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# Church brands and management styles: The case of South African Protestant churches

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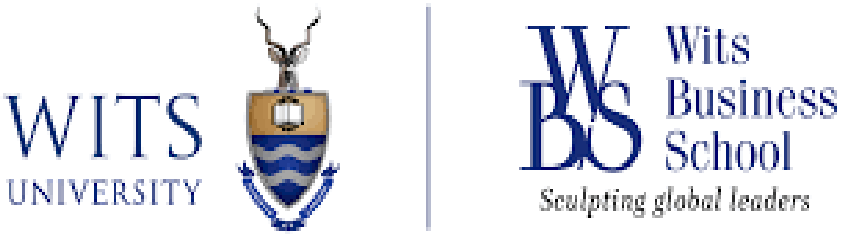
**2022**

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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Juqu, Thando Buhle. (2022). Church brands and management styles: The case of South African Protestant churches [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WireDSpace.https://hdl.handle.net/10539/40967

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# Church brands and management styles: The case of South African Protestant churches

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**A research submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing (MMSM)**

**Johannesburg, 2022**

# ABSTRACT

Protestant church brands continuously fail to recognise that their brands are indeed brands. South African church brands have continuously been accused of engaging in activities that detract and decrease their customer bases. Their roles are to ensure that the customers' needs are met and are satisfactory. This study aimed to measure the perceived relationships between brand management and other variables such as customer loyalty and consumer behaviours. Do church members and other stakeholders agree that church brands are brands and attest to this statement by identifying as customers to the brand? Guided by the positivism approach and descriptive research design, the study utilized a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 171 respondents who were members of the South African Protestant churches. The study established that communication remains a key pillar to the growth and sustenance of any relationship. The study further proved that proper befitting brand management styles play a role in the growth of brands. Under the agency theory, the study highlighted that these customers need to be noticed and heard by protestant church brands. About Thirty six percent (36.3%) of respondents highlighted that brands did not communicate internal issues and scandals. The study further cited poor brand management and the lack of communication, and that a decrease in brand management led to detracting customer loyalty and brand trust, putting these non-profit organisations at significant risk. The study concluded that adopting proper management styles and CRM activities and observing proper brand management styles in these protestant church brands allows brand growth. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by enriching the theoretical scope of theology and brand management in the context of protestant church brands. This ultimately leads to custodians of brands becoming great stewards of the brand.



**Key words:** *brands, Church brands, management styles, Protestant churches, South Africa*

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# DECLARATION

I, **Thando Buhle Juqu**, declare that this work is solely mine and that I have abided by the rules of the university in ensuring this work is true while observing the institutions ethical guidelines,

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family for their support in ensuring I could undergo this study. The feedback and guidance in unpacking some thoughts and learning about their experience with Protestant church brands. Thank you for not losing patent buy instead of always checking on my progress. To you, mommy, ntethe! I will not forget the cups of coffee to keep my energy up. Sis Ayanda, thank you for sometimes overtaking my “office” to do your work and watch movies. It made me realise that, indeed, I have spent some precious moments writing this work. Thank you, Tata, ndiyabonga Dontsa, for always checking in asking me when I am submitting, did I get enough responses from the churches, were the churches identified useful, and guess what they were. To my supervisor, Dr Fanny Saruchera, thank you for the back-and-forth coms, the guidance, and the harsh critique and corrections that have aided in this masterpiece, your patience with me on this project has been unmatched. Finally, I thank myself for persisting and persevering in seeing this experience through, in fact, that God for the wisdom to navigate this study, the strength and the teachings that came from undergoing this study.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## *1.1 Introduction*

Churches have become a sanctuary for spiritual upliftment and have become marketable brands, brands that have been creative in their ways to woe new customers. This chapter aims at giving readers an overview and an understanding of what the research is about. When reading this chapter, the reader would understand how different terms such as the “church” were described. The term church in the study referred to a physical building and included the activities that could likely be used to define a church. This chapter lays the foundation for readers to clearly see the need for more stringent management systems in (non-profit organizations) NPO brands, which will improve customer treatment. Together with emphasising the need for better-managed management styles.

## *1.2 Purpose of the study*

To establish better brand management systems/ business methods and management styles for South African church brands and other NPOs. Together with identifying if these brands have regulatory system/ brand management systems that aid in their potential growth. This research aimed to investigate churches' power on individuals as a brand and an employer brand. The research aimed to identify the need for better brand management styles and see if these entities were regulated. Chapter 9 of the South African constitution in the constitution sections 9(3), 15(1) to (3), 30, 31, 185 and 234 might regulate and manage churches. However, this is not entirely the case, as many protestant church brands continue to treat their stakeholders as though they are ungoverned. It is also important to note a possible hindrance to regulation issues on the matter of South African church brands was which had resulted in this study. Section 7(3) of the constitution is forced to respect and promote church brands as NPOs and religious entities as they are (Besson, 2019). This promotion is paired with the condition that all basic human rights

continue being observed. However, does not highlight the extent to which certain activities and governance can be restricted/promoted within these brands. This obligation forms part of the Bill of Rights as well (Besson, 2019).

It was thus important to note that the constitution does not outline how church brands must be managed and how church brand customers must be treated. The vagueness in the constitution allows non-profit organizations (NPOs) churches to interpret this and do as they wish as the brands would be viewed from a far by the state (Ogar, 2019). Brand management is thus an important aspect that needs to be applied within church brands as they need to push growth and sustainability. Though many might argue that the natural may not necessarily govern and rule the superficial/ supernatural, it was imperative to note that South African Protestant church brands, too, have integrity and sophistication to maintain (Hill, 2016). Because of maintaining brand integrity, these brands are obligated to act as lawmakers who abide by the laws they have set out for communities.

