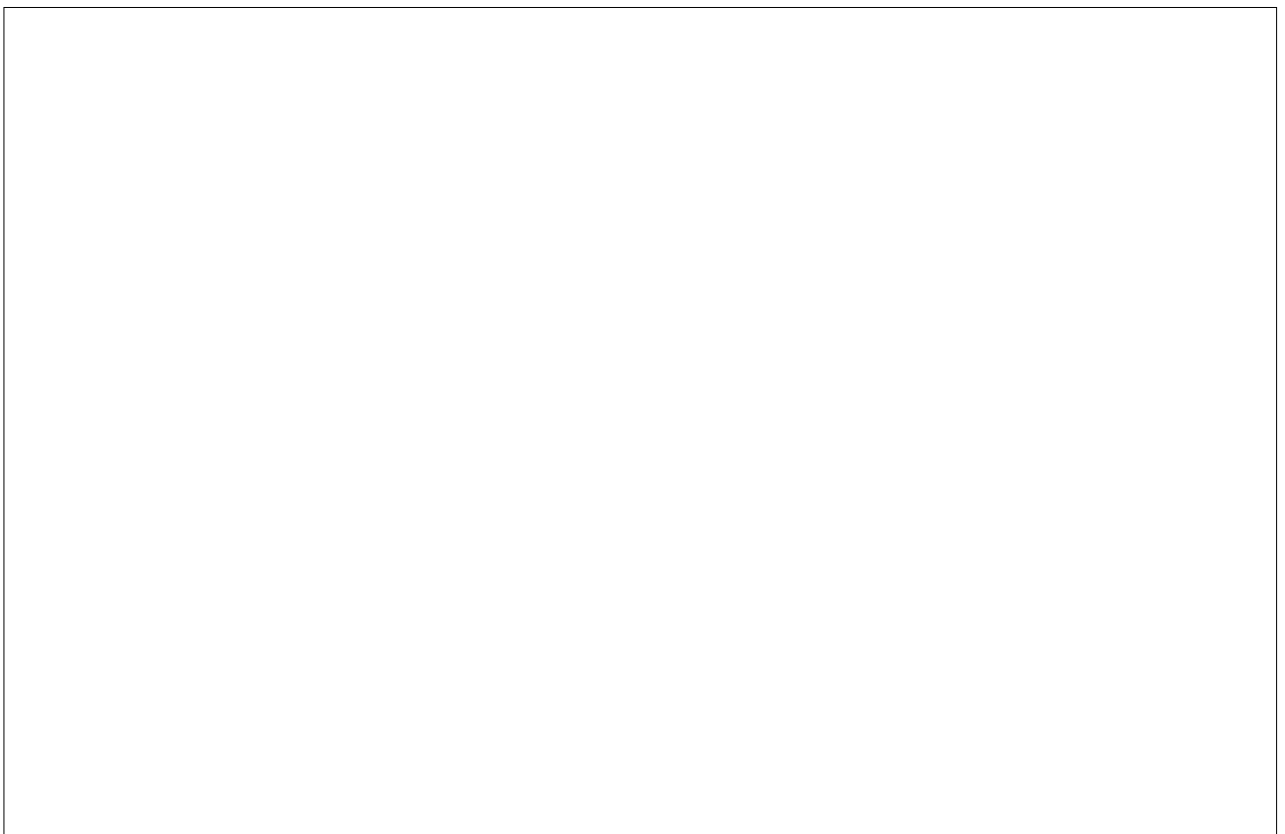


Figure 11 below provides a screen shot example of the final completed Q sort.

Figure 11: Final completed Q sort



Once the participants had reviewed and rearranged the distribution of statements, the next screen was displayed requesting participants to indicate the reasons for sorting the specific statements which they selected on either end on the Q sort diagram (+5 and -5). This question was compulsory and all participants were required to complete it. Figure 12 below provides a screen shot example of the instruction to provide reasons for sorting statements under the extremes of the Q sort diagram.

Figure 12: Instruction to provide reasons for sorting statements under the extremes on the Q sort diagram



Once the participants had clicked on the “continue” button, the next screen appeared reflecting the three statements which the participant respectively sorted under the “Agree most” (+5) column and the “Disagree most” (-5) column on the Q sort diagram. Each participant entered the reasons explaining why he or she had sorted these statements under the extremes on the Q sort diagram (+5 and -5). The purpose of this question was to obtain the personal perspective of each participant why the three statements sorted under the Disagree most (-5) column plays no purposeful role in brand image formation, while at the same time indicating why the three statements sorted under the Agree most (+5) column are perceived to contribute most effectively to corporate brand image formation within their own organisations. The comments of the participants for placing statements on either ends on the Q sort diagram (+5 and -5) provided valuable clarifications which assisted the researcher in the interpretation of the findings process.

