



THE FORMULATION OF A VALUE-ADDED BRANDING FRAMEWORK FOR PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCH THESIS

by

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DECLARATION

I, Alan John Bird, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.



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Date: 10 October 2020

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ABSTRACT

The value-added branding model for Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in South Africa was developed to guide brand building for both institutions and their external stakeholders. The current PHEI landscape is developing at a rapid rate in South Africa, with over ninety private tertiary institutions registered with the Council for Higher Education (CHE). However, stakeholder perceptions of these PHEIs are negative, citing a lack of accreditation of the qualification obtained from the private institution from both parents and students, and questioning the sustainability and long lasting effect of the institutions themselves. Media reports, a lack of Department of Education (DHET) support and funding, as well as minimum, if any, marketing and advertising from the PHEI are factors cited for these firmly entrenched perceptions from the general public.

The research study adopted an inductive approach based on the interpretive research perspective. A non-probability sampling design was implemented, focussing on four external stakeholders to investigate and understand the negative perceptions of PHEIs. The research study aimed to identify the value-added brand building-blocks that a PHEI could utilise to enhance the institution's brand and create positive perceptions of the institution.

Data was gathered from five groups of respondents, namely students, parents (account payers), sponsors (both corporate and private) of individual students and corporate HR practitioners who ultimately employ graduates from a private institution.. In addition, Lecturers and Heads of Department of a PHEI were also part of the respondent group. The research study focussed on the three legs of the hospitality industry, namely hotels, leisure, and travel and tourism. The hospitality industry is serviced by a large number of private institutions that offer hotel and leisure qualifications in the Western Cape and South Africa. Hence, the hospitality industry was deemed to be a suitable representative of private education institutions from both a student recruitment perspective, as well as graduate placement, once they attained their qualifications.

The research study gathered data by means of in-depth interviews (IDIs) with respondents, which then allowed for investigation into effective pillars of a branding model for a PHEI.

The research study was driven by both emerging and international markets, namely Asia, the United States of America (USA) and Brazil; not as a comparative study, but more to establish a framework of how tertiary education is conducted in the private sector in these markets. The subsequent investigation of these markets proved invaluable in respect of providing similarities and, in some instances, huge differences, which contributed to the formulation of a branding model for the South African private education sector.

One of the most significant outcomes of this study was the knowledge of which dimensions the branding of a PHEI should focus on to nullify the perceptions

associated with a PHEI, whilst simultaneously building the brand equity of the PHEIs that will provide them with a sustainable competitive advantage.

The findings of the research study indicated that a value-added branding framework and subsequent model can enhance the awareness and positive perceptions of a PHEI as well as improve the long-term stakeholder value of the brand. Furthermore, the findings addressed both the primary and secondary research objectives as well as provided information about the perceptions of the brand-building blocks that formed the basis of the value-added brand framework for PHEIs.

The primary contribution of the study is the development of the proposed framework of the value-added branding model, which seeks to allow private education institutions to strategically manage the building of specifically brand awareness, and brand relationships with their key stakeholders, which will in turn build brand equity within their institutions from a consumer's perspective.

DEDICATION

The completion of this thesis has been an immensely emotional journey in terms of my own personal studies, as I view it as the final chapter in my lifelong quest of continuous learning. From early days of toiling at small pine tables in tiny apartments for my first degree, and the unfailing support and love shown by my family through forty years of studies, I dedicate this degree to my loving wife, Judy, and my three truly beautiful and successful children, Nicholas, Suzanne and Jonathan.

Thank you for making my dream possible.

Alan Bird

Husband and Father

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym

<i>Brand ROI</i>	Brand return on investment
<i>CEO</i>	Chief Executive Officer
<i>Corporate HRP</i>	Corporate Human Resources practitioner
<i>CBBE</i>	Customer-based brand equity
<i>CHE</i>	Council for Higher Education
<i>CPUT</i>	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
<i>DHET</i>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<i>FET</i>	Further Education and Training
<i>HE</i>	Higher Education
<i>HEQC</i>	Higher Education Quality Council
<i>HR</i>	Human Resources
<i>IMC</i>	Integrated Marketing Communications
<i>IIE</i>	Independent Institute of Education
<i>NQF</i>	National Qualifications Framework
<i>PHEIs</i>	Private Higher Education Institutions
<i>UCT</i>	University of Cape Town
<i>US</i>	University of Stellenbosch
<i>UWC</i>	University of the Western Cape
<i>VC</i>	Varsity College

CLARIFICATION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Brand adoption - Based on the consumer having a preference for a particular brand, with an emphasis on repeat business based on the business consumer relationship (Lindstrom, 2005: 72).

Brand architecture – The structure in which organisations organise, structure and manage their particular brand that they offer consumers (Kapferer, 2004: 293).

Brand association - Abstract associations (attributes and benefits) that characterise the most important aspects or dimensions of a brand and can serve as the basis for brand positioning (Keller, 2013: 296).

Brand believability - A brand is believable if it offers a compelling reason(s) for the consumer to choose a particular brand over another (Venter & Jansen Van Rensburg, 2009: 49).

Brand equity - The perceived intrinsic value associated with a brand name owing to factors such as trust, the image transferred to the purchaser, longevity in the marketplace, social responsibility, and consistent performance (Neal & Strauss, 2008: 132).

Brand name - A brand is a name that influences buyers and services alike - the better known the brand, the more sought after it becomes, as the brand increases its perceived value (Kapferer, 2004: 57).

Brand leadership - An emerging paradigm, which replaces the traditional brand management system of reaching goals and objectives with strategy and vision (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 22).

Brand loyalty - Stems from an individual behaviour based on the act of choosing to purchase the same brand in a specific product or service category over a certain time period (Neal & Strauss, 2008: 148).

Brand strength - The strength of a brand is an organisation's ability to effectively balance consistency, as well as change within the brand (Klopper & North, 2013: 293).

Competitive advantage - This is how consumers see the brand, and their perception of the brand relative to the position of competitors' brands - where an organisation achieves an advantage in delivering superior value (Klopper & North, 2013: 103).

Competitive framework - The structure or "anatomy" of a competitive advantage, which provides dimensions to establish a competitive advantage (Ries & Ries, 2004: 65).

Communicability - The communicability of a brand association is the current or future prospects of communicating information in order to strengthen the association (Severin & Tankard, 2001: 123).

Corporate brand value - The unique context in terms of culture, people and products that differentiate and create value, based on stakeholder confidence in the brand (Keller, 2013: 178).

Corporate image - The perception that a consumer has of an organisation based on the branding achievement of that specific organisation (Du Plessis, Van Heerden & Cook, 2012: 226).

Corporate identity - The branding that an organisation utilises that visually associates, enhances or strengthens its image (Keller, 2013: 408).

Differentiation - Brand differentiation is the need to differentiate the product, not only from competitors, but from the rest of the brand's product range or attributes (Aaker, 2008: 150).

Feasibility - This concept relates to the practicality and manageability of an organisation's deliverables in a way that supports the brand equity of that organisation (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2012: 181).

Integrated Marketing Communication - The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) concept relates to total integration of an organisation's

marketing communication programmes by strategically controlling or influencing all messages that manage customer relationships (Koekemoer, 2004: 17).

Leverage brand equity - Leveraging brand equity is an indication that the brand achieves a level of return on investment, not only financially, but can also relate to factors such as changing brand perceptions, relationship building, or cross-selling opportunities (Koekemoer, 2004: 450). See also brand equity.

Market intelligence - This concept relates to the internal analysis of sources of information, and how the information is utilised (Jooste, 2012: 67).

Perceived quality – This concept relates to the image that is projected from a specific brand to the consumer, based on the perception of the brand's qualities (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012: 235).

Strategic brand management - This involves the design and implementation of marketing programs and activities over a period of time to build, measure and manage brand equity (Keller, 2013: 58).

CHAPTER ONE: SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background and purpose of the study, which relates to the branding of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in South Africa. Demand for tertiary education in South Africa has led to new markets and more and more local private education institutions opening. The concept of PHEIs and the branding of these institutions play a critical role in the acceptance of PHEI qualifications by students, parents, sponsors and industry in a volatile and dynamic changing education field in South Africa (Badenhorst, 2019).

Even though PHEIs can trace their existence back to the post-war industrial boom of the 1950s and 1960s, world-wide, as well as in South Africa (CHE, 2018), it was only during the late 1980s and early 1990s that PHEIs began to grow and develop in South Africa. With the new dispensation led by an African National Congress (ANC) government taking over in 1994, the government formulated the National Commission on Higher Education (Sehoole, 2001: 21). In addition, adoption of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in 1995 saw the establishment and growth of PHEIs throughout South Africa (Fehnel, 2006: 28)

From the mid-nineties, this phenomenal growth of private higher education providers, and according to Fehnel (2006: 21), created new opportunities from three main elements, namely:

- 1) Large corporations - for example Adcorp, ADvTECH, Educor and Pearson Ltd predominantly - moved into the field of higher education either as partners of public institutions, or to provide recruitment pools for their own graduates;
- 2) Some smaller independent providers, for example, specialised design, Information Technology (IT), and photographic schools focussed on prior limited knowledge and skills areas; and
- 3) Transnational providers. either on their own or in partnership with local providers, for example, Oxford-Brookes, in partnership with Damelin College.

Most of the larger PHEIs have made use of marketing opportunities to try and assure their future, focussing more on the needs of the 21st century Higher Education (HE)

student in South Africa. Smaller PHEIs have limited budgets and thus less marketing opportunities. These smaller PHEIs (those with less than 250 students) have no marketing or branding concepts and rely more on word-of-mouth advertising. The accreditation of these smaller PHEIs is based on a curriculum developed course that needs a licensed accreditation from the Department of Higher Education (CHE, 2018). Thus, the private education landscape consists of larger, sustainable colleges and smaller (in numbers) college in a highly competitive market. The driver for this research study was the realisation that, in spite of the growing boom of Private Higher Education, most of the larger and more prominent private institutions relies on their corporate image and web-site branding to remain successful and profitable. Branding and brand building amongst most of the PHEIs in South Africa have relied on the 'names' of their PHEIs in the market place, as well as their ability to adhere to quality standards and quality qualifications that both consumers (students) and workplaces (industry) demand (Macgregor, 2008:12)

The 90 PHEIs in South Africa today (CHE, 2018), which produce a wide variety of qualifications, have influenced the researcher's understanding of the branding of these institutions, and the acceptance of community and industry standards. Badenhorst (2019) stated in an article titled: "This is how South Africa can handle the growing demand for Higher Education" that a 3rd of all higher education enrolments are at private institutions. Froneman (2012: 38) states that PHEIs provide skills needed for the 21st century economy. He argues further that market forces have a great influence on private higher education. However, in spite of this phenomenal growth of PHEIs in South Africa, the absence of research around branding of the institutions had led to the researcher formulating a new branding model that will continue to build sustainable brand equity for PHEIs, as well as provide a competitive advantage. The purpose of this research study was, therefore, to formulate a model of how PHEIs in South Africa can be effectively branded, using strategic brand management principles and practices. This was achieved by analysing and highlighting current branding models available and discussing their applicability to a model for PHEIs as a collective. Once the analysis was conducted, including highlights and deficiencies, these concepts considered inductively the proposed new value-added framework and model for PHEIs was developed. This new branding model was then tested by being applied to a larger PHEI in South

Africa. This process then led to a recommendation of a new value-added model for PHEIs

The researcher thus postulates that branding amongst PHEIs in South Africa has relied mainly on their 'name' in the market place with some media advertising, indicating a lack of coherence and necessitating a unified branding framework and subsequent value-added models for all PHEIs.

The next section provides a contextual background of the study.

1.2 Background

Froneman (2012: 35) maintains that the changing education landscape for public universities, also known as traditional universities in South Africa, has had a vast impact on the rise of PHEIs. This has been partly due to the number of school leavers in South Africa seeking entrance to higher education greatly increasing year-on-year. Froneman (2012: 35) postulates that higher education in South Africa is experiencing an unrelenting pressure to extend study opportunities to these school leavers. This will ultimately result in increased applications and overcrowding at public universities in South Africa (Mabelebele, 2015: 21), allowing for opportunities for PHEIs to find their niche in the complex field of higher education.

Steyn-Kotze and Harris (2012: 11) argue that traditional media and advertising have provided limited exposure of private education providers to the general community. Thus, the common ground for all private higher education is that these institutions need to market themselves profusely (Olonisakin, 2013). An extensive analysis of current literature revealed that there is no overarching value-added branding framework that PHEIs can use to guide them in their efforts to build and sustain brand equity. The model can also help to solve some of the challenges currently facing all higher institutions, such as negative image, absence of adequate funding as well as overcrowding of students.

To ensure their continued existence, private higher education institutions in South Africa must develop branding strategies emulating from a branding model, that provide for 21st century higher education and enabling them to build sustainable long term competitive advantage and brand equity. These 21st Century Higher education innovations such as blended learning approaches and technology-based higher education become branding drivers in that they promote the modern day student

experience as well as allow an educational institution to deliver more individual attention to students because of smaller numbers enrolment. In addition, academic freedom of thought amongst students in a smaller learning environment are becoming more evident (Christensen & Eyring, 2011: xxvii). Therefore, a new value-added branding model with an emphasis on teaching quality, the student experience, and responsiveness to student opinion enjoying a culture more inclined to innovate, as in PHEIs was formulated and tested against an existing PHEI.

PHEIs need to find their niche in the complex field of higher education. Thus, this research study, had a focus on stakeholders involved in specifically the hospitality industry (including leisure and travel and tourism). The hospitality field covers a vast amount of students studying these career specialised qualifications as well as representing a large amount of PHEIs offering these programmes (CHE, 2018). In addition, the study also focussed on hospitality qualifications and their existing branding to corporate HR practitioners to employ PHEI graduates.

There is thus a gap, with research from the media and public perceptions, as well as existing academic literature, indicating that current branding models are not specific to PHEIs in South Africa, who need this branding to build their brand equity. Thus, the basis of this research study was to assess the major branding models currently available, identify their deficiencies and strengths, and to motivate why this framework and model for PHEIs is needed. Thereafter, this model needed to be tested using the propositions formulated by applying it to a specific PHEI and then been able to recommend a new value-added framework and model for all PHEIs.

The next section highlights the research problem.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Badenhorst (2019) stated that Private Higher Education (PHE) can address the triple challenges that South Africa faces in poverty, inequality and unemployment. Badenhorst (2019) further postulates that PHEIs can address some of the economic conditions South Africans are facing as well as inequality by providing quality education. Stander & Herman (2018) in an article titled: *“Barriers and challenges PHEIs face in the management of quality assurance in South Africa.”* cite the recognition of qualifications both locally and internationally as a major challenge to students registering at these institutions. Froneman (2012: 40) maintains that to

ensure recruitment growth and graduate employment, current media and public perceptions that PHEIs collectively experience as an industry, need to improve.

Froneman (2012: 41) further states that these current media and public perceptions of PHEIs indicate an ambiguity and identity crisis of private institutions in the mid set of stakeholders. A solution is required to address the current and future perceptions as well as serve as the foundation for PHEIs branding that will build brand equity and provide the competitive advantage to the education institution.

Like each of its competitors, a PHEI should provide brand value to students, parents, staff, sponsors and corporate HR practitioners. The brand value that a PHEI offers its stakeholders can be measured by the brand equity which refers to the perceived value associated with a brand by a specific target market (Neal & Strauss, 2008: 345). The effectiveness of the branding of the PHEI will be determined by the value of the PHEI as an institution, the brand equity – in effect, the measuring tool.

Thus, the research problem statement that this study sought to address can be summarised as follows:

What value-added framework can be developed to guide the branding of a PHEI to ensure effective alignment with both institution and industry needs?

The solution to the research problem was in formulating a workable, value-added branding framework that will ultimately:

- Provide a workable value-added branding model for PHEIs;
- Build brand equity for the education institution that will result in the PHEI gaining a competitive advantage;
- Create more awareness of PHEIs and their value in terms of graduate employability and the attributes that they can offer industry;
- Build relationships with industry, students, parents and sponsors (both corporate and private) to determine and meet their specific needs; and
- Provide a pool of graduates to be employed by industry.

From this point, PHEIs would be able to market themselves, using the newly formulated branding model as a base.

The next section provides the theoretical framework for the research study

1.4 Framework of the research

A solution is required to address current and future perceptions of PHEIs, and to create a foundation for the branding of PHEIs in an increasingly dynamic and market environment. The model will assist the PHEIs in building sustainable brand equity and competitive advantage. Thus, by conducting a research study into existing perceptions and current branding of PHEIs, this study proposes a value-added branding framework for PHEIs. Whereas the theoretical framework consists of the theories or issues in which the research study is embedded, the conceptual framework describes the aspects one selected from the theoretical framework to become the basis of the research (Kumar, 2012:40). This conceptual framework developed, analysed and unbundled current branding models in order to ascertain the value and contribution to the development of new insights into a branding model. Thus, the argument is posed of taking these new insights from existing branding models into a strategic and generic branding model to address both institutional needs, as well as the employment needs of communities that PHEIs serve.

Kumar (2012: 40) further postulates that the conceptual framework grows out of the theoretical framework and relates to the specific research problem. The theorists indicated below, provided the two most prominent models to current branding and thus provided insights into the development of the conceptual framework of this research study by an analysis of their inputs relative to the building of brand equity for an organisation. These, and other theorists discussed in Chapter two, will provide the framework and basis for the development of a new value-added branding model for all PHEIs.

Aaker's model (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 25) consists of a framework that creates and maintains brand equity. Aaker (2008:34) maintains that this brand equity model can provide value to both the organisation and the consumer. Aaker's model groups the brand equity (assets) into four dimensions: brand awareness/ perceived quality/ brand associations and brand loyalty. Aaker (2008:44) maintains that these dimensions underlie brand equity and takes it further by illustrating in his model how each dimension can create value. This value is then placed in two groups 1) value to customers and 2) value to the organisation.

In support of Aaker's Brand Equity model, Keller (2013: 551) places emphasis on one of the dimensions, namely *perceived quality*, a simplistic concept relative to an education institution's programmes that could provide an argument for inclusion in a value-added branding model.

Aligned with Aaker's model is Keller's consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) model (Keller, 2013: 68) – a more prominent and widely accepted model which builds, measures and manages brand equity. Differentiation between the two models occurs in contrasting Aaker's dimensions against Keller's four sequential steps 1) brand identity; 2) brand meaning; 3) brand response and 4) brand relationships (Keller, 2013: 107). In Keller's CBBE model, the sequential steps apply to brand building blocks which collectively make up the brand equity pyramid. Keller, in the model, shows how brand equity is created by reaching the pinnacle of this brand equity pyramid.

Keller's brand equity model developed into a brand resonance model which described how to create active loyalty relationships with consumers. Consideration is then given to how this brand resonance and these loyalty relationships, in turn, create brand equity or value of the brand (Keller, 2013: 107).

In addition, Keller's model of Brand Equity (Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & Du Plessis, 2012: 371; Keller, 2013: 61), places emphasis on a consumer's *knowledge* of the brand than on perceived quality. This concept is relative to students and parents, as consumers, having perceptions around PHEIs discussed earlier.

Other comprehensive models of consumer-based brand equity relate to Young and Rubican's Brand Asset Valuator and Millward's Brown's BrandDynamics (Walshe, 2018: Keller, 2013: 351). Of benefit to this research study is the BrandDynamics model which adopts a hierarchical approach (similar to Keller's brand building blocks and brand equity pyramid) to determine the strength of relationship a consumer has with a brand. This model is analysed further in Chapter two where brand equity models are discussed in greater depth.

The purpose thus remains for both Keller's and Aaker's model of brand equity (as the two current and most prominent) to act as a benchmark for brand building by providing both strategic direction for brand building processes as well as interpreting brand strategies for a new value-added branding model for PHEIs.

This research study resides within the field of marketing (as part of business management) and more specifically, branding. At the same time, this study will demonstrate the importance of managing brand equity. Critical factors such as strong brand names, value through brand extensions and specifically relative to PHEI is international accreditation of the brand- these factors all contributing to the brand equity of PHEIs. As will be evident from the literature review, limited brand equity research on PHEIs has been undertaken in both South Africa and in International markets.

Globalisation can provide an important benefit of a uniform international image (Ghauri & Cateora, 2010: 244) to a PHEI in South Africa, which can enhance its status as an institution, as well as provide an internationally recognised qualification – a perception that bears reality for education institutions in South Africa. Even though the foundation for this research study was based on analysing current branding models and perceptions of an accepted, suitably accredited qualification from a PHEI, globalisation also provided a context for this research study.

A global company engages in global marketing activities and markets itself worldwide. This equates to an organisation considering significant market segments with the same or similar demands for the same product/service worldwide (Ghauri & Cateora, 2010: 20). A PHEI in South Africa would need to benchmark its education institution and qualifications against the local market on a global scale as means to measure its success rate on an international level. For example, the Open University in Milton-On-Keynes in the United Kingdom has 250 000 students with registrations spanning 80 countries outside of the United Kingdom (Open University, 2017). Thus, the benefit of a global market orientation for PHEIs in South Africa would be to understand the norms that are measured, and the operational actions that are implemented, as well as marketing strategies, which are used from an international education institution, to implement a branding model locally.

The brand value that all PHEI's collectively offer its stakeholders can be measured by the brand equity, which refers to the perceived value associated with a brand by a specific target market (Neal & Strauss, 2008: 345). This brand equity is based on the value of the PHEI as an institution, as well as its qualifications in the marketplace. The effectiveness of the branding of the PHEI will be determined by this brand equity

- the outcome of the value-added model. This brand offering consists of a value proposition, which provides the benefits offered by one specific brand over another (Cravens & Piercy, 2012: 278).

Figure 1.1 (overleaf) indicates the inputs to a value-added branding framework using Kumar's (2012: 40) model. This framework highlights the critical components of a value-added branding model.

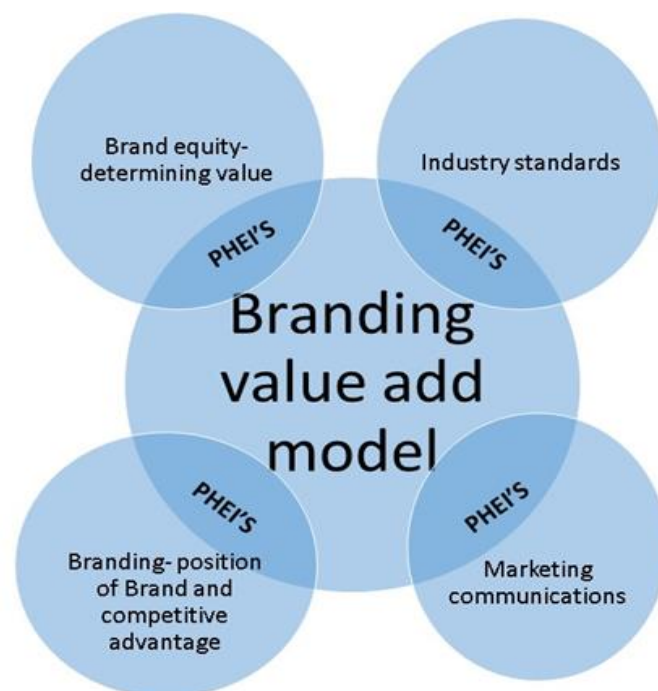


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of value-added branding (*adapted from Kumar, 2012: 40; Keller's brand equity model, Keller: 2013: 107*)

The conceptual framework (above) formed the basis of the research study, since the PHEI brand must enhance the offering, which, in turn, differentiates it from other brands (competitive advantage). Perceptions about a brand are influenced by a consumer's engagement with the brand (brand image), and thus forms the brand's identity (Kumar, 2012: 40). The need to create competitive advantage for a PHEI in order to increase its chances of success in the market, was incorporated into the solution to the research problem, as it is one of the key determinants of an effective value-added branding framework.

The conceptual framework, presents a value proposition, providing a benefit or value to the consumer that satisfies a need (current scenario of branding of PHEIs).

The next section provides both the research question and the research objectives that were formulated from the research problem.

1.5 Research question

The *primary research* question that was formulated to address the research problem was: what would constitute a value-added framework for the branding of a PHEI that aligns with both institution and industry needs and build sustainable brand equity and provide competitive advantage?

The *secondary research question* was:

To what extent will a value-added branding framework utilise the brand-building blocks coming from an analysis of the strengths the two current branding models , namely Keller and Aaker.

1.6 Research objectives

To answer the research question, primary and secondary research objectives were developed, as shown below.

1.6.1 Primary research objective

The primary objective of this research study was to formulate a value-added branding framework for South African PHEIs that builds brand equity and provides a competitive advantage for the education institution.

1.6.2 Secondary research objective

The secondary objective of this research study was to establish what brand building blocks and sub dimensions can emerge from both the strengths of the two prominent branding models currently in use, as well as analyse interpretations and perceptions of students, parents, staff, sponsors and corporate HR practitioners.

The next section discusses the selective parameters and delineation of the three industries that were considered for the study.

1.7 Significance of research within selective parameters

The selective parameters for the purpose of this research study are:

- 1) Significance to the academics.
- 2) Significance to the practitioners

1.7.1 Significance to the academics

As part of the process of developing a new value-added branding model, this study considered current branding models in order to ascertain their strengths and weaknesses. The applicability of these branding models, relative to all sectors, including the service industry, has been well researched over the last three decades (Keller, 2013: 622; Steenkamp, 2016; Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & Du Plessis, 2012: 71). However, the applicability of these current models to PHEIs has not been comprehensively researched, and this situation, therefore, provided justification for this study.

In view of the above background and context, this study analysed current theory and models of branding, particularly relevant to the service industry, and these models thus provided a basis for the development of a value-added model for PHEIs. Furthermore, the execution of this study was in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The next section highlights the thesis structure.

1.7.2 Significance to the practitioners

This research study focussed on the hospitality industry, which also included travel, hotel and leisure industries. This growing industry encompasses most PHEIs and within the South African education environment, and, therefore, assisted to meet the study's primary and secondary objectives.

This research study recommends a value-added framework and model for all PHEIs and their specific branding in terms of awareness and getting their names into the marketplace, including the corporate HR environment. In terms of both reliability and accuracy, the ring fencing of the population parameter and specific sample was limited to the hospitality profession within the three industry sectors (hotel, travel and tourism). The hospitality industry is vast, and at the same time provides

representation of several PHEIs offering specific hotel, travel and leisure qualifications throughout South Africa.

In addition to the analysis of current branding models,, the establishment of the current perceptions of PHEIs, amongst both the community (consumers) and corporate HR practitioners, was critical to determine a benchmark for these education institutions to evaluate the extent of their awareness and branding currently, and to what level it needs to develop to provide a competitive advantage.

1.8 Organisation of the study

Figure 1.2 (below) briefly describes the content of the rest of the research study.

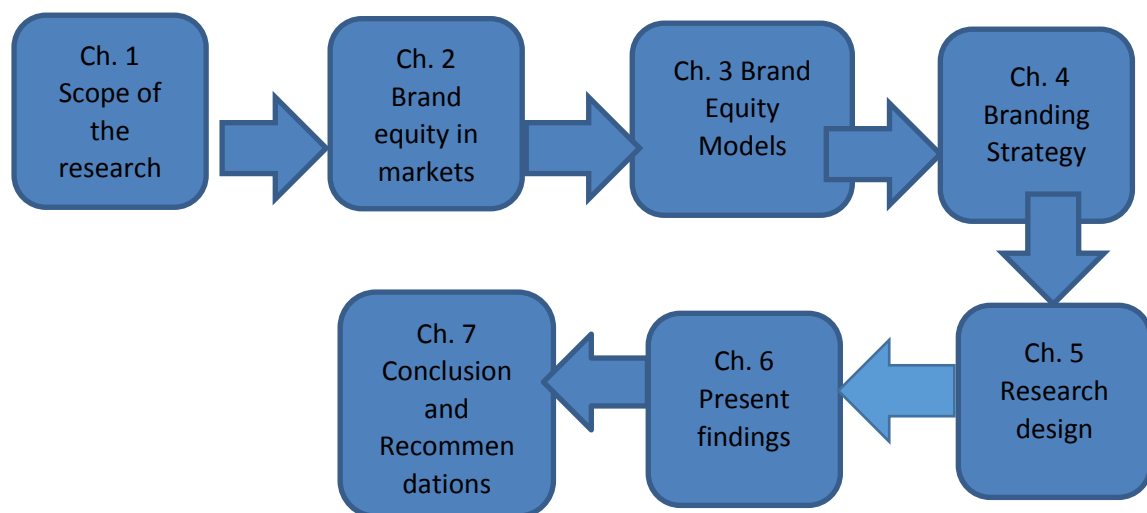


Figure 1.2: Organisation of the research study (Source: researcher's own)

The current chapter covered the background to the research study, including a background of the problem statement, research question and research objectives, relative to value-added branding.

The remainder of the research study is divided into the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Branding of PHEIs

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on brand equity in both consumer and business markets. Firstly, the chapter focuses on current theoretical and practical branding models that form the nucleus of the research study. Brand equity is defined as a fundamental issue within brand management. The strategic

brand building process is discussed with an emphasis on brand equity and the type of markets that brand equity is prominent. Foremost is adaption of the recent client-based brand equity framework (CL-BBE) from the B2B CBBE (customer-based brand equity) model, which has particular bearing on this research framework and subsequent model. Secondly, the literature is utilised to build the concept of brand architecture for PHEIs.

Chapter 3: Strategic brand models

Foremost is the discussion around the concept of a brand. The strategic brand management process included aspects of strategic brand leadership. This chapter also included branding in emerging markets as well as the global markets and impact on PHEIs branding model.

Chapter 4: Branding strategy

This chapter concludes the literature review and covers previous researched branding strategy development and other principles necessary for the formulation of a value-added branding model. It also includes the marketing communications concept, which provides the medium to drive the brand model. The role of the consumer, specifically from a perspective of building consumer relations in a business environment, integral to the drivers of the model, - is also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

This chapter details how this study was conducted. It covers issues such as the research philosophy, the research parameter, research design, and the research methodology that was used, as well as the plan, structure and strategy that were adopted in order to obtain answers to the research questions and fulfil the research objectives. In addition, this chapter includes a discussion around the units of analysis, participants, population parameters, sample type and size, as well as the self-administered questionnaire that the study used.

Chapter 6: Data analysis

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected during the study.

Chapter 7: Presentation of findings, conclusion and recommendations

This chapter presents the detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the data analysis and interpretations, and also highlights the key theoretical and practical contributions of this research study. Furthermore, the chapter identifies and discusses potential focus areas for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction and background of the research study. The chapter also highlighted the purpose of the study, the research problem, and the significance of the study.

The next chapter provides a review of brand management concepts and models relevant to PHEIs. The literature provided a foundation for the formulation of the proposed value-added framework and model for the branding of PHEIs.

CHAPTER TWO

BRANDING AND BRAND EQUITY MODELS

Brand preference may change as a result of marketing efforts

(Parumasar and Roberts- Lombard, 2012: 121)

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive background to the research study and highlighted the research problem and research objectives. Chapters, 2, 3 and 4 form the basis of the research study's literature review. This specific chapter reviews existing literature and theories relevant to the formulation of a new proposed value-added branding framework and model.

The strategic branding building process is covered in the chapter by discussing the important concepts of brand equity and brand architecture as they have emerged as important areas within the literature that impact on the process to develop competitive advantage and build brand equity. The researcher reviewed literature for this research study to establish the theoretical foundations of the study, clarify ideas, and develop the research methodology (Kumar, 2012: 31). The latter part of the chapter covered the most prominent brand equity models that were analysed, providing strong points and deficiencies that were used in the construct of a collective new value-added framework and model for PHEIs.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 101) provide an accurate assessment of a literature review by indicating that a literature review provides a benchmark against which the researcher can compare and contrast results. This benchmark, in the case of this research study, will be pitched against current branding models as well as the current branding of a large PHEI to assess their inputs relative to the new model.

Figure 2.1 below provides a visual representation of the chapter organisation.

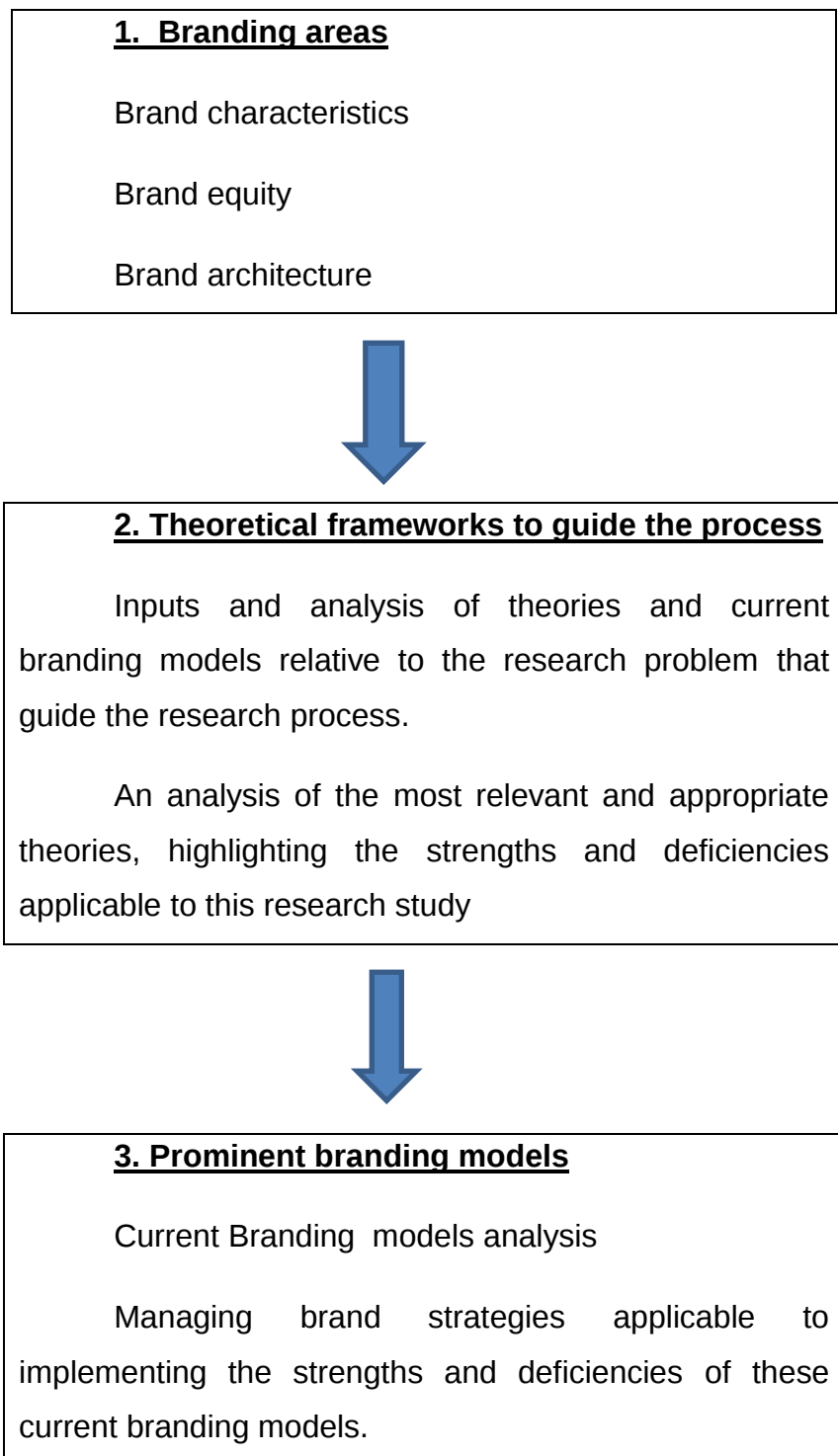


Figure 2.1: Structure of Chapter 2 (Source: Own)

The next section discusses the concept of brand equity relative to the analysis of branding models applicable to this research study.

2.2 Brand equity incorporated into branding models

The strategic process and creative practice of developing a brand is linked to the aim of the branding process which is to create brand equity (Keller, 2013: 57). In discussing and comparing the most prominent branding models used to guide the strategic brand building process, a distinction needs to be made between the value of a brand from a financial perspective and brand value from a consumer-based brand perspective.

Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & du Plessis (2012: 141) state that there seems to be some ambiguity as far as the term brand equity is defined. Firstly, even though the term brand equity is used more prominently, brand equity and brand value are used interchangeably. Kapferer (2009:13) provides further ambiguity when he defines brand equity as a set of associations and behaviours on the part of an organisation's customers and parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume (customers) or margins (financial value). Emphasising these two valid points of customer growth and loyalty, on the one hand and financial value on the other. However, Kapferer (2009:83) further discusses two clear perspectives relating to brand equity, namely *financially based* and *strategy based*.

The financial based perspective of brand equity deals with the value of a brand from an organisation's point of view, from which the value of the asset is built. Venter & Jansen van Rensburg (2014: 228) note that when building a brand organisation use various financial approaches such as the price premium generated by the brand, stock price movements and future earnings to name a few. These approaches exist to calculate the financial value of brand equity. This is only one aspect of brand equity that can impact on a branding concept of an organisation.

The strategy based perspective of Kapferer (2009:84) fosters the strategic brand building process and aims to build the importance of brands relative to consumer's perceptions as well as brand awareness and attitude. This strategy of building brand equity takes the elements of awareness and attitude from a consumer perspective and grows these two aspects into customer growth and loyalty- equally important for building brand equity of an organisation

Dutta (2013: 94) provides a strategy based consumer definition of brand equity that complement's Venter & Jansen van Rensburg (2014: 228) approach, as the set of associations and behaviours on the part of a brand's customers, channel members, and parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name, and that gives the brand a strong, sustainable, and differential advantage over competitors.

Johansson and Carlson (2015: 29) provide a simple, straight-forward definition of brand equity by stating that brands that have loyal customers and many customers, will be considered as being strong. This is because these have both high brand equity and high brand value.

Thus, brand equity from the above definitions can be categorised as two identifiable concepts that firstly, provides a set or group of behaviours demonstrated by the organisation that gives the organisation an opportunity for more earning power or greater volume and thus greater margins from a financial perspective. Secondly, the name and symbols that are associated with the brand are referred to as its assets, and a PHEI should adopt the concept of brand equity to measure these assets in order to ascertain the value of the brand.

Using the strategy consumer based perspective of Johansson and Carlson (2015: 31) they propose a brand equity pyramid that also has a consumer-based focus with an emphasis on managing the brand, which involves growing the brand from a consumer perspective and not a financial perspective. This brand equity concept provides stages that the consumer needs to progress through to show increasing consumer allegiance and suitable growth of brand equity- an element that needs to be included in a value-added model.

The discussion around brand equity describes and compares different viewpoints of this theoretical concept. However, Keller (2013: 73) provides a clear focus of the definition of brand equity as follows:

“Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favourable and unique brand associations in memory.”

Johansson and Carlson (2015: 31) describe these stages (discussed above) as follows:

Consumer recognition - a certain level of awareness and familiarity with a brand is necessary before consumers can use the brand as a cue, thus at the most basic level consumers must be aware that the brand exists. This aligns with the strategy-based perspective which deals with the value of a brand from a consumer's point of view relating to building the asset itself.

Consumer perception - involves more in-depth knowledge of the product and service behind the brand, as well as the kind of image that the brand wants to convey. Thus the consumer, at this stage, comes to understand what the brand stands for, and begins to develop an internal image for the brand. This "added value" as an element of brand equity leads to increased emotional and attitude strength on the part of the consumer. This adds further motivation for the inclusion of Keller's consumer perspective to be included in a value-added branding model.

Consumer response - the response of the consumer becomes positive in terms of rational evaluation of the brand, as well as their attitude towards the brand. Brand equity growth now focusses on creating the right associations – aligned with levels of the development of brand equity and the building of a brand as an asset (Dutta, 2009: 104).

Consumer bonding - captures the sense that a consumer's allegiance towards a brand and the pinnacle of creating brand equity is brand loyalty, and the forming of a bonded relationship.

Both Aaker (2008: 45) and Keller (2013: 73) emerge as the two most prominent theorists utilised as contributors to the strategic brand building process and their views inductively contributed to the development of the proposed value-added branding framework for PHEIs. Their viewpoints and definitions of brand equity relate to both the financial and strategy consumer-based perspectives discussed earlier.

Aaker (2008: 45) further defines brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, adding value to, or subtracting from the value provided by a product or service to an organisation, and/or to the organisation's customers.

There is thus a differentiation between a financial brand equity perspective and a strategy consumer based perspective as Aaker (2008: 135) further notes that the brand equity can be viewed from a consumer's perspective as "brand awareness is an important dimension of brand equity *from a consumer's perspective*." Simply put, it is the ability of consumers to identify the brand under different conditions.

Aaker (2008: 137) further defines two parameters relative to the concept of brand awareness, as firstly, *brand recognition* which is high brand awareness, when consumers are able to recognise the brand even by cues given about the brand. Secondly, *Brand recall* where consumers can recall the brand when needs related to the product or service category are to be fulfilled.

Keller (2013: 73) defines brand equity from the customer's perspective, and argues that brand equity can be clearly defined as either *customer-based brand equity*, where the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand, and holds some favourable and unique brand associations. This places emphasis on the consumer who must not think that all brands in a particular category are the same. Keller (2013: 408) furthermore defines brand equity in terms of a second component called *corporate brand equity*, where the "differential response" from consumers and other stakeholders to the brand underlines the corporate brand equity of the organisation.

Thus, brand awareness becomes a value-added building-block, which influences brand-based decisions that consumers will make. Together with brand equity, this value-added concept of brand awareness brings familiarity to the brand from a consumer's perspective.

Perceived brand quality is of paramount relevance to the brand equity component of any service or intangible goods that are presented to the consumer. Keller (2013: 46) supports the above notion in what he terms a customer-based brand equity framework, since brand knowledge is key to creating brand equity. Keller (2013: 47) further states that brand equity aligns with the concept of both brand awareness and perceived quality, which in the case of this study, can be measured relative to a PHEI and its qualifications.

Building brand equity is equally important, specifically for a brand that wants to gain a competitive advantage. Building strong brand equity will positively influence consumers and, in addition, provide an understanding of brand equity from a consumer's point of view.

The argument is around what creates a strong brand, and how brand equity contributes to building a strong brand. The point of departure for a brand value-add model stems from a brand equity basis (as discussed previously), moving towards brand identity (the basis for all branding), brand value, brand architecture, and, ultimately, brand relationships.

For the present research study, both Keller's view of customer-based brand equity and Aaker's brand value model will be analysed to adopt both highlights (strengths) and deficiencies that will be incorporated into a new value-added branding model.

The next section discusses the concept of brand architecture.

2.2.1 Brand architecture and the strategic brand building process

Brand architecture is an integral part of brand equity, consisting of a brand portfolio that essentially comprises brand roles (Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & du Plessis, 2012: 358). Thus brand architecture can be interpreted as the way in which organisations organise and structure the brand portfolio by specifying brand roles and the nature of relationships between brands. In assessing various brand equity models, in order to build a strategic brand value-added framework for PHEIs, brand architecture will refer to the structure of an organisation's brands and how they relate to each other.

Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2009: 134) indicate that brand architecture is an organising structure of the brand portfolio that specifies the brand roles and the relationship amongst brands and different product-market brand contexts. Thus, brand architecture constitutes the composition of the brand portfolio that consists of all the brands and, where applicable, sub-brands that exist in an organisation. This supports relationship building as an important construct in the B2B marketing that needed to be formulated into the branding model when PHEIs communicated with corporates around graduate placement.

West, Ford and Ibrahim (2010: 194) define brand architecture as an integral part of the strategic management of a brand, since they maintain that the critical component of corporate branding is when the organisation produces a variety of products that are distinct from one another all under one umbrella brand and enjoy the same brand benefits. This was applied to the research study when inductively constructing a new value-added brand model.

Figure 2.2 below highlights the concept of brand architecture that houses different types of brands and brand relationships, indicating how brand architecture is incorporated into a brand, and how stakeholders build a relationship with the brand.

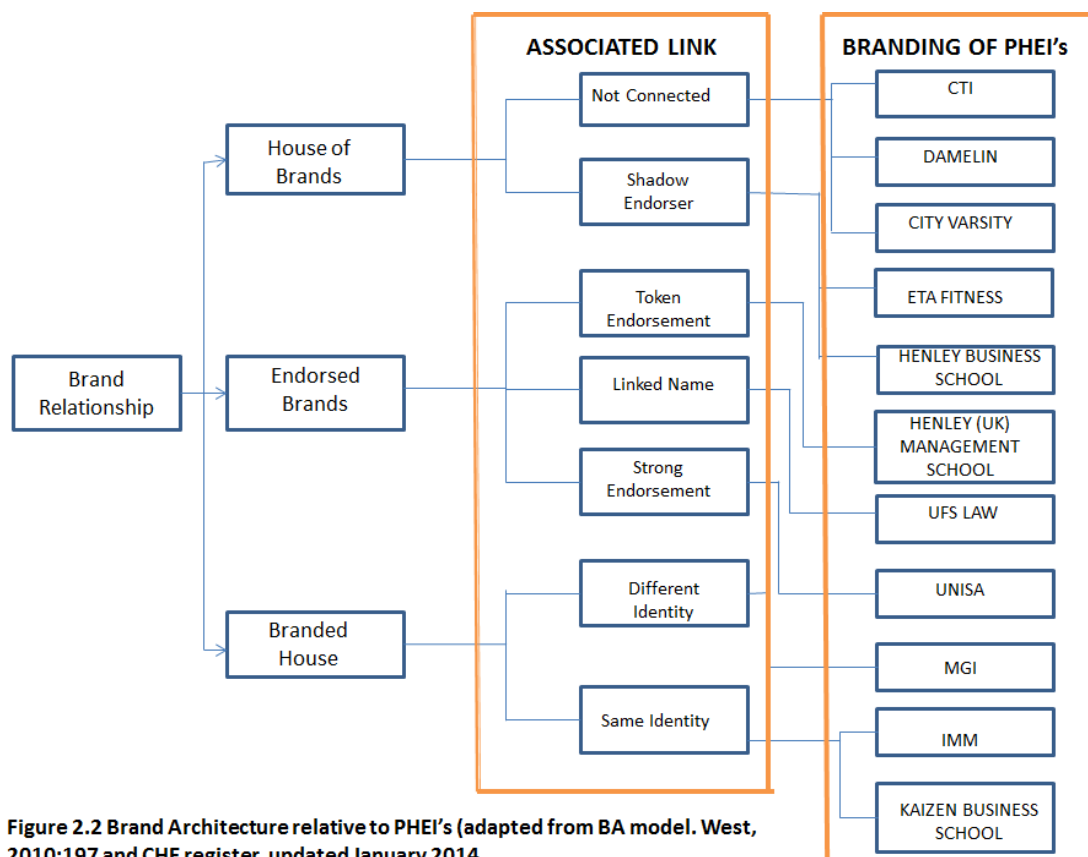


Figure 2.2 Brand Architecture relative to PHEI's (adapted from BA model. West, 2010:197 and CHE register updated January 2014)

West *et al.* (2010: 196) elucidate that the brand architecture model is structured around two extreme concepts – *house of brands* and *branded house*. The concept of brand architecture is defined by the *branded house* in relation to their own brands under one branded name having the same identity in Figure 2.2 (above). The branded house relates to the brand equity concept of the organisation's brand, built over time by sustainability and investment in a marketing programme that builds the brand and provides consistent performance offering. This reduces consumer risk and should reduce the consumer's reluctance to move from one brand to another and supported Aaker's (2008: 27) component of brand loyalty for the construct of a value-added model.

The *house of brands* concept deals with brands under one umbrella holding company; however, these have totally unrelated identities that are not connected. CTI, as an example, is a leading PHEI in South Africa, which is owned by the Pearson Group (UK), and has the Midrand Graduate Institute (MGI) as their degree offering institution, with most of their campuses linked to the CTI brand name (CTI, 2015). The branding concept here is that the organisation's name is already known and will link the two education institutions in terms of credibility and branded awareness. Differentiation is thus achieved by the supplier brand, which provides the credibility to the consumer and not the individual offering brand. This strategy can be applicable to the construct of a new model only if the new offering or service differs vastly from the umbrella holding company. The researcher's observation suggested that in B2B market, where PHEIs and corporates communicate around graduate placement the house of brands concept will be applicable as these corporates would have an understanding of the credibility of the holding company and attach credibility to the offering.

The brand architecture model, further outlined in Figure 2.2 (above), also included the *endorsed brand* link. This endorsement is not necessarily from consumers, but more from institutions, societies and committees. This endorsement is tangible because in the short term it provides branding strength for the brand to be recognised in the market-place, and in the long term for the initial brand to eventually stand on its own. A further example is CTI, a partner of Cardiff Metropolitan University in Wales, and is affiliated to the Information Technology Association (ITA) (CTI, 2014).

This theoretical perspective provided an analysis of consolidation where different, yet related brands, reside under one umbrella foundation to facilitate the strategic brand process and model building framework.

In a portfolio, brands have a relationship with each other, and this is expanded upon in a brand portfolio structure (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 144). This brand portfolio is similar to the brand architecture model, as brand grouping is used that provides meaningful characteristics to all co-brands under the same primary brand. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009: 111) provide further input to the brand architecture model by indicating similarity aspects to the endorsed brand's concept that they relate to the primary brand as a stand-alone brand (not connected to any sub brands), yet with endorsement from an organisational institution such as the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) for an accounting qualification. This brings credibility to the brand and, more importantly, can inspire confidence in the consumer market - one of the main objectives of a value-add brand framework and model.

The underlying common concept for brand architecture is to optimise the brand portfolio (Neal & Strauss, 2008: 76). The commonality of both the brand architecture model and the brand portfolio strategy discussed above, while optimising the brand portfolio, is the value creation for all stakeholders. This value is seen in specifying brand roles, developing relationships between brands and co-brands, as well as aligning with each brand and its respective markets. Neal and Strauss (2008: 59) further expand on the brand architecture debate by referring to consumers having different sets of "attributes" that brand architecture can build around. Consumers, for example, can be high-end users, desiring a certain set of standards, which is only applicable to a similar brand. Conversely, Kleyn (2014:48) discussed brand architecture as low-end market attributes that were met by the same brand by using co-branding or endorsed brands, which are relative to that particular market. This differentiation amongst consumers needed to be incorporated into the new value-added framework for PHEIs.

Brand roles, which consist of brand strategy, brand leveraging and, more relevantly, brand return on investment (ROI) will be able to provide elements of the PHEI's

brand equity. Ultimately, the make-up of the brand architecture of a PHEI will lead to strategic decision making that will enhance the construct of the brand model.

Figure 2.3 (overleaf) explores the concept of brand relationship, indicating how brand architecture is incorporated into a brand, and the subsequent development of the brand into brand relationship building.

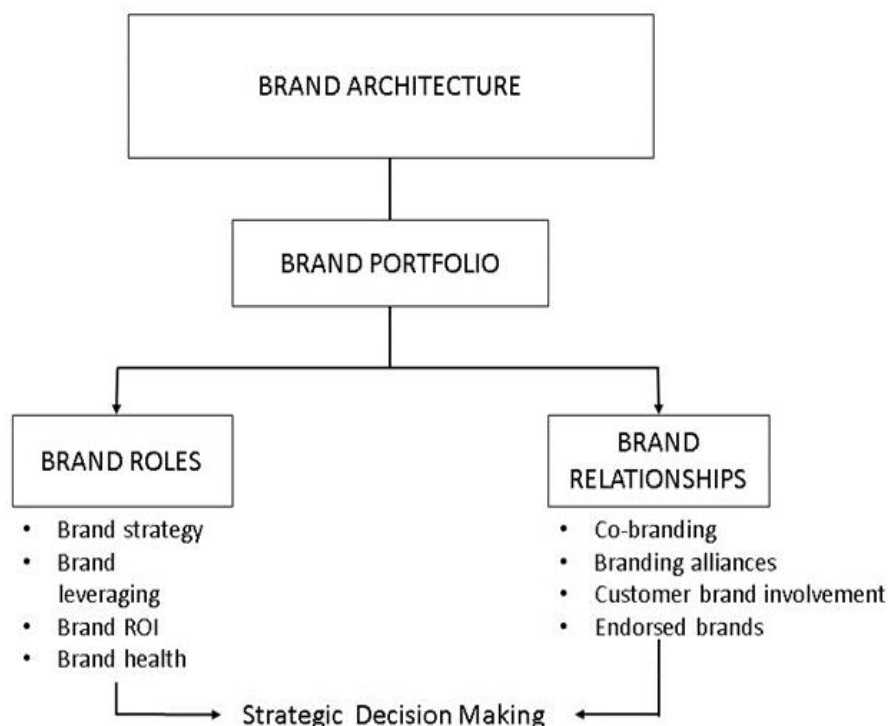


Figure 2.3 Brand Architecture (West, Ford & Ibrahim, 2010: 197)

Figure 2.3 above indicates that the concept of brand architecture, as an integral part of brand equity, consists of a brand portfolio that essentially comprises two concepts, namely brand roles and brand relationships. One of the strategic choices that a brand can decide on that will both differentiate it from its competitors, as well as enhance the perceived quality of the brand in the mind of the consumer, is brand architecture (West *et al.*, 2010: 196). This concept is essentially what an organisation manages within itself, and that, which it ultimately takes to industry to be measured as *brand equity* and *brand value*. West *et al.* (2010: 198) support the concept of the ‘endorsed brand’ (discussed above) as a primary stand-alone brand that has

endorsement from an accredited professional institution. This, in turn, can build onto its connection to a known brand, specifically from a consumer's perspective. From a theoretical perspective, this concept of a known brand lends itself to the sustainable success of the brand, and provides value, specifically to the consumer.

The theoretical point of departure for brand architecture and subsequent brand relationships is brand identity, which, according to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009: 44), consists of the brand as a product (quality/value), an organisation (attributes), a person (personality) and, lastly, a symbol (visual image). This invariably defines brand identity as representing what the organisation wants the brand to represent. The sustainable debate around this theoretical assumption is that the brand identity represents the strength of the organisation, and dictates what the organisation represents (Jooste *et al.*, 2012: 50).

Once it has its brand identity established, an organisation can leverage its own brand by establishing a brand architecture to provide the organising of the brand portfolio, hence determining the brand roles and relationships among brands (Kleyn, 2014: 50). This reduced consumer risk – an integral element during the construct of a value-added branding model.

The next section discusses perspectives on value-add as an integral part of a new branding model.

2.3 Perspectives on value-add

A value-added branding framework and model can improve the long-term stakeholder value of the brand. To achieve the long-term value of the brand, a strategic perspective would require a fundamental shift in the way in which organisational brands are ultimately managed and marketed (Neal & Strauss, 2008: ix).

Neal and Strauss, (2008: 80) discuss the value aspect from a consumer perspective, where the organisation's service is viewed as a source of expertise with *valuable* competences to be combined with the customer's own existing competencies (knowledge) - this creates a network (relationship) effect with new opportunities emerging that benefit all stakeholders. From a value-added perspective, this combination of consumer knowledge, enhanced by access to more readily-available

information from new technology, whilst also creating opportunities, is directly applicable to the formulation of a new value-add branding model for PHEIs.

Neal and Strauss (2008: 80) postulate further that this brand loyalty can provide a value aspect from a consumer perspective. The consumer views the organisation's service as a source of expertise with *valuable* competencies to be combined with the customer's own existing competencies (knowledge) - this creates a network (relationship) effect with new opportunities emerging that benefit all stakeholders. From a value-added perspective, this combination of consumer knowledge, enhanced by access to more ready information from new technology, whilst creating opportunities from the concept of brand loyalty, is directly applicable to the formulation of a value-added branding model for PHEIs.

Concerning a PHEI, the value-add of branding requires a focus shift from the brand that is more strategic and visionary to one that is both tactical and reactive in order for branding to be a value-add component. Jooste *et al.* (2012: 343) pose the question: "*When you think of a brand, what comes to mind?*" The simplicity of this question is much aligned with the value that any corporate or PHEI would link to the concepts of branding and value. If this same question is posed to consumers, they will react from a position of what identity (brand loyalty) and value they will gain from the brand.

Neal and Strauss (2008: 79) provide a synopsis of the concept of "value", and refer to three ideals in this regard:

- An amount of goods or services, as fair equivalent for something else - return;
- Monetary or material worth (fluctuating values); and
- Worth in usefulness or importance to the possessor, utility or merit.

It is essentially this third concept that has relevance to this research study, since this worth or benefit would have, provided benefits to the consumer and encouraged brand loyalty from an ideological perspective. For the benefit of this research study, a critical analysis of this concept has shown that one of the consumers, a corporate HR practitioner, for example, would realistically engage and consider employing a graduate who has a PHEI qualification, but only on the basis of the value (worth) of the qualification from the PHEI to the said industry. Once a new branding model is

formulated this concept of value-added will need to be tested in order to ascertain if the sustainability of the brand is indeed, a value component.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009: 40) further define brand value within an organisation as brand essence, brand promise or brand mantra. In order to provide the challenge to branding and its value-add component to the organisation, this brand essence should capture the meaning and importance to the organisation. The value of a brand, from a consumer perspective, is critical to the sustainability of a PHEI, making the value and branding of the PHEI important to their existence.

The next section discusses the theoretical framework of the research study.

2.4 Theoretical framework of the research study

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014: 55) maintain that a theoretical framework is a specific collection of thoughts and theories that guide the phenomenon that is being investigated - it is thus the conceptual starting point, and provides the framework of the research study. For this research study and forming an integral part of the literature review is the application of the theory to the research problem. Mouton (2013: 92) maintains that the aim of theoretical and conceptual studies is to review and discuss the most relevant and appropriate theories and models of a particular phenomenon- the analysis of existing branding models in order to motivate for the inclusion in a value- added framework.

Babbie (2011: 121) provides credibility to the concept of a theoretical framework by maintaining that a growing body of evidence suggests that interventions developed with an explicit theory foundation are more effective than those that lack a theoretical base.

The theory of reasoned action (see point 2.4.1) provided a framework for the application of decision making to the current branding models of Aaker (2008: 27) and Keller (2013:110) discussed in the literature. This behavioural theory framework impacted on the analysis of the models based on the relevance of the elements discussed in figure 2.4 below.

Figure 2. 4 below indicates elements of a theoretical framework that will guide the researcher in the analysis of the strengths and deficiencies (weaknesses) of current branding models applicable to the construct of a new value-added branding model.

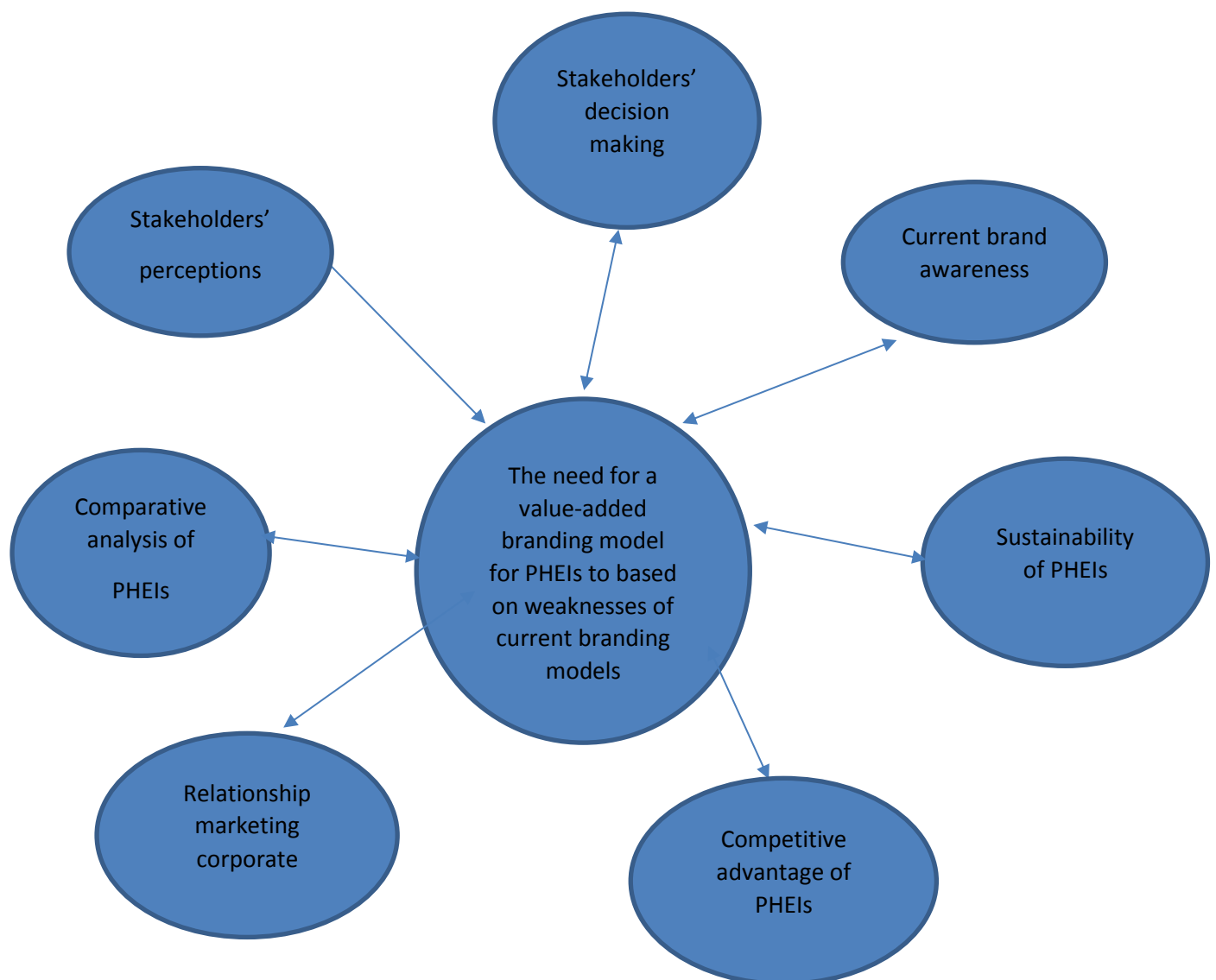


Figure 2.4 Concepts that guide the theoretical scope of the research study
(Adapted from Johanson & Karlson, 2015: 8)

Figure 2.4 above illustrates the elements to be investigated that stem from current branding theories and models that will guide the theoretical framework relative to the research problem. In this theoretical framework, discussed below, two theories provided a framework that will be instrumental in guiding what concepts were relevant or not relevant to the research problem, based on the analysis of the current branding models to follow.

Furthermore, the process theory relative to change, provided a framework within the constructs as it described how a phenomenon changed and developed. Section 2.4.2 elaborated further on the process theory introducing alignment between customer relationship marketing (CRM) and how processes are driven (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 180).

2.4.1 Behavioural theory – Theory of reasoned action

Paramasur and Roberts- Lombard (2012: 27) discuss the concept of individuals who, when they encounter particular situations, the consumer decision-making process is activated; in other words, the consumer decides to purchase a product or use a service. Consumers have to choose not only between brands (brand awareness), but also level of service needed and, which needs to satisfy.

Developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in the late 1960s (Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 2014: 12), the theory of reasoned action centred its analysis on the importance of pre-existing attitudes in the decision-making process. Fundamental to this process will be firstly, the analysis around the branding models and their elements applicable to branding and secondly, the consumer's preconceived beliefs and attitudes towards a brand – a concept that existed in the discussion under the consumer based perspective in the brand equity. This theory postulates that *specificity* is critical in the decision making process - a consumer only takes a specific action when an equally specific result is expected.

Parasumar and Roberts (2012: 29) further postulate that the theory highlights the importance of moving consumers through the so-called marketing “pipeline”. Long delays with minimum communication between completing the action allows consumers the opportunity to talk themselves out of a purchase, or question the outcome of the desired action.

Engel, Kollet and Blackwell (Bonnice, 2015: 32) expand on the theory of reasoned action by providing an assumption that there are two periods when marketers can play an influential role in the consumer's decision-making processes. Firstly, at the information phase, where the right amount of information needs to be generated to the consumer – brand awareness plays a critical role at this stage. Secondly, at the external influences stage, where the competitive advantage is critical.

Thus, the theory supports the notion of critical analysis concerning the decision-making process from consumers on choosing a brand based on both Keller's and Aaker's models of branding.

2.4.2 Process theory relative to change

Mouton (2013: 93) maintains that the literature review can be organised around a key construct in the research study, evident from the formulation of the research problem. The key construct in this research study was around the construct of a new value-added branding model based on analysis of current branding models. Thus Van De Ven (2011: 21) process theory bears relevance to the research problem as it provided a system of ideas that explained how a phenomenon changed and developed. Process theory is also contrasted with variance theories, namely systems of ideas that explain the variance in a dependent variable, based on one or more independent variables. Van De Ven (2011: 22) also discusses process theory as a theory used to explain how decisions are made.

Systems theory, as described by Stitweth (2013: 24), consists of three basic elements of input/ processing/ output that is in balance (equilibrium) with the systems environment. Du- Plooy Cilliers, *et al.* (2014: 53) provide a link between this systems theory and process theory, since through work processes, inputs are transformed into outputs by means of transforming the independent variables. Once the independent variables, as inputs to the process or system are transformed, a balanced environment will be achieved. A contrast between the systems theory and process theory lies in the balanced state in which the systems theory strives to achieve. This balance is aligned with the environment, which in the case of this research study is the organisation and the environment in which it operates.

Berndt and Tait (2013: 180) apply the process theory to the concept of customer relationship marketing (CRM). They define processes as the way in which things are driven to enable the strategic branding process of formulating a framework for a value-added branding model to be implemented successfully. Berndt and Tait (2013: 181) provide further relevance to the study by stating that it may be necessary to change the processes for different consumers, depending on whether they are business-to-business (B2B) consumers or individual consumers- relative to the research problem. For the purpose of this research study, stakeholders, both individual consumers (parents/ account payers and students) and B2B consumers (corporate sponsors and corporate HR practitioners), are significant.

The relevance of the process theory, as a guide to the literature study of this research study, lies in the variables or external influences that provide input to the process. The output of this study will be a value-added branding model for PHEIs, and will hence have competitors, stakeholders' perceptions and decision making, distribution channels and the relationship status of consumers as independent variables that should be considered.

2.4.3 Conceptual frameworks of the research study

Burns and Burns (2012: 74) relate a conceptual framework to the starting point of the research, with the theory specifying proposed relationships between theoretical concepts, and how they influence one another. The conceptual framework thus links abstract concepts as a first stage when designing a research study.

As indicated in Figure 2.1, the differences between a product and service that is not well-known and the branding of an organisation that is non-existent, are at the centre of this study. The lack of branding of an organisation can be attributed to many factors, including, *inter alia*, the obscurity of the organisation, the lack of competitive advantage displayed by the organisation, or negative perceptions from consumers about the brand. Perceptions about a brand are influenced by a consumer's experience with the brand, which, in turn, interprets the brand's identity and forms the image of the organisation in the consumer's mind. This consumer experience impacts on brand influences, *inter alia*, brand awareness, brand associations, brand performance (quality) and, ultimately, brand loyalty (Keller, 2013: 43).

This research study has as a primary research objective, namely formulation of a value-added PHEI branding model. This will be achieved by investigating current perceptions of stakeholders towards a PHEI, the branding that PHEIs display predominantly, the dominant stakeholders' decision making, specifically referring to either the account payer (parent) or student decision making concerning the PHEI that they should attend, the sustainability of a PHEI, and the relationship marketing that exists between a corporate and a PHEI.

The present study will thus contribute to knowledge and understanding of the following four areas:

- Current stakeholders' perceptions of PHEIs;
- Competitive advantage of all PHEIs;
- Relationship marketing (CRM) of PHEIs; and
- The sustainability of PHEIs (brand equity).

The framework of the value-added branding model will consist of the elements of the model to be researched and identified, which will constitute the formulation of a new value-added branding model for PHEIs.

The next section covers the two most prominent branding models.

2.5 Theoretical aspects and branding models

The purpose of this research study was to analyse theories and subsequent models, taking strengths and avoiding deficiencies and move into new fields that provide further insight and significances to the aspect of formulating a new branding model. The conceptual framework discussed in section 2.3.3 was continued and analysed and unbundled current branding models in order to ascertain the value and contribution to the development of a new branding model, specifically for PHEIs. There are various branding models ranging from early models such as the Howard-Sheth model (1967) to the Nicosia model (1976). Later models such as Kapferer's brand identity prism (2004) to the two most prominent branding models of Aaker (2009) and Keller (2013) and all these models provided valuable inputs to the strategic brand building process.

Aaker's brand equity model was developed to show the alignment between value and how this value is created through marketing activities and how they have enhanced brand equity (Keller, 2013: 466) and (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2009: 17). This model maintains that a brand's equity (assets and liabilities) is linked to five categories (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 17), namely:

- Brand loyalty;
- Brand awareness;
- Perceived quality;
- Brand associates; and
- Propriety assets (trademarks, relationships).

This model underlines the fundamental pillars of branding, both products and services, since its value is more in being a generic model, which provides five sound pillars for the branding of most organisations. Of benefit to the formulation of a new brand model of a PHEI, would be this aspect of perceived quality. The model provides a fulcrum and leverage point around perceived quality, an intangible asset that would be value-add to any organisation and its branding, provided that the market-place can construe this quality as being differential from other competitors.

Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & Du Plessis (2012; 370) maintain that this issue of perceived quality is at the heart of what a consumer is purchasing. At the same time this perceived quality is used to differentiate or position brands against others. Jooste, *et al.*, (2012:371) also see perceived quality in Aaker's model as the driver of financial performance, through the price premium that consumers are prepared to pay for and what the associated benefits can be obtained.

Aaker's brand loyalty is at the heart of any brand's value (Aaker, 2008: 121). A brand with a small but intensively loyal customer base can have significant equity. In addition, brand loyalty can reduce marketing costs as it is less expensive to resell to a loyal consumer than to acquire a new consumer. Another advantage of this element of Aaker's brand equity model is that brand loyalty can be influenced by brand awareness, perceived quality and brand association's dimensions (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 25). This provides an added dimension to any branding model as these elements, although interdependent from one another, can be influenced by

any one of the other elements and thus can expand from a consumer's brand loyalty into perceived quality and subsequently brand association. Thus, this loyalty is very much applicable to the brand and not necessarily the service or product offering and, as such, contributes greatly to the brand equity. Arguably, brand equity is often based on brand associations, which gives meaning to consumers and is represented in brand loyalty (Aaker, 2002: 29).

According to Venter & Jansen van Rensburg (2014: 249) brand awareness is very much a consumer perception. Thus Aaker's model of brand equity is well aligned with Keller's consumer-based model that reinforces the point of formulating a new value-added branding model that provides brand equity from a consumer perspective and not solely from an asset or financial perspective. Consumers relate to brands that are familiar and form part of their consideration set. Venter & Jansen van Rensburg (2014: 252) provide an awareness pyramid, whereby a hierarchy is created that ranges from total unawareness of the brand (brand is not known to the consumer) to brand recognition (based on attributes and benefits recognised) to brand recall (top of the pyramid) and relates to the dominant brand recognised by the consumer.

An important aspect of the element of brand awareness from Aaker's model, making it very applicable to the strategic brand building process of a new model, is that brand awareness can be linked to attributes such as sustainability and commitment, two integral parts of a consumer's consideration set. Thus for brand awareness to be achieved, and either maintained or improved, the brand needs to be different, provide familiarity and even memorable in order to differentiate it from other brands.

Keller's model of Brand Equity (Jooste *et al.*, 2012: 371) also focusses on an aspect of brand equity; however, the emphasis is more on a consumer's knowledge of the brand than on the perceived quality. This provides more of a value-add to the branding of PHEIs, since consumers (parents, students, sponsors and corporate HR practitioners in this case) will align the PHEI and its qualifications to perceptions, preferences and behaviours (Jooste *et al.*, 2012: 371) based on their current perceptions. Keller (2013: 624) relies on the concept of brand awareness, brand knowledge and, ultimately, brand image that will link strong and favourable associations to the formulation of a branding model for PHEIs.

An integral component of Keller's model relative to the strategic brand building process is a step that includes the measure and interpretation of brand performance (Keller, 2013: 59). A brand equity management system is discussed (Keller, 2013:60) as a research-based system, which provides brand managers with information to make timely decisions. This research study, in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of current branding models that have been analysed and incorporated into a new branding model, and then tested the branding model against a larger PHEI, as aligned with Keller's brand equity management system.

Keller's conceptualisation of consumer-based brand equity (Keller, 2013: 107) states that brand knowledge is an organisation's most valuable asset and is a direct result of investment in marketing activities and more specifically, brand marketing. Keller further indicates that brand knowledge consists of brand awareness and brand image. This concept of brand awareness is aligned with Aaker's concept of brand familiarity and relates to the strength of the brand in the mind-set of the consumer. The brand image refers to what the consumer associates with in their memory. Thus Keller (2013: 70) and Aaker (2002:23) to a lesser degree maintain that consumer-based equity occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand as well as having strong favourable and unique brand associations in their memory. This formed an integral part of a building-block used in the formulation of a new value-added model for PHEIs.

Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2009: 25) makes reference to brand associations in that brand loyalty is influenced by both brand awareness and perceived quality. Jooste, *et al.*, (2012: 372) in comparing both Aaker's model of brand equity and Keller's consumer-based brand equity maintain that positive brand image is created by marketing programmes that link strong favourable and unique *associations* to the brand in consumers' memory. These associations are manifested in all of brand attributes, brand benefits and brand attitudes and linked in terms of consumers overall evaluations of a brand. Thus, the brand attributes included associations to the obtaining a tertiary qualification; the brand benefits are service delivery and perceived quality; and brand attitudes the favourability of the brand, were included in a value-added branding model for PHEIs.

As Keller's consumer-based equity model developed it renamed into the brand resonance model (Keller, 2013: 107), which now describes how to create intense, active loyalty relationships with consumers. Thus the brand resonance model represented brand building (an integral component of the strategic brand building process of this research study) as a sequence of four stages – each stage being reliant on achieving the objectives of the previous one). These four steps represent a set of fundamental questions that consumers invariably ask implicitly about brands. Keller (2013: 107) asks the following questions with corresponding brand steps:

- 1) Who are you? (brand identity)
- 2) What are you ?(brand meaning)
- 3) What about you? What do I think about you?(brand responses)
- 4) What about you and me? What kind of connection would I like to have with you?(brand relationships).

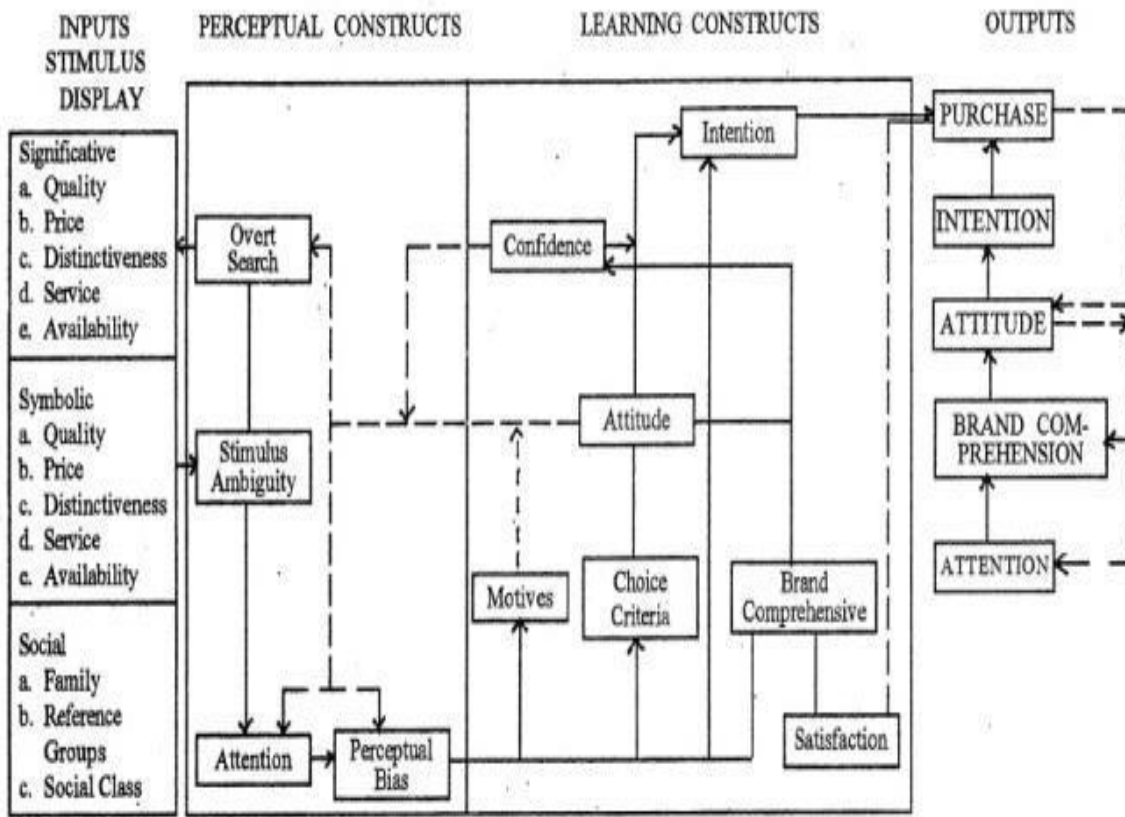
Keller (2013: 108) then formulates these stages of branding into a branding ladder. The objective achievement of each stage is then indicated thereafter. Thus a brand has no meaning for a consumer unless identity (stage 1) is established; no brand responses will occur unless the brand meaning(stage 2) has been established for the consumer and brand relationships (stage 4) cannot be forged until the proper responses (stage 3) have been elicited. The integral part of the branding ladder and the relevance to this research study lies in the progress up the branding ladder that an organisation puts in place for the brand-building process with significant brand equity only resulting if brands can position themselves at the top of the pyramid. Thus Keller's model provides valuable input in that brand resonance should be considered as the goal of the strategic brand-building process and subsequent activities gives focus to brand marketing decision-making.

A dynamic model of relevance to this research study is the Nicosia Model (Nicosia, 1976: 35), which was developed in the late 1970s as an integrative model, integrating knowledge that was acquired by a consumer into a decision making process that helps the consumer to choose a particular service or product. The theoretical assumption of this model is an emphasis on the relationship between the organisation and the consumer as aligned with Keller's brand ladder concept.

Nicosia (1976: 37) further elaborates on the concept of knowledge acquired, adopting a deductive approach of general product knowledge towards specific brand knowledge that allows the consumer to move from a passive state to an active state, and thereby deciding on a particular brand. Adaption of this particular model to a development model to brand PHEIs, based on consumers' knowledge and decision making, is too simplistic. The theoretical assumption that intensive knowledge, both of a general nature, as well as a specific brand nature, will influence their decision-making bears merit; however, it also provides limitations. Aspects such as consumers' attitudes or experiences with or from a particular service are influential factors that override knowledge, and will impact on post service behaviour (brand loyalty), which culminates in a pillar of a PHEI branding model.

Another influential model from the mid – 1960's, that contributed to the strategic brand building process of a new value-added model, was the Howard–Sheth model of buyer behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004: 67), which shows particular relevance to the branding of an organisation, specifically from a consumer perspective. Whilst the Nicosia model focuses on the consumer's decision-making process, this model dealt with *brand characteristics* (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004: 72). Figure 2.5 below indicates that the theoretical basis for the model begins with consumers being exposed to a stimulus in the form of information that is supplied by the organisation (inputs) – an awareness of the service that can be offered. The consumer determines their own perceptual bias in the form of attitude, confidence, search and motives towards the brand, as well as influential social and cultural variables (outputs). Branding aspects and attributes, such as quality of service, distinctiveness and, more importantly, service delivery, are instrumental to the organisation as value indicators that consumers seek.

Figure 2.5 below indicates the two pillars of the model, namely perceptual constructs (based on a consumer's initial knowledge and perceptions of the brand), and learning constructs (social learning from the consumer that influences their decision making behaviour).



(Source: John A Howard, Jagdish Sheth. The Theory of Buyer Behaviour, John Wiley, 1969)

Figure 2.5 Howard- Sheth model of brand awareness (adapted from Schiffman, 2003: 121)

The outputs that are indicated in Figure 2.5 above provide particular relevance to the research study, since they can be construed as value indicators in the form of brand comprehension, intention, attitude, acquisition and attention- all part of brand associations (discussed in Keller's brand resonance model). A strong emphasis is placed on consumers' wants and needs, contributing to an organisation's brand equity, hence these needed to be incorporated into the formulation of a new value-added branding model.

A limiting factor of the Howard-Sheth model is the number of variables that the theoretical assumptions provide as outputs, which would need scientific testing in a model in order to determine, which variables would be more influential than others, depending on consumer preference. This is a model, which dates back fifty years,

but can be labelled ahead of its time, especially because of its relevance to current consumer behaviour from a branding perspective.

Recent studies include a customer-based brand equity model (CBBE) that has been developed to guide brand building, applicable to business-to-business contexts (Steenkamp, 2016). This customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model was developed to guide brand building in both a consumer product and an individual brand context. Therefore, the proposal is that the model is applicable to any context, including business-to-business (B2B) and service contexts. The service context in the case of this research study is the hospitality service industry, making the CBBE model applicable. Steenkamp's (2016) CBBE model emphasises brand building strategies for B2B services, and this provides a platform for PHEIs' B2B brand building strategies when communicating with corporate HR practitioners.

The next section deals with the competitive advantage gained from strategic branding models.

2.6 Strategic branding models and their competitive advantage

Both management and branding models are designed, firstly, to resolve common problems and challenges in business and, secondly, to provide a new way of seeing a situation that will result in value-add, hence positive change that can provide a competitive advantage (Van Essen, 2009: xi). Generally, models should stand up to a high degree of scientific scrutiny and, at the same time, be of practical value to the organisation.

This research study focused primarily on the development of a strategic brand building process based on the analysis of prominent branding models discussed in section 2.4. This framework evolved into a collective branding model that provided a competitive advantage for a PHEI by creating value-add opportunities for the market place.

Figure 2.6 below highlights the conceptual frameworks and alignment with the PHEI, and all aspects of the brand that are critically important to the institution and the corporate industry. Brand equity and brand architecture will ultimately lead the PHEI to develop a value-added branding model formed from analysis and assessment of available prominent branding models.

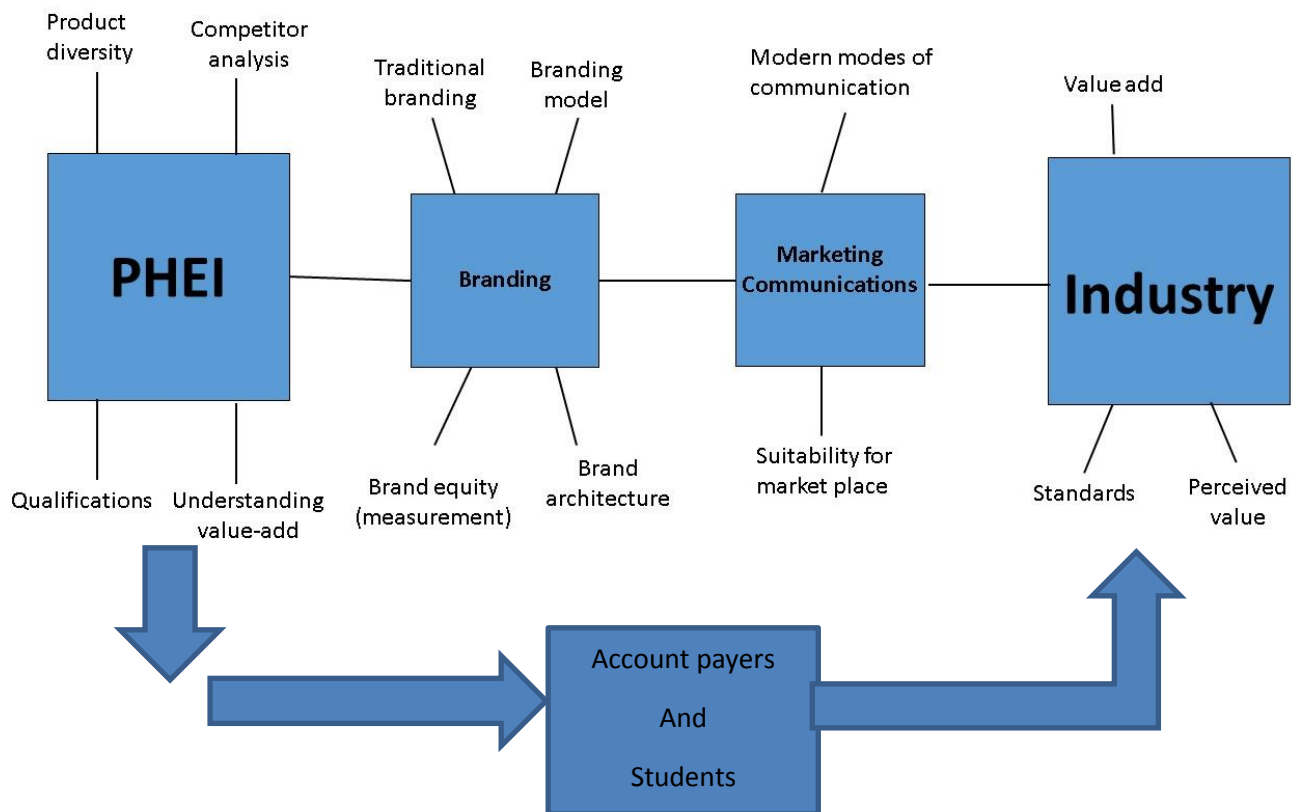


Figure 2.6: Conceptual frameworks for brand building (Adapted from Aaker, 2008: 44).

As shown in Figure 2.6 above, the conceptual frameworks for brand building is provided along a continuum that begins with the PHEI, and ultimately leads to the industry, both in standards and value-add. A PHEI should provide the competitive advantage in the form of well branded institution with strong brand equity – the measurable component of the success of marketing its brand to industry’s corporate HR practitioners by utilising marketing communications, which provided high-tech channels to reach the consumer-end of the market. The account payers (parents) and students form the uni-directional feedback to industry in terms of graduate placement.

The criteria mentioned above, will be critical for incorporating into a framework for a value-added branding model in PHEIs and will be elaborated upon in both the findings (Chapter 6) and conceptualisation (Chapter 7).

The present study, therefore contributed to three areas, namely 1) assessing available and current branding frameworks and models, highlighting their

deficiencies and strong points; 2) motivate for the inclusion of brand-blocks into a value-added model with brand equity for PHEIs as a collective; and 3) point inductively to a new value-added framework for PHEIs to be tested. Thus this research study contributed to the body of academic knowledge by expanding on the analysis of existing branding models and applying these propositions (elements) to the framework of a value-added branding model.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided introductory aspects of the literature review, and purposefully unpacked the concept of a brand and current brand models.

In this chapter, brand equity and brand architecture were defined with a view to having them as concepts built into the strategic brand building process. Various brand equity models, their frameworks and components in particular, were discussed and analysed with the two most prominent models of Keller and Aaker compared. This comparison contributed to the body of knowledge of the research study, by analysing what aspects and strengths of the current models can be incorporated into a new value-added branding model for PHEIs. However, based on the analysis of the two models, Keller's brand resonance model (formerly consumer-based brand equity model) in the first instance represents the most acceptable brand equity model, with Aaker's brand equity value model incorporated to a lesser degree.

This chapter also clarified basic terms and concepts used in the research study and which are fundamental to the conceptual framework. This part of the literature review also provided a gap in the branding of PHEIs, when contrasted against current branding models strengths and elements, finding that they do not formulate their own brand with their unique value propositions.

In the next chapter global markets and emerging markets will be discussed in order to provide additional inputs, other than the literature, to the formulation of a proposed new value-added branding framework.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC BRAND MANAGEMENT

The natural instinct to claim 'we are as good as the leader' is usually not a very good strategy for the runner up (Johansson & Carlson, 2015: 120).

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at literature pertaining to the analysis and theoretical aspects of branding models. This chapter covers a comprehensive literature study of specifically the strategic brand management process and strategic brand leadership- two relevant concepts in a brand building framework.

In fulfilling any one of the purposes of a literature review, Hart (1998: 27) states that discovering important variables, relevant to the research topic, involves incorporating these variables into the brand building process. Along with brand equity, a suitable strategic brand management standard or system can also be integrated into the branding framework in order to provide both effectiveness and sustainability to the PHEIs, which is one of the aims and objectives of this research study.

In addition, Boyne (2009: 3) states that a literature review should consider the need for depth and rigour in its process, whilst attempting to make an original contribution to knowledge by proposing critical thinking as a structured approach. Thus, a meaningful contribution to building knowledge for this research study, as well as the effectiveness of branding a local PHEI in South Africa, would be including variables such as the impact of global market on PHEIs in South Africa and the effect of branding in both emerging and international markets.

3.2 Concept of a brand

This study unpacks the concept of a brand from an organisational perspective, as well as the subsequent 'stand-alone' product of the brand, which is a difficult aspect of branding (West, 2012: 191). Even though the concept of a brand relates more to the brand itself as well as the branding of an organisation, brand equity and brand architecture are the concepts that will be discussed in greater detail. Kapferer (2008: 12) relates a brand to three pointers: product or services, name and concept. A brand is further differentiated from a product, as a product is anything that the

organisation can offer to a market for use or consumption, and that can satisfy a need or want from a consumer. Therefore, as a concept, a brand is more than a product, since it has elements or characteristics that differentiate it from other products that are designed to satisfy the same need (Keller, 2013: 31). Applying Keller's (2013: 33) definition of a brand to this research study, the brand of a PHEI, consumers will differentiate it from competitors, based on the elements or characteristics that the brand displays. At the outset of this research study, the only product differentiation separating one PHEI from another would be service delivery and knowledge of the brand - both intangible products.

Le Pla and Parker (2010: 31) introduce emotions to the concept of a brand and they define it as a perception or emotion, maintained by prospective buyers that describe the experience related to doing business with an organisation. This introduces the concept of building a relationship between an external stakeholder and the organisation from a PHEI perspective, which entails communicating on an ongoing basis with the student prior to registration with the education institution.