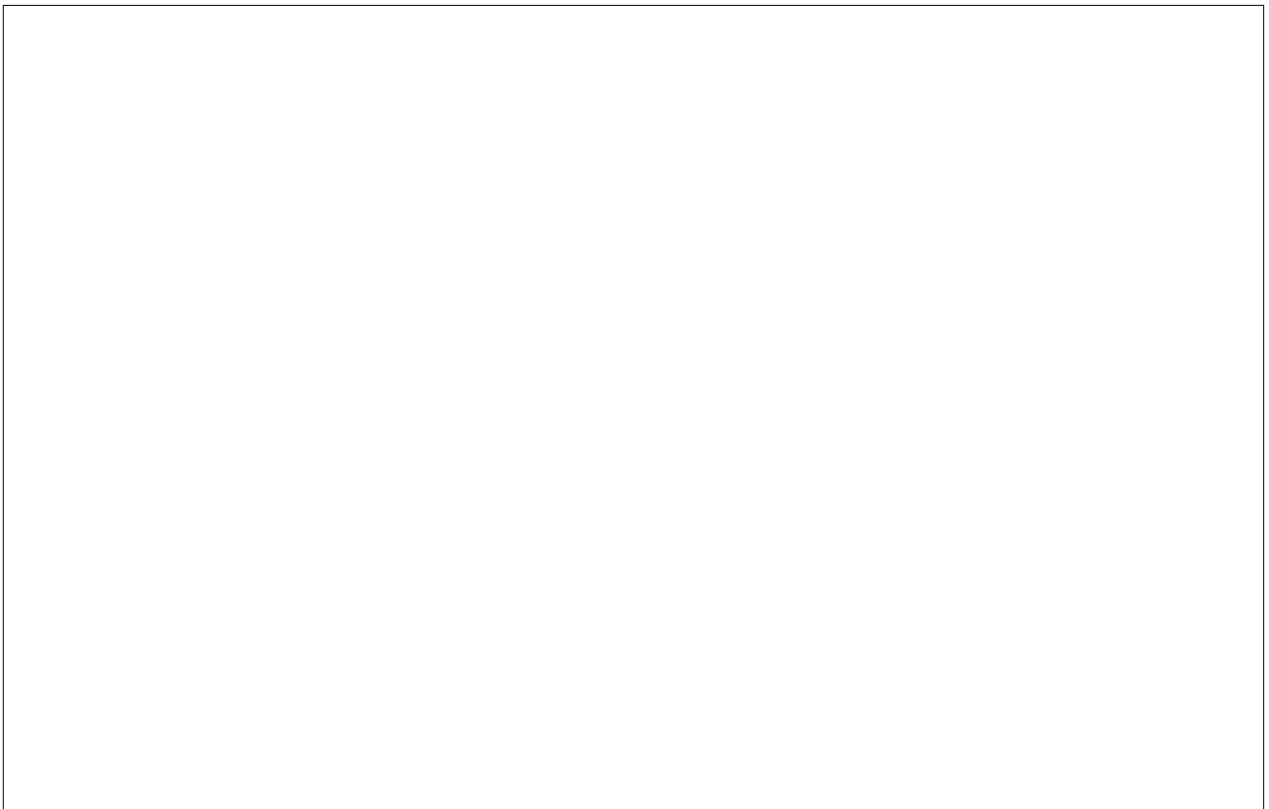
Figure 13 below illustrates the screen displayed where participants were required to enter the reasons for sorting statements under the extremes on the Q sort diagram.

Figure 13: Providing reasons for sorting statements under the extremes on the Q sort diagram



After entering the reasons explaining why participants had sorted the relevant statements under the extreme options on the Q sort diagram (+5 and -5), they clicked on the “continue” button, which brought them to the final question in the online questionnaire. Figure 14 below provides a screen shot example of the instruction to complete the online questionnaire.

Figure 14: Final online questionnaire



The final section in the online questionnaire required participants to complete a short questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions. Participants were required to enter their responses in the given box. No limit applied to the length of their written responses. Participants also had to indicate the name of their organisation. The questionnaire serves as a method of gaining additional information from the respondents who completed the Q sort. The qualitative insight obtained in this way elucidates why participants responded to the statements in a particular manner (Hogan 2008:100). Figure 15 below provides a screen shot example of the online questionnaire.

Figure 15: Online questionnaire



After completing the final questionnaire, participants clicked on the “continue” button. This ended the online Q sort and questionnaire. Each participant’s response was submitted by e-mail to research@ifedback.co.za.