From the above perspectives on the concept of a brand, the researcher can postulate that a brand provides both differentiation between different brands (competitive advantage), as well as relationship building with the consumers to meet their needs.

The next section has a focus on the process of strategic brand management.

3.3. The strategic brand management process

Venter & Jansen Van Rensburg (2014: 222) define managing the brand as a dynamic, constantly evolving business process that requires ongoing attention and resources within an organisation. One of the elements of strategic brand management, highlighted by Schaeffer (2015: 68) is the management of internal branding where it is questioned whether an effective brand identity can be built by an organisation if its employees cannot buy into it.

Keller's (2013: 58) notes that the strategic brand management process consists of four steps related to marketing programmes and activities to build, measure, and manage brand equity, as outlined below:

- 1) Identify and establish brand positioning and values- essentially part of the brand management process to manage the brand position in terms of its competitors. Thus, the formulation of a new branding model, although generic and based on collective value-add of all PHEIs, would still need to provide the competitive advantage to any PHEI brand.
- 2) Plan and Implement brand marketing programmes- outlines how the brand management process is communicated to create brand awareness and meaning (using marketing communications as the driver of the brand).
- 3) Measure and interpret brand performance- an integral part of the research study that incorporated this brand building block into the new model; and
- 4) Grow and sustain brand equity- the most important concept of the strategic brand management process as it deals with strengthening and updating the brand.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009: 8) align brand equity as part of the strategic brand management process by stating that this asset that can be the basis of competitive advantage and long term profitability if monitored closely by top managers of an organisation.

West (2012: 71) define brand management as the strategic process of managing an organisation as a brand in order to maintain as well as enhance brand equity.

Keller (2013: 71) further maintains that the key to creating brand equity is creating brand knowledge as this creates the differential effect that drives brand equity. The strategic brand management process then needs to complement and insightful way to represent how brand knowledge exists in consumer memory.

Thus, Keller (2013: 61) details several challenges and opportunities facing a brand such as changes in customer attitudes and behaviour, competitive forces, marketing efficiency and effectiveness and internal company dynamics. Aaker (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 40) alternatively, maintains that the strategic brand analysis will help the brand management process to negotiate these challenges by understanding the consumer, the competitors and the brand itself (including the organisation behind the brand).

3.3.1 Strategic brand leadership –a marketing perspective

In building a brand, the service or product offering can be an effective way to align with consumers and the target market. The brand can thus be formulated for a specific service offering that is special to the consumer and deserving of its own organisational name, whilst adding value to the industry and its needs (Keller, 2013: 14). It is this specific or unique service that sets the brand apart, and places the branded organisation above its competitors, hence it becomes a brand leader.

Brand leadership indicates that various factors contribute to the formulation of the brand, creating brand identity and maintaining brand leadership. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009: 44) show two important aspects that arise from these factors that underline brand leadership as a component of the strategy, namely:

- 1) association with a brand and the influence thereof; and
- 2) taking the lead in getting the brand to be above or ahead of its competitors.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009: 26) underscore brand building programmes that help to define brand identity using the concept of brand architecture to maintain the identity of the brand. Kapferer (2009: 34) links the brand architecture concept portrayed above as the corner stone of brand leadership, since it provides the organisation structure of the brand that incorporates both the roles of the various brands and sub brands in the portfolio.

Both Aaker and Keller, as the two prominent theorists in this research study, discuss the concept of brand leadership. In contrast to Aaker's model of brand equity, Keller's model (2013: 52) bring in the following concept of brand leadership in order to realise the brand's vision:

- persistence under adversity;
- innovate relentlessly;
- commit financial resources; and
- leverage assets.

West (2012: 52) aligns the brand leadership concept with both Aaker and Keller by maintaining that the brand leadership model has developed to a more strategic and visionary role rather than tactical and reactive – in part due to organisations

employing brand leadership to drive the process. A process allowing the leadership to control the brand strategically and communicate to relevant stakeholders what the brand represents.

Keller's concepts of brand leadership will provide the basis for a sustainable new brand model as part of the strategic brand building process.

3.4 Branding in emerging markets

As a process, the literature review can assist the researcher to develop knowledge of the specific subject matter, whilst being able to clarify what research is actually required in addition to formulating the broad aims and objectives, as well as practical ways to undertake the research (Hart, 1998: 16).

In order to provide a background for this research study, the concept of formulating a branding value-added framework and model required investigative research against the backdrop of emerging markets. South Africa, much like Brazil, is classified as an emerging market economy (Cant & Van Heerden, 2014: 646). These emerging markets have been instrumental in the rise of private higher education, specifically in Brazil in trying to implement efficiency driven economies (discussed in section 3.5.1)

This research study, specifically for the South African PHEI and the corporate HR practitioner market, also provided impetus and inputs into both southern African and African PHEIs, and thus needed to be researched within emerging markets. South Africa is certainly part of emerging markets, which are reflected in economies that have not yet acquired First World status but show macro-economic growth and outpace their developing counterparts (Ghuri & Cateora, 2010: 93). The formulation of a branding framework and for PHEIs, therefore, required investigative research within these emerging markets.

Developing countries and markets have under-developed economies (Ghuri & Cateora, 2010: 184), where emerging markets show growth and in some instance's recovery in the economy. Ghuri and Cateora (2010: 185) further indicate that a marketer cannot super-impose a sophisticated marketing programme (branding) on an underdeveloped economy. Thus, for a branding framework to be formulated, one would need to distinguish between a developing country that moves its economy into

emerging markets, and market driven economies (Cateora, Gilly & Graham, 2010: 145).

The success of formulating a branding model in an emerging market will depend on the following shared traits:

- They are physically large and have significant populations;
- Represent considerable markets for a wide range of products;
- Have potential for significant growth;
- Have undertaken programmes of significant reform;
- Have regional economic drivers; and
- Will have further expansion into neighbouring markets as they grow (Ghauri & Cateora, 2010: 186).

South Africa's emerging markets meet all of the above criteria, whilst firmly establishing itself as one of the top ten big emerging markets (BEM) worldwide, ensuring that emerging branding models can be successful if implemented effectively (Nair, 2010: 21). The underlying aspect of working in emerging markets is for organisations to have a strategy that incorporates consumers who need a service that is in line with their core business, and to then execute it via marketing programs (Regents, 2017). The aim, in line with this research study, is thus to build a new, successful marketing programme.

It has become evident that more and more companies are looking for their future growth in emerging markets (Nair, 2010: 41). One of the goals of this research study was invariably to formulate a branding framework for PHEIs that will add value to both the institution and corporates that hire graduates from the education institution, and, subsequently, provide sustainable growth to the PHEI. From a marketing perspective, this should ultimately translate into a student seeking a well branded higher education institution. In addition, corporate HR practitioners who require graduates with quality academic qualifications should be able to recruit from highly reputable academic institutions.

According to Nair (2010: 34), building brands in emerging markets is every bit as intricate and complex as developed countries. One of the areas of emerging markets that requires additional knowledge and input is the traditional communication

channel(s) that marketers utilise to advertise and promote their brands, which, based on accessibility from the market place, should be innovative and needs-oriented. Atsmon (2012: 35) further indicates that both developed markets and emerging markets currently use technology to develop the possibility of increasingly deep consumer engagement at each phase of the marketing spectrum. This spectrum is identified as four critical areas, where marketers can enhance their branding and subsequent services that can either gain or lose consumers (Atsmon, 2012: 35), The areas are presented below:

- When a consumer first decides to utilise a service and considers a few brands;
- Active evaluation, when a consumer researches a potential service;
- When the consumer selects a brand at the moment of *brand selection*; and
- When the consumer experiences service selected - *post decision*.

Arguably, the post decision era becomes crucial when one considers the intangible service that the educational institution offers, whilst considering the branding that it will provide in the sustainable long term, which should result in loyalty from consumers (Keller, 2013:67). Equally important from a branding perspective is the first stage, where the consumer weighs up options from various brands, while the consequence of the competitive advantage from the brand itself plays a significant role (Atsmon, 2012: 36). Consumers in emerging markets rely heavily on the relationship built up over time with an organisation and thus place pressure on these organisations to maintain consumer relationships.

According to Cant and Van Heerden (2014, 646), Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), an international trading bloc of countries, is based on three categories of economies, namely:

- Innovation-driven economies – developed or highly competitive countries with advanced economies and excellent infrastructure;
- Efficiency-driven economies - low to medium income countries, including BRICS countries; and
- Factor-driven economies - low income countries such as Iran, Egypt, Angola and Pakistan - developing countries.

Thus, it is evident from the classification above that South Africa, as an emerging market, competes with fast developing countries, and yet finds itself part of both southern Africa and Africa, consisting of more factor-driven economies with untold health, housing and other socio–economic problems. The emerging market concept is hence a factor to develop a value-added branding framework, specifically for the South African PHE sector.

Table 3.1 below provides a comparison of both developed countries and emerging market economies with reference to infrastructure, lifestyle goods (television sets and cell phones), and basic services (water and electricity).

Table 3.1: Infrastructure of selected countries (1st world & emerging)

Country	Roads (per 1000 people)	Vehicles (per 1000 people)	Electrical power (KWH)	Mobile phones (per 1000 people)	PC's (per 1000 people)	Colour TV (per 100 houses)	Shower (per 100 households)
USA	6304	859	12183	723	731	99	99
Brazil	1724	79	1776	464	167	86	75
China	1765	223	987	734	255	65	63
Germany	6104	729	6046	785	625	92	97
India	3315	120	380	146	185	42	41
Kenya	64	110	120	112	55	46	43
South Africa	476	143	3860	909	255	56	71

(Adapted from Ghauri, 2010:183; updated 2018)

The above table illustrates the differences in both economy and infrastructure for both first world and emerging markets worldwide. The noticeable differences occur in transport and technology, as well as media access. The importance of the disparity in cell phones per 1000 users versus access to a computer (255 users per 1000 in South Africa) showed, for the purpose of this research study, an impact on the marketing communications used as a vehicle to deliver branding messages to consumers. Thus, this comparative table (above) indicates that a sophisticated marketing programme that includes branding for specific markets still requires meaningful contribution from the organisation to both reach the consumer and ensure economic success and growth, which are vital for emerging markets.

Ghauri and Cateora (2010: 185) maintain that the more developed an economy is, the greater the variety of marketing functions that are demanded by the consumer, whilst the consumer is more receptive and viable to the marketing programs.

The following section highlights Brazil's PHEIs- which in spite of operating in an emerging economy, as described above, have attracted investors and student growth.

3.5 Global markets and impact on PHEIs

Globalisation can provide an important benefit of a uniform international image (Ghuri & Cateora, 2010: 244) to a PHEI in South Africa, which can enhance its status as an institution, as well as provide an internationally recognised qualification – a perception that bears reality for education institutions in South Africa. The foundation for this research study is based on an analysis of current branding models that contributes towards an accepted, suitably accredited qualification from a PHEI; therefore, international bench-marking are of enormous benefit to both the education institution and the research study.

Global market orientation or a global international company engages in global marketing activities, and markets itself worldwide. This equates to an organisation considering significant market segments with the same or similar demands for the same product/service worldwide (Ghuri & Cateora, 2010: 20). A PHEI in South Africa would need to benchmark its education institution and qualifications against the local market on a global scale as means to measure its success rate on an international level. For example, the Open University in Milton-On-Keynes in the United Kingdom has 250 000 students with registrations spanning 80 countries outside of the United Kingdom (Open University, 2017). Thus, the benefit of a global market orientation for PHEIs in South Africa would be to understand the norms that are measured, and the operational actions that are implemented, as well as marketing strategies, which are used from an international education institution, to implement a branding model locally.

3.5.1 Branding of PHEIs in International markets

The basic difference between local (domestic) and international market research is the broader scope, which is required for international research owing to the unknown variables that exist in that foreign country. From a research perspective, one would question the merit and time spent conducting research around a comparable service in a foreign country, specifically when there are considerable variables such as

cultural, social and political climates, which all affect the marketing service (Cateora *et al.*, 2010: 217). However, from a literature review perspective, where the aim of the research is to explore new ground, which is relative to the research problem at hand, research and information obtained from an international perspective can prove invaluable as a comparative analysis to local PHEIs. Two such comparisons, one from an emerging economy, Brazil (discussed in section 3.4) and Asia were included in this study.

From 1996 the Ministry of Education in Brazil relaxed regulations on colleges offering private tuition throughout the country. Prior to this period, higher education could only be provided by public universities and non-profit organisations such as religious institutions (MacGregor, 2016: 36). As a result of this deregulation, private colleges and universities have escalated significantly in the growth of their facilities and number of students. This growth period has seen mergers and take-overs occurring, with distance learning in Brazil becoming predominantly private and attracting over 120 000 students, whilst showing bottom-line earnings in excess of US 1,5 billion dollars. (MacGregor, 2016: 44).

This upsurge in private education in Brazil has also attracted strong criticism from the traditional public institutions, citing factors such as:

- Lack of well-equipped laboratories and facilities;
- Lecturers not well paid and lacking skills and qualifications;
- Little infrastructure investment;
- Minimal research conducted; and
- Quality of the qualification deemed inferior (Magadza, 2013).

These factors remain generic to most PHEIs worldwide and are certainly applicable to the South African environment. Of interest to this research study is the aspect of the measurement of quality of education, from both the institution's point of view and industry standards.

Other than the rise and growth of PHEIs in Brazil over the last decade, an important aspect emerged from research studies of PHEIs in Brazil. This was the merger between government and industry that sparked interest by the Brazilian government concerning the importance of technology offered by private institutions in the

formulation of the Brazilian General Command of Aerospace Technology (CTA) (MacGregor, 2016: 38). The advantage of government interest in a private education institution is twofold, namely:

- 1) It provides both financial resources, as well as support to the technological environment - a commodity that is essential for both the education and economy of a developing country; and
- 2) This government support sets the private institution up for graduate opportunities, as the partnership lends itself to aspirant graduates working in both the aviation industry, which is predominantly government driven in Brazil, as well as the technology industry - the growth industry.

This aspect was of interest to this research study as a government partnership with a private education institution can develop to areas in South Africa, including technology and education, considering the skills shortage of trained teachers in South Africa. This would both assist the PHEI financially and provide employment to trained teachers who work after graduating from government schools. This has greatly enhanced the value-added branding framework formulated in terms of having a well-recognised PHEI brand that has government backing to address the critical skill shortage of qualified teachers in South Africa.

The brand architecture concept involved in the Brazilian PHEI and carried over to the South African private education environment was incorporated into a value-added framework and model that showed a focus on relationship building, partnerships and government interventions. The latter provided resources for PHEIs to provide skilled resources in certain skills shortage fields such as education and technology, and to ensure employability with these organisations.

Another emerging economy from the majority of developing countries in Asia, showed that legislation that allows the privatisation of higher education institutions only came into being in the late 1990s. This allowed two aspects to develop; firstly, the introduction of tuition and fees and, secondly, allowing special and executive programs to be offered (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2012).

Various factors came into play that allowed for the privatisation of higher education institutions; most importantly, the first being the increase in high school graduates

across Asia, which led to a greater demand for more space in higher education. In addition, most Asian governments relied on the fact that, like most countries, both developed and developing countries that offer privatised higher education, typically receive little or no state funding – thus, the PHEIs are self-sufficient (ADB, 2012: 46).

Asian PHEIs provide useful insight into the majority of their developing countries' similarities to the South African private education environment. Despite the growing number of high school graduates who look to higher education institutions in Asia, a lack of government funding of private institutions leads to a lesser demand for private education in Asia than South Africa.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter of the literature review provided a scope that included a strategic brand management process that consisted of the challenges that brands face with changes in consumers attitudes and behaviour, competitive forces as well as internal company dynamics. Brands themselves are valuable, intangible assets that need to be managed carefully.

Emerging markets and globalisation provided insights and learning capabilities into an aspect of how a value-added brand model was formulated for PHEIs in South Africa. Basic terms and concepts relating to the strategic brand management process such as brand leadership, emerging markets and globalisation provided insights into the strategic brand building process of a new value-added branding model for PHEIs.

The next chapter deals with branding strategies, strategic brand processes and strategic brand leadership as the final chapter, covering the research study's literature review.

CHAPTER 4

BRANDING STRATEGY

An organisation must measure the critical few parameters that represent its strategy for long-term value creation – (Paul Smith, Gray-Syracuse, 2004)

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the strategic brand management process as well as the implication of brand leadership, specifically referring to emerging markets and globalisation. This chapter covers the development and formulation of a brand strategy, including both services marketing and marketing communications. From the perspective of formulating a branding strategy that provides the context and structure of this research study, one should research all aspects of what branding constitutes for an organisation. According to Kapferer (2009: 5), the brand is not the product or the service; however, it gives both meaning and defines the identity of the product or service. Hart (1998: 26) states that the literature review, as part of a doctoral thesis, can provide both a process and a “product”. At the same time, it can establish the context of the research problem and provide structure to the subject.

In addition to reviewing the available scholarship on the research topic at hand, as well as investigating all the available theories and literature, an effective literature review also provides widely accepted definitions of key concepts in the field of study (Mouton, 2013: 87). The conceptual framework of this research study provided for the formulation of a value-added framework to brand PHEIs that meet consumers’ needs. This, in effect, related to the definition of the consumer and corporate that benefitted from the value-added branding framework, either by obtaining a qualification from a reputable organisation, or by being part of a graduate placement programme.

4.2 Branding strategy - development and formulation

As discussed previously, Kapferer (2009:13) defined brand equity as the value of the organisation’s assets and liabilities. Thus, once this concept is applied to a new branding framework, the brand strategy would need to incorporate both what the brand represents to the target market, as well as critically evaluating its brand equity

to ensure that the service that is offered represents value to the organisation, whilst aligning with what the market considers being value.

According to Keller (2013: 58), the strategic brand building process starts with a clear understanding of what the brand should represent and, more importantly, how it should be strategically positioned with respect to competitors. Thus, the strategic brand management process plays a vital role in a model that includes brand positioning in the formulation of a strategic brand framework for PHEIs.

Figure 4.1 below indicates the strategic brand building process, with its point of departure being the brand elements that constitute the brand, culminating in the development and growth of sustainable brand equity (as discussed below).

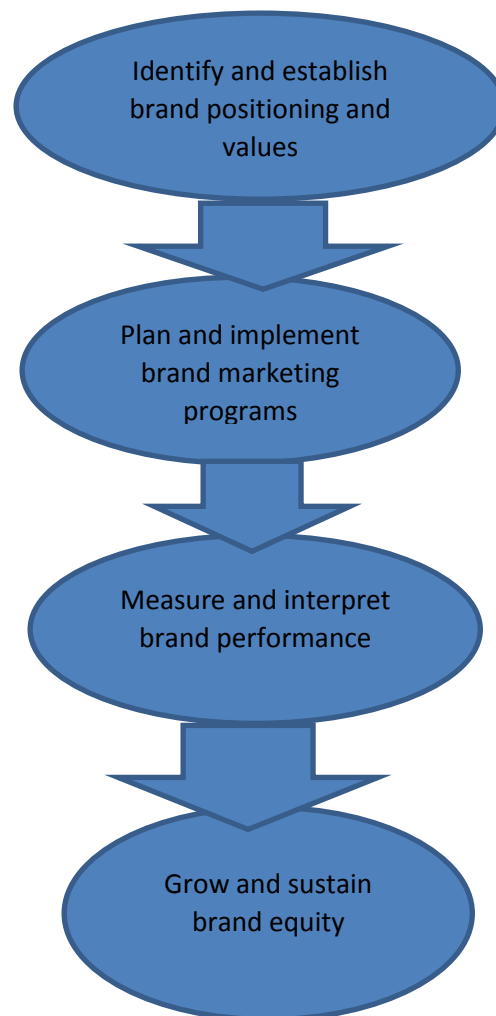


Figure 4.1: Strategic Brand Building Process (adapted from Keller, 2013: 59)

Figure 4.1 above highlights the starting point for building a brand and positioning a brand and includes aspects of the core brand associations, as well as the brand mantra. Planning will always form an integral part of the strategic brand management process. Brand performance will be measured on the brand equity management system with the last pillar of the process being the most challenging, as one needs to reflect how brand strategies can impact positively and sustainably on the organisation's brand equity (Keller, 2013: 60).

4.2.1 Strategic branding – value proposition

Brand value, as an important component of the concept of strategic positioning of the brand, is formulated in the value proposition of the brand. The only recourse of long-term competitive advantage of one service or product over another is for the organisation to continue to provide the target market with superior value (Venter & Jansen Van Rensburg, 2009: 12). In order to provide the above competitive advantage and value to any one entity, the organisation should determine its value proposition upfront.

A value proposition is a statement that summarises or convinces potential (or existing) consumers in the target market that the organisation's service provides added value to them over and above any other competitor (Laja, 2008: 1). Invariably, the value proposition is reflected in the marketing communications of the organisation, which could be reflected on web sites, social media sites, e-mails or any other forms of communication for consumers in the target market. A value proposition is a promise of a value that will be delivered to the consumer (Venter & Jansen Van Rensburg, 2009: 14). It thus forms the primary reason why a prospective or existing consumer should conduct business with any one organisation and not the competition. When Kapferer (2009: 5) defines the brand (above) not as a product or service, but gives meaning to and, more importantly, the identity of the brand, this brings the importance of the value proposition to the fore.

Branding strategy should not be seen as a formal design programme, which becomes a static, once-off operation, but rather a matter of deciding on the value flows that should be created between the different parts and products of a company (Kapferer, 2009: 295). Thus, the value flows of the value proposition translate into two concepts relative to an organisation, namely:

- Return on investment (ROI); and
- Economic value add (EVA).

The return on investment (ROI) of an organisation measures how effectively a company uses its capital to generate profit (Venter & Jansen Van Rensburg, 2009: 93). Thus, the alignment between ROI and value proposition is relative to both increasing the profitability potential of the organisation and providing the consumer in the target market with the added service value over and above that of a competitor.

Further arguments of the value proposition, present in all of the performance indicators, is testing the value proposition of a PHEI to ensure maintaining both profitability and consumer satisfaction. Format testing, adaptability, and conciseness of the web site message of the PHEI could be a practical method to ensure the viability of the value proposition (Kapferer, 2009: 36).

Economic value add (EVA) in Figure 4.1 above is a more complex phenomenon in aligning with the value proposition; however, much like ROI, it is linked to the profitability segment of the organisation, as well as its value proposition. EVA is linked to an organisation's business plan, since the concept provides for profit projectability, following tax and investment in assets' calculations. They thus form forecasts of the strategic business plan of the organisation, which is utilised in conjunction with short term value propositions that form an integral part of the organisation's long-term profitability (Kapferer, 2009: 41).

Figure 4.2 below shows a PHEI perspective, where the value proposition was not only linked to ROI and EVA, but also to the concept of brand equity. Jooste *et al.*, (2012: 367) defines this concept as the set of assets (and liabilities), inherent in a brand.

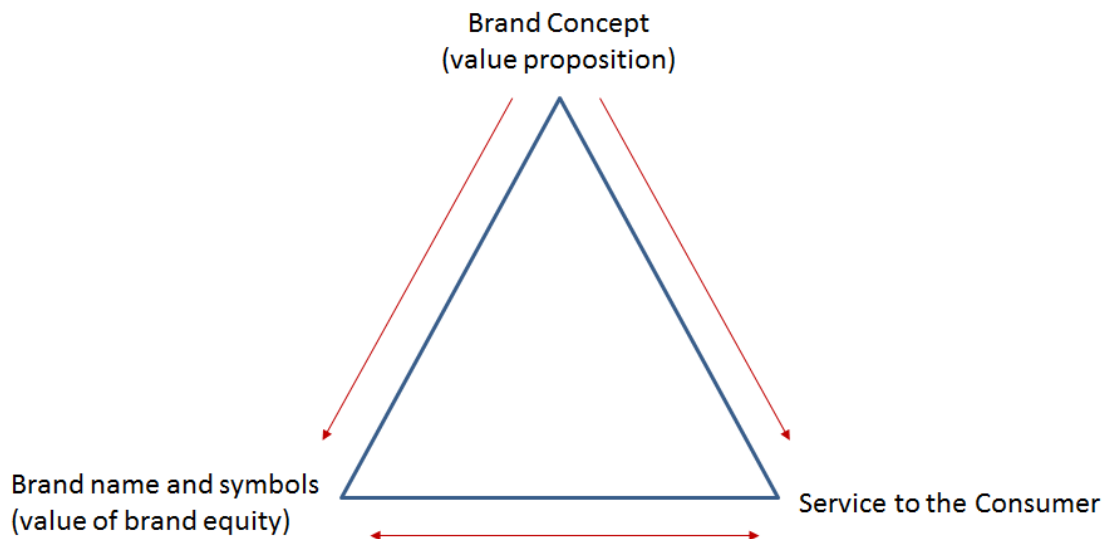


Figure 4.2: PHEI's and value proposition (Source: Jooste, *et al.*, 2012: 367)

The future and growth of the organisation (PHEI) depends on successful branding of the identity portrayed (value proposition), which is long term profitability and sustainability (Venter & Jansen Van Rensburg, 2009: 12).

A value proposition of a brand relates to the strategic positioning of the brand, since the statement was aligned with the organisation's brand positioning within the market place, whilst ensuring the organisation's profitability and economic viability (Jobber, 2010: 41). A PHEI should develop a value proposition based strictly on facts, using both quantitative and qualitative consumer research, as well as statistic modelling methods that ensured that the focussed value proposition is built on elements that truly affected consumer behaviour, and differentiated the organisation from competitors (Johansson & Carlson, 2015: 51). Thus, the value proposition will form an essential part of the value-added branding framework that was formulated and should provide a competitive advantage for any PHEI.

4.3 Services marketing – a consumer perspective

The American Marketing Association defines services as: “Activities, benefits and satisfactions, which are offered for sale or are provided in connection with the sales of goods” (Ghauri & Cateora, 2010: 171). Whilst the concept of *sales* linked to a service concerning PHEIs’ industry consumers is not relevant to this research study, the concept of the service itself is paramount to this research study. The focus on a benefit or satisfaction to the consumer is an integral part of any service industry. Service marketing is closely linked to service excellence (Cant & Brink, 2009: 49), which is an intangible offering that has characteristics such as heterogeneity (autonomous), inseparability (part of a combined offering), and perishability (does have a shelf life span). Lovelock and Wirtz (2004: 9) maintain that the first step towards service excellence is to gauge the service consumers’ needs, and to strive to meet or better these needs. This can only be achieved with an understanding of services marketing and consumers’ needs.

A service is an economic activity that creates value and provides benefits for consumers at specific times and places, and invariably brings about a desired change for the recipient (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004: 9). This definition underscores the importance of the economic viability of the service that is provided, which, in turn, lends itself to the competitive advantage that a service organisation needs to remain profitable and sustainable in the market place. Whilst in direct comparison to a retail organisation that produces daily profits from its products in a Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) environment, which provides a higher economic activity than a service, the profitability of ensuring an effective service remains high.

Figure 4.3 below shows the strategy of starting at the consumer end and conducting a thorough needs analysis to provide a service to the consumer. Consumer outcomes will be aligned to the organisation and based on both consumer needs and community needs. Cant and Brink (2009: 14) argue for a direct intervention based on strategy and market segmentation flows from consumer outcomes to market analysis.

OUTCOMES -CONSUMER

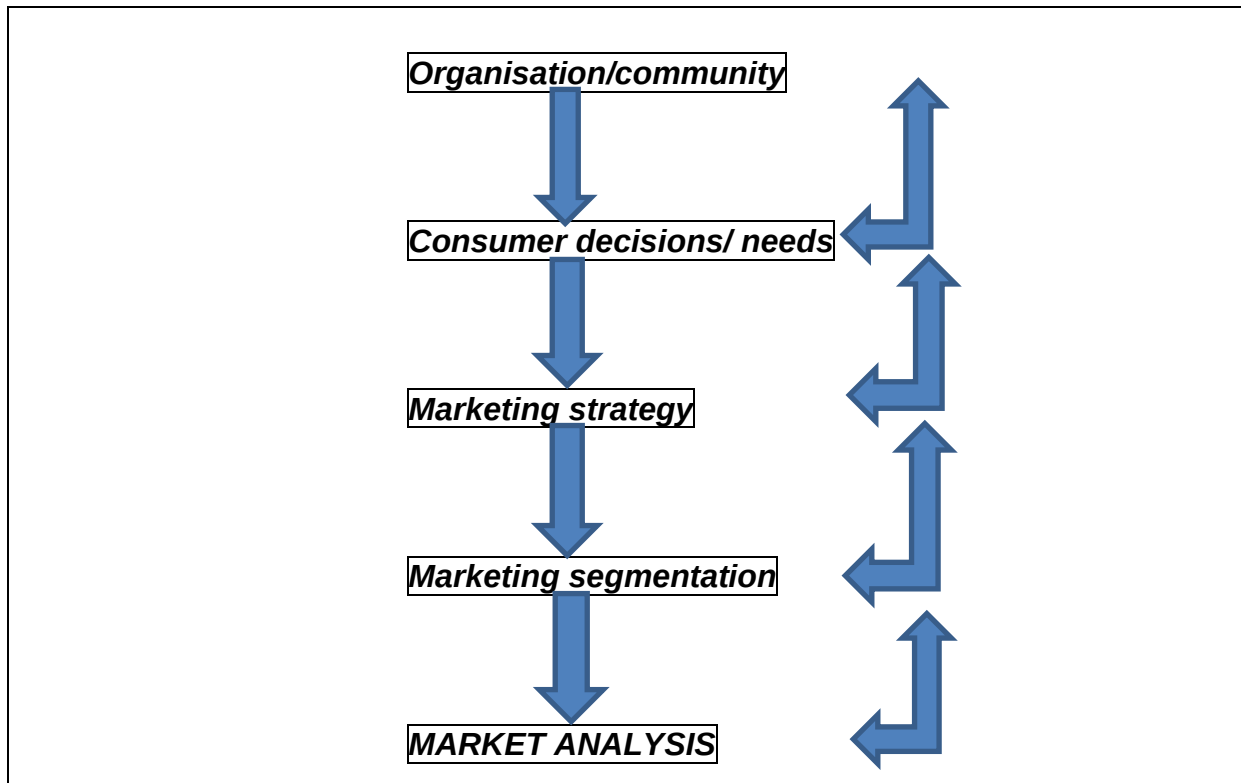


Figure 4.3: Marketing strategy and consumer behaviour (Source: Cant & Brink 2009: 13)

This marketing strategy, applicable to a PHEI, should therefore start with a market analysis of both the institution and the industry's needs, including competitor analysis, and current and potential consumers of the market place. This analysis should then provide the market segmentation, aligned with the various stakeholders in terms of providing effective graduates. *Market segmentation* (Cant and Brink, 2009: 14) provides a brand focus on the section of the market place, where the organisation would want to align or position themselves. An advantage of market segmentation is that this concept can lead to the identification of new marketing opportunities. Once the PHEI has conducted adequate research concerning its market, and implemented marketing segmentation, this can reveal previously untapped markets that are beneficial to the marketing of the institution. In addition, market segmentation, when dealing with B2B consumers, compared to FMCG

consumers, shows that B2B consumers are more needs oriented (Davis & Geach, 2013: 110), and required a more focussed approach from the organisation.

Two important distinctions are made when dealing with services marketing; firstly, *price* plays a major role in consumer decision making. In terms of managing differentiation from an organisation's perspective, consumers care less about the service provider than the price (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2006: 50). From a PHEI perspective, this traditional services marketing concept would need to be reversed. A comparative example would be the car hire service industry, where a consumer utilises that service from a day or two to sometimes weeks, but never owns the product.

In addition to criteria such as size and space, their decision to rent a vehicle for a period of time is based on the most competitive price. The consumer in this example of services marketing is not purchasing a vehicle, and is, therefore, not concerned with the value proposition of a motor vehicle organisation such as Toyota or Ford, as the vehicle is not being purchased. It is purely a vehicle service that is required. Secondly, a service industry is not an inventory stock item that is available after being produced (Davis & Geach, 2013: 121).

Thus, capacity such as labour, facilities and equipment, which are not in demand over a particular time, lies dormant and are unproductive. Both these distinctions have implications for the industry, which benefits from the service of a PHEI, specifically with reference to price and demand (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004: 10), and were implemented into the branding framework that was purposed for this study.

Thus, as indicated above, price in this particular service industry has no bearing, as emphasis is placed on the quality of the service that is offered. The quality can only impact on the service that is offered in the form of the branded name of the education institution, as well as the accreditation of the qualification, which is offered. From a consumer perspective, in terms of the service, which is offered, this will certainly promote a comparative analysis that forms the basis of decision making for the consumer. The service provider, and in this research study the PHEI, was aware of the needs of the industry that it serviced, and hence ensured that the organisation provided value-added branding in accordance with the needs of consumers in a

competitive market place. Thereafter, consumers would need to identify the value-added component in the branding model framework.

The supply and demand concept can prove costly to any PHEI, as the demand from students will be to attain quality, highly accredited qualifications from well-branded private education institutions, and that will render them employable. From the education institution perspective, a well-branded PHEI will attract students. These concepts are invariably intangible elements (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004: 11), which, in most instances, dominate the creation of value in service performances.

An understanding of the service industry coupled with effective consumer relations were incorporated into the proposed branding framework in order to provide the competitive advantage for the PHEI in what is presently a highly competitive market in South Africa. A strong message is, therefore, to get out of the pack, and stop trying to go head-to-head with competitors and chase market share (Bouwer, 2013: 36). In order to achieve this increased market share, the branding framework should understand consumer needs in this service industry.

An integral part of the service industry is the service quality delivered. This concept can be defined as the ability of an organisation to determine customer expectations correctly, and to deliver the service at a quality level that will at least equal customer expectations (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 48). Furthermore, service quality also refers to the consistency with which consumers' expectations are met, and the general superiority of the service relative to that of the competition. This initiative thus focusses on identifying what services and service attributes consumers want, and to provide them to the consumer's satisfaction, and at a level superior to that of the competition.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004: 188) argue in defence of Berndt and Tait's (2013: 49) definition of service quality delivery by stating that the most widely accepted framework for researching service quality stems from the premise that a consumer's evaluation of service quality is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between the customer's expectation of service and the customer's assessment (perception) of the actual service that is delivered. Such will be the expectations of a student wanting to register at a PHEI, expecting academic service delivery in terms of the brand promise, and subsequent brand performance.

An effective model utilised for measuring consumer satisfaction as well as service dependability was a model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithami and Berry (1985) called the *Servqual* model. The model measured the extent to which consumer's pre-consumption expectations of quality are confirmed or disconfirmed by their actual perceptions of the service experience (Bolton & Drew, 2020).

The elements of the *Servqual* model relate to reliability (service dependability)/assurance (trust and confidence in employees and organisation)/tangibles (facilities)/empathy (caring and relationship building)/responsiveness (willingness to assist consumers). These elements form part of the comparative analysis conducted in Chapter seven, when they are incorporated into the framework of a branding model, along with other elements of the Aaker and Keller models.

Aligned with the *Servqual* model of measuring customer satisfaction from service deliverables is the concept of Consumer Value Management (CVM) focussing more specifically on the value component (Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard, 2012: 45)-discussed in more detail in Chapter four of the literature review. The value component measures consumer satisfaction relative to the price paid for the service, called the consumer's perceived value. This customer value paradigm approach relates to elements of both Keller's and Aaker's models discussed in section 2.6

Berndt and Tait (2013: 50) identify five dimensions that consumers use to assess service quality that impact on this research study from a quality gap perspective:

- Reliability - refers to the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, and focusses on delivering on promises made by the organisation;
- Responsiveness - the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service, whilst also meeting the needs of the customer in a timely manner;
- Assurance - knowledge and respectfulness of the employees, as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence;
- Empathy - this dimension involves caring and individualised attention that an organisation gives to consumers. This involves confirming to the consumer that their unique and special needs will be met; and

- Tangibility - the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, staff – anything physical that shows customers the quality of the service/s that they will receive.

The similarity that exists between consumer relations and relationship marketing (see section 4.3.1) is evident, specifically when one considers the trust and confidence dimension, and how relative this would be to building long term relationships and sustainable brand loyalty.

The above dimension is industry-related, whereby another individual dimension might be more salient to one organisation than another. For example, in the *assurance* dimension, this concept of trust and confidence would be relative to the PHEI industry, where credibility in terms of a student's education and future career prospects plays a strong role. The *tangibles* dimension is also aligned to the PHEI service industry, since a prospective student and parent makes initial contact with the campus following an invitation to an Open Day interview and forms their first impressions from the aesthetic look of the campus. The hospitality industry, a major stakeholder in this research study, is service quality-aligned and would need to adhere to all these dimensions in order to deliver service quality.

Further alignment is apparent between service quality and customer relations in the customer loyalty concept, whereby these transactions between consumer and organisation are seen as an exchange of value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012: 135). If an organisation is successful in satisfying the consumer in terms of this value exchange in a consistent way (*reliability* dimension), then it can create a relationship with that consumer, where the transaction takes place on a regular basis.

Another factor that impacts on service quality is that the longevity of an organisation in the mature phase, where they face challenges like overcapacity and over supply. This forces organisations to take more action and to focus on customer service to keep their good consumers – relationship marketing (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 76).

Table 4.1 below provides a comparative analysis of the service quality dimensions for both the PHEI and hospitality industries.

Table 4.1: Service quality dimensions for PHEI and hospitality industries
(adapted from Berndt & Tait, 2013: 50)

Industry	Reliability	Responsive- ness	Assurance	Empathy	Tangibles
Hospitality	Appointments kept; check-in times adhered to.	Waiting times kept to a minimum; simple and easy checking-in systems.	Guests will always be treated with respect + advertised features and packages adhered to.	Acknowledge mistakes with apology and compensation where possible; needs and preferences of all guests acknowledged.	Aesthetic look and feel of establishment; dress code of staff; exemplary look and cleanliness of location.
PHEI	Campus visits and interview times and schedules adhered to; confirmed in writing via e-mail.	Appointments start on time; systems of student management user friendly + financial packages, deposit, pay off schemes responded to timeously.	Information supplied at interview and registration aligned and followed through with campus operations. Trusted brand name and academic service delivery adhered to.	Student and parent needs are discussed and met within reason. Campus student relations counselling re personal stress and examination stress provided.	Campus layout and classrooms has a look and feel of education institution. Technology enhanced environment. Needs state of art label for technology to attract students. Visible campus facilities.

Table 4.1 above shows similarities between the PHEI and hospitality industries, with commonalities in the use of the five dimensions discussed previously (Berndt and Tait, 2013: 50). In addition, the service quality dimensions indicated also provide

competitive advantage to an organisation over another, based on the service quality delivered.

Marketing needs a new role to be defined when dealing with business-to-business consumers in the service industry (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004: 110). Such is the differentiation of the consumer needed in the private higher education industry, where service is paramount.

4.3.1 Consumer relations in a business environment

The relevance of the literature review for both the research problem statement and research questions provided a platform for the subsequent investigative questions that followed. The outcome of the research study was to propose a value-added branding framework for PHEIs, and then to consider the impact of existing relationships and the concept of relationship marketing on a new branding model.

Cant, Brink and Brijball (2009: 261) label relationship marketing as the new marketing paradigm, since basic customer needs still apply; however, the marketing methodology and the way that it is practised, show fundamental changes.

Cant *et al.*, (2009: 261) highlight these fundamental alterations in relationship marketing by stating that the objectives of relationship marketing was to identify and establish, maintain and enhance, and, when necessary, terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders at a profit so that the objectives of all parties involved are met. Cant *et al.*, (2009: 262) maintain that this is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises.

An essential difference shown with this new research paradigm is an emphasis placed on the retention and development of consumer relations rather than new consumer acquisition (Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard, 2012: 95). The act of establishing lasting relationships with consumers will impact on *brand loyalty* – a corner stone of a value-added branding framework – in the long run.

Berndt and Tait (2013: 7) provide a similar concept of relationship marketing by stating that relationship marketing concerns the facilitation and management of the relationships between the business and its consumers. It developed as a response to the realisation that businesses were spending vast time and money resources to

attract new customers, but little on retaining existing ones. Berndt and Tait (2013: 9) further state that relationship marketing is particularly relevant when a customer has alternative service providers to choose from, when the customer makes the selection decision, and when there is an ongoing desire or need, particularly in the service industry.

This concept provides a similar emphasis on the fundamental change from the traditional marketing of acquiring new consumers to retaining existing ones with an additional point of competitive advantage given when relationship development played a significant role (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 65) This is particularly prevalent when consumers make decisions based on an existing relationship with the organisation. In this context of providing a competitive advantage, relationship marketing is linked to *brand awareness* – another important foundation stone of a branding model (Keller, 2013: 89).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004: 353) provide a definition of relationship marketing that has a strong focus on relationship building and, which provides a ‘feel good’ aspect to relationship marketing. The authors’ state that relationship marketing is marketing aimed at creating strong, lasting relationships with a core group of consumers by making them feel good about the organisation, and by giving them some kind of personal connection to the business.

This is prevalent in the service industry and particularly the hospitality industry, where consumers seek the ‘feel good’ factor that both the relationship and customer service delivery should provide.

Alignment between the consumer relationship developing from the organisation’s side, and consumer loyalty (brand loyalty), is represented by Berndt and Tait (2013: 34) in a *ladder of loyalty*, which highlights six different stages of relationship development, as shown below.

- 1) **Prospects** - where consumers have limited awareness of an organisation, hence the organisation should increase its awareness campaign/s before consumers will consider doing business with that organisation.

- 2) **Purchaser** - at this stage, potential consumers begin to explore the relevance of the organisation to their needs - the potential to establish a more significant flow of business is created.
- 3) **Client** - consumers now have contact with the organisation, and need to be satisfied with their contact with the organisation and its staff, forging a trust relationship.
- 4) **Supporter** - this includes long-term purchasers whose trust is there based on the current relationship building activities. Competitive advantage still plays a role at this stage, as consumers may still be considering and using other outlets as well, and only consider your organisation as a *second source*.
- 5) **Advocate** - this consumer provides a strong influence on an organisation by providing powerful word-of-mouth endorsement of the organisation. Goodwill exists because of the trust relationship developed, and the consumers will thus refer other customers to the business.
- 6) **Partner** – these are consumers or business-to-business organisations that have developed into partners, who are closely linked in trusting and mutually sharing relationships with, for example, suppliers.

The relevance of this model to this research study is embedded in the stakeholder, namely the corporate HR practitioner. Whilst all stages are relevant to building a trust relationship with this stakeholder, the ultimate gain was to forge a partnership (stage 6) with this organisation via the corporate HR practitioner. The research study shows that such relationships do exist, and so where a partnership was likely to be formed, brand loyalty is ensured.

Cant *et al.*, (2009: 275) provide another dimension to relationship loyalty, as they maintain that relationship loyalty from the consumer is not only committed to purchasing products and services from a specific organisation, but also resisted the activities of competitors that attempt to attract their patronage. This bond with the organisation is based on trust, which is forged over a period of time, as well as service delivery and other brand attributes. Thus, the objective of relationship marketing is, therefore, to turn new customers into regular returning customers, and then to move them through being strong supporters and ultimate advocates of the organisation.

Relationship loyalty is a biased behaviour response towards an organisation expressed over time, which is a function of decision making, and an evaluative process that culminates in brand commitment (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 27). This brand commitment is aligned with brand loyalty - repeat patronage accompanied by a favourable attitude.

If one considers the statement that one of the most important relationships that an organisation can take place with other organisations (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 123), then the validity and importance of business-to-business (B2B) marketing becomes evident.

Brink and Berndt (2004: 127) indicate that there are fundamental differences between conducting business with a consumer, selling a product or providing a service to this consumer, and conducting business with other organisations. One of the most important differences is in the market structure, since there are a few large consumers who exercise a great influence over the service provided (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 124). For example, this influence could be in the form of financial organisations' HR practitioners who employ graduates for their management development programmes. The comparative link to a consumer-based product or service is the element of having a large number of consumers who, individually, cannot influence the marketing structure of a large organisation. With business-to-business (B2B) marketing, the influence of five to six large financial organisations on a PHEI was hugely influential and dictated both marketing and business processes.

From the above influential concept, two important elements ensured a healthy and effective B2B marketing and business environment (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 125):

Asymmetry - the balance of power between the two organisations should be aligned, as the industry (consumer) needs are met and deemed to be effective, yet at the same time the organisation that provides the benefit is not dictated to indiscriminately; and

Legitimacy - being associated or having a relationship with a large, well-known organisation may improve the reputation of a smaller organisation (the PHEI), and a desirable relationship is thus forged between the two organisations in the B2B marketing environment.

Fundamentally, an organisation tries to convince its consumers that they will receive good value from its services. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004: 355), an understanding of consumer behaviour is the basis for formulating a branding strategy for B-2-B that allows the same organisation to react better to industry needs.

The aim of the marketing strategy, which includes the branding strategy, is then to provide the consumer with more value than any of its competitors (Neal & Strauss, 2008: 48) - this can be achieved by building consumer relationships.

B2B marketing refers to the marketing of services to other businesses and organisations – differing from B2C marketing which is oriented towards the consumer (Nicholson, 2015: 32).

This research study makes a contribution by studying branding within a B2B context when dealing with corporate HR practitioner's as stakeholders. For many B2B organisations, the organisation's name is the brand, but the brand must be more than the organisation's name. This indicates that brand building activities are limited in terms of salience, a brand-building block formulated into the model (discussed in chapter 7), while establishment and enhancement of the brand with brand associations are lacking (Nicholson, 2015: 68).

In an article from King (2019), he states that an organisation should start with identifying its distinct competence, its target market and consumers, its value chain position and strategy in order to deliver value-added services to consumers. Branding, specifically with reference to corporate HR practitioners and PHEIs, should be paramount to the organisation's business branding model.

B2B buyers have different needs to B2C, thus the brand promise must be relevant to all who are involved in the service process. Furthermore, this means that the PHEI as an organisation should support the business organisations strategy that it is dealing with (King, 2019). The business (PHEI) service (corporate HR practitioner) long-term relationship is important (as opposed to once-off transactions). This is underlined in the element of both credibility and relationship-building incorporated into the model. To this extent, the value-added concepts of expertise, trustworthiness, ease of doing business and likeability should be maximised to build the organisation's brand's intangible brand associations of credibility, reputation and

distinctiveness- elements of both Keller (2013) and Aaker's (2009) brand building models.

4.3.2 Consumer relationship value

An organisation can both attract new consumers and retain existing ones by knowing their consumer needs and demands – consumer relations have thus become strategic requirements in a consumer–focussed and economy-driven environment such as the private higher education industry (Berndt & Tait, 2013: 17).

A shift from customer satisfaction to customer value is an important dynamic, specifically in a business-to-business environment. This shift in paradigm still encompasses many of the values of the concept of customer satisfaction (Parumasur, Roberts-Lombard, 2012: 44), with an emphasis on value derived from how business consumers view competitors' services, and how the organisation's services are rated compared to competitors. Thus, in addition to identifying and conducting a needs analysis of the organisation's consumers, a competitor analysis should also be strategised. A model of consumer value management (CVM) (Parumasur, Roberts-Lombard, 2012: 45) takes on a new dimension, as the focus has shifted specifically to the value component. For example, in a PHEI, the business consumer, namely the corporate HR practitioner, will need quality service delivery in the form of graduates that have credible qualifications.

Figure 4.4 below shows this model of CVM delivery, as illustrated in the four stages. This is built into the value proposition of the PHEI. The model also identified a need for both the institution and the industry, as well as benchmarking these criteria against other PHEI competitors.

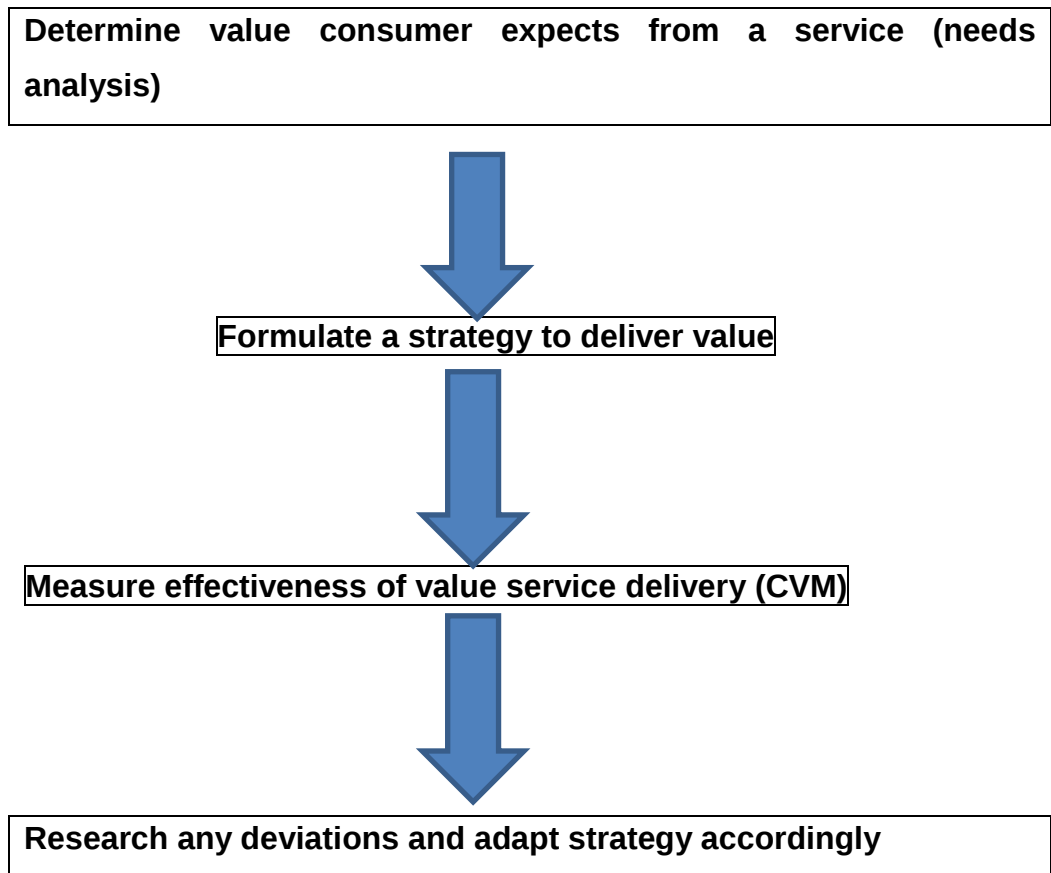


Figure 4.4: Model for Consumer Value Measurement from an organisation's perspective (Source: Parumasur & Roberts – Lombard, 2012: 44)

The value component, which is indicated in the *first* stage of the CVM model in Figure 4.4 (above), is the *perceived* value that a consumer places on the service, which the organisation delivers. This perceived value from a consumer's perspective should be researched by the organisation in order to meet this need in terms of value, which is provided.

The *second* stage incorporates a CVM strategy from the organisation that will deliver the value. This stage is integrally linked to the branding of the organisation that will indicate value to the consumer, specifically in a business-to-business environment. For example, a premium brand that offers a service to a business consumer will enhance the perceived value that the consumer enjoys. If the service is a particular industry that needs a time deadline-oriented service, for example, then this particular consumer key performance indicator will be in the organisation's marketing strategy

– this will be deemed to address the perceived value by using a marketing strategy to ensure quality service delivery.

The *third* stage of the CVM model that incorporates measuring value delivery is the most critical stage from an organisation's perspective for two primarily distinct reasons, which are outlined below.

- 1) An organisation can effectively measure its service delivery through its financial success, whilst gauging the successful delivery in terms of profitability margins (brand equity) from consumers that it deals with in business-to-business marketing. However, the intangible quality service deliverables such as consumer satisfaction, innovative service concepts, sound relationship building, and perceived value delivery are difficult to gauge. At the same time the importance of having an accurate assessment of these intangible criteria are critical to the organisation if they are to maintain both a competitive edge and/or be a market leader.
- 2) The importance of having a measurement value delivery gauge is linked to the fourth stage of the model, as this concerns feedback and realigning the original marketing strategy and perceived value concept. Once feedback is obtained from the measurement instruments adopted to gauge the perceived value delivery, the organisation will need to revert to the stage 1 and stage 2 concepts. In order to ensure further CVM aspects such as consumer loyalty, consumer acquisitions and consumer retention, which are important intangibles from an organisation's marketing perspective, these would then need to be built into the strategy to deliver value to the organisation (Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard 2012: 47).

The *fourth* stage of the model relates to feedback, on-going monitoring and control of service delivery to the consumer. This feedback would then be utilised to redevelop the marketing strategy, if necessary, or adjust and upgrade to keep the quality service delivery at the highest standards for the specific industry under discussion.

Chapter 7 (section 7.4) provided findings that benchmarked the model of CVM delivery against International PHEIs using the examples of Brazil, Asia and USA. Table 7.1 also provided a comparison drawn from these countries, with a discussion around private higher education in these countries to follow.

4.3.3 Measurement of Consumer Value Management (CVM)

The above CVM model shows that the concept of measurement of the value that a particular service brings to the consumer, is of critical importance to this research study. In order for an organisation such as a PHEI to gauge the effectiveness of a value-add branding model to the market-place and industry, one would need to measure aspects of business consumer satisfaction.

Various consumer social value measurement tools exist such as List of Values (LOV) and Values and Lifestyle 2 (VALS 2) (Cant *et al.*, 2009: 68), as well as measuring devices that are designed to measure attitudes, lifestyle trends, personality trends, and purchasing profiles. Cant *et al.* (2009: 68) further maintain that these social value measuring instruments would be of value to organisations and industries that are involved in FMCG products and deal with individual or family consumers, specifically focussing on purchasing decisions. From a B2B perspective, specifically when dealing with a service with minimalistic purchasing involved, further measuring devices or techniques should be utilised.

Paramusar and Roberts-Lombard (2012: 44) state that when research is conducted concerning the measurement of B2B consumer satisfaction, the range is limited in terms of concrete measurement devices for business. Cant *et al.* (2009: 70) support this view by indicating that, firstly, one would need to investigate criteria that has been established for B2B marketing and consumer satisfaction based on industry needs - *benchmarking* as per industry standards. Secondly, once the industry standard criteria are effectively met, the level of business consumer satisfaction that is attained should be measured, as well as the standard that exceeds an organisation's competitors, hence feedback that gauges the *competitive advantage*.

In B2B marketing certain core values exist that can be evaluated and measured from a business-consumer-satisfaction perspective. These core values must be accepted by the key stakeholders within the organisation, and be sustainable over a period of time to ensure both consistency and credibility (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004: 419). When it comes to marketing performance measurements, these core values consist of, *inter alia*:

- Brand awareness;

- Lead generation (additional new consumers);
- Lead management (nurturing);
- Consumer acquisition;
- Engagement (relationship building);
- Customer retention/loyalty;
- Website traffic; and
- Repeat clients and/or website visitors (Nguyen, 2015).

These core values, amongst others, provided some foundation pillars for a value-added branding framework for PHEIs, as these were incorporated into the formulated model, and thereafter measured by using the *measuring analytics* that were most suitable for the organisation. According to Davis (2007: 87), brand awareness is a critical component to gauge feedback from industry. An online survey tool would provide credible and consistent feedback to the PHEI, relating to how well the brand is known, as well as what value the brand brings to that particular industry.

The point of departure in measuring the value of a brand that provides a specific service to the market place and industry is the concept of brand image (Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard 2012: 308). It is the perception that a B2B industry carries concerning the brand from an organisation with which it does business - this perception is aligned with a brand's reputation management (Doorley & Garcia, 2007: 221).

Consumer relations in a B2B environment are unique and diverse, and thus markedly different to a purchasing consumer in an FMCG environment (Wiid & Diggins, 2014: 114). Hence, credible attributes were delivered and ultimately measured, ensuring sustainability in service delivery from a PHEI to a specific industry. In both the B2B and consumer perspective, marketing communications provided the driver to get the brand into the market place (Koekemoer, 2004: 56).

4.4 Marketing communications – the medium that drives the branding model

Once a brand has been formulated for an organisation, the target market should be made aware of the benefits and value of the brand. Ouwerschoot and Duncan (2008: 154) postulate that creative message strategies form an integral part of marketing communications. This message strategy about the brand is expanded on further by

du Plessis, van Heerden and Cook (2012: 16), who maintain that a message strategy is an idea about how to creatively and persuasively communicate a brand message to an audience.

This is undoubtedly a link to promote brands positively and create brand awareness. Thus, the importance of the message strategy is to make the brand relevant to consumers.

According to Ouwerschoot and Duncan (2008: 161), the message strategy includes the following elements that can influence the brand positioning of an organisation:

- *Generic strategy* - this strategy emphasises a basic feature or benefit of a product or service of a brand that is not brand specific. This could be a commodity or essential service that will benefit the community as a whole, and will ensure market growth because of the essential nature of the service. This strategy is of particular relevance to this research study, as the PHEI brand will be able to provide a footprint, however small, into the diverse higher education landscape (discussed in Chapter One);
- *Pre-emptive strategy* - focusses on an attribute or benefit that any other product in the category could have claimed, but did not. This strategy is used in categories with little product differentiation. In the highly competitive PHEI field, with over ninety PHEIs registered in South Africa (CHE, 2018), this strategy could be highly effective. For example, a PHEI could advertise via their marketing communications that their campus offers Wi-Fi and interconnectivity, a feature that most students would relate to, and regard as a benefit;
- *Informational strategy* - providing information specifically on new services that have distinctive features that provide strong points of competitive differences. This message strategy should provide the salient features of a brand that will provide a competitive advantage;
- *Credibility* - this strategy heightens conviction and decreases the perception of risk for the consumer. This message strategy is strongly aligned with a PHEI, since an education institution cannot break the trust or bond that is created between student and institution. The marketing communications used to deliver this message strategy needs to rely on endorsements, testimonials

and similar messages to build credibility amongst stakeholders. These endorsements or testimonials could, in the case of a PHEI, come from corporate HR practitioners who have hired graduates that have proven to be successful in the corporate world;

- *Association strategy* - makes a psychological connection between a brand (its attributes or image characteristics) and its consumers. Students and parents, for example, would want to be associated with a brand that has high success rates, and provides a good turnout of successful students;
- *Incentive strategy* - an incentive strategy creates a sense of immediacy and rewards consumers for their quick response to the message strategy. This strategy would be relative to this research study, where time lines are involved for cut off dates for registration for students. The marketing communications would need to advertise these dates and create this sense of urgency;
- *Reminder strategy* - this message strategy keeps a brand in the forefront of a consumer's mind. It is well aligned with the *incentive* strategy, since it can work hand-in-hand with the marketing communications by reminding consumers of a forthcoming deadline, and the need for students to register early to book their place; and
- *Interactive strategy* - this strategy creates two-way communication to open communication with consumers, and at the same time capture their feedback. As a marketing communications tool or medium, social drive would be best suited to this strategy and is discussed later in the chapter.

Marketing, incorporating brand building, is more about building a two-way relationship with consumers than merely informing consumers about a service (David & David, 2015: 297). Today's marketing, with the paradigm shift to relationship building between organisation and consumer, enjoys a lot more involvement from the consumer in, for example, the company's website (inter-active), whilst soliciting suggestions from consumers to ensure service improvement, consumer satisfaction, product development, as well as ideas to improve the service (Ouwerschoot & Duncan, 2008: 56). This means of communicating with a consumer has created an online community, which is far more efficient and effective than any traditional marketing communications that have been utilised in the past (David & David, 2015: 298).

To gain a competitive edge, organisations must inform and convince consumers that their services offer better value than competing services (West, 2012: 32). To achieve this competitive edge, organisations will still need to utilise traditional marketing communications or an integrated marketing communications approach such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, sponsorships, and other similar activities (Du Plessis, van Heerden & Cook, 2012: 2). Once the concept of digital marketing is enhanced in conjunction with traditional marketing communications, marketing and branding then move into the era of new marketing or new principles of marketing (Gundlach, Block & Wilkie, 2007: 56).

Scheffler (2013: 14) postulates that from a branding ideological perspective, the marketing goal of an education institution is to be able to convey its brand identity to the most important group of customers (end users). To achieve this goal requires a focussed and directed marketing communications strategy in a media landscape that has changed dramatically in the last two decades. According to Ouwerschoot and Duncan (2008: 8), a brand is a perception that results from experiences with, and information about, an organisation. Marketing communications can create, deliver, manage and evaluate that perception in the form of a brand message.

Ouwerschoot and Duncan (2008: 105) elaborate on two factors that drive the degree of involvement of marketing communications in a message strategy, as shown below.

Relevance - which is the extent to which an advertised service is pertinent and connects with a consumer's personal interests. Specifically, from a PHEI perspective, to relate to the target market, namely the student market, digital marketing that emphasises business social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) was formulated (discussed in section 4.4)

Risk - marketing communications that deliver the messages run a financial risk factor in terms of over-budgeting and huge expenditure in selecting a medium that bears relevance to the target market. Wild and Diggins (2014: 121) elaborate further on this concept by indicating that the risk element is in the message that has not reached the target market, and the underlying message component is then lost on the audience. The message component needs to motivate customers to evaluate brand choices carefully, and influence their decision making (Kotler & Trias de Bes,

2003: 167). There is also a psychological risk, since the brand message that is delivered may not fit in well with the consumers, or with the organisation's corporate culture. For example, a high-end brand might send out an advertising message that relates more to the lower end of the market, and thus hurt its organisation's self-image.

The fundamental oversight from most, if not all PHEIs, is to use the tool of marketing communications to formulate a brand message to attract more student numbers to their educational institution. This research study has sought to provide an integrated framework that will deliver the brand message to both the market-place and industry. Hence, the value-add of a PHEI and its qualifications will be more enhanced if the corporate HR practitioners within industry have identified with the brand message, as well as the institution's market-place.

A detailed media analysis should be conducted in order to determine how a brand message can be delivered to the market place, which can convey an appropriate and relevant brand message, and at the same time eliminate both message clutter and intrusiveness (Ouwerschoot & Duncan, 2008: 206).

According to Gay, Charlesworth and Essen (2013: 161), the concept of building a brand by using marketing communication as a tool, will impact marketing share, profitability, and indirectly access talent, which provides long-term value for an organisation.

4.4.1 New principles of a brand message

A focussed communication message will, in most instances, relate to introducing or reinforcing the same competitive aspect of the brand (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2012: 13). Any type of messaging with the consumer focussing on the brand and brand knowledge will need to, in the modern market place, be interactive and will include digital technology (Gundlach, Block & Wilkie, 2007: 61). One cannot ignore the overall goal in communicating with the consumer, which is to reach the organisation's communication objectives, and reach the consumer to change attitudes and behaviours (Ouwerschoot & Duncan, 2008: 206).

Blogs, wiki's, social media, Twitter and Facebook as well as the internet are now mainstream business tools, which an organisation provides that allow consumers to

interact and talk more freely, and allow the organisation to improve its services, marketing and branding. In addition to the interactive concept, it has provided the marketing world with an instantaneous, fresh up-to-date feedback mechanism that organisations cannot ignore (Gay *et al.*, 2013: 2).

Technology, as a marketing medium, has provided a new global market place for traditionalists in organisations. In addition to online purchasing, which has raised the profitability of medium to large size organisations by large margins, both in South Africa and internationally, the ability to engage with current and potential consumers has also changed (Burns & Burns, 2012: 134). E-commerce (interchange of merchandise on a large scale) and E-business (application of information technologies for internal business processes) (Gay *et al.*, 2013: 5) relate to consumer sales online.

Conversely, digital marketing communications, provides an organisation with an opportunity to manage information with consumers. It is the idea of being able to manage this information that enhances the organisation to use digital technology to drive the brand in a certain direction, which is beneficial to the consumer (Doorley & Gracia, 2007: 225).

4.4.2 Digital online B2B consumer behaviour

Relevant to this research study is the aspect of online B2B consumer behaviour. A PHEI will invariably interact with a corporate HR practitioner to ensure employability and recognition of the graduate with a qualification from a PHEI. The corporate HR practitioner will be called a decision making unit (DMU) - this DMU consists of any one individual or group that will provide the power base for B2B marketing (Gay *et al.*, 2013: 122).

To be able to target the DMU, part of the online strategy of a PHEI is to build a website (an interactive internet site) that appealed to users. The website provides the point of departure for a PHEI to attract corporate HR practitioners to the organisation to then build relationships with the consumer. The organisation needed to construct a value-added branding model, which, in turn, led the consumer to the website. This concept is, in essence, one of the building blocks of this research study. It was this concept that began with contact, via digital technology, with the consumer that led to a sustainable relationship, and was based on a value- added branding model.

A further aspect of online digital technology, as a medium to drive a branding model home, is an advantage of using the website of one's organisation for digital analytics (Gay *et al.*, 2013: 180). This technology has provided a shift, allowing organisations to now respond to marketplace demands rather than dictate to it. When the proposed branding model was based on industry needs, this concept of digital analytics, both to gather and analyse information, proved invaluable in the quest to formulate the model.

As a marketing tool, the internet has brought about the creation of a new marketplace – a boundary less, interactive space that was not available before digital technology (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2012: 374). Digital technology can provide the interactive space between both organisation and consumer that can lend itself to shared experiences and relationship building. Internet purchasing from an organisation's perspective has increased by billions of rand, both locally and abroad (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2012: 373). This is an environment where the consumer never has to leave home or the office to make a purchase. Gay *et al.*, (2013: 187) provide the downside of this online purchasing or service provision, as they indicate that relationship building is limited to the web page or any other digital technology, which B2B marketing uses. The PHEI organisation under study and its individual staff aligned with digital technology, whilst still providing personal face-to-face contact.

The importance of relationship building between an organisation and its consumers, cannot leave any sustainable long term platforms to solely interactive websites. Quality academic service delivery, for example, to a corporate HR practitioner requires face-to face interaction, aligned with interactive digital technology. Contact points with the consumer, shared experiences, regular visits, and stimulation of both the cognitive and emotional side of the consumer, should inform the order of business once the consumer acknowledges the value of the PHEI brand (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2013: 375).

Whilst the value of the internet and the world wide web, currently referred to as the backbone of the internet, cannot be underestimated in digital B2B marketing, other digital technology tools such as blog sites are invaluable in a business environment.

An organisational blog can, from a corporate perspective, be used externally for:

- Marketing - blogs can be used to answer product and/or service-related questions;
- Branding – a brand can create opportunity for blog space visitors to interact with the brand; and

- Relationship building - within the brand (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2012: 385).

Essentially, a blogging site provides an organisation with a platform to become an interactive brand forum, where it can communicate brand information and services. Blogging has become a major impact on how brands use marketing communication as a tool to promote B2B marketing (David & David, 2015: 297).

B2B e-marketplaces provide an inter-organisational information service through which multiple service consumers can interact to identify, as well as integrate with potential partnerships and trading partners (Botha, Bothma & Geldenhuys, 2004: 375). This interactive space will provide a PHEI with a platform for dialogue with both the marketplace consumer, as well as any linked partners such as affiliated educational institutions in South Africa, and international higher education accredited service providers. Botha *et al.*, (2004: 381) elucidates that the e-marketplace allows independent third parties, as well as multi-firm consortiums to exchange information, services, and relationship building, regardless of their location. Figure 4.5 below indicates both the integration, as well as communicative structure of a B2B e-marketplace, where industry CMP (consumer market places), associated and accredited HEI institutions (local HEI SA), and international (HEI Int) public higher education institutions (PuHEIs) interact with a PHEI.

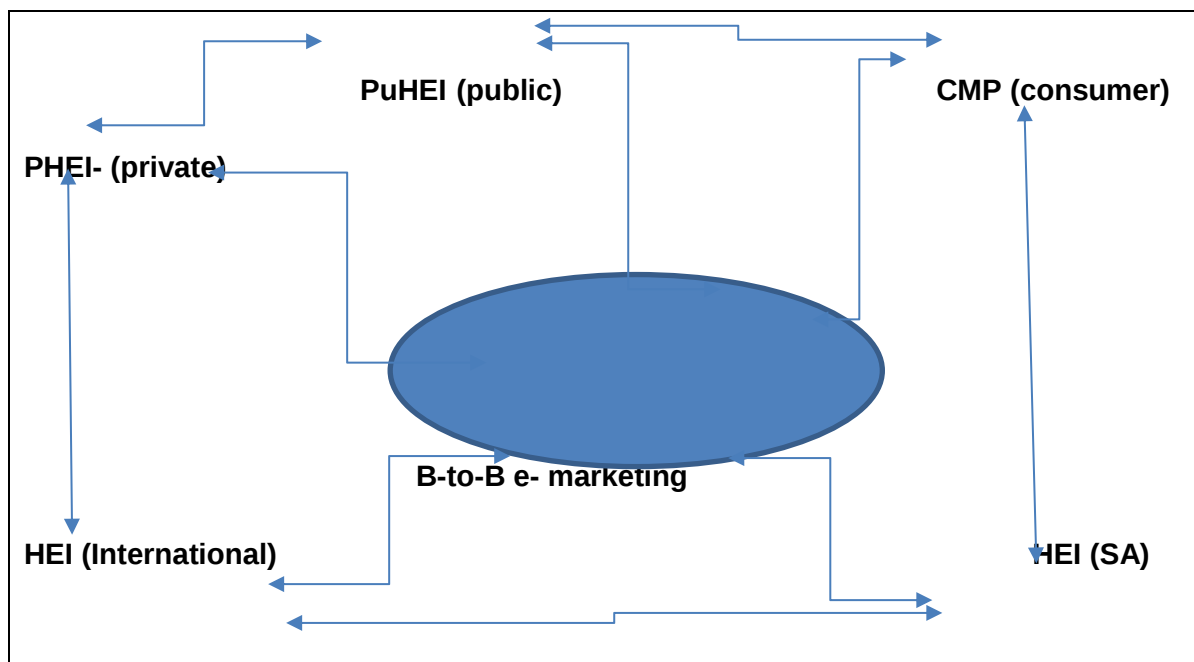


Figure 4.5: Integrative and communicative structure of a B2B e-marketplace
(Author's own source)

The link between an organisation's marketing plan, branding model and ultimate business plan is provided by marketing communications of any nature. A successful business model requires four choices from the organisation's management for the business model to be effective:

- to clearly specify the *value proposition* in order to be both financially sustainable and competitive in the market place;
- a market space service offering;
- a unique, defensible resource system; and
- a financially viable model for the organisation to be sustainable (Ouwerschoot & Duncan, 2001: 71).

The association that a consumer links with an organisation's value proposition (derived from the business model) is derived from the branding model of that particular organisation. The branding model is driven home to the consumer via the medium of marketing communications – the points of contact that an organisation has with its consumers. If branding is defined as the consumer's perception of the service provided (Ouwerschoot & Duncan, 2001: 170), then these perceptions are nurtured and driven by marketing communications, both off-line and, more importantly, online.

The new economy indicates that processing information, in a two-way, interactive space is more powerful and cost effective than actual tangible products. The important intangible assets of an organisation such as people, ideas, innovation and branding form parts of the strategic plan of the organisation's key information driven assets such as the Internet, and the web presence of the business (Botha *et al.*, 2007: 13).

4.5 Rational for research - synopsis of goals and objectives

Critical thinking is the examination and test of propositions and statements, which are offered for acceptance from stakeholders and the community alike to find out whether or not they correspond to reality (Boyne, 2009: 8). As a concept, critical thinking conceptualised the rationale for this research study, as theories, models, findings, conclusions and recommendations were proposed that stood up to the rigours of critical analysis from others. In addition, as critical thinking aligned with the

concept of reality (above), the rationale for this research study was measured against the realism of the community as a whole.

This research study sought to present a set of arguments and justification for a new or original topic that analyses existing concepts, theories and models in the literature, and, which link with a particular situation by using prior knowledge and the experience of analysing current situations. Thus, critical thinking can provide a structured way to develop insights and arguments, which lead to original creative approaches and provide the necessary insights (Boyne, 2009: 8).

This aspect of critical thinking embraces knowledge of the methods of logical enquiry and reasoning, covering various dimensions (Boyne, 2009: 12), namely:

- Examining statements and propositions by utilising supporting evidence;
- Gathering and collecting relative information;
- Interpreting data and evidence, and then evaluating arguments around them;
- Recognising and identifying the existence of logical relationships between statements and propositions;
- Reconstructing the researcher's beliefs on the basis of wider experience;
- Developing justified conclusions and generalisations; and
- Critically examining or testing these conclusions and generalisations.

Specifically relating to the topic of this research study, one would need to follow and apply the dimensions of critical thinking, as indicated above, relative to the scrutiny that a research study will need to undergo to be both scientifically viable and provide reality to all sectors.

How an organisation behaves, and how that organisation interacts with their people, investors and consumers, as well as the macro concept of the impact that they have locally and internationally, translates into a brand. In essence, the brand is what people think about the company (Goldman, Maritz, Nienaber, Pretorius, Prillard & Williams, 2010: 100). One of the critical components of this research study was to formulate a value-added branding model that had a consumer-facing strategy that fully understood consumers' (industry) needs. An investigative research methodology that utilised a detailed questionnaire was distributed, according to research methodology guidelines, outlined in Chapter Five. This questionnaire

provided a foundation for the value-added branding model that was formulated, based on consumer needs.

This consumer-facing strategy is clearly highlighted in the *Blue Ocean strategy* by Kim and Mauborgne (2005: 12). This strategy, firstly, identifies consumers that will benefit from the organisation's service/s provided and then, secondly, delivers an appealing value proposition to consumers. The *Blue Ocean strategy* is built on a theory that suggests that organisations can provide more of a competitive advantage over other organisations by looking into “uncontested market space, rather than engaging in traditional competition” (Goldman, *et al.*, 2010: 99). This theory relates well to formulating a value-added branding model for a PHEI that will adopt an uncontested market space or new market space in industry and will add to the organisation's competitive advantage.

A good practice concept that stemmed from this literature review was to provide contrasting viewpoints of existing theories and models, relative to the research topic. Branding, as part of the overall marketing plan of any organisation, has been well documented over the last thirty years, both locally and internationally' however, PHEIs from a media and public perspective, have limited branding exposure, as well as branding an intangible service such as a PHEI qualification, which was virtually untapped in any type of research.

The branding models that were reviewed in Chapter 2 of the literature review and summarised here as part of the contrasting viewpoints (discussed above), include the following:

- Aakers' Brand Equity Model (Keller, 2013: 622), which relates to an organisation's brand equity (assets and liabilities), with an emphasis on perceived quality. However, the simplicity of the model, focussing on five pillars of brand loyalty/awareness/quality/associates and propriety assets, makes this theory and subsequent model of less value-add to the branding of a PHEI;
- Keller's Model of Brand Equity (Jooste, *et al.*, 2012: 371) focuses on consumers' knowledge of the brand. Critically, this knowledge should be reinforced and aligned with the organisation's communication tools/techniques, with a modern-day focus on social media and technology in order for the brand to provide value to industry;

- The Integrative Nicosia Model (Nicosia, 1976: 35) is based on the theoretical assumption that a consumer will make a conscious, informed decision about utilising an organisation's service once they have acquired knowledge. Biplav, (2010: 46) postulates that this model is similar to Keller's model above, since knowledge that is acquired should be disseminated from the organisation's communication medium. However, the model neglects to indicate what a consumer would do if the required knowledge to make an informed decision about purchasing a product from an organisation, is not forthcoming;
- The Howard–Sheth Model (Schifman & Kanuk, 2004: 67) focuses on brand characteristics such as quality of service, distinctiveness, and service delivery - a psychological perception embedded in the consumer's mind. The organisation, in turn, provides value indicators that the consumer seeks and, which are of immense benefit as a theoretical foundation in formulating a value-added branding model that will meet industry's needs. A possible weakness of this model is the concept of brand loyalty, which at the time of the model, was based on the value indicators of quality of service and good service delivery. Modern-day consumers purchase on-line as means for value for money, convenience and distribution. These are value indicators that did not form part of the Howard-Sheth Model;
- Kim and Mauborgne (2005: 56) created the *Blue Ocean strategy* that was based on the theoretical approach of growing an organisation through effective strategy execution by using fluid communication. This strategy, firstly, identified consumers that benefitted from the organisation's service, and secondly, delivered an appealing value proposition to consumers. This strategy was aligned with a value-added branding model, as the theoretical approach indicated an organisation that deals with value elements and, in fact, created a *new value curve*. The *Blue Ocean strategy* was built on the theory that suggests that organisations provided more of a competitive advantage over other organisations by looking into "uncontested market space, rather than engaging in traditional competition" (Goldman *et al.*, 2010: 99). Factors of the *Blue Ocean strategy*, applicable to this research study and ideals that formulated a value-added branding model for PHEIs, were both competitive advantage and differentiation. This was created by raising factors well above industry standards, as well as creating factors that industry has never experienced before (Arline, 2015: 32).

An organisation's strategy, as it positions itself in the market place, will be based on weak or incorrect positioning if both the competitive advantage and long-term sustainability is lost (Goldman *et al.*, 2010: 56). Strategic factors, which are applicable to this research study, and that guided formulation of the branding model, had a close relationship with the external environment, as well as the organisation's change to that environment. In addition, current perceptions exist, based on both media and public opinion in the market place concerning PHEIs and their qualifications. This research study thus had, as its point of departure, a negative perception based on minimum branding, and limited exposure to the worth and value of PHEIs, whilst competing against the long sustainable traditions of public universities. Thus, to turn this perception around from a PHEI perspective, one would have a value-added branding model, which was built on relationships with industry, as indicated in Figure 4.6 below.

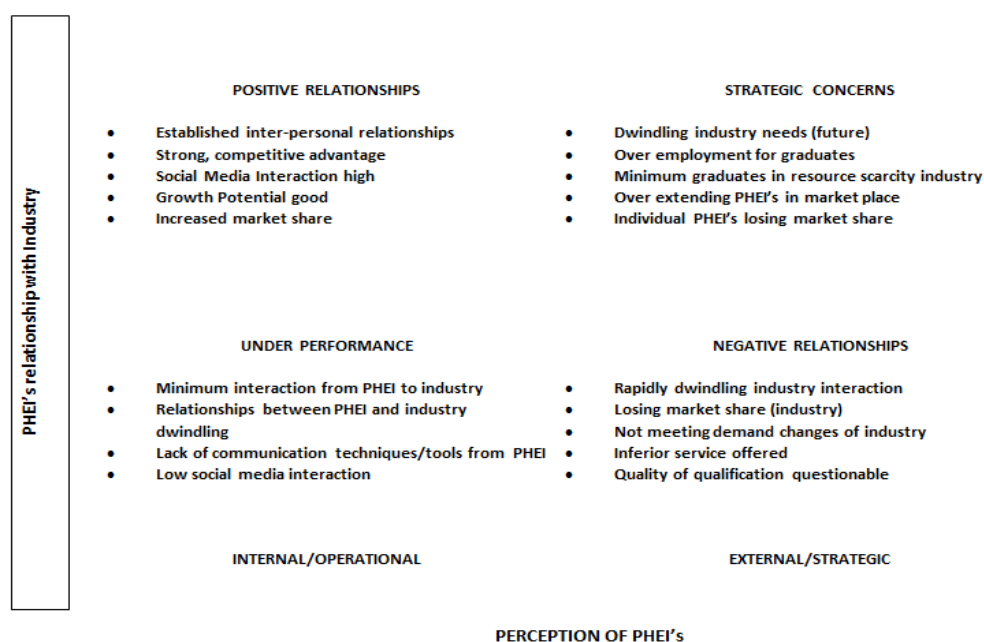


Figure 2.10 Formulating a value add brand model – based on current media and public perception (Goldman, et al, 2013:58)

Figure 4.6: Formulating a value-added branding model – based on media and public perception (Source: adapted from Goldman *et al.*, 2010: 56)

The 2nd quadrant illustrated in Figure 4.6 above describes the perception around the external environment, which exists more from a strategic perspective that places certain environment factors out of the control of a PHEI. Scarcity of qualified graduates in certain sectors such as accounting and/or finance makes employability

difficult, overall. In other instances, too many graduates enter the marketplace from both private and public education institutions, flooding the employment market. Dwindling industry needs for graduates, as well as too many PHEIs offering programmes (CHE, 2019) and supplying the marketplace with graduates, are strategic factors that are difficult to control.

Quadrants 1 and 3 show internal operational aspects that extend to good, solid relationships with industry based on the interpersonal relationships that were forged with communication tools. The fourth quadrant (quadrant 4) indicates a poor or non-existent relationship between the PHEI and industry, with relatively little communication and limited use of social media to build that relationship.

The concept of “pure services” was emphasized previously in this research study, as this relates to those services that are marketed and branded in their own right without necessarily being associated with a physical product (Paramusar & Roberts-Lombard, 2012: 67). Most importantly, with the increase in competition amongst service providers, as well as outsourcing of these services to a single-minded enterprise, the need for a marketing programme with a specific emphasis on branding, has become paramount. Once the marketing programme of a PHEI is established, this allows the service provider to:

- Pre-establish a relationship with many clients in the various fields of industry;
- Advance the PHEI’s reputation as a leader in the field; and
- Strengthen the relationships between PHEIs and existing consumers (Hutt & Speh, 2010: 329).

Incorporating these three elements into a value-added branding model for a PHEI will expand the demand for further services and create significant opportunities in the business market.

The purpose of this literature review was to provide a rationale for the research study to provide a goal and direction for this investigative research study. A literature review is also referred to as a “*scholarship review*” (Mouton, 2013: 87), which in essence refers to investigating and discovering more of what one is researching. Thus, in addition to an analysis of current branding models, this literature review also probed perceptions of PHEIs and their qualifications, based on industry needs and

building brand equity for a competitive advantage. Using this perception grounded in both media reports and public word-of-mouth, whilst also utilising existing theories, models and hypothesis in the field of PHEI, one would discover, anecdotally, aspects concerning PHEIs such as the following:

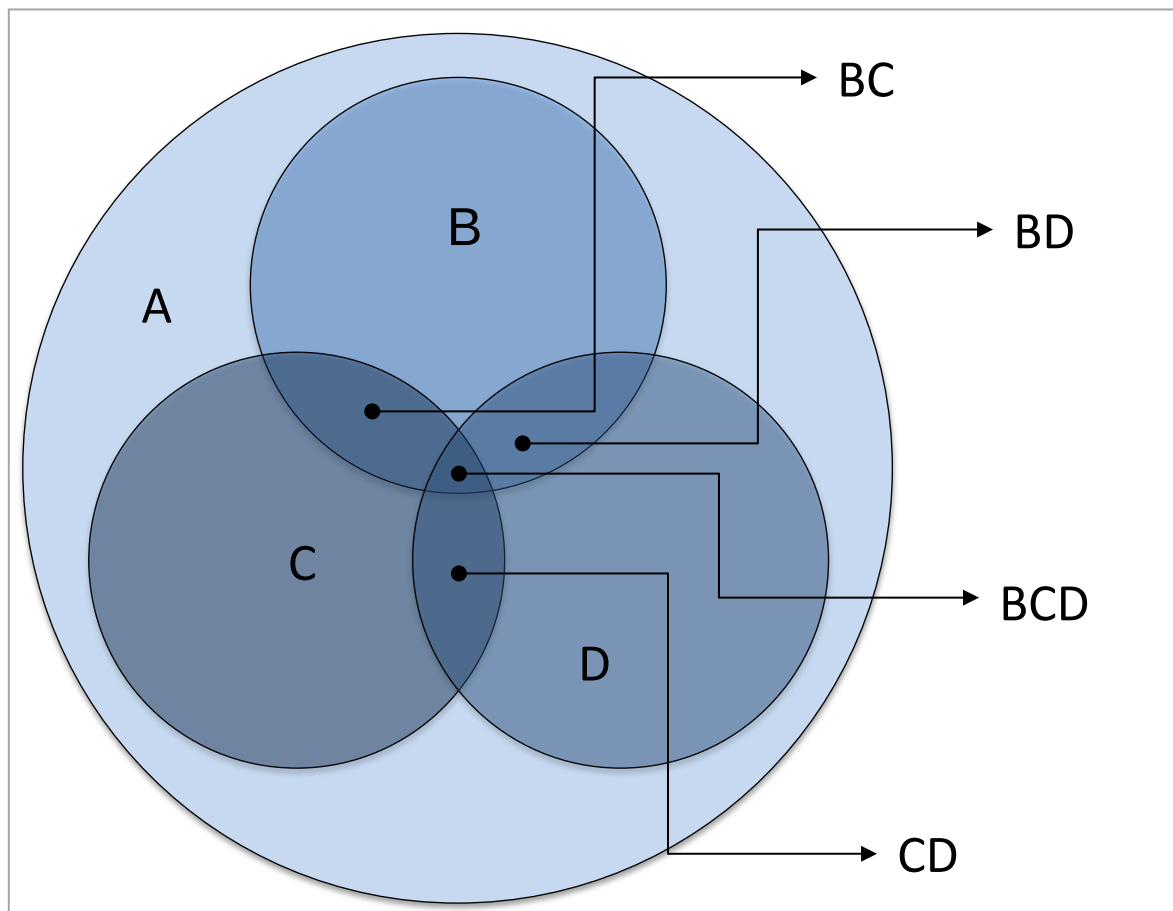
- PHEIs are relatively new compared to public universities;
- The traditionalism of being in existence for over 100 years such as some South African public education institutions like UCT and Wits University;
- The perception that a PHEI is owned by a corporate conglomerate that is listed on the stock exchange, which charges exorbitant fees for own profits, puts students off; and
- Most PHEIs are not well known within the greater community in South Africa.

Mouton (2013: 87) takes the concept of “reviewing a body of scholarship” to a next level for a research study, as this study provides the researcher with more information about the topic under study. This review can provide the following points, which are relative to this literature study:

- Discovery concerning the most recent and authoritative theorising about what the subject matter consists of (content thereof);
- Discovery of the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study – specifically, in this research study, from an industry perspective;
- Identify available instrumentation that has proven to be valid and reliable; and
- Ascertain the most widely accepted and adopted definitions of the key concepts of the research study.

Figure 4.7 (overleaf) provides a conceptual framework summary of branding of a PHEI that can provide a competitive advantage and consists of a branding value-added model driven by marketing communications that will measure value and brand equity from an industry standards perspective.

Conceptual Framework Summary



Legend	
A	Context
B, C and D	Basic components
BC, BD and CD	Relationships between pairs of components
BCD	Synergy between the components

Components	
A	Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) - Historical perspective - Government legislation - Current PHEI footprint in SA - Council for Higher Education (CHE) register of PHEIs - Marketing opportunities of PHEIs - Addressing student needs - PHEIs offer - Corporate takeover and mergers of PHEIs - Industry needs in terms of employability of graduates from PHEIs - Perceptions of PHEIs - Branding of PHEIs

B	Branding - Branding theories - Existing branding models - Influential branding models - Branding strategy development - Strategic positioning of the brand - Strategic branding – value proposition - PHEIs and value proposition - Strategic brand leadership - Asset leverage of a PHEI brand - Brand identity and position - Brand building programmes
C	Marketing Communications - Medium for driving branding model - Communication to consumers that enhances better service value - Integrated marketing communications approach - Digital marketing - Traditional marketing communication - New principles of marketing - New principles of brand message - Digital online B2B consumer marketing - B2B e-market place - Marketing communications and value proposition - Relationship building using marketing communications
D	Industry needs - Consumer relationships – an invaluable commodity for PHEIs - Services marketing – a value add activity - Increased marketing share - Understand the needs of the consumer in the service industry - Marketing strategy and consumer behaviour - Market segmentation in dealing with B2B consumers - Comparative analysis – B2B consumers vs FMCG consumers - Model for Consumer Value Measurement (CVM) from an organisation's perspective - Measurement of Consumer Value Measurement (CVM)

Relationships	
BC	Linking the brand model to the marketing communications - Brand architecture- the formulation of a branding model for PHEIs - Brand identity – theoretical point of departure - Brand relationships- house of brands/endorsed brands/branded house - Optimise the brand portfolio - Brand leadership paradigm - Brand equity basis - Building brands using practical applications of marketing research theories - Brand equity – a sustainable tool of measurement for success of a branding model

BD	Linking the brand of a PHEI to the needs of industry - Brand loyalty - Brand awareness - Brand associates - Generic branding model providing sound foundations to branding of most organisations - Comparative analysis – branding of PHEI in SA vs Brazil/USA/Asia - Thematic area of comparative analysis and international standards - Benchmarking of international needs of industry relative to PHEIS - Brazil – PHEIs and corporate involvement with private universities - Asia – PHEIs and a lack of government funding - USA – PHEIs and a lack of accreditation
CD	Linking marketing communication to needs of industry from a PHEI perspective - Marketing communication alignment with emerging market needs - SA as part of emerging markets that have not yet attained first world status - Corporate HR practitioners will need a service from PHEIs - Meet the needs of industry utilising marketing communications as the driving tool - Complexity of building brands in emerging markets - Efficiency driven economies – low to medium income countries, including BRICS countries - Difference in economy and infrastructure for both first world and emerging markets worldwide - Technology constraints and impact on marketing communications in order to meet industry needs - More developed an economy, greater the demand on a variety of technologically driven marketing programs - Demand from external customers that internationally recognised standards and benchmarks are used - Best practices
BCD	Synergy of components – factors to consider - Link between the brand, marketing communication and industry needs to formulate a branding model for PHEIs - Critical thinking using prior knowledge, experience, theories, models and concepts that provide both creative approaches and necessary insights - Investigative research based on perceptions and questionnaires that provide qualitative insights into building a branding model for PHEIs - Expert opinion regarding the use of internationally recognised standards and benchmarks in international fields - Provide contrasting viewpoints of existing theories and models relative to research topic - Incorporating both competitive advantage and long term sustainability to position the brand in accordance with its marketing strategy - Formulating a value-added branding model - based on current media and public perceptions - Providing a rationale for the research study to provide a goal and direction for the investigative research study.

Figure 4.7: Conceptual frameworks for the study (Source: own)

4.6 Conclusion of literature review

This summary includes a summary of the three literature review chapters.

As detailed in the literature review, this research study investigated current perceptions and acceptance of graduates' accredited qualifications, students, parents, and sponsors from a PHEI. The research study had, as its point of departure, an analysis of current branding models, using the highlights (strengths) and weaknesses to apply to a new branding model as part of the branding framework. In addition, a negative perception of PHEIs formulated in the public eye, as well as media speculation was evident. The literature review revealed a subsequent gap in the branding of PHEIs that clearly highlights that education institutions do not formulate their brand with their own unique value propositions, whilst having limited exposure to promoting their brand.

The literature review also elaborated on the concept of a PHEI having a brand strategy, as well as a lack of strategic brand leadership. Further research that specifically considers a PHEI providing a service and not a tangible product that needs strategic brand strategy, should be conducted.

The literature review also revealed a gap concerning marketing communications as the medium to drive the brand model that is formulated. Chapter Two showed that most PHEIs relied on limited traditional advertising and their websites, with social media links, as their only medium of driving their brand. Target market needs of students, in particular, should be researched to ascertain the most effective medium that can ensure that they are reached. In addition, with the value-added branding model for PHEIs that industry needs from a graduate employability perspective, an effective medium for driving the brand should be developed to reach corporates.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

No more things should be presumed to exist than are absolutely necessary

(William of Ocean in Knowles, 2004: 571).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the research objectives formulated in the introductory chapter and describes the study's research methodology and design. This chapter also demonstrates the appropriateness of the research design and explains why specific procedures were followed whilst conducting the study. A second aspect relates to the choice of a research methodology that could provide a structured, workable framework that ultimately provided valid answers to the research question(s).

The first part of this chapter contains a description of the research philosophy, strategy and approaches that were adopted, whilst the second part discusses the population parameters and the population used in the study. The final part of the chapter explains the data collection procedures and provides a detailed discussion of the measuring instruments and methods used for data analysis.

5.2 Research objectives revisited

As stated in Chapter One, the main purpose of this research study was to provide a model of how PHEIs can brand themselves in order to create competitive advantage for their businesses and build brand equity. Thus, for this purpose, both the study's primary and secondary objectives were formulated as follows:

Primary research objective: To formulate a value-added branding framework for South African PHEIs that builds brand equity and provides a competitive advantage for the education institution; and

Secondary research objective: To establish what brand-building blocks and sub-dimensions can emerge from both the strengths and deficiencies of the two prominent branding models currently in use, as well as analyse and interpret perceptions of students, parents, staff, sponsors and corporate HR practitioners.

To fulfil the above objectives, the researcher followed the research framework discussed in the next section.

5.3 Research framework

Within the framework of the research process, the research methodology followed the research process, with a focus on the individual steps in that research process (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, and 2009: 57). The research framework guides the research process, which, in turn, ensures that the participants provide the right information to enable the researcher to answer the research questions.

In utilising the research framework to guide the research process, Saunders, *et al.*, (2009: 41) makes use of the *research onion* concept as a decision-making tool for the various layers of the research process.

Figure 5.1 (below) highlights the different layers of the research process in line with Saunders's research onion approach (Saunders, *et al.*, 2009:26)

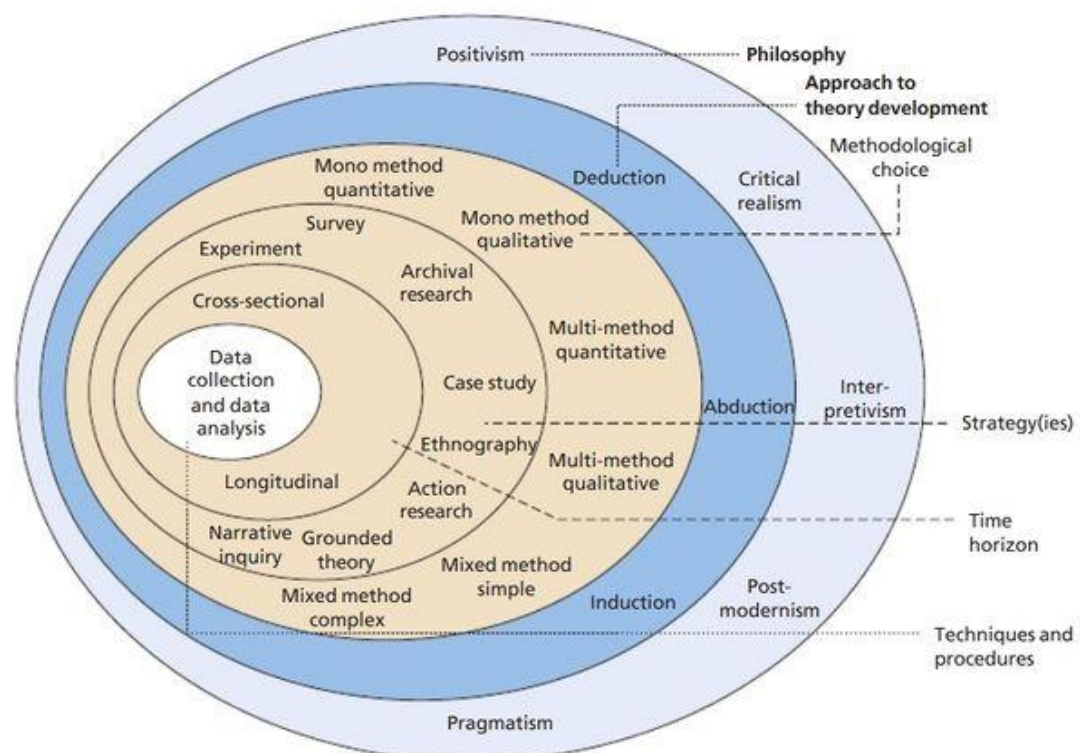


Figure 5.1: The research process onion (Source: Saunders, *et al.*, 2009: 26)

Figure 5.1 above indicates the various layers of the research process as follows:

- The research philosophy – interpretivism, positivism, critical realism, postmodernism or pragmatism;
- The research approach - deductive or inductive;
- The research strategy - plan to answer research questions;
- The time horizons – cross-sectional or longitudinal; and
- Data collection methods.

In respect of this research study, the layers of the research onion were, metaphorically speaking, peeled from the outside in, and are both justified and explained in the following sections.

5.4 Research philosophy

The choice of a suitable approach to the research study depends on the research philosophy, as well as the methods and strategies used in this research study to obtain this type of knowledge (albeit objective factual knowledge, or subjective personal experiences, or both). Each approach has its own purpose, methods of conducting enquiry, strategies to collect and analyse data, and criteria to judge quality (Ritchie & Lewis, 2007: 47).

According to Saunders *et al.* (2009: 93), the design of a research investigation into a particular topic requires selection of a philosophical position or paradigm from which a research strategy or methodology can be derived.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009: 128) articulate that there are two views on how knowledge is developed, namely the positivist view and the interpretivist (phenomenological) viewpoint. Welman, *et al.*, (2009: 131) further states that in the positivist paradigm, the researcher stays objective or removed from that phenomenon being studied. If a positivist paradigm was applied to this research study, the research would begin with a theory and use deductive reasoning to develop testable hypothesis from the theory.

Contrasted to this positivist paradigm, Maree (2016: 60) indicates that the *interpretivist* approach is strongly influenced by phenomenology, an approach that

advocates the need to consider the subjective interpretations of human beings and their perceptions of the world. Thus, for the present research study, the researcher's social ontology (reality) was made explicit in that the brand was constructed in the minds of humans and that the researcher and the study of reality cannot be separated. An interpretivist approach was used to investigate the knowledge claim that a new value-added model is applicable to the branding of PHEIs. From the above, as well as this research study point of view, this approach was the most effective, as the interpretivists merely want to understand human behavior (Maree, 2016:89). The interpretive philosophy indicates that all observation is subjective, that theory is dynamic, and that research should follow reality (ontology). This philosophy was supported by Steenkamp (2016) in a research study to maintain that the research of a client-based CBBE framework is applicable to business – to – business (B2B) services. Thus, in Steenkamp (2016) study, as in this research study, the interpretive philosophy maintains that there is no singular objective reality but instead multiple realities and meanings that participants attach to concepts which are important in this research paradigm.

De Vos and Strydom (2013: 309) support the viewpoint that considers both the *researcher's* own perception of reality (social ontology) pertaining to the research question, and the aspect that the brand is constructed in the minds of consumers and therefore the studied reality cannot be separated..

According to Babbie (2011: 36), the ontological tradition is the study of being or reality, and includes assumptions made about certain phenomena. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm was the most relevant, since human behaviour was the focus element of the paradigm and provided meaning to the set of beliefs that emanated from the research problem. The underlining media and public perception of PHEIs was one of a lack of credibility, as well as a lack of international accreditation, and formed part of the research study to brand a PHEI positively, and thus change the perceptions (MacGregor, 2008: 14)

This set of assumptions about fundamental aspects of reality is thus the interpretive paradigm, identifying the respondent's beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena (De Vos, & Strydom, 2013: 65). Thus, the interpretivist approach provided understanding to the PHEI phenomena, and provided meaning to the

current perceptions of the private education industry, allowing the researcher to have formulated the value-added branding framework.

Bazely (2013: 239) provides a sound basis for this research study by discussing the ontological perspective, as an approach that one takes to theorising concepts as our view of what constitutes reality. This was, in effect, applicable, since the theoretical construction of the research problem and solution was based on interview questionnaire responses in order to capture the substance of the object, namely the reality. In addition, the researcher's own ontological viewpoint determined both how reality should be viewed and the approach to the research study.

Du Plooy- Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout (2014: 24) maintain that ontology deals with the concept of reality, including assumptions that exist around certain phenomena. This held specific relevance to this research study, since the current perceptions around the phenomena of PHEIs from both consumer and industry perspectives were ontological in nature and were the focus or point of departure for this study. Perceptions from both the consumer and industry included a lack of awareness of PHEIs, uncertainty around their place in the current higher tertiary education space, and doubt about their footprint around the qualifications on offer. This investigative research used these perceptions as ontological assumptions that exist as the point of departure to the formulation of a value-added branding framework for PHEIs.

Silverman and Marvasti (2008: 49) provided the first aspect of the research design that conceptualised an operational plan, which provided various procedures, as well as adequate, valid, objective, and effective answers to research question(s). A second aspect related to the choice of a research methodology that was capable of providing a structured, workable framework that would ultimately provide valid answers to the research question(s).

At the outset, the two functions of both a research design and research methodology are to provide an operational plan, and to select an effective research methodology that, in both instances, provide answers to the research questions (Maree, 2016:121).

Thus, the interpretivist research philosophy is deemed applicable to this research study as this approach respects the differences between people (respondents) and the objects of natural sciences- it allows the researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of the phenomenology as a philosophical concept. (Bryman & Bell, 2014: 15).

5.5 Research approach

The next stage in the research process framework relates to approaches to theory development. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2007: 45), the research approach can be classified into two broad categories, namely the inductive approach and the deductive approach. The deductive approach is a top-to-bottom approach, which begins with a broad topic, before narrowing it down to a specific hypothesis.

Conversely, the inductive approach is the opposite of the deductive approach, since it is a bottom-up approach, moving from the specific observations to broader generalizations (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008: 87). The inductive reasoning approach infers that the occurrence or reoccurrence of an event may lead to generalisation (Ritchie & Lewis, 2007: 56). This research study involved the adaptation of current branding models for a new branding model for PHEIs. This implied generally accepted and well adapted theories and literature incorporated into a model. The present study identified additional elements of current models to formulate the conceptual model. Thus, this research study analysed the strengths and shortcomings of existing models and then developed a new branding model from this context. The study therefore adopted an inductive reasoning approach which was applicable to this research study as theory and the subsequent branding model is the outcome of the research- drawing generalisable inferences out of observations and feedback (Bryman & Bell, 2014:11).

The knowledge base as in the ontological viewpoint (researchers own understanding of reality included) guides the researcher to a research philosophy (interpretivist) and subsequent inductive research approach. In a recent study conducted on a client-based brand equity framework for selected B-2 B services (Steenkamp, 2016), the researcher used an interpretivist approach and an ontological viewpoint, stating that for the study it was accepted that reality is influenced by the frame of reference of both the researcher and the respondents.

This research study was qualitative in nature, using reasoning of inductive generalisation - moving from specific theories (Keller (2013) and Aaker (2009) to the collective elements of a branding framework. This qualitative research method

presented interpretive engagement of addressing the research problem at hand. The data then contributed to a new body of knowledge formulated around the perceptions of PHEIs. At the same time, the gap created by formulating the research problem was addressed by using the continuing interplay between data collection and theory (Babbie, 2011: 391).

The above points illustrate the fundamental aspects of a qualitative research approach applicable to this research study. As a qualitative research enquiry, this research study determined stakeholders' perceptions of PHEIs using an insight – based questionnaire.

The use of a qualitative enquiry provided a rationale since this approach provided mutual understanding for both stakeholders and the researcher.

5.6 Research Tactics

Research is governed by a measure of research tactics (Maree, 2016: 145). The research tactics provided a general plan of how the researcher proceeded to answer the research questions provide the relevant information required to solve the research problem. These tactics explained the methods, techniques, and procedures that the researcher adopted in his attempt to answer the research questions, and the research objectives.

There are many different ways in which surveys can be conducted, and the most widely used method of gathering information from respondents is a questionnaire in a semi-structured interview format with open-ended questions (Wilson, 2014: 174). This supported the interpretive paradigm that framed the research.

According to Maree (2016: 174), survey data is used to describe and explain the status of phenomena, or to trace change and draw comparisons. Further evidence of the alignment of the survey research strategy for this research study is provided by Mouton (2013: 107), who maintains that survey designs should take all the salient aspects of the survey strategy into account.

In depth interviews (IDIs) with a semi- structured interview guide were used for this research study (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014: 152). This design was used to create an overall picture of a phenomenon at one point in time. In depth interviewing proved to be an extremely useful method of data collection that provided complete freedom

in terms of content and structure. A Focus group according to Kumar, 92012: 386) is a form of strategy in which attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards and issue are explored through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher. This research study relied on individual input from one-on-one in depth interviews to obtain the necessary data. In addition, a facilitated discussion around any single issue pertaining to the research problem was not warranted as group stimulation and feeding information off one another in a focus group environment would not necessarily give any additional data of benefit to the research study.

Taking the above points into consideration, the semi-structured interview format, using an interview guide, remained the most valuable research tactic and source of obtaining information and allowed the researcher to interpret and understand the meaning of the respondent's answers. In support of this methodology, Kumar (2012: 162) maintains that in a qualitative research design it remains paramount to develop an interview guide that ensured desired coverage of the areas of enquiry and comparability of information across participants. Maree (2016: 90) provided further support of the above methodology by indicating that in-depth interviewing was both a method of data collection and a study design in qualitative research and the interview guide was a research tool that was used to collect data in this design.

Thus a semi structured, in-depth interview is deemed the most appropriate for this research study as firstly, aligned with a qualitative research design, an interview is less structured and the initial research ideas are formulated more broadly; and secondly, this format of interview allows the researcher can ask new questions that allows follow up on interviewee's replies as well as vary the order of questions (Bryman & Bell, 2014: 224).

These salient aspects all form part of the research process, which are discussed in the following sections.

5.6.1 Research purpose

The research purpose forms an integral part of the research strategy. The purpose of the research was considered from three different perspectives, namely: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive research.

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014: 12) outline three strategies of research design that guided the researcher to determine the purpose and goals of the research. These categories are *exploratory*, *descriptive* and *explanatory*, which can relate to a research design. This research study used both exploratory research to gather new information about the topic, and descriptive research to describe the phenomenon of interest. The exploratory research design is applicable to the problem statement (Chapter One) and the literature review (Chapter Two), since the research was geared towards gaining initial understanding of the phenomenon. The intention of the descriptive research design for the latter part of the research study was to establish whether the findings of the secondary research were relative to the research questions posed in terms of the perceptions of industry and PHEIs.

An exploratory empirical research design was required to address the research problem. This exploratory design was used to gain insight into a situation or phenomenon such as current awareness and perceptions of PHEIs amongst staff, students, sponsors, parents, and industry.

The aim of any exploratory research is to gain insight, and to generate ideas about a marketing problem or opportunity, of which little is known (Haydam & Mostert, 2014: 64). This research design also allowed for flexibility and adaptation in order to gain insight from the collected data. Exploratory research is appropriate when there are few or no earlier studies to which one can refer for information about the research problem. The aim of this type of study was therefore to seek patterns, ideas or trends rather than to test or confirm a hypothesis, which justifies the choice of the exploratory research design.

Silverman and Marvasti (2008: 112) highlight that the purpose of exploratory research is to establish what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions, and to assess a new phenomenon in a new light. Exploratory studies seek to 'explore' or understand a particular phenomenon. The initial phases of an exploratory research study may actually show that a researcher might not yet be sure about the nature or extent of the research problem and for this reason will conduct initial exploratory research (Wilson, 2014: 111).

5.7 Research time horizons

Relative to this research study is the consideration of the time horizon within which the study is done. The time horizon applicable to this research could be longitudinal or cross-sectional. Longitudinal studies are applicable when a change in the phenomenon of interest may occur if tested over time. Terre Blanche, *et al.* (2011: 43) maintain that longitudinal studies (also called diachronic research) involve the observation of units of analysis over a period of time. Because the main objective of the research study was to formulate a model of value-added branding for a PHEI at this point in time, a longitudinal study was not applicable.

A *cross-sectional* time horizon is the study of a certain phenomenon at a particular time (Welman & Kruger, 2009: 134). A major advantage of a cross sectional time horizon over a longitudinal design is that it is relatively cost-effective, and time-efficient. Thus, the cross-sectional time horizon was used to create an overall picture of a phenomenon at one point in time – in line with the ontology (reality) of the research philosophy discussed in the research paradigm section.

Sampling strategy and the selected sample size are discussed in the next section.

5.8 Sampling strategy

The research question that is posed determines both the nature of the population, as well as the selected sample. Thus, the selection of a population parameter and a sample follows the path of the research question (Maree, 2016: 192).

The purpose of this study, as well as the qualitative element of the research design, required a limited number of respondents than for a quantitative study.

The type of sampling generally applicable for qualitative research is non-probability sampling (based on purposeful selection). The focus in qualitative research is on selecting limited respondents that provide feedback relative to the information required as opposed to a large sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 139). There are various types of non-probability sampling, and these include convenience, quota and judgmental sampling. Judgmental sampling was used for this research study as discussed in the section below under sample size and choice of respondents.

As a qualitative study, this research was more concerned with gaining access to the hospitality industry targeted as an accessible population rather than by obtaining a nationally or internationally representative sample of all industries across southern Africa and beyond. Thus, a non-probability sampling type called judgement sampling, were used for the survey research.

The research study was primarily aimed at the hospitality (including travel and tourism) industry, and hence judgemental sampling type was used, as respondents were easy to access, and were readily available. Kumar (2009: 207) maintains that the primary consideration in purposive sampling is the researcher's judgement as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. This is further endorsed by Maree (2016: 174) who describes judgemental sampling type as being effective when one needs to describe a phenomenon or develop something about which only a little is known. In addition, Kumar (2009: 207) proposes that this sampling type is more common in qualitative research. Furthermore, a study by Steenkamp (2016) based on a client -based brand equity (CBBE) framework for selected business-to-business (B-to-B) services used judgemental sampling to great effect. The focus was on selecting cases for research that are information-rich, rather than a large sample, very much applicable to this research study.

One of the population groups been Corporate HR practitioners, who hire graduates from tertiary education institutions, will place purposive sampling at the forefront as a choice for a sampling method. An advantage of using purposive sampling is that it ensures that each element of the sample will assist with the research, as each element aligns with the population parameters of the research study (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014: 143).

The size of the sample in this qualitative research would always be a dilemma in terms of deciding the right number of respondents to get the necessary information-rich text needed. Leedy & Ormond (2010: 141) suggest a typical sample size of 5 to 25. Steenkamp (2016: 98) in a similar study on CBBE branding in the short-term insurance industry conducted interviews with 17 respondents of which 14 were used. This research study was administered amongst a sample of 14 participants over a period of 13 months from May 2019 to May 2020.

The make-up of this group of respondents is indicated in Figure 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Summary of sample size selected

	PHEI(1)	PHEI(2)	PHEI(3)
STUDENTS	2 Students	1 Student	1 Student
STAFF	VPA	HoD	
PARENTS	1 Full time	1 Business	
SPONSORS		1 Corporate	1 Donor
CORPORATE HR PRACTITIONERS	Large Hotel	Boutique Hotel	Guest House
2 Large Hotel	2 Practitioners		
1 Boutique hotel		1 Practitioner	
1 Guest house			1 Practitioner

(Source: Researcher's own)

The sample provided a mix of students studying hospitality programmes at PHEIs in the last two years. More importantly, two of the students in the research study applied to study at a PHEI, and for various reasons, did not register to study at that education institution. One alumni student, graduated from the full-time programme, also formed part of the sample.

In order to provide an input to the brand identity of a PHEI, 2 staff from two PHEIs were part of the sample. One staff member, the Vice Principal (Academic) was also part of the lecturing body and a Head of department (HOD) represented the operations (administrative) department. The two parents (account payers) utilised in the sample frame represented both full time and business school students from two PHEIs. This was deemed a sufficient sample size of the parent body as students, as recent school leavers are either studying full time or more mature students are at business schools doing part time courses. The sample necessitated only two sponsors (corporate and donor) and thus provided representation from two of the

PHEIs. The rest of the institution participants, with the remainder of the participants comprising corporate HR practitioners in the hospitality industry.

Figure 5.2 below indicates the unit of analysis, participants, and sample size

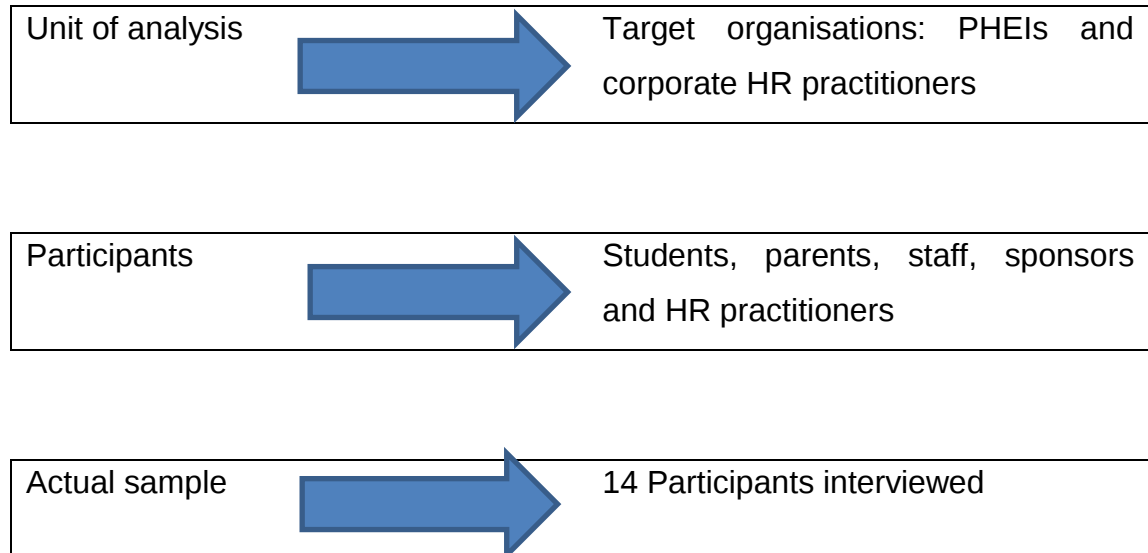


Figure 5.2: Unit of analysis, participants and sample size of study conducted
(Source: researcher's own)

The use of one interviewer for the interviews limited subjective interpretation and ensured that perceptions and bias were kept to a minimum, whilst ensuring that credibility and consistency were maintained throughout the investigative study. Thus, the merits of the questionnaire were invariably to gather information that ultimately met the research objectives as outlined in Chapter One.

The most compelling argument for using a non-probability sample is that it is aimed specifically at developing new models and theories to explain a particular phenomenon (Welman *et al.*, 2009: 176). The design classification provided empirical evidence in the form of non-numeric, and mainly textual data, stemming from both the questionnaire and structured interview. The phenomena related to the problem statement since corporate HR practitioners have scant knowledge and awareness of PHEIs and graduates' employability.

It is important to note that in qualitative research, sample size does not occupy a significant place, and is more determined by the *data saturation point* while collecting data, as opposed to having a fixed number at the outset (Kumar, 2012: 213). This saturation point is applicable to the one-on-one basis of collecting data, as in the

case of this research study, where the sample size provided sufficient diverse information necessary to formulate a data analysis applicable to have provided a solution to the research problem. The sample size was based on the notion that exceeding the number of respondents would not lead to any new or additional information, the so-called data saturation point. The diversity of the phenomena or the diversity of the population amongst institution and corporate HR practitioners in this qualitative research design was not great. The sample size had been selected carefully to ensure that diversity was maintained, whilst information was gathered from both the questionnaires and the interviewees.

5.9 Data collection methodology

This classification framework of design types bears relevance to the empirical nature of this qualitative research design. The interview guide had empirical or direct observable data as its focus point, and subjectively provided perceptions concerning PHEIs to the researcher. The data for this research study was obtained from individual participants under empirical observation, and was detailed and rich, used to explore a variety of issues relevant to perceptions of PHEIs.

A hybrid of data collection, incorporating primary and new data from the interview guide and interviews, as well as existing data analysis, was used. The relationships that exist between PHEIs and corporate PR practitioners, albeit limited to one or two current top education institutions and large corporate firms provided a mix of the current scenarios and perceptions that exist between the two parties.

The type of data that was collected was both textual and information rich to a large degree. The textual data stemmed from issues raised in the interview guide, as well as providing opportunity for any relevant ones to emerge. The text provided information that was collated into the data analysis process, contributing to structured, selective modes of data capturing, making trends and patterns easily identifiable.

Whilst interviewing was time consuming and expensive, it provided a more interpersonal perception of the problem question under investigation. Hence, the interviewer used the combination of an interview guide and structured interview for the purpose of this research study, in conjunction with both Aaker's and Keller's model of brand equity, for consideration to a value-added framework for PHIS. The

interview guide and semi-structured IDIs provided the platform for respondent's contribution to the make-up of this model.

According to Babbie (2011: 288) primary data is data collected for the first time (new data). This research study mainly used primary data from respondents' feedback (obtained from the structured interview, using the interview guide), and sources of information obtained from the literature review (Chapter Two).

The interview guide was developed from the literature and consisted of open-ended questions (point 5.4.1 below). These questions in the interview guide were obtained, in the main, from the literature pertaining to both Aaker (2009) and Keller (2013) branding model, with an emphasis on the strengths emanating from these models. The sample unit and sample element consisted of both graduates with hospitality qualifications that were employed at various corporate tourism and hotel aligned industries, as well as current and past (last two years only) students from a site delivery private institution of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE) in South Africa, as well as two other PHEIs.

A pre-testing questionnaire in the form of a pilot questionnaire was implemented by using the career centre coordinators of two PHEIs, who provided e-mail addresses to five HR practitioners who gave consent to provide feedback concerning the pilot questionnaire, and subsequent questions posed. This constituted piloting or pre-testing of the questionnaire, which satisfied the need for pre-testing, even though a relatively small sample was used (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008: 284).

The purpose of the pilot questionnaire was mainly to test the validity of the original questionnaire (measuring instrument) to ascertain if the research problem statement would be adequately tested, and that the questions were all relative to both the corporate HR practitioners, as well as the education institution. Both the validity and reliability criteria were satisfied by the pilot study, since it indicated that similarities existed between respondents' feedback.

Furthermore, it was significant to note that, in the majority of cases, respondents from the pilot study concurred with the views of the respondents in the main study. Given the main point of discussion concerning a lack of communication between corporates and PHEIs, which could enhance brand awareness, inputs from the

corporate HR practitioners were valuable from both research *design* and *insight* points of view.

This feedback proved to be invaluable as the respondents included two HR practitioners from the Gauteng region, who provided input from both a research design and insight perspective. In addition, this provided a more national perspective and could broaden the scope of the research, if necessary. It is important to note that the pre-testing was not conducted as a comparative analysis to compare results with the main respondents, but rather utilised to test the validity of the questions, and the feasibility of posing such questions to respondents.

Even though verbal feedback was not obtained from each of the respondents in the pre-testing, feedback ranged from the nature of the question(s), the simplicity of the statements and, more importantly, the ability of the practitioner to provide suitable answers. These comments were adjudged to be valid, considered, and included into the format of the final questionnaire.

Results from the pilot questionnaire were themed and codified in order to make the questionnaire topics more relevant (see section 5.12). Only topics that were relevant to the final questionnaire were used, and a sample questionnaire contain the relevant questions for corporate HR practitioners are included in Appendix 2 of this research study.

5.10 Interview guide

The interview, with selected respondents, was conducted by the researcher, using the basis of the questions from the questionnaire. Also, with the demographic nature of this research encompassing mainly Varsity College students and parents, the ease and convenience of using a questionnaire proved advantageous.

Basically, the questionnaire was designed to address and provide answers to the following broad themes:

- How well the PHEIs and their qualifications are currently recognised by both consumers (students, parents and sponsors) and the hospitality industry?;
- What are the reasons why public university qualifications dominate public perceptions of education quality standards in South Africa?;

- For what reasons do corporate HR practitioners, representing corporate South Africa, prefer to employ graduates from public universities?;
- To what degree the introduction of branding a PHEI would increase value for the private educational institution?; and
- To what extent the branding of PHEIs and their qualifications enhance their perceptions amongst all stakeholders?.

The purpose of probing insights to the above questions provided relevant inputs to what elements of branding need to be incorporated into a new branding framework for PHEIs.

In addition, the information stemming from the questions posed (above), as well as the information researched in the literature review (Chapter Two), impacted on the information from data collection. Thus, the gap that was identified between the posed questions and the respondents feedback contributed to elements that were both lacking and highlights from current branding models of PHEIs and need to be incorporated into the formulation of a new framework for value-added branding of PHEIs against the background of institution and industry needs and standards. These gaps and the formulation of a model formed the basis of the recommendations, which the final chapter of the thesis addresses.

The initial interview guide (Appendix A) was divided into five sections, which are presented below. Each of the sections relative to this exploratory study is discussed below to clarify reasons for the inclusion of particular questions.

Section A

This section included the student group and consisted of questions that probed the advertising media relating to any branding of private education brands they could recall. The questionnaire probed any associations from private education brands they could formulate with the purpose of ascertaining if these associations to students (and unique selling points to the education institution) were branded in any platform of advertising media. Particular reference in this section of the questionnaire was made in identifying if students could recall any content of the branding, they observed from advertising media. Lastly, the decision-making concept was probed

between both parents and students to ascertain the dominant role in this regard, which would ultimately impact on the content of branding in advertising media.

Section B

The questions in Section B of the interview guide focussed on the parent group of respondents. This section included questions probing the recall of any private education brands to test the differentiation, if any, that parents have over student's recall of private education brands. Associations in the form of unique selling points from the private education brands perspective were probed from the parent's group to identify if the content of advertising media was relevant to this sector. Further probing in the questionnaire related to the recommendation or non-recommendation that the parent group would make concerning their son/daughter's educational institution.

Section C

The questions in this section tested the sponsors group from the perspective of brand recall of any private education brand advertising media they were exposed to, and specifically the content and type of advertising media recalled. The purpose of the questions posed to this stakeholder group was also to probe what associations, if any they had with any private education brand in order to ascertain what content of an advertising media appeals to this group.

Section D

This section, relevant to internal staff at a PHEI, included questions that probed firstly, the branding of their own education institution, in order to ascertain the internal corporate identity. Thereafter, perceptions of the brand equity and the branding done in any advertising media were probed as well as the content, as unique selling points, were tested. A recommendation/ non-recommendation to friends or other professionals of their own private education institution was also probed. In order to assess the current brand image of the private education institution that the students are attending, or from whom the corporate HR practitioners are recruiting students from, were also tested.

Section E

This section provided external stakeholders in the form of corporate HR practitioners who employ graduates in the hospitality industry. This group of stakeholders were of great importance to the research study, as their responses provided insights into both B2B branding as well as perceptions of the private education brands. The questions probed a direct correlation as to whether they would prefer to recruit graduates from the private or public domain of higher education institutions. In addition, the relationship building concept between their corporate and a higher education institution was probed. If a relationship of any nature was formed, the questionnaire probed firstly, the type of relationship they expected, and secondly, whether such a relationship would enhance the calibre and type of graduate students employed. Any branding in the form of advertising media of private education brands was also probed.

In summary, the sections of the interview guide mostly followed the brand building orientation of Keller's model of brand resonance (Keller, 2013: 117) to a greater degree and Aaker's model of brand equity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2009: 20) to a lesser degree. This involved, firstly, a total value chain organisation and, secondly, a total stakeholder orientation. The premise of the section's questions was to ascertain if the brand of any one PHEI was engineered to deliver on its promise to stakeholders. These stakeholder groups (student/staff/parents/sponsors) have the ability to influence the brand's image by adding value to the brand's perception if they feel the brand is living up to its stakeholder promise, as well as contributing to the overall brand perception of PHEIs.

This section also included questions that focussed on the advertising and media in terms of consumers and external stakeholders' awareness of PHEIs. It also included questions relevant to the choice of private or public educated graduates, as well as awareness or a lack of awareness of PHEIs. At the same time, the current mode of advertising known to both the institution respondents, as well as the corporate HR practitioners, was tested.

5. 10.1 In-depth Interviews (IDIs)

With reference to the interview it was also more effective to use more standardised procedures, as these procedures would provide the following benefits (De Vos and Strydom 2013: 335):

- Maximise observational efficacy;
- Minimise interviewer bias;
- Allow for verification of the data; and
- Provide for field notes consisting of everything that the researcher sees and hears, specifically for future references purposes.

This research study used semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs) with open-ended questions. In the interviews the sequence of the questions was kept constant, the participants were probed to understand certain responses. This methodology supported the interpretive paradigm that underpinned the research. The IDI used an interview schedule with a written list of questions prepared by the researcher in a person-to-person (face to face) interaction. The interview schedule was used as a research tool or instrument for collecting the data during the IDI.

For the purpose of this study, it was not so much the development of a research instrument that was applicable as opposed to developing a conceptual framework of the likely areas to be covered in the interview. The interviewer conducted the interview from a perspective of personal and work settings relevant to the research topic, research problem statement, research questions, and aim of the research - this provided the thread that held the interviews together, and provided the required data to formulate solutions for the research question.

The interviewer recognised the importance of both rapport and relationship building with the respondents in an interview environment and was critical in gathering the necessary data. Interviews were conducted in the respondent's own work environment at a time suitable in respect of their work operational requirements. Figure 5.3 below indicates the benefits of a structured interview (contrasted to an unstructured interview).

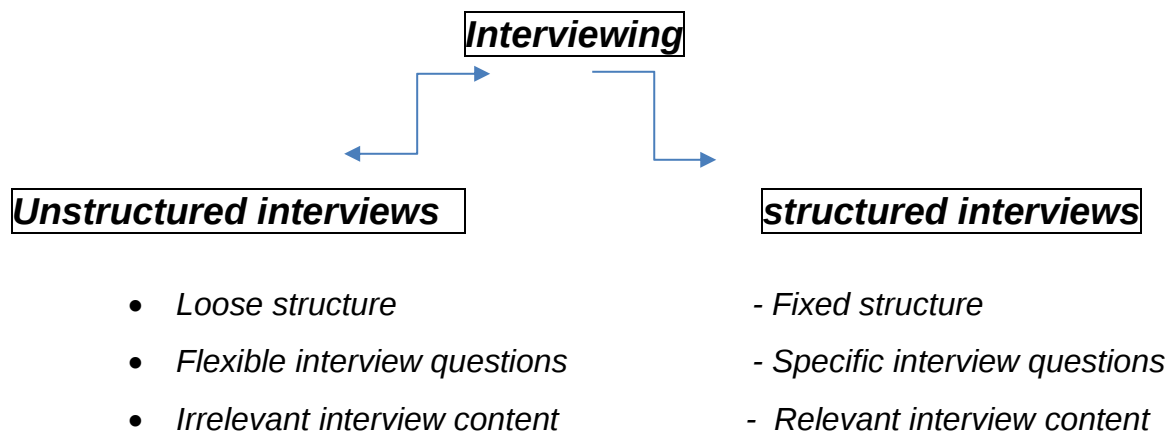


Figure 5.3: Structured and unstructured interviews (Source: Kumar, 2012: 144).

Overall, the use of face-to-face interviews in the IDIs was a flexible tool and, more importantly, allowed the interviewer to establish a relationship with the respondents, and allowed the interviewer to discuss further to obtain the required information. Kumar (2009: 118) states that relationship building in a face-to-face interview enables the researcher to gain more information and to generate more data.

As indicated previously, the basis of the interview schedule was structured around the questionnaire that was formulated for the structured interviews. However, in order to gauge the respondents' perceptions in the interview environment, a measure of flexibility and adaptability was incorporated. This ensured that a formalised structure was maintained, and at the same time adaptability was utilised to ensure that maximum benefit was obtained from the face-to-face interviews.

A research study conducted on a client-based brand equity framework of the short-term insurance industry in South Africa (Steenkamp, 2016) used a semi-structured interview format with open-ended questions. The use of this specific technique in the IDIs of that research study bore relevance to the current study, in that the success of the technique was evident. Overcoming the initial effort to secure the interviews, and notwithstanding the time and expense involved, the researcher considered the use of IDIs to be ideal in that it supported the inductive interpretivist approach that framed the research.

5.11 Data analysis of interviews and questionnaires

Data coding consisted of a systematic way in which the researcher condensed extensive data sets into smaller analysable units through the creation of categories and concepts derived from the data (Malhotra, 2010: 137). This became a challenge for the researcher, because once all the information had been processed and collated, one had to reduce the amount of data into manageable and understandable texts.

The first level of distinction was determined by the qualitative nature of the research, which makes the information obtained to be descriptive by nature. Thus, for the purpose of the research study, this qualitative nature of the data helped to formulate relevant theories, and the proposed framework for the value-added branding of PHEIs relative to this research question.

Leedy and Ormrod (2013: 153) mention that a data analysis process begins with raw data and moves through the following process to produce the final report, while this certainly relates to the present study too:

Organisation - classification according to themes;

Perusal - of the data as a whole to get a sense of the overall concept;

Classification - coding the data and creating categories within the realms of the themes; and

Synthesis - integrating and summarising the findings into an applicable model.

In determining the codes or units of analysis, questionnaire codes were finalised and collated once the questionnaire was completed. From an interview perspective, the codes were developed inductively, following data collection and data analysis. Kumar (2012: 264) formulated a questionnaire around the classification of the three categories of determining codes, as follows:

- Exhaustive - every response was placed within *one* of the categories;
- Mutually exclusive – coded information can only be assigned to one category; and
- Residual other – kept to a minimum and allowed for information that was not anticipated, particularly relevant to the interview information obtained.

The researcher considered these categories when the study's subsequent coding was compiled.

Following the interviews, all the written responses by the researcher were transcribed and analysed, ensuring that data gathering, and analysis occurred consecutively.

Data manipulation was done by transcribing the interviews and coding. This data analysis entailed labelling and coding data that was important to the research study. Based on the sample size of 14 participants, the researcher adopted a manual procedure of data analysis which provided a more hands-on-approach as well as a more personal touch with the data.

The procedure adopted ensured that the useful portions of the text were coded and grouped to form categories. This initial coding entailed breaking down large amounts of text data into manageable parts that could be grouped. Repetitive reading of the transcribed text was needed to ensure that data was grouped according to their correct themes to ensure consistency was maintained throughout this thematic coding process. The study's research questions, problem statement, objectives and theoretical framework (discussed in chapter 2) always guided the coding system. As the inductive interpretivist approach was adopted, all the coding emerged from the data collected. This would also include the objectives confirming the applicability of the elements from analysing current branding models to be incorporated into the codes. For example, one of the questions posed to a corporate HR practitioner of a hotel, related to the employability of a graduate from a PHEI. The responses were coded against the relationship building element emerging from the analysis of the current branding models. Table 5.1 below shows an example of the initial coding process.

Coded segments were viewed within a larger context, while thinking and reviewing were supported by memo writing and visualisation, as well as coding, according to themes. This process of coding provided attention to detail and constant review, providing an unusual degree of "closeness" to the data.

Table 5.2 below aligns both the questionnaires and the interviews' information into variables that impact on the various industry samples and graduate placement from the hospitality industry.

Table 5.2: Coding and theming: Scale of variables relevant to interviews and questionnaires of Corporate HR practitioners

VARIABLE	Hospitality	Hotel	Travel industry
<i>Employ > 50% graduates</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>—</i>
<i>Relationship with PHEI</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Communication with PHEI</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
<i>Advertising of PHEI</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Awareness of PHEI marketing</i>	<i>X</i>		
<i>Accreditation of qualification</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Adhere to industry needs</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>

(Source: Researcher's own)

Table 5.2 above relates to the example used in the coding process, where a corporate HR practitioner's response to the employability of a graduate from a PHEI was coded against the theme of a relationship with a PHEI and could form an element to be incorporated into a new branding framework. The rationale behind the selection of data was that the variables represented above provided the required information to analyse this selection of data from the three industries and, subsequently, provided the necessary solutions to the research question(s). This was the ultimate aim of the research methodology that the research study used.

5.12 Responses from the Pilot Questionnaire

The responses from the pilot questionnaire were only used to enrich the responses gleaned from the stakeholders that were interviewed in IDIs. It is also important to note that the responses from the pilot questionnaire were only from corporate HR practitioners, as one of the stakeholder groups that were interviewed. Thus, the purpose of the pilot questionnaire was two-fold:

- 1) To test the trustworthiness and accuracy of the questions posed in the final interview schedule; and
- 2) To obtain responses from outside the scope of this research study, namely the Western Cape, as two of the respondents were from the Gauteng region. This would broaden the scope of the research, and not limit it to one province in South Africa.

The responses from the corporate HR practitioners achieved both of the points (above) and at the same time enriched this study, especially given the relatively small sample used for the final interview schedule (see Appendix 6).

Appendix 2 shows an overall breakdown and synopsis of the pilot questionnaire's responses.

With reference to the concept of brand awareness, the participants' responses indicated minimum knowledge of any branding of PHEIs, irrespective from which region in South Africa they emanated.

A response to the pilot question concerning *"...if you as corporate HR practitioner had the final decision making authority to employ a graduate from a public university or PHEI, what would your choice be?"*, provided the most telling factor in determining the lack of knowledge at this early stage of the existence of PHEIs (See Appendix 6).

The responses to the question relating to advertising, which probed:

"Indicate any marketing or advertising material or signage you have seen or been exposed to of any private education institution you are aware of...", elicited responses that endorsed the trustworthiness of the type of questions to be used in the IDIs that would give sufficient and accurate data to be analysed.

Even though vague and ambiguous responses were received from corporate HR practitioners, this indicated a lack of brand awareness, in terms of actually recognising any form of marketing or advertising from a PHEI that might provide a cue or some form of brand recognition. This lack of awareness of a brand not only justified the inclusion of the concept of brand awareness in the interview guide. In addition, this response justified the inclusion of questions around the concept of brand awareness in the final questionnaire that would illicit responses from other stakeholders.

Further responses to questions posed around brand salience and brand performance provided insights into a lack of knowledge and understanding from corporate HR practitioners at PHEIs in South Africa. All respondents registered a show of disbelief and lack of understanding to the more than 90 PHEIs registered in South Africa (CHE, 2018).

The pilot questionnaire revealed, at this early stage, that the brand performance concerns around designing and delivering a product or service that fully satisfies consumer needs and wants – a prerequisite for successful marketing and branding (Kapferer, 2009: 112) – are fully justified.

Keller (2013: 113) discusses this justification further and proposes that certain important attributes and benefits often underlie brand performance. Two of these attributes coming from the pilot questionnaire responses are particularly relevant to this research study:

- 1) Product reliability, durability and serviceability – reliability, specifically, is an integral attribute of brand performance, as this concept measures the consistency of performance over time, and from purchase to purchase; and
- 2) Service effectiveness, efficiency and empathy – consumers often have performance-related associations with service, while service efficiency describes the speed and responsiveness of service, whereas service empathy is the trusting and caring nature of having the consumer's interests in mind.

Clearly, an indication of the lack of understanding and confidence in PHEIs stemming from the corporate HR practitioners' responses (above), is based on the two attributes of brand performance – reliability and empathy. These preliminary discussions provided invaluable input to analysis of the respondents' feedback from the interview questionnaire discussed in Chapter Six.

These preliminary discussions from the pilot questionnaire proved to be aligned with the trustworthiness and accuracy of the research study, whilst they provided clear guidelines for the final interview schedule questionnaire.

5.13 Shortcomings and potential sources of error

The extent to which respondents engage the subjectivity of the researcher, as well as the degree of subjectivity applied by the researcher to respondents' questions can lead to shortcomings in the information that is obtained. Qualitative research has as its fundamental principle subjective interpretation of the data acquired yet will always need to consider the researcher's bias. A possible solution to this interpretation was the guiding principle of formulating a research design and methodology to provide solutions to the research question. Once this concept was kept as the ultimate solution to the question posed, it went a long way towards eliminating this subjective shortcoming.

One of the key shortcomings of this participative survey was that the questionnaire design did not lend itself to interpretation of cultural meanings, specifically in the South African context. The sample size had taken this into consideration, albeit limited, and though suitable for qualitative research design, it still raised concerns about the scientific validity of the collected data. However, this researcher maintains that qualitative research provided the basis for solutions and conclusions to be formulated, and the opportunity to nationalise or internationalise the research at a later stage, if required.

This research study ensured that from the research questions posed to possible solutions gathered from the accumulated data, validity was maintained. At the same time, the period of both questionnaire distribution and collection, as well as the interviews taking place over a three-month period, ensured that aspects such as faulty research procedures, poor samples, and inaccurate measuring instruments did not influence validity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013: 142).

The focus was also on the reliability and dependability of the measuring instrument in order to achieve both consistency and stability in the responses received. This relied on the ability of an instrument to produce consistent measurements. When one collects the same set of information more than once, using the same instrument, and obtains the same or similar results, the measuring instrument is considered to be reliable (Kumar, 2012: 180).

Kumar (2012: 182) mentions the following factors of reliability which in the case of this research study formed a benchmark for both *the wording of questions* - minimum

ambiguity existed in the questions, thus eliminating any misinterpretation on the part of respondents and *the physical setting* - took place in the respondent's own environment, ensuring consistency and ease of presence. Both *the nature of interaction* - the researcher conducted each interview individually, ensuring probing of the questions and that data was provided consistently and *the regression effect of an instrument* - respondents can feel that they reacted too negatively or positively, and thus adjust their perceptions if necessary. Due to the simplicity and directness of the questions posed, this regression was an unlikely occurrence.

Lastly, quality assurance was ensured by keeping track and a record of the field work that ensured that quality control was maintained.

5.14 Ethical considerations

Before the commencement of this research study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Babbie (2011: 477) defines research in its most basic format as conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group. At the same time different groups have different codes of conduct in which to govern ethics, as does a research study.

This research study offered the best opportunities to answer research questions and contribute to society based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation and expectations between all parties involved (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011: 113). These aspects of *honesty* and *integrity* formed the cornerstones of the ethical considerations that were undertaken for this research.

Welman and Kruger (2009: 187) point out that the right of the respondent to expect privacy and *anonymity* in a research report is significant when considering ethics. This research study guaranteed *confidentiality* and anonymity, as participants were assured that descriptions of individuals or particular groups, or quotes from individuals would remain undisclosed and would hence be unrecognisable to any viewer or reader. The researcher assured the participants that these guidelines would be adhered to throughout the course of the research study, and that their identity would be protected, and that they could remain anonymous, if they so desired.

Informed consent is the process of seeking explicit and un-coerced agreement from respondents, based on their full understanding of the procedures involved in the study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2011: 560). Respondents were also advised that they could terminate the interview at any time at their own request. All participants were also given the assurance that once the research study was concluded, a brief summary of the findings would be given to them, if they requested this, as per instructions on the questionnaire.

The study also allowed for respondents to participate independently, without any coercion, and at the same time informed them of their rights not to participate in the study. The participants were also informed that they could *withdraw* from the study at any time at their request, and without any prejudice.

In addition, ethical considerations were maintained by accurate reporting of results throughout the research study. There was no bias or conflict of interest indicated on the part of the researcher, whilst no *emotional harm* was inflicted on any of the respondents. Kumar (2012: 226) states that respondents should not be subjected to any form of physical or mental harm. Research respondents were also assured that they were not placed at any risk as a result of their participation in the research study. Risks indicated included a reassurance that they would not be physically or mentally harmed, while they were also given the researcher's contact details, as well as those of his research supervisor and the chairperson of the Ethics Committee, as part of this assurance, should they need to contact any one or all of them.

Throughout the study, the researcher acknowledged information in any form that did not belong to him to avoid *plagiarism*. Thus, all references have been properly listed and documented as in-text referencing throughout the research study.

This study valued the role that participants played in the research, since it was their perspectives on the research topic, and their interpretations of the phenomenon under study that the researcher sought to understand and present (Bazely, 2013: 51). In bringing researchers into direct and personal contact with their respondents, field research (interviews) raises *ethical considerations* of a general nature that could be seen as shortcomings (Silverman & Marvasti, 2011: 322).

Trochim and Donnelly (2007) in Kumar (2012:185) compare the criteria proposed by Guba & Lincoln in the following table with validity and reliability

Table 5.3 Guba & Lincoln comparative criteria (adapted from Kumar: 2012: 185)

<i>Traditional criteria for judging quantitative research</i>	<i>Alternative criteria for judging qualitative research</i>
Internal validity	Credibility
External validity	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Confirmability

According to Guba & Lincoln, trustworthiness in a qualitative study is determined by four indicators- credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability- that reflect validity and reliability in qualitative research.

As qualitative research studies explore perceptions, experiences, feeling and beliefs of the respondents, Kumar (2012:185) believed that the respondents are best to judge the *credibility* of the findings from a congruence, validation, and approval perspective.

Transferability (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008:149) refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings. This would be the case with this research study, not only limited to the hospitality industry.

Conformability, refers to the degree to which the results could be corroborated by others, as would be the case with this research study if the sample frame would be broadened to include more students and other stakeholders (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008: 151).

Dependability, according to Trochim & Donnelly, (2008: 150) relates to whether a researcher would obtain the same results if one could observe the same phenomena twice – difficult to establish for the purpose of this research. However, with the researcher able to do a data analysis from the respondent's feedback without any major ambiguity, the dependability of the data is verified.

5.15 Conclusion

This chapter provided comprehensive information with regards to the research methodology and design that the study adopted. This study drew from the ontological knowledge base through an inductive interpretivist philosophical approach. It also used a cross-sectional exploratory and descriptive research design as a research strategy. Chapter Five, together with the literature review, framed the investigative research into value-added branding of PHEIs, and clarified the assumption on which the present research was based.

The chapter highlighted the structure of research methods that the study used, and the considerations that were used to adopt the research methodology. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were applied as a research tactic to gain the participants' feedback. Thereafter, the chapter presented and discussed detailed descriptions of the population of the research study, the sample strategy and size, data collection instruments (questionnaire) and the main survey procedures.

The next chapter presents the findings of the study from the questionnaire responses. In addition, the chapter will also include an analysis of the participants' perceptions of PHEIs.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focussed on the research strategy and methodology that was used for the research study. This included the research objectives, research design, sample size, collection of data as well as the analysis of the data.

This chapter discusses the findings from the analysis of the in-depth interview (IDIs) data. Thematic analysis (Maree, 2016:111) was used to group themes, which enabled the researcher to use a technique for making objective inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified themes emerging from respondent's feedback. In addition, this technique deals with meaning and the relationship aspect and involves an interpretation of the underlying meaning of the feedback. The data analysis was conducted relative to the primary research objective through verification of the data as well as the analysis of the current branding models to formulate a new value-added branding framework for PHEIs. The applicability of this new branding was then tested against its building blocks and sub-dimensions originating from both the analysis of current branding models and the participants' data in a real world and against a large, existing PHEI.

In addition, the chapter also provides findings that addressed the secondary research objectives that relate to:

- Establish what brand-building blocks and sub-dimensions can emerge from both the strengths and deficiencies of the two prominent branding models currently in use; and
- Identifying the brand building blocks that are aligned with the participants' feedback and applicable to the formulation of a new branding model.

The importance of two key stakeholders, namely the students and corporate HR practitioners, are highlighted in section 6.3, as the students formed the basis of the inputs to the system, with the employability of the student by corporate HR practitioners as the output.

The findings are presented per stakeholder group IDI data stemming from the research questionnaire.

The basis of the presentation of findings, from a qualitative research design perspective, was the critical examination of one's ways of understanding the world, bearing in mind that the sense of shared and interactional processes of belief and meanings about the world is inter-subjective (Babbie, 2011: 28). This concept relates to the building blocks assumption that although the findings will be inter-subjective

and ontological in nature (Lindstrom, 2005: 45), this will still provide values, truths and beliefs for the purpose of the research study.

Furthermore, the findings provide information about the perceptions of the brand-building blocks (see section 6.4) that formed the basis of the value-added brand framework for PHEIs. These brand building blocks are presented in Figure 6.1 below, and originated from the coding or theming that the researcher applied to the 'raw data' from the interview questionnaires (see Appendix 1).

An understanding of the data interpretation emerged from the specific theme (see Appendix 3) as a foundation for a branding model. This foundation is firmly entrenched in brand equity. The pinnacle of the building blocks pyramid, aligned with Keller's model (Keller, 2013: 107) that can only be achieved once the other steps of the pyramid are satisfied with brand equity - the value or worth of the service. Both sides form the structure of the pyramid made up of brand building blocks and dimensions that includes *inter alia*, brand awareness (as the foundation) and brand loyalty, as well as perceptions (judgements), performance of the brand, importance of the brand to respondents and relationship with the brand (see section 6.7).

The presentation of the data and subsequent data analysis substantiated the elements of the building blocks, developed to formulate the value-added branding model. These elements follow the conceptual framework of branding, illustrated in Chapter one (Figure 1.1). In formulating a new branding model, both brand equity and brand positioning as elements contribute to the value-added component, are along with other brand building blocks and dimensions incorporated into the new model. In addition, the brand identity component emerged under the brand relationships element as integral stakeholders (internal) from a PHEI provided data feedback. The elements of the building blocks are represented in Figure 6.1 overleaf.

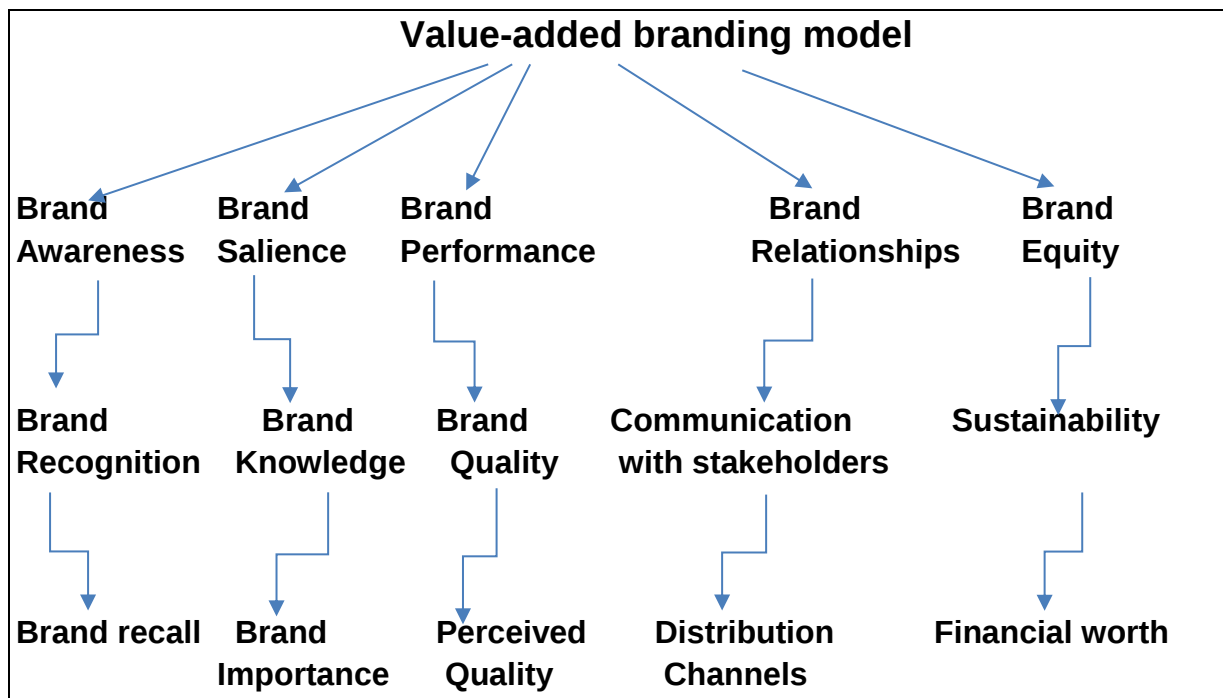


Figure 6.1: Elements of the value-added brand-building blocks aligned with the conceptual framework in Chapter one (Figure 1.1) (Source: Own).

The building blocks resonate throughout the respondents' feedback, placing emphasis on specific components that vary from parent, to student, to staff, sponsor and, ultimately, corporate HR practitioner.

Figure 6.2 below represents the pyramid of brand value-added building blocks.

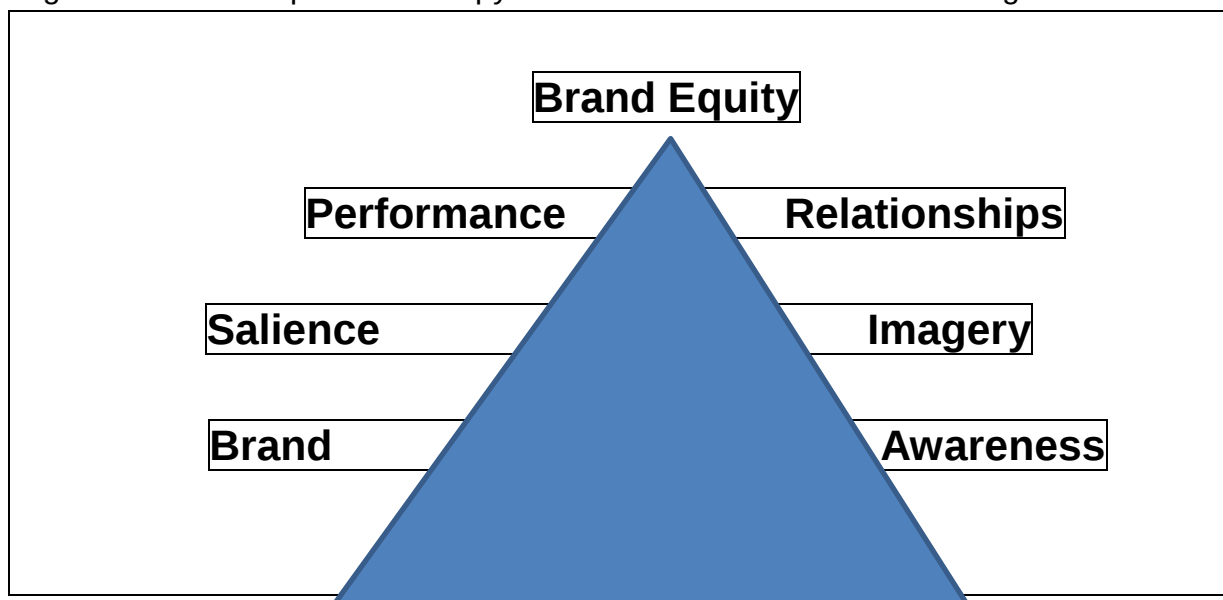


Figure 6.2: Building-blocks of brand building model (adapted from Keller, 2013: 108).

The findings, indicated below, pertain to the five stakeholder groups, viz., students, parents, sponsors, staff and Corporate HR practitioners. Table 5.1 (*Summary of sample size selected*) indicates eight stakeholder groups, bearing in mind the Corporate HR stakeholders are split up into Large Hotel group, a boutique hotel and a Guest House.

6.2 Student group response

Section A of the interview guide was composed of demographic data of the respondents, namely students, who supplied their current PHEI and year of study as well as their responses to questions probing their recall or familiarity with private education brands (Appendix 1- research questionnaire).

The findings of the student response concurred with a study from Kumar (2012: 280) where the empowerment and decision making of the family was researched. The teenage child, an integral part of the family, as is the student as stakeholder, was allowed to feel that they can make some decisions, to work within the realms of the family, and that their voices or views was as valid as the parents of the family. Thus as with the study done in Kumar (2012: 281), this research study provided key findings relative to a student's empowerment and decision making in choosing their PHEI.

A key finding was that even though the interview guide and research study was structured to test the marketing perspective and branding of an education institution, the **students** and **parents'** responses differed in this marketing applicability. The students' responses to the question – *from a marketing perspective, as well as your perception of brand awareness, indicate which of PHEIs can you recall* – focussed mainly on main stream and well known PHEIs. The parents' responses to the same question did include some main stream PHEIs; however, their responses mostly concerned an institution's awareness such as Institute of Marketing Management (IMM) or the Independent Institution of Education (IIE) as opposed to a college awareness of institutions such as Damelin College or Varsity College. Thus, in the light of institution based PHEI and campus based PHEI, there seems to be two value-added branding viewpoints emerging in view of the two different sets of consumers. The applicability of this differentiation, specifically from a marketing and branding perspective, would relate to the education institution advertising to the decision-maker when it comes down to the choice made for a student to enrol at a

tertiary academic institution. PHEIs should recognise that their task is to build brand awareness in the minds of students primarily (ultimately their choice of where they want to obtain their qualification), and thereafter in the minds of parents, who are the account payers. Academic governing institutions need to market their brand to the student, as firstly, the academic governing institution, and thereafter the campus point of delivery – which is the current well-known brand. At the same time, indications are forthcoming of a differentiated response to branding PHEIs from parents and students.

Table 6.1 below indicates both students and parents' differentiated responses to associations with PHEIs.

Table 6.1: Students and parents' views on differentiated associations and responses to the branding of PHEIs.

Name of Institution	Student	Parent
AAA school of advertising	<i>Exclusive</i>	<i>Professionally run</i>
Boston City Campus	<i>.....</i>	<i>.....</i>
Damelin	<i>Small classes</i>	<i>Effective communication</i>
Independent institute of Education (IIE)	<i>.....</i>	<i>Academic governing body (control)</i>
Varsity College	<i>Academic success</i>	<i>Academic excellence</i>
Midrand Graduate Institute	<i>No Input</i>	<i>No Input</i>
CTI	<i>Not aware of</i>	<i>Not aware of</i>
Mancosa	<i>No Input</i>	<i>No input</i>

(Source: Researcher's own)

This question asked to both students and parents not only indicated the differentiated branding necessary to the two stakeholder groups, but also tested the applicability of the salience and imagery groups of *brand awareness* and *brand*

association. Brand associations is one of the five components of both Aaker's brand equity model (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 25) as well as a component of brand knowledge in Keller's brand resonance model (Keller, 2013: 108). The associations attached to both the institution brands as well as the campus brand are what created the brand imagery in the parents and students' minds. These associations, including the salience and imagery groups relates to the brand-building blocks and dimensions of the proposed branding model for PHEIs.

The decision-making process by parents and students, relative to the preferred choice of education institution, is directly related to these respondents' brand awareness of a PHEI.

The question dealing with brand recall at both the time of applying to do studies as well as during their studies, would relate to student's brand awareness. The three brands mentioned by the student participants were indicative of the lack of cumulative PHEIs brand awareness, merely listing the three largest (by numbers) private education brands. It was not evident whether the participants were aware of these large education brands from any specific branding or advertising or were doing brand recall on friends attending these institutions or genuine familiarity with the brand.

The brands that formed part of the participants brand awareness formed part of their consideration set, for the reasons mentioned above. This means that these brands would have to reach a level of awareness where the brand is included in the consideration set for consumers to consider. For this research study, being part of the consumer's consideration made brand awareness an integral building block for a proposed branding model.

According to the data stemming from the IDIs, PHEI brands were recognisable to students (brand awareness) during the early stages of their study applications.

Responses to probing questions about *recall of private education brands* or *which private education brands were you familiar with* elicited responses such as:

"Yes, I can recall the larger brands such as Varsity College, Damelin College, CTI and one or two others ... Boston City Campus is another one"

Further probing of students' recall of familiar private education brands specifically when they were now students and in the PHEI system indicated the following response:

"more private education brands are spoken about from fellow students, especially specialist type colleges like AAA School of Advertising and IT colleges whose names I cannot remember now" and;

"...the only private brand is the one at which I am now studying as I was not going to do university studies and then decided on this college at the last moment"

The last of the four students' responses gave an indication that they had no idea of any private education brands either at the time of application or even when they were studying at their PHEI. The response was:

"I haven't experienced any contact or have anyone from a private college contact me but I had friends who went to my college, so I decided to go there as well...."

The private education brands mentioned during the brand recall and brand association responses formed each respondent's evoked or consideration set. This essentially indicates that these brands (larger PHEIs) would form part of the students' consideration to satisfy their need to find a suitable higher education institution. It therefore becomes important for a brand to reach a level of awareness where the brand is included in the consumer's evoked set, becoming part of a mind set or list that the student will consider. Two important factors emerged from these student responses concerning brand awareness, firstly, being part of the consumer's evoked set is critical from a branding perspective and needs advertising, in the main, from various platforms to instil the consideration set (section 6.2.3); and secondly, seemingly only larger brands and specialist brands are part of the student's recall or familiarity. Of the ninety private education brands (CHE, 2018), this means an overwhelming majority of these brands are not part of a student's consideration set and will thus not endure sustainability and brand equity to survive in a competitive market.

The last comment from the student responses (above) indicates and stresses the importance of relationships between the private education brand marketer and the consumer (either parent/ student). In terms of relationship building, the complex

markets of private education indicate a differentiation of decision making between parent and student to be discussed in the parent's response (section 6. 3). However, from a student's perspective, and specifically at the time of consideration to embark on university studies, *brand relationship* building forms an important consideration. The private education relationship is directly between the individual brand and the end consumer.

In response to a question probing students' brand relationship at time of application to their studies and including their current relationships included:

"Good- the private college guy was in contact during my matric year and even phoned to wish me well for my exams and even now I have a good relationship with my lecturers.."

Aligned with brand relationships is the brand building block of judgements- relating to the proposed branding model and consisting of the sub-dimension of credibility. In Keller's model of brand resonance (Keller, 2013: 117), this credibility relates to three aspects of 1) brand expertise (competence or performance of the brand); 2) brand trustworthiness (from a consumer perspective); 3) brand likeability (fun, interesting brand). Brand judgements shape a consumer's personal opinions and evaluations of the brand- based on the different brand performance and imagery that constitutes the brand relationship a student will have with the private education brand. From the student's response (above), the brand relationship and thus subsequent brand judgement were diluted by the non-contact with the consumer.

In response to the question posed concerning *the recommendation of your PHEI to a friend or fellow student*, responses received included:

"Yes- Very happy with both communication and relationships that have happened now that I am studying at my current college" and;

"Was a bit hesitant and unhappy at my college when I first started my studies but now am more settled and would recommend my place of study to my friends"

These responses highlighted both Keller's brand performance building block (Keller, 2013: 111) as well as Aaker's brand equity model (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 27) concept of brand associations. Keller discussed this building block of brand performance as how well the service met consumer's more functional needs. Aaker

relates brand associations as a key component of brand knowledge. Aaker (2008: 54) then took the theory further by linking these associations to other brand elements in the consumer's minds, such as brand knowledge and brand performance. These brand performance indicators impact on brand positioning and allow a brand to overcome performance deficiencies, if any, and differentiate the brand from its competitors – the competitive advantage. If the brand performance is enabling students to recommend the brand in a word-of-mouth environment, then this needs to form part of the brand pyramid and one of the brand building blocks.

6.2.1. Advertising perspectives from student's responses

Advertising was one of the elements of marketing communication, probed in the questionnaire, and resulted in the responses shown below. In response to the question *"...recall any advertising media of your private education brand that influenced your choice of place of study"* and *"the type of media platform used as well as recall of any content displayed in the advertising media"*

Current students' responses included:

"Mainly social media (Face-book and Twitter) as well as a television advertisement for one of the larger private colleges- can't remember if it was Boston CC or Damelin- content was about student success and the percentage pass which was high- that type of stuff" and;

"Only social media like Face-book and Instagram- mainly about the student experience with images on Instagram and student life in general"

In contrast, parents' responses to the same question were:

"A television advertisement for one of the private education brands that was aired on most of the DSTV channels showing exciting student life in and around classroom activity. There was little emphasis on study choices, international accreditation and type of qualification you get" and;

"There was a billboard advertisement showing one of the PHEIs as well as a radio advertisement about it is now time to register and some or other contact details. Newspapers (specifically community newspapers) and television also showed some private colleges..."

Brand recall as a dimension of brand awareness relates to the content of the advertising media messages, specifically aimed at students. The content needs to be student specific as the responses indicated: *“student success and percentage pass rates”* as well as *“the student experience”* – are integral pointers for any student wanting to embark on university studies. However, there were few references to the private education brand, linking the brand recall and brand awareness to the positive message content. The same brand building blocks are confirmed from the advertising messages based on the associations of the PHEIs recalled by the students’ responses.

The students’ responses related overwhelmingly to social media as an advertising tool or mechanism that specifically, full time students could relate to. Face-book, as a social media advertising platform, provided many students with access to PHEI advertising, with responses as follows:

“Face-book is easily accessible on my mobile phone and I could instantaneously see what content was being displayed as well as get up to date information and thus became my choice for receiving any advertising...”

Another students’ response was:

“My cell phone is always with me, thus making any Facebook messages and information from my college easily accessible...”

The popularity of social media platforms, as drivers of persuasive messages, is clearly evident amongst students. As indicated below, other stakeholders will have a differential response to a choice of medium, hence a multimedia strategy as a driver of the communication message, is necessary.

In contrast, the parents’ responses highlighted a traditional mainstream approach to advertising media. A large PHEI ran a television advertisement towards the end of 2017 and repeated this advertisement at the end of 2018 and 2019 in time for students to register in January for the start of the academic year. According to the respondents’ feedback, this television advertisement was aimed specifically at the parent as one of the decision makers of what PHEI the student attends (see section 6.7 - respondents’ decision-making process).

The reviewed literature of Du Plessis, Van Heerden & Cook (2012: 121) further postulated that advertisements produce better results if they highlight or dramatise the brand's unique compelling benefits or differentiate the brand message from other competitors to increase advertising effectiveness. Based on the responses to primarily television advertising from parents and students, indicating television as a preferred medium, the brand message of PHEIs can be differentiated on television. The brand promise that emphasises superior academic quality and delivery, as indicated by the students' responses can, in a television advertisement, be both differentiated from other PHEIs and, at the same time, be visually attractive to both parent and student. Furthermore, the student responses indicated that the same sentiment would need to apply to their social media platforms- content specific to a student's needs.

The advertising feedback from the questions relating to both students and parents' choice of advertising media about branding of PHEIs indicated a differentiation in both the choice of media content as well as the choice of media platform. Furthermore, this advertising perspective provided an opportunity for an organisation to broaden its value-added component and provide a competitive advantage over other education institutions. Marketing communications provides an ideal platform to drive a marketing message, using an integrated marketing communications approach (Du Plessis, Van Heerden & Cook: 2012: 184).

6.3 Parent group response

Both sets of parents (account payers) were from a large (numbers) private education brand- one with a son studying full time, and another whose daughter was enrolled for a computer course at the Business School. Even though the student studying computers at the Business School does not represent the hospitality industry, her inputs provided valuable feedback relative to a working (adult) student and their perceptions of branding for their chosen PHEI. Her intention was to apply the computer skills learnt to a career in the hospitality industry.

One of the emerging themes stemming from both the parents' and students' responses related to the decision-making process relative to the preferred choice of education institution is related to both the stakeholder's brand awareness of a PHEI. The question posed, probed *the making of the final choice of education institution either by parents or students*.

Even though responses differed in terms of the final decision-making it indicated sufficient evidence to uphold the differentiated concept of advertising media content (discussed in section 6.2.1). Ultimately, this indicated that the understanding and subsequent decision-making from either parents or students to attend a PHEI, rests with the individual's level of brand awareness. From their feedback, this concept of brand awareness from a stakeholder needs to be specific to the advertising media adopted by the private education brand.

The fact that both parents and students recalled or showed familiarity of a private education brand, is indicative of the existence of a brand concept for both these stakeholders. However, this brand awareness was superficial with minimum brand recall or brand association displayed, as indicated in the responses below.

In response to the question, *can you recall or indicate what private education brands you are familiar with (other than your son or daughter's chosen education institution)*, the responses received were as follows:

"I know of larger colleges, such as Rosebank College, Damelin College and the IMM (Institute of Marketing Management). Also know of IT colleges and Progress College to name a few...." and;

"Both my wife and I are aware of Damelin College/ CTI and Boston City Campus – there were some television adverts- we also know of the IIE (Independent Institute of Education) because our daughter's friend goes to one of their colleges.."

On the positive side, according to the data collected through the questionnaires, PHEI brands are recognisable to both parents and students, although differentiation occurs to the specific type of private higher education brands that they recognised. Figure 6.3 below indicates a building block concept that starts with brand awareness (in essence brand recognition or brand recall), stemming from the responses received from parents and students.

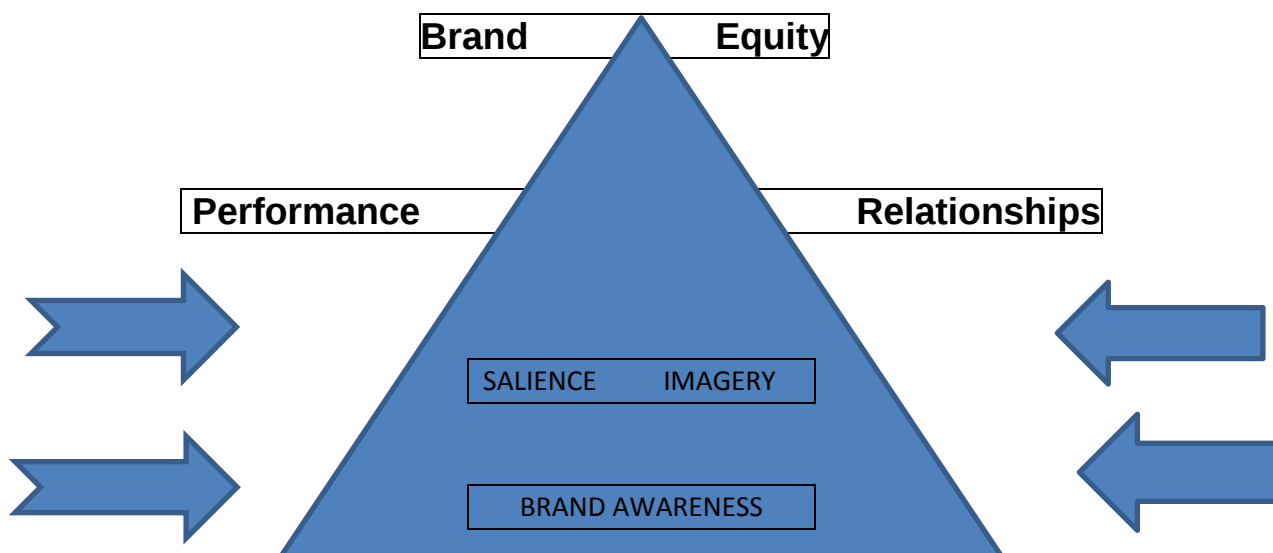


Figure 6.3: Brand-building block of Student/ Parent brand equity (Source: own)

Figure 6.3 above is representative of the initial contact of parents and students with a PHEI and is associated with the respondents' brand awareness at the time. In addition, brand salience also plays a role, since this concept measures various aspects of the awareness of the brand and how easily the brand is evoked under various situations or circumstances (Goodson, 2015: 107). Both brand awareness and brand salience form part of the building blocks that were incorporated into a proposed branding model. The questions that arise concern to what extent the PHEI brand is at the forefront of their minds, and how easily they can recall or recognise the brand.

Table 6.2 below indicates responses from students and parents relative to the brand differentiation concerning advertising media content discussed in section 6.2.1

Table 6.2: Brand and advertising differentiation amongst parents and students.

Statement	Parent of FT student	Parent of Business School student	FT student at Varsity College	PT student at Damelin College	Other PHEI students	
Parents brand awareness of PHEIs		X	.....	.....	.....	

Students brand awareness of PHEIs	.....	.....	.....	X	.....	
Parents are exposed to traditional advertising media of PHEIs	X	X	.....	.....	.....	
Students are exposed to specific social media content advertising of a PHEI	.....	.....	X	X	.....	

(Source: Researcher's own)

Table 6.2 above highlights that, firstly, many of the students favoured social media as the primary advertising medium for PHEIs and, secondly, parents have more brand awareness knowledge of PHEIs than students. The respondents' feedback also indicated that parents, who are more exposed to traditional advertising, predominantly, billboards and radio, relate more to academic governing institution advertising than brand (college) advertising. Table 6.2 above also reveals that the overwhelming social media advertising from students led to more interaction from this group, either as word-of-mouth or chat platforms on social media.

One of the student responses was that: *"if I as a student found information concerning a PHEI on Facebook, we would readily interact and circulate this information on social media platform networks, creating a wide-spread source of information for friends as well"* This differentiated concept of brand awareness is addressed in section 6.6, which discusses respondents' decision making process and brand awareness. The perceptions of brand awareness from the respondents' feedback emerged as one of the building blocks of the proposed value-added framework, as discussed previously (see Appendix 8). The respondents' findings also provided feedback aligned with the concept of brand loyalty.

The pyramid structure (Figure 6.1) incorporated the building blocks of a value-added framework and indicated a base structure or point of departure for brand awareness and ultimately culminated in brand loyalty. The importance of brand loyalty, as a construct of brand equity (discussed in the literature review), is seen as a behavioural dimension (Dutta, 2009: 105). This behavioural concept was evident in the student respondents' feedback specifically, as the tendency was to show behaviour loyal to their chosen institution, demonstrated by their intention to stay with that brand as a primary choice.

6.4 Sponsor group response

One of the questions related to stakeholders' perceptions of PHEIs to *the granting of a bursary to a student, and the sponsors' preference for the tertiary institution that they want the student to attend*. The two respondents provided data from a different perspective, as the one sponsor was from the corporate world that would consider sponsoring an intern with a view to recruiting the student upon completion of their studies. The second respondent was more of a donor since the person sponsored their domestic worker's daughter by funding her tuition fees. Both respondents provided invaluable data about the perceptions that "outsiders" (non-parents or students) have of both public and private tertiary education institutions (see Appendix 8).

Both respondents indicated that the student that they financed should attend a public university. Their responses indicated:

"I would choose a public university as I believe in the traditionalism of education institutions and I myself went to UCT. I am also not too aware of private universities in South Africa as not too many are advertised." and;

I did not think you get private universities in South Africa; and

"....I went to a public university and whilst I would go with her choice of education institution, I would be far happier if she attended a public university close to our home"; and

"...are these private institutions any good?"

The respondents feedback relates to all of “salience”; “performance”; “imagery” and “judgements’ as brand building blocks dimensions. “salience” and “performance” were aligned with the establishment of a traditional institution and had ‘history’ associations with the brand. “Judgements were formed based on the “performance” associations which showed an inter-personal subjective emotive feeling towards the brand. For this research study, both the emotional component extended to brand loyalty and the rational component linked to the “performance” association would support the building brand equity element of the new value-added model.

De Vos & Strydom (2013: 373) maintain that the aim of analysis is to look for trends and patterns that reappear within individual responses or from the group collectively. Thus, from a research study conducted by Steenkamp (2016) on a CBBE model for selected Business-to- Business (B2B) services, trends and patterns from the data showed similar findings to the respondents’ feedback from this research study. An emphasis on both “judgement” and “performance” by Steenkamp (2016) showed both credibility and relationship building with stakeholders – key components of this research study.

Advertising of a private education institution (discussed further in section 6.3) provided little feedback from the respondents, as they stated that they had not seen or taken notice of any adverting of PHEIs. The clarity around being exposed to a brand, if brand awareness, is not clearly evident is highlighted in the advertising media a stakeholder is exposed to as well as the content of the advertising media. To a stakeholder, such as a sponsor, with little interest in a student’s choice of education institution or in their academic matters, the brand awareness, if any, would stem from advertising media.

The most important aspect of the sponsors’ feedback was that they had very little brand knowledge of private education brands for the reasons mentioned above. From the above discussion, and from a perspective of not being directly involved with a PHEI (either as parent or account payer and/or prospective student), there is more brand loyalty to their own education institution. Thus, brand association and brand recall – two essential components of brand awareness - did not register with either of the sponsor respondents.

This question tested the applicability of the building-blocks to the proposed value-added branding framework. Other than brand awareness and brand salience, building blocks that needed to be addressed further from the respondent's feedback, were performance and feelings (see Figure 6.1 - building blocks of a value-added branding framework).

Performance seemed to be foremost in the sponsors' responses, even suggesting that PHEIs are not good – this may be from a perspective of accreditation and results. Seemingly, at the outset, brand awareness, in whatever format, seemed to be more prevalent than brand performance.

This brand performance was discussed in the literature review (section 4.3), where Berndt and Tait (2013: 48) defined the concept of service quality. This showed the ability of an organisation to deliver services at a level that is in line with consumers' expectations.

The sponsors' feedback from the interview questionnaire indicated a lack of this academic service quality from a PHEI. Their responses are pertinent to the dimensions used to evaluate service quality, and although applied to a wide range of industries and organisations, they are also applicable to PHEIs and the hospitality industry (as indicated in Table 4.3 in Chapter 4). Dimensions such as reliability, with an emphasis on consistency and specifically assurance that conveys trust and confidence, were lacking from sponsors' feedback and necessitated that brand performance should be included as one of the building blocks in the proposed framework. Tangibles such as the look and feel of a PHEI campus, particularly on a first time visit to that campus, can provide a favourable impression - not only to sponsors, but to all stakeholders as well.

Relationships would be an emotive component of the building blocks, since the sponsors' responses seemed to centre on either the education institution that they attended, or having limited knowledge of PHEI branding, and thus formulated an emotive, subjective response. This response was based on their own associations with their own institution (brand loyalty) and their own evoked or consideration set which would be difficult to change.

Figure 6.4 below highlights building-blocks for the sponsors' responses (see Appendix 6.)

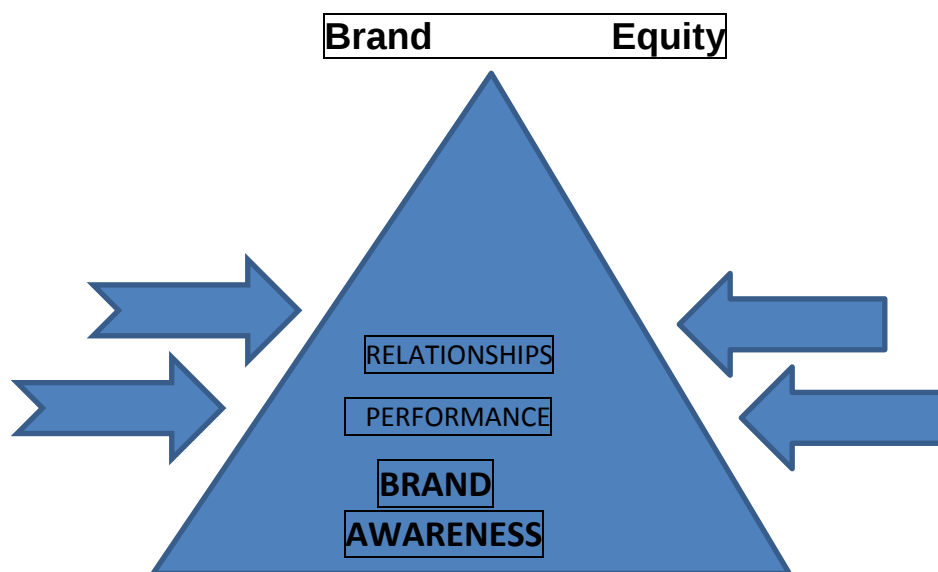


Figure 6.4: Brand Building-blocks for sponsors' feedback (adapted from Keller, 2013: 108)

Based on responses to questions in the interview guide, feedback from the sponsors and donors showed that initial brand awareness was evident; however, their focus was on “imagery”; “judgements”; and *performance* criteria from the education institution, as well as a relationship building criteria being present.

6.5 Staff of PHEIs group response

According to Keller (2013: 167), the right brand elements can be invaluable in developing brand equity, with brand identity being one of these elements. The staff at a PHEI provided responses relative to the brand identity of their education institutions and provided valuable feedback around this concept.

The question that relates to *how your education institution is branded and made available to the general public?* elicited the following responses:

“My private institution relies mainly on traditional advertising such as radio and television as well as social media to project the brand. The visibility of the brand is not always prevalent”; and

“Our private education brand is not well advertised and thus not well branded mainly due to its location in a business park.”

This question tested the applicability of how staff from within the private education sector relate to the brand identity of their institution and how they related to their own brand associations.

In the question that ask the participants *what you consider as unique selling points of your PHEI?* they responded as follows:

“Smaller classes, individual attention, relationship building with students”; and

“Academic success focus on academics and professional, well-experienced lecturers.”

The brand associations attached to their private education brands are conceptualised in the brand equity model highlighted in figure 1.1 (Chapter one) and indicates links to the salience and performance brand building blocks. The interpretation of the findings concerning associations that were attached to their private education brand is key to the concept of brand equity. This provided further links to Aaker’s brand equity model (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2008: 28) as a key component of brand knowledge. With this specific group of participants, more importance was attached to these associations as they were from stakeholders “within the system” and linked to corporate identity and brand memory within firstly, consumers’ minds, and secondly, staff of PHEI. Thus, the associations attached to the private education brands from this group of participants, are what create the brand image in the consumers’ minds.

6.6 Corporate HR practitioner group: response

Section E in the interview guide covered the responses and feedback from the corporate HR practitioners. The organisational data indicated that the participant representing the large hotel group recruited the most graduates per year (between 11 and 15) and provided invaluable input as to choice of graduates and specifically from which institution, public or private they would recruit graduates on an annual basis.

The participant’s feedback to specifically a question on recruiting any graduates from a public university over the last 2 to 3 years gave the following response:

“Mostly from public universities as not so much a calculated move to only recruit public universities graduates into our hotel but seemingly we get more CV’s and applications from these graduates.....”

This probing question was the opposite of the above question asking for *any reason(s) why no graduates have been recruited from a private education brand*.

The participant's feedback indicated:

"To the best of my knowledge, the only private education brand offering hospitality qualification is the CT International Hotel School. We don't get many applications and CV's from this private college, more from CPUT Hotel School and other public universities."

The response to the question concerning any branding or advertising that the corporate HR practitioner can recall about private education brands were:

"..can't recall any branding or advertising for private universities that I have recently encountered, other than the larger ones like Damelin and Boston City Campus"; and

"No advertising or any branding comes to mind"; and

"I only know of the larger private colleges such as Damelin, Varsity College and an advertising one, I think it is called Red and Yellow Advertising. I only know the larger one's because they have been around for some time."

After indicating that most, if not all, of their graduate recruitment is conducted at public universities, brand awareness of PHEIs was limited to a few of the major private tertiary institutions that exist such as Damelin College, Varsity College, the AAA School of Advertising and PC Training and Business College, to name a few.

This question probed the concept of brand association of PHEIs amongst corporate HR practitioners. The concept of brand association and subsequent brand identity was non-existent in the participants' feedback, relative to marketing a PHEI. All of the participants had scant knowledge of PHEIs, both as a brand, and as a higher education institution, citing further responses such as: *"...am not aware that PHEIs offer degree programmes"*, and *"where are these PHEIs situated in Cape Town?"* These responses showed minimum reaction to any aspect of brand identity of PHEIs from corporate HR practitioners. Keller (2013: 107) in stating that consumers in ascertaining brand identity, pose a simple question of: "Who are you" which is well aligned with the responses of the HR practitioners as to non-acknowledgement of any knowledge of brand identity of private education brands.

Keller (2013: 339) further explains brand awareness as being related to the strength of the brand in memory, as reflected by consumers' ability to identify various brand elements such as the brand name, logo, symbols, characteristics and slogan under different conditions. The participants' feedback to the question on brand awareness did not align with Keller's (2013: 339) explanation, as either the PHEIs' brands do not fulfil the above criteria, or a bias exists from corporate HR practitioners in traditionalism and *alma mater* emotional decisions, as to from which tertiary institution the graduates should emanate from. This question probing brand awareness was, in fact, unaided brand awareness as the participants in trying to express knowledge of a private education brand did not have the benefit of prompting or observing any cues, i.e. brand recall. Thus, the alignment between brand recall leading to brand awareness was non-existent. Therefore, as far as the "salience" building-block of the brand pyramid is concerned, the PHEIs need to ensure that the corporate HR practitioners are aware of their brand, that brand recall needs to be foremost in their thinking and that these practitioners know what the private education brands are offering.

The second participant from a stakeholder corporate HR perspective was from a small exclusive boutique hotel in Cape Town. This hotel only employed one to two graduates per year; however, they did employ interns whom they remunerated with a small stipend for periods of three to six months, and in some cases twelve months. In contrast to the participant from the larger hotel group, the respondent from this boutique hotel had employed graduates from both public universities and PHEIs. Whereas in response to the question – *Please indicate if you would prefer graduates for your organisation to come from a public university or a PHEI*, the larger hotel group response was a public university, while the response of the smaller boutique hotel was neutral.

Although a neutral response indicated that the participant might employ graduates from a PHEI, there was no conclusive evidence that this decision was based on brand awareness and/or brand association. The participant, having spent many years in the hospitality industry, and hence had many years of experience, relied more on the graduate's CV (with hospitality experience), and interview as a basis to guarantee employability. The following comments from this participant reinforced this aspect:

“....no real preference in hiring a graduate from a private or public university - their employability is based more on their qualifications and ability to interview”; and

“... rely more on the graduates’ ability to build relationships with the guests as opposed to where they obtained their qualification”.

On further probing of the question that asked HR practitioners *what characteristics and qualities you are looking for in employing a graduate from either a private or public university*, in order to ascertain what the HR practitioners were “actually looking for” in employing graduates. Responses were aligned with one another as follows:

“An accredited qualification from a reputable university, specifically for our Management training positions, as well as experience in the hospitality industry.” As well as:

“Experience (of any nature) in hospitality industry and suitable qualifications.” On further probing of *“suitable qualifications”* the response was: *“as long as it is from an internationally accredited education institution.”*

The issues raised in the above responses are important, as they relate to the dimension of brand performance confirming that, the case of a PHEI, the service offered is at the heart of brand equity. Keller’s model of brand equity (Keller, 2013: 111) related to the designing and delivering a product or service that fully satisfies consumer needs and wants a prerequisite for successful marketing. The responses around the “issue” of a suitable and accredited education institution for the employment of graduates supports the argument that in order to ensure brand loyalty and resonance, dimensions of the performance building block, brands must ensure that consumer’s expectations are met. This building-block of performance was included in the brand pyramid in order to meet the consumer’s expectation of a PHEI having both local and international accreditation, to employ graduates from these education brands.

The third corporate HR practitioner participant was from another large hotel group, situated in Cape Town. As indicated in the organisational data, this large hotel is part of an international hotel group, based in Dubai. The hotel alone employed between seven to eight graduates per year, although according to the participant, the hotel employs upward of fifty non-graduate staff annually, including housekeeping,

kitchen staff, and maintenance staff. The participants' input indicated that the hotel group only employed graduates from public universities throughout South Africa.

The participants stated reasons for employing graduates from predominantly public universities, ranging from: *"that was the trend over the last few years";* to *"that private universities were not well known."*

Their comments included:

".....most graduates employed over the years have been from public universities and private universities are not well known";

"If you had the final decision making authority to employ a graduate for your organisation, would you employ a public university graduate over a PHEI graduate?" (Question 28) *"Yes..... that has been the trend over the last few years";* and

"Damelin College offered a B. Com (Tourism Management), which was attractive to us to employ graduates with this qualification".

This last comment above, was of interest to this research study. The recruiter showed interest in graduates with a specific tourism/hospitality qualification, irrespective of the education institution, where they obtained their qualification. Brand awareness, as a building block, was lacking in terms of how this highly sought-after qualification in the hospitality sector could be advertised, irrespective of the PHEI where the qualification was obtained. Brand awareness of the PHEI must play a role here (see Appendix 9).

The fourth corporate HR industry participant was from a guest house from the greater Cape Town area and provided much the same responses as the other three participants from the hotels. The standard response from this participant was minimum knowledge of private universities and that they recruited more public university graduates than private.

The responses from the corporate HR practitioners were that there was no evidence of any communication or attempts at forging relationships between their hotels and any PHEIs.

In response to the question: *"what expectations do you have from any private education brands concerning building relationships between your yourself as a*

corporate HR practitioner in the hospitality industry and a private university?”- participants gave the following feedback:

“Our expectations from any university offering hospitality programmes was having contact or discussions around graduates who might be deemed suitable for employment in our hotel” and;

“We would expect communication that builds a relationship with us in order to see what graduates are suitable to work in our industry” and;

“...any form of contact via e-mail or personal visit, much like I have with the CPUT Hotel School”

Participants referred to their relationship expectations with a private education brand even though with previous questioning they were not aware of the private institutions. Clearly the corporate environment value a relationship and communication with PHEIs, which would give them personal contact with both the institution and students eligible for graduate placement. The expectation would be that the relationship is regarded as a partnership. Fournier (2012: 348) argues that brands can and do serve as viable relationship partners, and this triggers a series of inferences regarding the *explicit* contract that appears to guide the consumer (corporate HR practitioner) and brand (PHEI) and, hence, the type of relationship formed. The findings of this research study bear testimony to this and correlate with Fournier's (2012: 349) view that a “service is more about selling a relationship and the value of the relationship between the consumer and the brand.” Whilst, relationships and partners forming is not part of Keller (2013) and Aaker's (2008) models as building blocks, both brand loyalty and brand resonance, would be dimensions of the brand relationship building concept.

Further probing of the question relating to the *“type of relationship from a graduate placement perspective, a corporate HR practitioner would want with any private education brand”* responses were as follows:

“Would prefer a personal/professional relationship that ensures close contact with the private college to ensure placement of top graduates”; and

“Continuous communication that would even have visits to campus to talk to suitable students interested in working in hospitality industry.”

As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), this response goes against the definitions of the task of PHEIs to build the type of relationship with, specifically

corporates, based on the need of the consumer relative to maintaining that relationship as well. This relationship from a PHEI perspective will ensure graduates can obtain employment in their specific industry. Most PHEIs have career centres that specifically work with their graduates and should network with organisations as means to find work opportunities. This lack of relationship building and absence of contact with corporates necessitated inclusion of the relationship building block into the elements of the value-added brand-building blocks (Figure 6.1). This relationship starts with corporate communication between the organisation and the stakeholder – in this case between the PHEI and the corporate HR practitioner – that starts at a common point and shares the same values. The question on relationship building between corporates in the hospitality industry and private education brands probed *“the existence, if any, of relationships with any PHEIs in your encounter with recruiting graduates”*

The participants noted the non-existence of any relationships between their organisation and the private college when it comes to recruiting graduates. Thus, these responses indicated, in the main, a lack of relationship forming with minimum communication between a PHEI and corporate HR practitioners in a highly competitive field for graduate placement, specifically in the hospitality industry. The question related to branding or recall of advertising media displaying any branding of private education institutions elicited the following responses: Figure 6.5 below highlights the building blocks formulated for the corporate HR practitioner stakeholders.

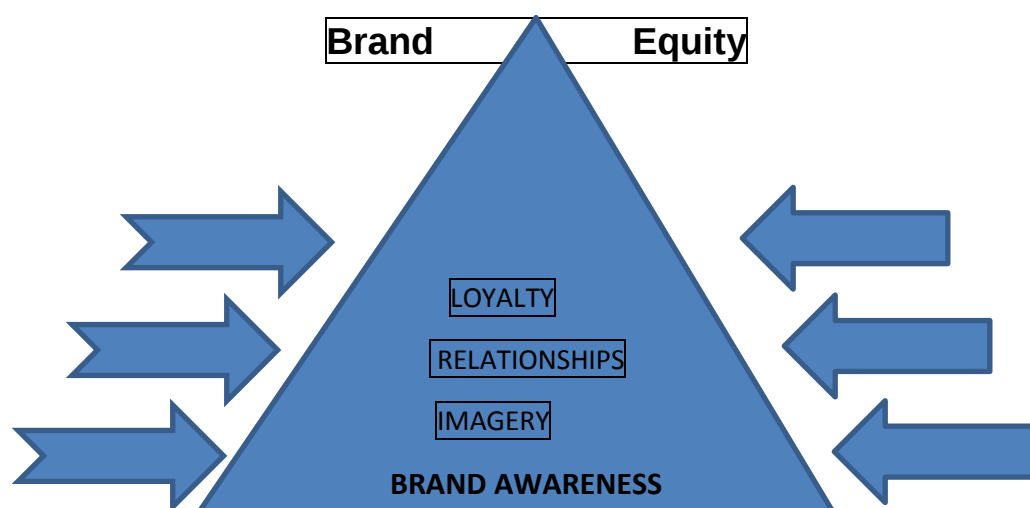


Figure 6.5: Brand building-blocks for corporate HR practitioner feedback
(Adapted from Keller, 2013: 109)

The brand positioning of corporate HR practitioners is a vital component of the building blocks necessary to formulate a value-added branding framework for a PHEI. Feedback from those participants involved with graduate recruitment from PHEIs indicated minimum brand awareness. The public university domain clearly dominated their graduate appointments, while little branding of PHEIs was either acknowledged, or the participants were made aware of the advertising of PHEIs.

Imagery (Keller, 2013: 108) related to the organisations' history, heritage and experiences is prevalent in this building block, as the participants indicated that they employed mostly graduates from public universities because of the traditionalism, and the heritage of these institutions. At the same time the participants' feedback concerning their recall of branding or advertising media with branding, indicated that minimum branding was forthcoming from PHEIs in an attempt to nullify the traditionalism of public universities, and hence needs to be incorporated into a building block for the proposed PHEI value-added branding framework.

The fact that the participants indicated *none* or *no* communication with any PHEIs (career centre coordinator or any other personnel) was aligned with the theory posed by Millward Brown (Klopper & North, 2011:387) regarding the 'brand dynamics pyramid model'. This theory relates to this research study, since the pyramid approach is used to determine the strength of the relationship that a stakeholder has with a brand (applicable to the relationship and brand loyalty building blocks in Figure 6.5). For example, the lower levels of the pyramid relate to 'presence' and 'relevance', indicating a weak relationship between stakeholder (in the case of the research study, the corporate HR practitioner), and the organisation (the PHEI). 'Bonding' and 'advantage' on the upper levels of the pyramid indicate a strong relationship based on emotional attachments to the brand to the *exclusion* of most other brands. Thus, the link between relationship building and brand loyalty is evident, since there is a clear lack of minimum communication between the PHEIs and the corporate HR practitioners.

Thus, brand awareness and both brand salience and imagery are highlighted as fundamental parts of the building blocks from a corporate HR perspective that will ultimately contributed, to the proposed value-added branding framework.

Table 6.3: Responses from the final interview questions that impact on brand building-blocks for the proposed value-added branding framework.

Written Response	Brand Awareness	Brand Salience	Brand Performance	Brand Relationship	Brand Sustainability (equity)
Students indicated minimum knowledge of larger PHEIs. Parents were more aware of the academic governing bodies of PHEIs.	X	X			
Students made contact with tertiary (higher education) institutions via school presentations, open day visits on campus, and social media. Parents became aware of tertiary institutions through radio and television advertisements. A relative or friend informing them also featured prominently amongst both students and parents.	X	X	X		
With reference to traditional and social media, students had been exposed to the media, namely television and social media. Parents had seen television, print and radio television advertisements with	X				

minimum use of social media platforms.					
Factors such as relationship building, diversity of subject choices, and smaller classes were what students used to base their final choice of study institution. Parents based their final choice on pricing (fees), bursaries offered and traditionalism of the institution.		X	X	X	X
In response to a question relating to: <i>if you were going to offer a bursary/ scholarship to a student, which tertiary institution would you like them to attend?</i> both sponsors (donors) and sponsors (corporate) indicated a public university.	X	X	X	X	X
Both sponsors (donors) and sponsors (corporate) indicated that they had not seen any media recently advertising a private education institution.	X		X		

In response to the question relating to: <i>whether corporate HR practitioners recruit graduates from an agency or via advertising</i> , the corporate HR practitioners stated that they use both to recruit.	X		X		
In response to the question from <i>which advertising they could recall any branding</i> the respondents indicated that they used Internet sites such as Career Junction and newspaper supplements such as Job Shop to recruit graduates.	X				
The corporate HR practitioners indicated that they recruited graduates - their HR specifications and policies only allowed them to recruit graduates.	X				
The corporate HR practitioners' responses indicated that they recruited from public universities citing their own <i>alma mater</i>	X	X	X		
Corporate HR practitioners					

identified mainstream and well known education institutions as those whose brands they were aware of. Responses included Boston City Campus, Damelin, IMM, and Rosebank College.	X	X	X	X	X
Corporate HR practitioners indicated that they employed no graduates from private education institutions.	X	X	X	X	X
The corporate HR practitioners mentioned that they preferred their graduates to come from a public university, with the exception of one respondent, who indicated that they had no real preference for either public or private institutions, as they appointed candidates based on their interview performance.	X	X	X		
In response to question: <i>indicating any marketing or advertising material or signage that the corporate HR practitioners had been exposed to,</i>					

they mentioned billboards for the AAA School of Advertising, print for Damelin, and a television advertisement for Mancosa.	X		X	X	
In response to the question: <i>any communication or relationship building had transpired between their hotel and a private education brand</i> , the respondents indicated that no communication or relationship building between the two organisations had transpired. In addition, the need for such relationship building as well as type of relationship was expressed.	X			X	

(Source: Researcher's own)

6.7 Respondents' decision-making process and brand awareness

As mentioned earlier, this specific chapter does not address the questionnaire responses in chronological order, as presented in the questionnaire, but rather examine the responses as they pertain to the building blocks of the brand building model highlighted in Figure 1.1. The analysis of the results started from the foundation of brand awareness, and moved to the level of *imagery* and *salience*, with specific input from both parents and students' responses.

Specific reference has been made to the differentiation applied to parents and students from both a marketing and advertising perspective. This begs the question of *who ultimately makes the decision as to what higher education institution a son or*

daughter should attend – parent or student? The questionnaire's responses revealed that parents (account payers) allowed their children freedom of choice concerning the degree that they wanted to study. The parents group stated that their decision-making influence was more prevalent in the choice of study institution. This was evident from the findings, since they posed more questions around international accreditation of the qualification, and the longevity of the study institution. Conversely, the students group showed foresight in their choice of both institution and qualification to be studied, guiding the decision-making process to a large degree. What is evident from an organisation's point of view is that both the marketing and advertising has to provide a consumer behaviour approach relevant to the parent, in terms of institution choice, and student, in terms of qualification choice. These factors needed to form part of the building blocks incorporated into a value-added branding model.

The questions of the interview questionnaire focused on the Corporate HR practitioners and their responses to their level of consumer satisfaction with the services offered by a PHEI verses services offered by a public education institution. For the measurement of CRV, the responses revealed that an element of brand awareness needs to be present for the HR practitioners to make their judgement call. The respondents indicated a lack of knowledge about private education institutions and did not show too much awareness of PHEIs. It was evident that brand awareness from the corporate HR practitioners' understanding of PHEIs, was lacking, making measurement of consumer satisfaction, using the CRV technique, irrelevant.

6.8 Brand awareness linked to brand value

Brand equity is grouped into four dimensions, as highlighted in Figure 6.6 below.

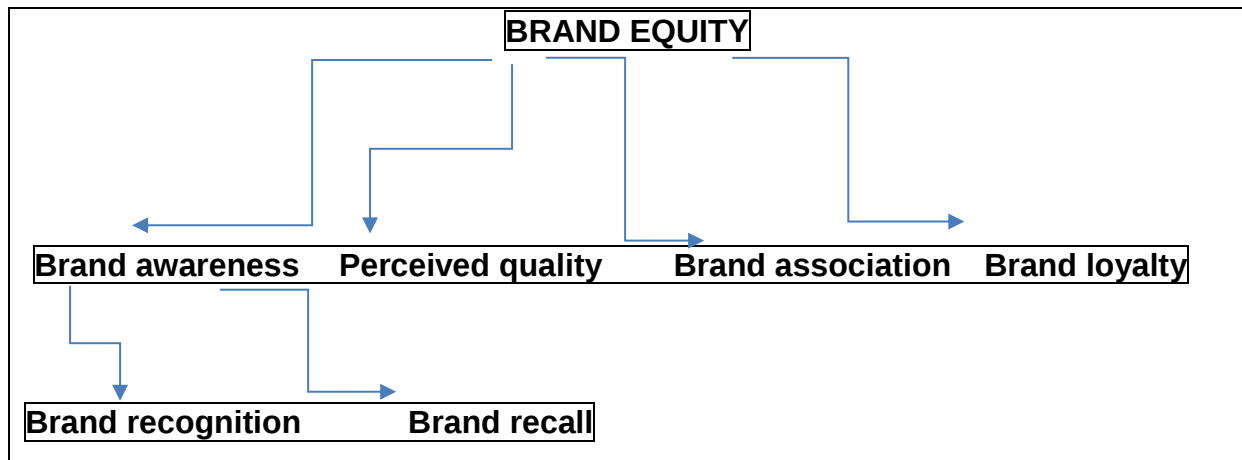


Figure 6.6: Four dimensions of brand equity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009: 17)

Brand awareness in Figure 6.6 above consists of brand recognition, as well as brand recall. In the interview questionnaire, this fundamental concept of brand awareness was tested, relative to both students' and parents' responses. The questions and sponsors response, as well as the questions for corporate HR practitioners, provided feedback concerning PHEIs' brand awareness. The findings relate to the four dimensions of brand recognition (specifically from parent stakeholder findings); and brand recall (from students as stakeholders).

Table 6.4 below highlights the responses ranging from brand awareness to brand salience, brand performance, imagery, brand relationships, and brand equity.

Table 6.4: Selected responses applicable to the elements from brand awareness to brand equity.

BRAND	Awareness	Salience	Performance	Relationships	Equity
VC(Student)	X	X	-----	X	-----
VC(Student)	X	X	-----	X	-----
VC(Previous)	X	X	X	X	X
VC (ANR)	X	X	X	X	X

Student (other)	X	X	-----	X	X
Student (other)	X	X	-----	X	X
Parents (F/T)	X	X	X	-----	X
Parents (BusSch)	X	X	X	-----	X
CorpHR(1)	.....	.....	X	.....	X
CorpHR(2)	.....	.....	X	.....	X
CorpHR(3)	.....	.....	X	.....	X
CorpHR(4)	.....	.....	X	.....	X
Sponsors (Corp)	X	X	X	.....	X
Sponsors (Donor)	.....	.....	X	.....	X

(Source: Researcher's own)

Note: **x = Positive comments between group and brand**

..... = No connection between brand and group

According to Keller (2013: 72), the concept of brand awareness is the consumer's ability to identify the brand under different conditions. This was highlighted in the differentiation between student and parents' responses to the question, which probed their feedback, relative to the marketing and branding of a PHEI. This differentiation was carried through to the next question, where initial contact with the PHEI brand was tested. This feedback provides a definitive response to the parents' and students' initial brand awareness. All four students overwhelmingly recognised a PHEI brand through their initial contact or through a high school presentation. All of the students' responses indicated that the use of social media, specifically Facebook, showed a positive brand association of a specific PHEI. Parents' feedback to the question on brand awareness (brand recall) – differed from the students' responses, since their initial contact was either through a relative/friend or mainstream media (radio and/or television).

One must relate to all PHEIs and not to any one specific PHEI, as all PHEIs needed brand awareness incorporated into one of the building blocks of the proposed value-added branding framework. In the literature review (section 2.2.2), Aaker (2008: 103) discussed brand awareness as an important dimension of brand equity from a consumer's perspective. The stakeholders' responses were indicative of this link between brand awareness and brand equity. Keller (2013: 86) simply put the alignment of brand awareness and brand equity as the ability of consumers to identify the brand under different conditions. This identification of the brand relates to building strong brand equity.

Thus, consumers need to be made aware of the concept of brand knowledge, while at the same time PHEIs need to build relationships with both consumers and brands to enhance the institution's brand equity.

In Chapter Two of the literature review, Dutta (2013: 102) discussed factors that affected brand equity that were well aligned with the responses received from stakeholders, specifically parents, sponsors and corporate HR practitioners. It was thus evident that the need for brand equity is paramount amongst these stakeholders.

Of interest to this research study, specifically concerning brand awareness, is both the sponsors and corporate HR practitioner's responses about a PHEI brand. Both the sponsors and corporate HR practitioners do not have a direct vested interest in a PHEI compared to a student or parent (account payer). Thus, their feedback concerning brand awareness takes on a 'neutral' perspective and provides valuable, unbiased input.

Both the sponsors and corporate HR practitioners indicate in their response's minimum, if any, brand awareness concerning a PHEI (notwithstanding a specific well known PHEI such as Varsity College). Keller (2013: 73) underscores that brand awareness or brand recognition, simply put, is when a consumer will be able to recognise the brand as one to which they have already been exposed. Thus, an assumption can be construed that all four groups of respondents and their understanding of brand awareness are on the bottom rung of the pyramid of building blocks for the proposed value-added building framework for PHEIs.

Once the brand awareness foundation stone is formulated in the branding ladder, brand salience should be created with consumers. Salience is concerned with the brand reaching some form of prominence in the consumers' mind. The concept of brand salience determines the measurable stance of how easily and how often the brand is evoked under various situations or circumstances (Keller, 2013: 107). Would the brand be construed as 'top-of-mind' with the consumer, and what types of cues or reminders are necessary? These are questions that determine brand salience and can lead to the measurement of brand awareness with both brand recall and brand recognition acting as drivers.

Important dimensions that emerged from the sponsors and corporate HR practitioners' responses were *performance* and *relationships*. Performance would be a building block level up from brand awareness on the brand ladder, since once the brand recall is embedded in the consumer, they then consider how well the brand performs. Klopper and North (2013: 103) refer to brand performance associations as ways in which a product or service meets the functional needs of consumers. These performance associations include benefits, reliability, durability and promises regarding service effectiveness, efficiency, value and price. For the context of this study, these performance associations were found to be in line with specifically the students' responses (relative to the student who applied at a PHEI but did not register).

This performance indicator can be linked to a brand promise, since all the participants, from both a marketing and advertising perspective, were not only looking for brand awareness and recognition, but at performance associations such as value-added, service effectiveness and benefits such as bursary offerings. Performance thus becomes an important building block to be incorporated into the proposed value-added branding framework.

Neal and Strauss (2008: 148) maintain that brand loyalty is the proportion of times that a purchaser chooses the same brand compared to the total number of purchases made in that category over a specific time period, and under the condition that other acceptable products/ services are equally available. This indicates that brand loyalty is built on relationships construed between an organisation and the consumer through its branding and subsequent brand loyalty. Ultimately, the

relationship building block is extended to *brand loyalty* from the consumer. Neal and Strauss (2008: 149) extend the loyalty concept further by indicating that loyalty is a behaviour - it is a choice. Whatever it is that drive choice or decision making (see section 6.6), provide drivers for brand loyalty.

Johansson and Carlson (2015: 31) in section 2.2.2 of the literature review made reference to brand loyalty as a pyramid that constructs from consumer recognition through to consumer bonding and subsequent brand loyalty. Between consumer recognition (brand awareness) and consumer bonding (brand loyalty) lies consumer perception (in-depth knowledge of the brand) and consumer response (positive attitude of the brand). All these brand factors are aligned, to a degree, with stakeholders' responses, and form the building blocks of the pyramid that constitutes the proposed value-added branding framework.

From a PHEI perspective, both groups of sponsors and corporate HR practitioners provide a platform for building relationships and subsequent brand loyalty. Having stakeholders such as corporate HR practitioners who specifically employ graduates from a specific source of PHEI, provides both brand awareness and brand loyalty. This relationship can be extended further to the corporate representative becoming an associate of the PHEI, attending student graduation, and choosing top graduates to become part of their intern programme. Of benefit to the PHEI will be a value-added service to the students since they provide a career choice and employment for their graduates. Thus, relations between the organisation and its stakeholders must be long-term and strategic - choosing the right stakeholder groups (Klopper and North, 2013: 365).

Furthermore, Klopper and North (2013: 309) maintain that building long-term relationships with key consumers has long been the focus of business-to-business marketers.

Johansson and Carlson (2015: 45) provide further input to the importance of relationship building with consumers by relating consumer-based brand equity to the culmination of the effort to connect the brand to a meaningful relationship with the consumer. The level of relationship building as discussed in the corporate HR practitioners' responses was described as "reaching out" to the consumer to let them know about the brand and making the brand acceptable to them. In addition, Keller

(2013:167) maintains that building good relationships can enhance customer retention (brand loyalty) and provide the key to an organisation's long-term survival. Thus from the participants' feedback and aligned with both brand equity and brand loyalty, a relationship building-block thus needed to be incorporated into the proposed brand value-added branding framework.

This research process of presenting and interpreting the empirical interview questionnaires' responses provided answers to the research study's secondary research questions, namely:

To what extent will a value-added branding framework utilise the brand-building blocks coming from an analysis of the highlights and deficiencies of the two current branding models, namely Keller & Aaker.

The feedback to the above-mentioned secondary research question directly impacts the building-block of relationship building, which was critical to formulation of the value-added branding framework. It was evident from the research that, from a corporate perspective, there was no attempt to communicate or build relationships forthcoming from any one of the PHEIs. The conceptual framework that guided the formulation of a value-added framework, therefore, needed to incorporate the relationship aspect to substantiate the secondary research questions.

6.9 Chapter Summary

The concept of brand awareness (including brand association and brand recall) was tested, using both marketing and advertising perspectives. At this junction there seems to be two interrelated understanding of the brand equity frameworks based on the differentiation of students' and parents' responses related to brand awareness of an education institution. Ultimately, the applicability of this differentiation, specifically from a marketing and brand perspective, would relate to the private education brand advertising to the decision-maker when it comes down to the choice made for a student to enrol at a tertiary academic institution.

The stakeholders' perceptions of PHEIs tested the marketing and branding perspectives applicable to a PHEI. The stakeholders' responses to the interview questions and questionnaire provided feedback relative to the marketing and

branding of an education institution, the advertising of the institution, and finally, from a consumer perspective, the understanding of an institution's brand awareness.

The primary objective of the research study was to propose value-added branding framework that collectively guides the strategic brand building process for PHEIs. To achieve the primary objective, two secondary objectives were developed. Firstly, the researcher needed to establish what brand building-blocks and sub dimensions can emerge from both the strengths and deficiencies of the two prominent branding models currently in use. Secondly, to identify the brand building-blocks that are aligned with the participant's feedback and applicable to the formulation of the proposed value-added branding framework. The presentation of the data and data analysis substantiated the dimensions of the building-blocks and thus fulfilled both the primary and secondary objectives.

The building-block concept resonated throughout the participant' feedback from the questionnaire. All the dimensions of the brand pyramid were confirmed in the form of brand building blocks consisting of brand awareness, salience, imagery, performance, and relationships culminating in the brand equity of the PHEI. These brand building- blocks were incorporated into the proposed value-added branding framework. In the next chapter, the researcher presents the proposed value-added branding framework and the research study's conclusion, recommendations, and directions for further studies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A VALUE-ADDED BRANDING MODEL AND FRAMEWORK: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

“The Brand Value Model provides a powerful tool that my organisation can use to gain insight into our markets, and to develop ‘go to market’ strategies”. Jack Eli, Taste Rite

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides overall conclusions of the literature review (chapters 2, 3 and 4), and the empirical research that was conducted by using the interview questionnaires. It also provides recommendations to address the research problem and proposes the value-added branding framework for PHEIs.

The previous chapter provided an analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected for this study. This study sought to determine the extent to which a value-added branding framework could enhance the relationship between a PHEI and sectors of the hospitality industry (see Appendix 2).

The findings of this research study indicate that a value-added branding framework that can enhance the awareness and positive perceptions of a PHEI can improve the long-term stakeholder value of the brand. Furthermore, the findings of the research study highlight that there possibly seems to be two interrelated value-added frameworks to build a branding model for PHEIs. From a student’s perspective, the framework emerging is centred on predominantly social media as an advertising platform and a focus on campus-oriented PHEIs such as Varsity College and Damelin College. This was evident in the students’ responses about the marketing and advertising perspective of an education institution. Secondly, the parents’ perspective related more to mainstream advertising such as radio and television, as well as a focus on the academic governing body of the education institutions such as the Independent Institute of Education (IIE) with Varsity College a brand of the IIE or Pearson Limited with CTI College as a brand.

Notwithstanding the differentiated aspects of students’ and parents’ perspective, the main conceptual framework and primary research objective was to formulate a

value-added branding framework for PHEIs; hence, a subsequent generic model, using the building blocks discussed in Chapter Six, was formulated. These building blocks were aligned with the analysis of the two prominent branding models of Keller (Keller, 2013:107) and Aaker (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009).

The chapter concludes with a section on limitations of the research study, as well as prescription of the potential direction on future research.

7.2 Elements contributing to a value-added branding framework

The primary research question formulated to address the problem statement was: *what would constitute a value-added framework and model for the branding of a PHEI that aligns with both institutions and industry's needs?* Figure 7.1 below provides an illustration, highlighting the building-block components of the proposed value-added framework for the branding of PHEIs. Figure 6.1 in Chapter Six provided the platform for the model that incorporated all stakeholders, including students, parents, sponsors, staff and corporate HR practitioners in the hospitality industry.

Available branding models and frameworks were assessed in order to determine their suitability to guide the branding of PHEIs. The assessment looked at their suitability strengths and weaknesses in terms of the branding of PHEIs, thereby providing some of the elements that we adopted in the proposed framework. Thereafter the propositions and elements contributing to the pillars of the framework were tested against a larger PHEI and its current branding model (see section 7.2.2)

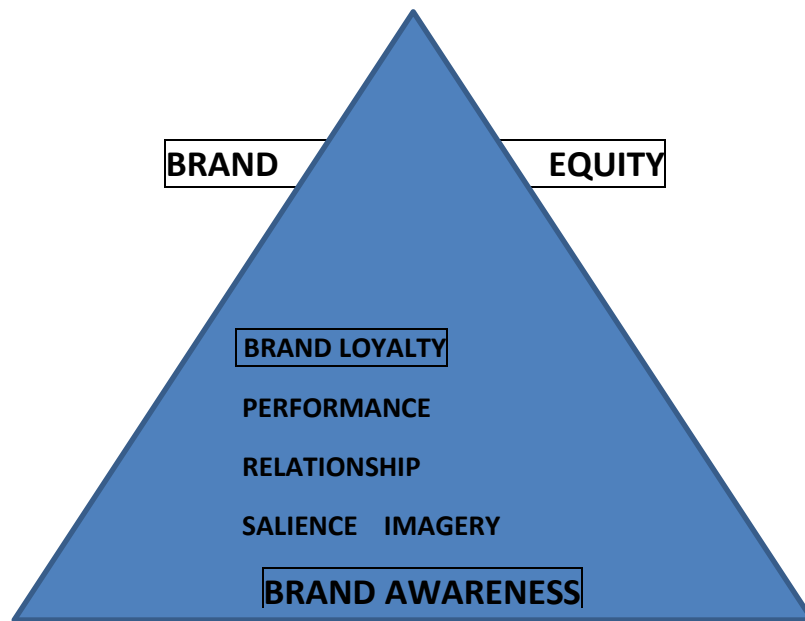


Figure 7.1 Building-blocks of the value-added branding model (adapted from Keller, 2013).

The proposed value-added branding model framework is presented in a different format in Figure 7.2 below that aligns all the components of the conceptual frameworks discussed in section 2. 3.2 of the literature review and, at the same time, links these building blocks that show the commonalities among them.

The connection between the legend of A, B, C and D relate to relevant responses discussed in Chapter 6 as well as strengths and elements relating to both Aaker (1997) and Keller's (2013) model as follows:

A – Brand Equity- specifically from the sponsor's feedback as well as the pinnacle of both Aaker (2009) and Keller (2013) -underlie the pinnacle of brand equity as fundamental to any branding framework as the total value of the brand.

B- Brand performance- relates to a brand promise and the credibility of ensuring the promise is adhered to. A case study of a PHEI as a yard stick to brand performance and its subsequent deliverables is discussed in section 7.4.

C- Brand relationship – Keller's (2013) loyalty between B2B brands as well as the stakeholders of Corporate HR practitioners' responses to building relationships between themselves and PHEIs is a corner stone of the framework of this branding model.

D- Salience and imagery- relate to the concept of brand identity (staff of PHEI as stakeholder) as well as needs satisfaction from both parents and student stakeholder group.

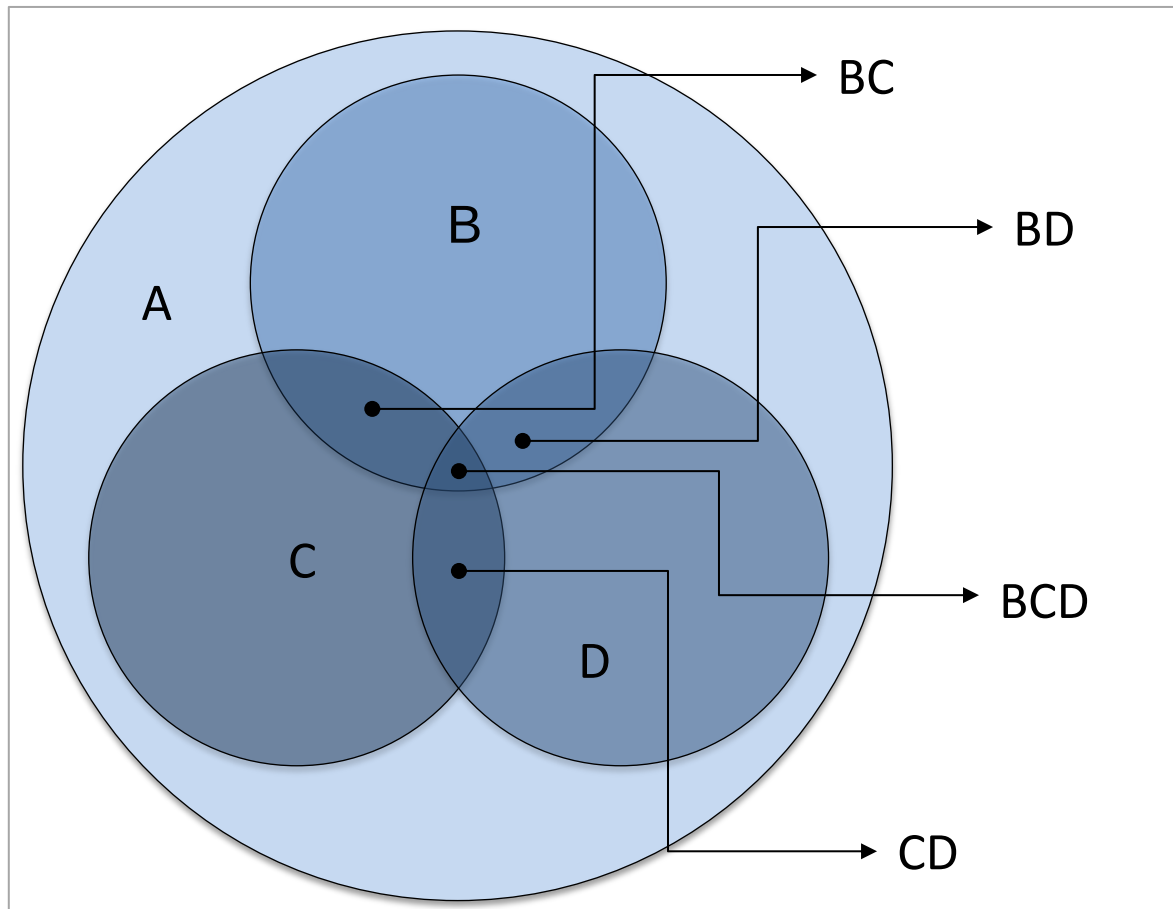


Figure 7.2 The proposed value-added branding framework (Source: Researcher's own).

The table below incorporates the components relative to the framework in figure 7.2

Table 7.1 The components of the proposed value-added branding framework

Legend	
A	Brand equity - strength and value of the brand
B, C and D	Performance/Relationships/Salience and Imagery
BC, BD and CD	Performance/ Relationships; Performance/ Salience & Relationships/Salience
BCD	Brand awareness - foundation stone of the brand ladder

Components	
A	Brand equity - Set of associations for the brand to have financial value; - Customer brand equity – level of awareness of brand; - Corporate brand equity - differential response of stakeholders to communication from the brand; - Perceived brand quality has relevance to the brand equity component of service, or intangible goods presented to consumer; - Set of assets and liabilities connected to the name of the brand, which adds value to the service; - Being able to assess the brand on various fronts, and not only in terms of monetary value (profits); - Brand equity contributing to the building of a strong brand; - Branding of PHEIs; and - Asset leverage of a PHEI brand.
B	Brand performance - Influential branding models; - Branding strategy development; - Strategic positioning of the brand; - Strategic branding – value proposition; - PHEIs and value proposition; - Strategic brand leadership; - Brand essence, brand promise (deliverables) and brand mantra; and - Brand building programmes (performance) - accreditation and results.
C	Relationships - Emotive component of the building block; - Consumer relationships – an invaluable commodity for PHEIs; - Communication to consumers that enhances better service value; - Integrated marketing communications approach; - Digital marketing; - Traditional marketing communication; - New principles of marketing; - Active loyalty relationships with consumers; and - Relationship building using marketing communications.
D	Salience and Imagery - Achieving the right brand identity means creating brand salience with customers; - Measure various aspects of awareness of the brand; - How often the brand is evoked under various situations; - To what extent is the brand “top-of-mind”; - What type of cues or reminders (imagery) are necessary; - Market segmentation in dealing with B2B consumers; - Brand identity and related imagery; - User profiles – imagery; and - History, heritage and experiences of the brand.

Relationships

BC	Linking the brand performance to consumer relationships - Brand relationships - House of brands/Endorsed brands/Branded house; - Durability and serviceability of brand; - Service effectiveness of brand; - Brand equity basis (performance) from sponsors and corporate HR practitioners' perspectives; - Building brands using practical applications of marketing research theories; - Brand equity – a sustainable tool for measurement of successful branding model; and - Brand loyalty based on brand performance.
BD	Linking the brand performance to salience of the brand - Brand salience- a model for Consumer Value Measurement (CVM) from an organisation's perspective; - Generic branding model providing sound foundations to branding of most organisations; - Comparative analysis – branding of PHEIs in SA vs Brazil/USA/Asia; - Thematic area of comparative analysis and international standards; - Benchmarking of international needs of industry relative to PHEIS; and - Needs satisfaction in terms of needing brand to perform once decision making process is completed.
CD	Linking Brand Salience to consumer relationships - Intense, active relationships measureable in brand loyalty; - Satisfying market needs by forming consumer relationships; - Corporate HR practitioners will need measurable services from PHEIs; - Meet industry needs by utilising marketing communications as the driving tool; - Build sustainable consumer relationships with corporate HR practitioners; - The more developed an economy, the greater the demand on a variety of technologically driven marketing programs that build relationships; - Demand from external customers for internationally recognised standards and benchmarks to be used; and - Best practices.
BCD	Synergy of components – Brand awareness foundation stone of the brand ladder - Link between the brand, marketing communications and industry needs to formulate a branding model for PHEIs; - Critical thinking using prior knowledge, experience, theories, models, and concepts that provide both creative approaches and necessary insights; - Brand awareness gives service an identity by linking brand elements to a category, and associated decision making processes; - Brand recognition or brand recall; - How easily can the brand be recalled or recognised? - Easier to remind people of their existing attitudes towards a brand than to try to change existing brand attitudes; and - Perceptions and questionnaires that provide qualitative insights into existing levels of brand awareness that can formulate a value-added branding model for PHEIs.

(Source: Researcher's own)

7.2.1 Brand equity as a value-added component

As stated in Chapter Two (section 2.2.2), the names and symbols associated with the brand are referred to as its assets, and the concept of brand equity can be utilised to measure these assets to ascertain the value of the brand (Kapferer, 2009: 13). Furthermore, the responses from the sponsors' interview questionnaire indicated that, as financial donors, they would look at the worth (value) of a PHEI brand that they wanted their protégés to attend.

Dutta (2013: 46) states that brand equity gains importance in the maturity stage of the product/service life cycle – at this stage the image of the brand, and, more importantly, brand equity, help to create a competitive advantage for the organisation, and provides the value of a brand. Dutta (2013: 47) provides a further argument that the consumer, after evaluating the brand, forms a perception or image of the brand that hopefully will meet the consumers' expectations. This was also evident from the parents' (account payers) responses, where particular importance was attached to the brand's worth and sustainability.

Both Aaker (2008: 54) and Keller (2013: 78) define brand equity in more holistic terms, which apply to this research study. These two acclaimed authors on brand equity incorporate total value of the brand, including price premium, satisfaction, reliability, brand image, and consumer perceptions. From a PHEI perspective these brand equity attributes were directly applicable to the formulation of the proposed value-added branding framework, since the findings indicated that stakeholders will respond to the brand name and brand performance that builds sustainable brand equity, and not consider the brand as a commodity or generic service. Thus, a positive consumer-based brand equity is required from a PHEI in ordered to provide a competitive advantage.

Thus, the hierarchical effect that allows brand equity to be the pinnacle of the building block is supported by Neal and Strauss (2008: 130), who maintain that brand value drives choice.

7.2.2 Brand performance and relationships

Brand performance, a building block of the proposed value-added branding framework, highlighted in Figure 7.1 above underscores both brand promise (deliverables) and brand building programmes (performance) as dimensions of performance. Chapter one of the research study reflected on a case study on Varsity College, an educational brand of the Institute of Education (IIE), registered with the Department of Higher Education and training as a PHEI under the Higher Education act, 1977 (Varsitycollege, 2019). The Varsity College website elaborates further on deliverables such as teaching philosophies grounded in technology, and blended learning with the IIE website (IIE, 2018), taking these deliverables further into the realms of student success - a *focus on student success with innovative and supportive teaching methodologies*. Specifically referring to brand performance and relationships, this PHEI provided an ideal platform to test these brand building blocks and their dimensions relevant to the new value-added branding framework.

Varsity College was started in 1991 by an entrepreneur who was a student at UNISA at the time. The college initially offered tuition to UNISA students in the Durban area, and subsequently grew to form partnerships with the Institute of Marketing Management (IMM), the Public Relations Institute of SA (PRISA), the International College of Hospitality (ICHM), and, in later years, the Open University (UK) and the University of Free State (UFS) across 8 campuses nationally. In 2000 Varsity College was acquired by the ADvTECH group ([Varsitycollege, 2019](#)).

Emphasis was placed on creating an appealing image of Varsity College for prospective students, hence the focus was on the IIE, as the over-arching academic body, to present all IIE programmes and to govern academic delivery on all campuses. Varsity College is thus a brand of the IIE. Further links on the website ([Varsitycollege, 2019](#)) show flagship qualifications, namely the IIE LLB 4-year degree, launched in 2018, as well as “getting ahead” with an IIE B. Com (Hons) degree, and “go further faster” with an IIE BA (Hons) degree. A link to a brief video shows a student-centred approach in the classroom, with emphasis on the following:

- Academics;
- Career centre;
- Alumni;
- Library services;
- Social and cultural activities;
- Sport;
- Academic teaching support; and
- Community engagement (VC Cares).

These unique selling points of the private education brand were endorsed as part of the brand identity of the staff's responses to questions posed in the IDIs.

The brand position of Varsity College is clearly outlined. The value proposition of Varsity College is propagated as a premium, private higher education brand that is based on a uniquely progressive student-centric approach to learning and development (Varsitycollege, 2019).

The VC brand is further defined as both brand essence, the single golden thread running through the brand, signifying everything that the college does as "exceptional" (Varsitycollege, 2019). The other aspect defined is brand promise, which emphasises superior academic quality and comprehensive student experience. Little evidence, apart from a website, traditional advertising (billboard, newspaper, radio and television), is shown relative to the customer (parents, students and sponsors) concerning both brand essence and brand promise. There is, to a point, social media platforms giving information indicative of the brand performance. However, when correlated with both student's and parent's responses discussed in the data analysis (chapter six), many of these performance indicators reflecting the success of the brand were not acknowledged.

Most of the traditional advertising was more about product offering - various different qualifications that can be obtained than the brand, albeit Varsity College or the IIE.

Of interest to this research study is a four-tier brand positioning illustration of Varsity College, and where it wants to be positioned in higher education as highlighted in Figure 7.3 below.

HIGH CREDIBILITY	
<u>Top-tier: Traditionalist</u>	<u>Top-tier: Progressive</u>
<i>Classical, conventional, historic, primarily academic focus. High institution focus.</i>	<i>Student- focused, holistic development, modern, pioneering, collaborative. High student focus.</i>
<u>Second-tier: Challenged</u>	<u>Second-tier: Pretenders</u>
<i>Inconsistent quality, lack of student focus, security concerns. Low institution focus.</i>	<i>Lacking in authenticity, low quality, limited student support, volume focussed. Low student focus.</i>
LOW CREDIBILITY	

Figure 7.3: Brand Positioning - Varsity College (adapted from Varsitycollege, 2019).

Figure 7.3 above indicates Varsity College positioning itself as a high student focussed-institution as opposed to being one that focuses on a high level of traditionalism (a public university), with high credibility and high student focus (academic support). The converse of Varsity College's brand positioning is a low institution focus, as well as a low student focus, which leads the higher education institution into a low credibility tier.

Furthermore, the brand position of Varsity College becomes evident, since the education institution recognises that it cannot compete with the traditional and historic conventions of an established public university, and has thus adopted a student-centric approach that is pioneering (use of high-end technology in the classroom) and collaborative (inter-active) teaching. Comparing both the findings and elements of the two brand models to the case study under test, the research postulates that the positive brand positioning and brand performance of Varsity

College (from Figure 7.3) and subsequent benefits are not marketed externally to consumers.

Other brand traditional media advertising initiatives from Varsity College include the launch of the college's first television advertisement at the end of 2016 and, which was launched again in November, 2017 (Hardyboys, 2018). The advertisement was launched on DSTV, some prime-time channels, and on a sports channel. In addition, a billboard advertising campaign was launched in February 2017, with two billboards in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban, illustrating IIE Varsity College's programme offerings (Hardyboys, 2018). Thus traditional advertising utilised in promoting the brand awareness building-block is evident with the testing of the case study.

Whilst the Varsity College website has gone to great lengths to promote the institution's flagship programmes, and has dedicated links to student-centred activities, the site provides little connection to, and/or recognition of the existence of the IIE (Varsitycollege, 2019). This was a differentiated marketing understanding from both parents and students with parent's acknowledging the academic governing body's authority and students having minimum, if any comprehension, other than their campus name.

Other than programmes that use the prefix IIE, for example, IIE B. Com to advertise Varsity College's offerings, there is minimum reference to the connection between the brand of the IIE (academic governing body) and the PHEI brand, Varsity College. This may confuse the brands for consumers such as parents, students, and sponsors who would fail to recognise the connection.

The findings from both the students and parents focussed strongly on the deliverables of a PHEI, predominantly concerning accreditation and the quality of its qualifications, as well as pass rates and throughputs- brand performance indicators. The academic success of Varsity College students is highlighted in the television advertisement discussed in the case study, where the average pass rate throughout all programmes averages 82%. Thus, the performance of the Varsity College brand is justified in its value statement that indicates *a premium, private higher education brand that is based on a uniquely progressive student-centric approach to learning and development* (Varsitycollege, 2019).

For the purpose of this research study, the testing of the Varsity College brand from a value-added branded framework perspective, an alignment with both Klopper and Aaker's model needs to be ascertained. The brand-building blocks of the models shown in Figure 7.1 above are present in the proposed framework itself as determined from both participant's feedback in the questionnaire from the IDIs and specifically an adaption of Keller's brand resonance pyramid (Keller, 2013: 108). Aspects of specifically, performance (academic success displayed on both television advertisement and billboards) and salience (needs satisfying) of both parents and students are prevalent in the advertising media of Varsity College. More importantly, two building blocks, that is brand awareness and ultimately brand equity as corner stones of the pyramid, came forth in both the participant's feedback and all advertising media and branding of the college.

Klopper and North (2013: 387) further underline the brand performance and relationship building-block by referring to marketing research consultant, Millward Brown, who annually carries out the BrandZ study, a quantitative brand equity study, with the Brand Dynamics framework playing a major part. This model adopts a pyramid approach to determine the strength of the relationship that a consumer has with a brand. The performance concept is in the middle of the BrandDynamics pyramid, with a focus on whether the brand can deliver acceptable performance. The relationship dynamic is incorporated into the pinnacle of the pyramid, called *bonding*. Keller (2013:352) relates Millward Brown's BrandDynamics model five steps to the four ascending steps of the CBBE model relative to the concepts of salience, consideration, performance or quality and resonance. Thus, Keller's (2013: 352) CBBE model synthesizes the concepts and measures from a leading industry model, insights on brand resonance. This culmination of brand building provides a more meaningful way to view brand loyalty with consumers at higher levels of the brand building-block framework, and are likely to be active advocates of the brand owing to the sustainable relationship between PHEIs and consumers.

7.2.3 Brand performance and Salience – components of the proposed value-added branding framework

The salience brand building block of Keller's brand equity model (Keller, 2013:110), was confirmed from the data and retained in its entirety in the proposed value-added

branding framework. The dimensions of needs satisfaction and brand identity were included as achieving the right brand identity meant creating brand salience with consumers. Keller (2013: 107) maintains that brand salience measures various aspects of the awareness of the brand and how easily and often the brand is evoked under various situations or circumstances. The staff findings in the data analysis, endorsed the inclusion of brand salience in the new proposed framework as their positive inputs relative to the corporate identity of their own organisation is the starting point for consumers to recognise the brand identity elements of an organisation. The data indicated the staff's identifying of their own establishment's unique selling points as a corner stone of the framework aligning salience with brand awareness. This link between salience and brand awareness gives the service that a PHEI can offer an identity which refers to a consumer's ability to recall and recognise the brand under different conditions and link to the brand name.

Hutt and Speth (2010: 97) confirm that the value creation of a brand is derived from its core offering at the level of its consumers' operations. The salience building block in Figure 7.1 above, according to Keller (2013: 107), is the achievement of the right brand identity by creating brand salience with consumers. Thus, salience has to do with the measurement of various aspects of the awareness of the brand and subsequent performance.

Jobber (2010: 107) further postulates that a highly salient brand is one that has both depth and breadth as measuring cues of brand awareness. Brand awareness and subsequent brand performance is achieved through this concept of brand salience, where consumers reflect on a brand across a variety of settings.

Keller (2013: 113) further proposes that five important attributes and benefits often underlie brand performance. These attributes are:

- 1) Primary ingredients and supplementary features - some attributes are essential ingredients necessary for a product to work, whereas others are supplementary features that allow for customisation and more versatile personalised usage;
- 2) Product reliability, durability and serviceability – reliability, specifically, is an integral attribute of brand performance, as this concept measures the consistency of performance over time and from purchase to purchase;

- 3) Service effectiveness, efficiency and empathy – consumers often have performance-related associations with service, and service efficiency describes the speed and responsiveness of service, whereas service empathy is the trusting and caring nature of having the consumers' interests in mind;
- 4) Style and design - relates to the functional aspect in terms of how a product works that affects performance associations; and
- 5) Price - can create associations in consumers' minds about how relatively expensive (or inexpensive) the brand is, relative to the price tier of other brands.

Both the responses from stakeholders and the attributes (above) relating to service reliability and service effectiveness, indicate how important brand performance is to consumers. The sponsors and corporate HR practitioners specifically indicated that the competitive advantage that a brand will show over other brands will relate to the brand performance – service reliability and service effectiveness.

7.2.4 Brand relationships and brand salience – components of the proposed value-added branding framework

Relationships was included as an additional brand building block to the new value-added branding framework. This is supported by Cant and Van Heerden (2014: 444) who found that customer retention is based on the relationship with the consumer, as well as the organisation's ability to enhance value, and thus this concept becomes important to the consumer. Nurturing and managing customer relationships has emerged as an important strategic priority in organisations.

Furthermore, Fourier (2012: 169), conceptualises brand strength in relationship terms. It defines a brand strength's in terms of the strength, depth, and durability of the consumer-brand relational bond in a concept called brand relationship quality.

Keller (2013: 107) maintains that brand responses in order to create brand resonance needs an active loyalty relationship between consumers and the brand. Keller (2013), poses the simple question of what kind of association and how much of a connection would one like to have with you?

The research study's findings show that, specifically in business-to-business (B2B) marketing, relationships are of critical importance. Both sponsors (funding from a

retail organisation) and corporate HR practitioners showed a lack of communication (if any) in the B2B environment. The hierarchical effect of relationship building as a building- block in the proposed value-added branding framework is critical, specifically when brand loyalty - the value outcome of relationship building - is non-negotiable.

The salience brand building block of the proposed PHEI value-added brand framework (Figure 6.1) was confirmed in section 7.2.3. Brand salience is both a brand equity (finance) and a consumer-based measure (Dutta, 2013: 36) that relates to the consumer's understanding and perception of the brand.

Salience has to do with the brand achieving recognition in the consumer's mind - ultimately as relationship building and subsequent brand awareness measurables.

7.2.5 Brand awareness – foundation stone of the brand building framework

The synergy between the brand equity/performance/relationships/salience and imagery is reflected in brand awareness. The literature review in Chapter Two discussed the concept of a branding model that should be formulated that will, firstly, resolve common problems and challenges in a business environment and, secondly, provide a new way of seeing a situation that will result in value-add. Van Essen (2009: xi) provides further input in describing models that should stand up to a high degree of scientific scrutiny, and at the same time be of practical value to the organisation.

The brand awareness cornerstone of the proposed value-added branding framework provides the brand recognition and brand awareness (Aaker, 2008: 29). The purpose of the proposed value-added branding framework is to predict consumer behaviour in the future. Bueno and Jeffrey (2017: 41) support the notion that without a branding model and brand awareness as part of that model, there will be major uncertainty on how an organisation's decision making will affect consumers in the future. Bueno and Jeffrey (2017: 43) discuss the concept of cult branding, proposing features that an effective branding model with brand awareness can give an organisation:

- an effective branding model predicts the future, turning “what if” questions into observations to consider for future action from the organisation;

- an effective branding model provides an organisation with information about what is needed to reach goals with consistent standards in place; and
- an effective branding model offers a synthesis of the components of what the organisation's brand does, and a quintessential framework of evaluating decisions.

If a competitor uses an effective branding model and another organisation does not, market share will be lost to that competitor.

7.3 Branding in emerging markets

Chapter Three of the literature review discussed the concept of formulating a value-added brand framework against the backdrop of emerging markets. Cant and Van Heerden (2014: 646) classified South Africa, much like Brazil, as one of the countries that belongs to emerging market economies. The relevance of a value-added branding framework in emerging markets to this research study is shown in the growth of PHEIs over the last decade with the increase in numbers of PHEIs opening, has been phenomenal (CHE, 2017). The growth of PHEIs has provided a highly competitive field in higher education that necessitates a value-added branding model for a PHEI to differentiate itself and develop the competitive edge.

Ghuri and Cateora (2010: 186) provided shared or common traits concerning the development and growth of PHEIs in these emerging economies. These traits have been met by private higher education, as indicated in the rapid growth of PHEIs discussed above. These traits include:

- Providing potential for significant growth;
- Undertaking programmes of significant reform, specifically concerning qualification diversity and accreditation;
- Have regional economic drivers, indicative of the national footprint of PHEIs throughout South Africa; and
- Will have further expansion into neighbouring markets (southern Africa) as the South African PHEIs grow and develop.

South Africa's emerging markets meet all of the above traits, whilst firmly establishing itself as one of the top ten big emerging markets (BEM) worldwide. At

the same time these traits are consistent with the phenomenal growth of private higher education providers in South Africa, discussed in Chapter one.

7.4 International PHEIs and branding

In addition to the findings aligned with the analysis of current branding models that formulated a new branding model, reference was made to two international markets PHEIs that formed an international benchmark for PHEIs in the South African context. Brazil and Asia in terms of their current status, funding, qualification accreditation and branding of their private education colleges were much aligned with the South African private education landscape (Magadza, 2013).

According to Goodson (2015), Brazil has experienced phenomenal growth in the private education sector. This is, in part, owing to private higher education regulations being relaxed. This has seen mergers and acquisitions take place, with in excess of 100 000 students at private institutions (Magadza, 2013). A comparative analysis between South Africa and Brazil's PHEIs would draw many similarities attributed to commonality in emerging markets, as discussed in section 7.3 above.

Much like the South African private education landscape discussed in Chapter One, these similarities relate to the phenomenal growth that PHEIs experienced in both countries yet are also similar in the challenges that they faced. For one, a lack of infrastructure investment, as well as a lack of well-equipped laboratories and facilities, are similar challenges. Magadza (2013) documented these challenges, stating that none of the Brazilian private higher institutions have research facilities, much like the lack of facilities in South Africa. This dramatic growth in the private providers in Brazil is endorsed by McCowan (2019) who discussed the World Bank involvement in Brazil private higher education, promoting this expansion based on the private providers' ability to ensure rapid increase in enrolments (performance). This growth of private higher education in Brazil has indicated implications for both equity and quality.

One area of disparity lies in the funding of private education institutions. Here a vast marked difference occurs between South African and Brazilian PHEIs. The findings of this research study indicate a lack of communication and general non-commitment between industry and private education. Yet, in Brazil, a merger between

government, industry and a private education institute culminated in the formulation of the Brazilian General Command of Aerospace Technology (CTA) (Goodson, 2015). In South Africa a merger of this nature will be limited to a government funding the Engineering or Education Faculty of a public university. The reason being is that, firstly, these are two critical skill shortages in South Africa and, secondly, funding of this nature will go to public universities only, as these universities are already government subsidised. Government interest and funding in private education in Brazil resulted in a marked shift away from small business schools and religious institutions that offered private higher education in the nineties.

Conversely, the Asian private higher education landscape received little state funding and, as a result, in contrast to South Africa, experienced minimal growth over the last two decades. Legislation was also relaxed, which did not indicate a turnaround in the growth of private education institutions. In contrast, this caused more of a “spot light” effect with these institutions coming under government scrutiny (article from Asian Development Bank, 2012: 46). The article further postulates that a lack of funding from government, as well as low student enrolment, ensured a lack of demand for private higher education in most parts of Asia. At the same time, a lack of ability from private academic institutions to balance the marketing role (branding) and quality academic service delivery, also contributed to this lack of demand.

The *brand awareness* building block of the proposed value-added branding framework of a PHEI in South Africa formed the corner stone of the branding pyramid. The research study findings showed, specifically from parents and students’ perspectives, the willingness to make a decision to register at a private education institution, based on how well known the institution was (brand recognition), and whether the institution had built brand equity. More importantly, both parents and students asked the question: *is the qualification accredited and of value if the student wants to study further, or find employment outside of South Africa?*

7.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher proffers a number of recommendations as follows:

7.5.1 Recommendations for PHEIs

This study proposed that a value-added branding framework for PHEIs to differentiate themselves and create a sustainable competitive advantage for their businesses. This culminated in one of the significant outcomes of the study. The findings and analysis of current branding models showed that, initially, PHEIs were not that well-known amongst major stakeholders. Thus, with the resultant allocation of resources for management to brand and advertise, the value-added branding framework can collectively enhance brand awareness of PHEIs as well as build relationships with stakeholders in order to change public perception of brand identity of private higher education in South Africa.

Furthermore, as stated in Chapter Five, this study was mainly exploratory in nature, with the intent of developing an initial understanding of the phenomenon. A number of different topics or themes were explored, and the research study successfully identified a number of different avenues of research.

The first research implication for PHEIs came from both the students (past and present) and parents' responses to the interview questionnaire. A distinction was forthcoming from the ultimate decision maker to register at a PHEI – the student who will spend the next three years on campus, or the parent, who is the account payer for the tuition. Even though no clear distinction emerged in this area, it was evident that different stakeholders respond differently to specific branding and subsequent advertising of the brand. Thus, of relevance to the PHEI brand is a differentiated consumer behaviour approach that combines marketing communications of a social media nature for students, and more traditional advertising for parents. Varsity College as a benchmark for PHEIs, seems to have the mix right, since it has an inter-active website that relate to students, and an awe-inspiring television advertisement that focuses on student success relevant to parents. In addition, their social media reach to students has facilitated many students making enquiries to study at the institution.

Another avenue of research that emerged from the research study was the lack of communication channels (if any) between the PHEI and corporates. The distinct lack of communication between the PHEI and specifically the corporate HR practitioners culminated in poor relationship building between these two parties – one of the

building blocks identified in the proposed value-added branding framework. This lack of communication with corporate HR practitioners culminated in poor graduate placements of students from PHEIs. PHEIs need to establish a clear line of communication with corporates specifically in the hospitality industry (the focus of this research study) by hosting career fairs/ workshops/ coffee mornings/ classroom visits with specific stakeholders in industry, which will enhance the brand and facilitate graduate placement, as well as intern work for students of that specific PHEI.

A third avenue of research related to the sponsors, both corporate donors and individual financial contributors, who, whilst not prime decision makers in the choice of a PHEI, were acutely aware of the brand. Whilst, as sponsors, they would abide by the decision of their protégés as to which education institution they wanted to attend. However, they were particularly concerned with the brand performance of the PHEI, and how well known the brand was. Thus, these two key components were incorporated into the building blocks of the value-added branding framework.

A case in point with relevance to the point raised in the opening paragraph as to the public's lack of knowledge of PHEIs, provided a fourth avenue of research pertaining to the branding of the academic governing body/ holding company of a PHEI. This study focussed on the IIE in the case of Varsity College, and Pearson Ltd for CTI College (now renamed Pearson College for Higher Education), which are both well listed and represented on the stock exchange for their shareholders, but have little brand recognition amongst the general public. A clear line of synergy should be drawn between promoting the academic governing body institution and the individual brand, bearing in mind that the students spend a majority of their time relating to the latter on the brand's campus.

The ultimate aim of brand building for PHEIs should be to build their brand equity to facilitate developing relationships and forging partnerships with their hospitality corporates to sustain long term graduate placements for their students. Brand building should start with brand awareness targeted at stakeholders who form part of the decision-making process that will get them to acknowledge brand recognition and brand response. Surely, brand knowledge of a brand that has a proven track record of success and sustainable brand equity, will attract more students to a specific PHEI.

7.5.2 Recommendations for future research

Chapter Three mentioned the fact that branding and strategic brand management is evolving. This continuous development of a strategic brand plan for an organisation was partly supported by the empirical survey, showing that current branding models are not aligned with the development of strategic brand management. Branding of an organisation is an ongoing, futuristic concept, requiring small to medium organisations to seek guidance and direction in this respect to stay competitive. Whilst large established organisations such as Nike, Google, Amazon, Coca-Cola and Samsung, for example, are strong, established branded names, in South Africa's emerging markets, the smaller to medium-sized companies are still struggling to establish their brands.

This research focused on the hospitality industry, including hotels and the leisure industry participant's feedback culminating in a proposed value-added branding framework being formulated for PHEIs. It is suggested that the generic model that was formulated could be extended to other industries, specifically professional qualifications from a PHEI that includes the law, accounting, and finance industries. As mentioned previously, this would need relationship building and sustainable partnerships between PHEIs and these industries to build their brand around brand awareness and subsequent industry placements for their graduates. This level of branding and brand awareness for a PHEI would encompass a law firm, for example, which deals with a well-branded PHEI, to facilitate placement for their top academically strong students; hence, requiring strong brand and relationship building for these institutions.

Specifically, from a South African perspective, the scope of this research can be extended to any of the 90 PHEIs (CHE, 2018), to be able to have an individual branding model based on the generic principles of the framework discussed in this research study.

7.6 Contribution to practice and policy implications for the branding of PHEIs

Section 1.1 in Chapter One mentioned PHEIs, dating back to the 1960s; however, PHEIs only started to expand and grow in the mid-1990s and can thus be considered as ongoing developing entities, specifically in their marketing and branding initiatives.

This research study endeavoured to create new knowledge concerning the branding of these PHEIs, which will ultimately provide a competitive advantage for any one of them. The decisive input of the stakeholders of this study represents a majority of the four major decision makers that contribute to the ongoing financial existence of any PHEI, hence the focus on brand equity and the importance of this aspect for the sustainability of any PHEI. The analysis of current branding models provided the strengths and deficiencies that aligned with the participant's views in order to formulate a new branding framework.

The Higher Education Act 1997 (Act 101 of 1997) underlined the fledgling establishment of PHEIs, and brought control and legislation to the growing and developing market of private tertiary education. The act makes specific reference to the control and registration of PHEIs (CHE, 2018) with the following provisos:

- Private institutions must offer quality education;
- The public is protected against unscrupulous and exploitative operators;
- Students obtain qualifications that are aligned with the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF), and registered with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
- The education system meets the goals of transforming South Africa in accordance with government policy and legislation; and
- Private institutions comply with the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) (mentioned above)

The provisions of the above Act have at all times been the foremost consideration of the research study. In fact, the branding of any PHEI will always need to take the above points into consideration. The essence of this research study has been to market and promote the private education institution that, based on the respondents' feedback, indicated that the pillars of the above Act are not well known to the general public.

The contribution of this research study to any aspirant student considering registering for private higher education, has been to formulate branding pillars of a value-added branding framework, based on stakeholders' responses and current branding models analysis, which align with the above practical and policy implications. This should ensure that the student knows that his or her qualification is

accredited with the Higher Education Quality Framework (HEQF), much the same as any other tertiary institution.

7.6.1 Contribution to body of knowledge of branding

Section 2.3 of Chapter Two refers to the upsurge specifically the retail and product driven industries; however, many of the traditional branding models made little provision for both the education industry and/or the service industry. The branding of a PHEI, essentially a service and an intangible product, needed to break new ground to provide a solution for the research problem statement in respect of constituting a suitable and value-added branding framework for both the institution and its stakeholders.

Whilst definitions of the concept of a brand were developed many decades ago, Keller (2013: 30) provides the *American Marketing Association* concept of a brand as simply a name, term, sign, symbol or design intended to identify the goods and services of one seller(s), and to differentiate them from those of the competition. This research study followed the tried and trusted basis of what constitutes a brand; however, applying these basic concepts of a brand to the early perceptions of a PHEI amongst relevant stakeholders proved both challenging and, at the same time, ground breaking in new, emerging thought processes.

In most industries such as construction, retail, product, manufacturing, cell phones or otherwise, there is one industry leader followed by other top brands competing for the leadership position. Internationally, Starbucks in the coffee industry, Apple in the computer industry, and in the cell phone industry in South Africa, Vodacom. Based on public perceptions, these renowned products and services are proven leaders in their field. The tertiary education field in South Africa is blurred for industry leaders or, more importantly, those striving to contest the leadership in their field. There are over ninety PHEIs (CHE, 2018); some are well-known while others are not, and they all compete with each other, but there is also a different education footprint in the form of the public university sector that PHEIs need to overcome to achieve a competitive advantage.

This research study can be validated against a recent study of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model developed to guide brand building applicable to business-to-business contexts (Steenkamp, 2016). The research study needed to

develop a tailored branding model for B2B services. Even though the current research study was limited to the hospitality sector, and the CBBE model to the short-term insurance sectors, vast similarities were found between the two research studies. Both studies utilised building blocks as pillars or foundation stones of their respective new branding models. The CBBE model aimed to identify the brand-building blocks and sub-dimensions of the proposed model, and this study endeavoured to establish the elements of a PHEI value-added branding framework. As the corner stone of the studies, brand awareness stemmed from both sets of respondents as being the principal building block that started the branding process. As the pinnacle of both studies, brand equity proved to be comparative, since the respective studies' findings provided the sustainability that stakeholders were seeking. The proposed CBBE framework should improve the effectiveness of brand building strategies for selected B2B services by enhancing dimensions that have been confirmed by the stakeholders' responses.

This research study has contributed to the branding of the private education sector by, firstly, breaking down a perception that is firmly entrenched in stakeholders that private education will not provide the quality education that a public institution does and, secondly, a contribution that will give the PHEI brand a competitive advantage over other private and public institutions.

One of the most significant outcomes of this study is the knowledge of which dimensions the branding of a PHEI must focus on to nullify this perception of an accredited qualification from a private education institution, and knowing areas that the institution must focus on to build brand equity.

The primary contribution of the study is the proposed value-added branding framework (Figure 7.1), which allows a private education institution to strategically manage the building of specifically brand awareness and brand relationships, which will build brand equity within their organisations from a client's perspective.

7.7 Limitations of the research study

With minimum resources available, this study was limited to South Africa, with a focus on the Western Cape, where the researcher is based. Students from the sample, relative to the interview questionnaire, were from all parts of South Africa, although they studied in Cape Town. The corporate HR practitioners from the larger

hotels and although at the time of the research were based in the greater Cape Town Metropole area, had worked in different parts of South Africa. Thus, the study was limited to a truly South African perspective in formulating a branding framework for PHEIs, but perhaps it may serve as a pilot study to move into both Southern African regions and other African countries. The growth of PHEIs in Southern Africa, for example, would be in line with the growth in Brazil and Asia (discussed in Chapter one), and necessitates a sustainable branding model to be formulated in the long term,

This qualitative research design would provide a limitation in terms of the potential researcher subjectivity, specifically concerning interpretation of the participants' feedback, and the formulation of the building-blocks to brand PHEIs. The inductive reasoning applied would necessitate moving from specific branding theories and models to the generic value-added branding framework presented in section 7.1 with a degree of subjectivity.

The 'I' in the researcher has a background in education management and marketing lecturing and not industry, and thus the concept of branding an education institution or corporate was undertaken from academic principles' point of view, and not from industry.

7.8 Conclusion

The conclusion of this chapter also concludes the research study.

The perception problem that PHEIs face from all sectors of the public may be solved. When students, parents, sponsors and corporate HR practitioners ask the inevitable question from more than ninety private education institutions as to: *"Who is your organisation?"* and/or: *"Is your institution accredited?"* the stakeholders should distinguish little difference between a private and public higher education institution.

This will require new thinking and resources (finance) made available from PHEIs and will require marketers and PHEI management to "think out of the box" concerning unique and innovative ways to brand their institutions. Thus, institutions need to build brand equity, as endorsed by both Keller (2013) and Aaker (2009), which will provide a competitive advantage to respective PHEIs.

Should this occur, PHEIs in South Africa will no longer have to undergo scrutiny of their qualifications in terms of them being local or internationally accredited. PHEIs, although not having the tenure or traditionalism of a public university, will be able to advertise academic success, stronger support, innovative and technologically-enhanced classroom and lecture didactics, professionalism, and relationship building with stakeholders owing to their smaller and more controlled environments. They need to know thoroughly how to reach these stakeholders to advertise these drivers of PHEIs.

With public universities closing their doors to countless applications that they cannot accommodate owing to, firstly, high levels of students wanting to study at tertiary institutions and, secondly, capacity issues at universities, the South African education landscape needs the footprint of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). This will be of mutual benefit to government, as well as public and private education.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview Guide



Faculty of Business
Department of Marketing

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research title:

The formulation of a value-added branding model for Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in South Africa

Researcher: Mr A.J. Bird

Supervisor: Dr V. Mugobo

Introduction

The researcher is completing his first doctorate degree by means of a research study, which addresses the formulation of a branding model, specifically for Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in South Africa. This investigative research is directed at industries that recruit graduates from these institutions, and their employability

As a student/ parent/staff member sponsor or HR practitioner in any of these research fields, you have been accordingly invited to participate in this research study.

The purposes of this research study are:

- To meet the requirements for the degree Doctor of Technology: Marketing at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology;
- To determine the extent of knowledge and certain stakeholders' perceptions of PHEIs;
- To determine levels of awareness that stakeholders have of a PHEI, and the qualifications that are offered;
- To determine levels of organisational standards required to employ a graduate from a PHEI; and
- To gauge an understanding from industry regarding the employability of a graduate from a PHEI.

Significance of the research

- Due to the relevance of this research in a South African context, the possibility of extending the findings into southern Africa and the broader African environment, is significantly high;
- The findings generated from this questionnaire will prove invaluable in formulating branding methods that will increase awareness of PHEIs; and
- To provide the necessary information that will address any perceptions and resource deficiencies that may present a negative impact on the branding of a PHEI.

Ethical considerations

- Participation in this research study is voluntary;
- Participants may withdraw from the research study at any time, and for any reason;
- Participants may omit questions that are not applicable to them, or that they do not want to answer;
- No probability of harm exists for participants in this research study;
- Anonymity will be ensured for all participants;
- All data collected will be treated with full confidentiality, and the business entity and individual employees participating will be treated without prejudice; and
- Quality control and data security will be maintained throughout the duration of this research study, and beyond.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you have read the above mentioned ethical considerations, and are voluntarily participating in this research study.

Contact Information

For further information regarding this research study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Alan Bird, on 0848215216. or by e-mail at abird@varsitycollege.co.za

If you agree to take part in this research study, please sign below, indicating your willingness to participate.

Thank you for giving up your valuable time to participate in this research study.

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Date

Please indicate below, by ticking the appropriate box, whether or not you would like to receive a summary of the research results.

Yes	No	E-mail address:
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Once again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study; your time and effort devoted to this exercise is much appreciated.

Alan J Bird (BA (Hons); MTech (CPUT))

Cape Town 10th May 2018

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions applicable to your respective group.

SECTION A: STUDENT GROUP TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION

Q 1) Which Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) are you currently studying at? Please indicate the education institution and current year of study.

.....
.....

Q 2) When you were applying to do your tertiary studies which education brands can you recall or were aware of?

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.....
.....

Q 3) Other than your own place of study is any of these education brands familiar to you now?

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.....
.....

Q 4) Which private education brands did you approach or were approached by when you were applying to do tertiary studies?

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.....
.....

Q 5) What *associations* come to mind from the private education brands you can recall or were approached by?

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.....
.....

Q6) How would you describe the relationship you have with your education institution?

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.....
.....

Q 7) Can you recall any advertising media of your education institution that influenced your choice of education institution? If you can, what type of media and what content of the advertisement was displayed?

.....
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.....

Q 8) Did you or your parents/sponsor make the final decision concerning your choice of educational institution? Please indicate with an X.

Parents or sponsor/Student

Q 9) What is the most favourable aspect you like about your choice of PHEI?

.....
.....
.....

Q 11) How likely are you to recommend your PHEI to a friend or other interested student? Give reasons for this recommendation/non-recommendation.

.....
.....
.....

SECTION B: PARENT GROUP TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION

Q 11) Which Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) is your son/ daughter studying at?

.....
.....

Q 12) Did you or your son/ daughter make the final choice of education institution? Please indicate with an X.

PARENT/ STUDENT

Q 13) Can you recall, or are you familiar with any other (than your son or daughter's) private education institution? If you can, please list them in space provided.

.....
.....
.....

Q 14) What associations come to mind when you recall any of the private education brands mentioned in Q 14.

.....
.....
.....

Q 15) Can you recall any advertising media of a private education brand that you were made aware of in the last 2 years? If so, please list below.

.....
.....
.....

Q 16) How likely are you to recommend your son/daughter's PHEI to a friend or work colleague? Give reasons for this recommendation/non-recommendation.

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.....

SECTION C: SPONSORS TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION

Q 17) What private education brand is your sponsored student currently studying at?

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Q 18) Can you recall any advertising media of a private education brand that you were made aware of in the last 2 years? If so, please list below.

.....
.....
.....

Q 18) If you had to sponsor a student for University studies, would you choose public or private university Please give reasons for your choice.

.....
.....

.....

Q 19) What associations do you have of your current sponsored student's choice of education institutions?

.....
.....
.....

SECTION D: STAFF OF PHEIs TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

Q 20) What Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) do you work for and what is your job title?

.....
.....

Q 21) Do you think your education institution is well branded? If so, can you recall any of the branding done at your institution

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.....
.....
.....

Q 22) What do you consider as unique selling points (USPs) of your PHEI?

.....
.....
.....

Q 23) Would you recommend these USPs (of a PHEI) to a friend or professional (other than those employed at your own education institution)? If so, please give reasons below.

.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION E: HR PRACTITIONERS TO COMPLETE THE SECTION:

Q 24) Please indicate the name of your organisation

.....
.....

Q 25) Have you recruited any graduates from any public universities over the last 2 to 3 years? If so, which public university?

.....
.....

Q 26) Have you recruited any graduates from any private higher education institute (PHEI) over the last 2 to 3 years? If so, which private universities?

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.....
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.....

Q 27) Would you prefer your graduates that you employ to come from a public university or PHEI? Please give reasons for your choice.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Q 28) Please indicate the qualities and characteristics you are looking for in employing a graduate from either a private or public university.

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.....
.....
.....

Q 29) Can you recall any branding or advertising that you have recently seen about a PHEI? If so, please indicate the advertising media and if you can recall any content of the advertisement.

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.....

Q 30) What expectations do you have from any private education brand concerning building relationships between your corporate in the hospitality industry and a private university?

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.....
.....
.....

Q 31) What type of relationship (contact with a specific PHEI career counsellor or ongoing communication with a group of PHEIs or visiting PHEIs and speaking to students with a view to employment) would you prefer?

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.....
.....
.....

Q 32) Do you think any of the above type of relationships with a PHEI would enhance the calibre of student you recruit for your hotel? Give reasons for your choice.

.....
.....
.....
.....

This concludes the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix 2: Sample Pilot questionnaire: only for reference purposes

NOT FOR ANALYSIS

Question 1: Please indicate your position from the options below.

HR practitioner.....
HR manager.....
Manager.....
Senior manager.....
Consultant.....
Other, please specify.....

Question 2: Of the total number of staff employed on a yearly basis, please indicate the number of graduates (higher certificate, diploma or Degree) employed.

1-2
3-5
6 to 10
11 to 15
More than 15

Question 3: If your organisation recruits from advertising, please indicate, which of the following media they use.

Business publications, for example, <i>Bizcommunity</i> or <i>Legal Publication</i> .
Community newspaper, for example, <i>Constantiaberg Tattler</i> .
Mainstream newspaper, for example, <i>Cape Argus</i> , <i>Job shop</i> .
Internet sites, for example, <i>P-net</i> or <i>Career Junction</i> .
Radio

Television
Recommendations or word of mouth
Other sources, please specify
No advertising used

Question 4: Please indicate the number of graduates that your organisation employed over the last two-three years. For example, if your organisation employed 12 staff members over this period, and 8 were graduates, this equates to 75% graduates.

Question 5: Please indicate from which public university in the Western Cape, or nationally or internationally, your organisation employed graduates over the last two-three years. Please also indicate the number of graduates.

Question 6: From a marketing perspective, and considering brand awareness, which PHEIs are you aware of?

Question 7: Please indicate from which Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) your organisation employed graduates over the last two-three years. Please also indicate the number of graduates.

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Question 8: Please indicate if you would prefer that the graduates that your organisation employs come from a public university or a PHEI.

Question 9: If you had the final decision making authority to employ graduates for your organisation, would you employ a public university graduate over a PHEI graduate?

Yes/No
Reasons:

Question 10: Please indicate if you have seen or been exposed to any marketing or advertising material, or signage of any PHEI you can recall? Also, indicate the type, for example, bill board, radio advertisement, brochure, television, and so on.

Question 11: Please indicate any communication, correspondence, relationship building that exists between your organisation and a PHEI

APPENDIX 3: STAKEHOLDERS' INTERVIEW RESULTS AND OBJECTIVE MATRIX

	<u>Secondary objective 1</u>	<u>Secondary objective 2</u>	<u>Primary objective</u>
Stakeholder perceptions of PHEI - interview guide questionnaire	To explore current relationships existing between hospitality industry and PHEIs	To explore stakeholders' perceptions and interpretations of PHEIs and their qualifications	To formulate a value-added branding framework and model for PHEIs in South Africa
From a marketing perspective, as well as your perceptions of brand awareness, indicate which of the PHEIs you are aware of? (students/parents)	X	X	X
How did you make contact with your tertiary institution? (students/parents)		X	X
Which advertising media for a PHEI have you been exposed to over the last two years? (students/parents)			X
Indicate the factors that you used to			

decide on your final choice of study institution. (students/parents)	X	X	X
If you granted a bursary to a student, which institution would you prefer them to attend? (sponsors)	X	X	X
Which media channels have you recently (last two years) seen advertising a PHEI? (sponsor)		X	X
Do you recruit your graduates from an agency or by way of advertising? (corporate HR practitioners)			X
Which of the advertising media do you utilise? (corporate HR practitioners)			X
How many (%) graduates did your organisation employ over the last two-three years? (corporate HR)	X		X

practitioners)			
From which public university in the Western Cape (over last two-three years) did your organisation employ graduates? (corporate HR practitioners)	X	X	X
From a marketing perspective, and considering brand awareness, which PHEIs are you aware of? (corporate HR practitioners)	X	X	X
How many graduates from PHEIs did your organisation employ over the last two-three years? (corporate HR practitioners)	X	X	X
Would you prefer that the graduates that you employ come from a PHEI or a public university? (corporate HR practitioners)	X	X	X
In your final recruitment selection process, would you employ a			

public university graduate or a PHEI graduate? (corporate HR practitioners)	X	X	X
Which marketing or advertising media for PHEIs has your organisation been exposed to? (corporate HR practitioners)			X
Is there any communication, correspondence or relationship building between your organisation and a PHEI? (corporate HR practitioners)	X	X	X

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE THEMES AND GROUPING OF DATA

Theme	Coding and data grouping
Stakeholders	Students/ parents/sponsors and corporate HR practitioners.
Brand personality	Attributes and characteristics that brands display that can differentiate them from other brands.
Brand value	Value or worth of the service offered by the brand.
Heritage	Traditionalism and culture of an institution built up over a lengthy period of time.
History	Length of time period in existence that has built up a history, based on past significant events.
Likelihood to recommend to others	Word of mouth recommendations through friends/relatives/peers, as well as social media.
Brand association	Emotive component of knowing a brand through some form of contact or association.
Brand awareness	Knowledge of a brand through advertising of the brand, or any other means of past contact with the brand.
Brand loyalty	Linked to repeat business from a consumer, based on previous service delivery received from the organisation.
Brand names used as cues	These brands are not subconsciously recalled from memory, but require a cue to recall the brand.
Unaided brand recall	When sponsors, in their capacity as stakeholders, discuss a specific PHEI

	brand, based on their own <i>alma mater</i> university attended.
Academic service delivery	Ability of the education institution to deliver operationally on its brand promise made at initial contact.
Brand promise	Advantages and positives of the brand discussed at initial contact that culminates in academic service delivery.
Brand performance	How well the brand performs in terms of success rates and programme accreditation.
Perceptions	Judgements formed by stakeholders based on previous performance or contact made with the brand.
Trusting	Empathy from students/parents displayed towards the brand, or organisation that they deal with.
Service satisfaction	How satisfied participants are with the service received from an academic institution.
Influence	The extent of the marketer's persuasive ability and involvement in students/parents' decision making in order to register at a specific academic institution.
Demographic data	Personal particulars of a respondent, including name and contact details, as well as stakeholder position.
Organisational data	Information and particulars pertaining to organisations such as corporate HR practitioners.
Marketing of an institution	Traditional marketing of an academic institution that includes building

	relationships, networking, making contacts, and establishing a rapport.
Advertising of an institution	Traditional mainstream advertising, as well as social media, depending on the target market reach.
Value-added branding frameworks	Providing a set of parameters or boundaries in which a brand can operate, and that adds value.
Value-added branding model	A branding model that is formulated from the concepts and theories operating within the parameters of the framework that provides value-add to the institution.
Academic governing institutions	Overall governing authority responsible for accreditation and qualifications certification of some PHEIs.
Campus point of delivery	Brand of academic governing institution that is responsible for service delivery of the programmes offered.
Brand contact	Initial contact with the brand, albeit a call to action response from advertising or face-to-face contact with a school presentation /career fayre or open day at a PHEI.
School presentation	Normally, the initial contact that a student has with a specific brand of a PHEI, which is done in the form of a presentation to a Grade 12 group.
Career fayre	A more common form of contact between stakeholders and PHEIs conducted at various times throughout the school year.
Open day	Held at respective campuses of various PHEIs that encourage both parents and students as “walk-ins” on campus to hold

	discussions with campus personnel, and to answer any queries concerning future studies of the students.
Graduate placement	Employment of a graduate from a PHEI by a corporate, based on the graduate's qualifications and study direction.
Brand positioning	Position of a brand, from a consumer's perspective, relative to other brands and their competitive advantage.
Decision making	Stakeholders have the final say in the selection process of a choice of study at a higher academic institution.
Mainstream media	All forms of traditional media that PHEIs use to advertise both their institutions and qualifications offered, including radio, television and print.
Billboard advertising	A popular choice amongst PHEIs, specifically to advertise open days with ever changing activities on campus, and brand awareness.
Social media advertising	Media advertising, using the internet, with a particular appeal to students because of the availability and instantaneous nature of the net devices.
Facebook	The most popular form of social media using the internet, accessible by all students' pre-registration for a PHEI, as well as during their studies for notices, events and updates.

**APPENDIX 5: WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM CORPORATE PRACTITIONERS:
B2B PRACTICES**

Question Number	Questionnaire Number (Interview guide)	Comments and responses
1	-	On average, the number of graduates employed by organisations totalled between two to three, with one organisation employing four graduates.
2	-	All collaborated with line managers concerning the selection of suitable candidates.
3	-	Corporate HR practitioners came from diverse business sectors, including marketing and corporate hospitality.
4	-	Responses were a mixture of recruitment from both advertising and recruitment agencies, with a majority still advertising in traditional mainstream media.
5	28	Advertising in traditional media such as print career supplements, as well as some internet sites such as career junction and/or P-net.
6	27	Respondents employed 75% graduates or more of their total employment compliment.
7	24	One other respondent indicated that they had a graduate from the University of Cape Town.
8	28	All of the respondents indicated some form of knowledge of the more prominent private institutions such as Damelin and Varsity College; however, they were surprised to hear that there are over 90 PHEIs, and were not aware that they offer degree programmes.
9	26	None of the respondents had employed any graduates from PHEIs. Their responses were

		mostly in line with: <i>'not sure if private institutions offer degree courses.'</i>
10	26	Comments were divided with some respondents firmly entrenched in only employing graduates from public universities, while others agreed to employ from private institutions: <i>"if they knew more about them, and what degree programmes they offered."</i>
11	27	Split comments ranging from: <i>"don't see why not"</i> to: <i>"unfortunately not, believe in the traditionalism and accreditation of a public university, especially in South Africa"</i> and: <i>"Don't know much about private universities so rather stay away."</i>
12	29	Minimum marketing or advertising seen from any of the listed PHEIs. Vague responses such as: <i>"think I did see a bill board advertising Varsity College"</i> to: <i>"wasn't there a television advertisement for a private recently?"</i>
13	-	Additional comments included: <i>"thank you for including me in this survey, I think I know a little bit more about private universities"</i> and: <i>"would like to know more about private universities, including accreditation, history, heritage etcetera"</i> and: <i>"no additional comments at this stage, thank you."</i>
14	29-32	All of the corporate HR practitioners indicated that they had received no correspondence such as e-mails, brochures or advertisements concerning open days, career fayres or invitations to presentations at guidance classes. Their comments were similar, stating: <i>"we have had no communication what so ever from any private institutions."</i> And <i>"we would like to have an ongoing relationship with universities for purpose</i>

		<i>of employing suitable graduates”</i>
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APPENDIX 6: WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM FINAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire Number	Number	Comments and responses
15	1	Students indicated that they only knew of the larger PHEIs. Parents were more aware of the academic governing bodies of PHEIs.
16	2	Students made contact with tertiary (higher education) institutions via school presentations, open day visits on campus, and social media. Parents became aware of tertiary institutions through radio and television advertisements. A relative or friend informing them also featured prominently amongst both students and parents.
17	3	Students had been exposed to television and social media. Parents had seen television, print and radio television advertisements, though with minimum use of social media platforms.
18	4	Factors that students used to base their final choice of study institution related to sports offered (relationship building, diversity of subject choice, and smaller classes. Parents based their final choice on pricing (fees), bursaries offered, and traditionalism of the institution.
19	5	In response to a question relating to <i>if you offered a bursary/ scholarship to a student, which tertiary institution would you like them to attend?</i> Sponsors (donors) and sponsors (corporate) indicated a public university.
20	6	Both sponsors (donors) and sponsors (corporate) indicated they had not seen any media advertising a private education institution recently.
21	7	In response to a question relating to <i>whether corporate HR practitioners recruit graduates from an agency or via</i>

		<i>advertising</i> , the corporate HR practitioners mentioned that they use both to recruit.
22	8	The respondents indicated that they used Internet sites such as Career Junction and newspaper supplements such as Job Shop to recruit graduates.
23	9	The responses from corporate HR practitioners indicated that they recruited all graduates - their HR specifications and policies only allowed them to recruit graduates.
24	10	The corporate HR practitioners stated that they recruited graduates from public universities based on their <i>alma mater</i> .
25	11	The corporate HR practitioners identified mainstream and well-known education institutions only as those whose brands they were aware of. Their responses varied from Boston City Campus to Damelin, IMM, Mancosa, Varsity College and Rosebank College.
26	12	Corporate HR practitioners indicated that they had employed graduates from no private education brands
27	13	The corporate HR practitioners indicated a preference for their graduates to come from a public university, with the exception of one respondent, who indicated that they had no real preference in terms of public or private institutions, as they appointed candidates based on their interview performance.
28	14	In response to the question: <i>indicating any marketing or advertising material or signage that corporate HR practitioners had been exposed to</i> , from a list of PHEIs, the responses included bill boards for the AAA School of Advertising, print for Damelin, and a television advertisement for Mancosa.
29	15	In response to the question: <i>any communication, correspondence or relationship building that existed between their organisation and a PHEI</i> - The

		respondents indicated that no correspondence or communication between the two organisations had transpired. They expressed a desire for a relationship as well as the type of relationship in order to recruit suitable graduates.
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APPENDIX 7: ETHICS CLEARANCE

ALAN JOHN BIRD

Outcome of your submission tabled at the Faculty of Business Research
Ethics Committee on the 18th May 2016.

	ALAN JOHN BIRD (203103505)	DTech Marketing Management	APPROVED
• The submission includes a REC5 form completed and acceptable for the review. • Ethical considerations are included within the proposal and there is no indication that harm may occur. • Questionnaire included ad appropriate for the study. • Permission letters included from Metropolitan Health and PSR HR consulting. • Proof of registration included.			

DECISION: APPROVED.

Regards

Fazeela Salie

FBMSETHICS CPUT

APPENDIX 8: EDITOR CERTIFICATE

GRAMMARIAN CERTIFICATE

SHAMILA SULAYMAN PROOF READING AND EDITING SERVICES

25 March 2020

Dear Sir / Madam

This confirms that I have proof read and edited the research study entitled: **“THE FORMULATION OF A VALUE-ADDED BRANDING FRAMEWORK FOR PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA”**, and that I have advised the candidate to make the required changes.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully



(Mrs) SHAMILA SULAYMAN

Communication Lecturer: CPUT

Professional Editor's Group

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