It could further be noted that religious brands now have the veracity to border certain privileges of their followers in obedience with conditions outlined within the Constitution (Besson, 2019). The purpose of this paper was to further examine the management styles and the extent to which church brands comply with set regulations for NPOs and profit-driven entities. Compliance with regulation would give insights into how stringent their management styles are. Do church brands comply with basic management styles, which speak to the makeup of their protestant brand? Furthermore, the research investigated the importance of communication between brands and brand lovers/advocates. This is in the context of the church and its congregants and employees. How were the different church brands positioned and branded? Were these brands acting in accordance with management styles that ensured the flow of communication and trust? Lastly, responding to the final question: was the church managed in a suitable and financially healthy manner that ensures growth and sustainability of the brand?

## *1.3 Context of the study*

The book of Hebrews chapter 10 verse 25 states, “not forsaking the assembling of we together, as are the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Challoner, 2019). South Africa is a truly diverse country with 11 official languages and just over seven different religions, with Christianity being the leading religion in terms of its followers. The Christian brand had been tainted and questioned by both Christians and other religious groups in the past years. Critics have been stemming from how the church brands under the Christianity banner conduct business and treat individuals. Different church brands continue fighting against corruption within South Africa (Makungo, 2017). However, this is not the case with all of these brands. Most of these Protestant brands might enter (might have already entered) into unethical business transactions, as these protestant brands are not required to pay taxes and are not kept accountable in terms of labour laws that protect employees plus any form of reportable governance (Draft Taxation Laws Amendment Bill, 2020).

To better understand that NPOs and these church brands are, in fact, profit-generating organizations and should be treated as such. Together with viewing these brands as organizations that needed a triumphing positioning plus branding. The study investigated the relationships between brand management and the possible failures of brands. The possible failure of brands from four angles: Customer relationship management (CRM), communication, compliance/regulations (brand trust), and brand management. In order for protestant church brands to shift consumer brand perceptions, “these brands need to ensure the integrity of their church, or indeed any secular institution is dependent upon certain beliefs and behaviour common to all its members. Proper internal governance, values that need greater sophistication if a church had many members” (Hill, 2016). In exploring the most recent examples of how imperative, it is for brands to manage their images and management styles. The study looked at the following examples: In the past years, businesses have seen their demise and have thus nearly/have shut their doors or rebranded due to poor brand management styles, including their image-management (customer perceptions), monetary management, the management of basic business activities.

In recent years, Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), one of the biggest brands in South Africa, lost business with many companies due to their financial mismanagement and corrupt activities (Holtzblatt, Foltin, & Tschakert, 2020). This, on its own, shows the extent to which a business could fail should brand images and perceptions surrounding the brand change (Merwe, 2018). Places of worship today are no different from KPMG, as these brands have thus been positioned in numerous ways; however, they have the same end goal: spiritual growth together with spiritual fulfilment for its people. The importance of having a protestant church brand adhering to certain regulations set out by higher structures and bodies. This could assist in ensuring that proper management styles are observed in favours of both brand custodians and customers. Subscribing to a body that regulates church governance and management, church brands enter into activities that potentially change their current brand perceptions and better position. It can be argued that KPMG and other bigger brands answer to higher bodies such as SARS and the chambers of commerce, yet the brand is still tainted. However, such higher bodies could assist in better brand management and the probable future regulatory of South African church brands (SACC) (SACC, 2020). Currently there are on average 4 basic known and trusted brand management styles, these styles speak to how brand are managed as well as the pros and cons (Chung & Byrom, 2020). No one style can be seen as an overall management style however many brands adopt a singular style to ensure their success. Leaders and pastors need to often take lead and steer their ships; however, the cost should never be losing their customers to other brands (Chung & Byrom, 2020). The inability to select a management style which benefits all parties' results in loss of growth and profitability. Protestant church brands in away should adopt management styles which allow for ease of application and versatility (Wu, Peng, Wang & Da, 2022). A need seen with the set-out rules and regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic which altered gathering of individuals and how these brands carried out usually activities for one. The few management styles are Democratic; Autocratic; Persuasive and Laissez-Faire. These styles vary, yielding different results and reactions from customers and leaders (Olga, 2018). The assumption regarding South African protestant church brands is that they have adopted a Persuasive management style, a style which often leaders to

unilateral decision making, as well as the manipulation of its customers. In an ideal world a “real democratic approach would be adopted.

A democratic approach allows for shared authority in decision making and the redundance of any unilateral decision making. With giving every customer a voice, brands ensure true loyalty as well as brand advocacy which is expressed through positive consumer behaviours (Olga, 2018). In a protestant church brand, a democratic approach in management would entail clear lines of communication and feedback. Church brands often call for feedback however it is often acted on if individuals who are higher up in the hierarchy chairs raise them. In a democratic management style, real matters of the church can be raised and deliberated on rather than the cascade of decisions for the head pastors Individuals further assist the brand in growing. Democratic styles in an ideal church scenario could further ensure accountability as all parties are aligned on activities. In the context of the study a democratic management style could further be the release and refill needed by customers. Identifying this style and how the implementation thereof if needed, would be beneficial in correcting many wrongs. In so doing rewriting consumer experience and increasing the observed variables of the study positively: brand trust loyalty and consumer behaviours

This making it easy for versatility and easy adoption of government set out regulations and rules. Such a styles ensures that no ill treatment and manipulation of customer occurs making governing bodies jobs less about correct management of brands but then how do they stretch brands and continue seeing success of these well oil machines (Olga, 2018).

This specific study resolves to understand how the different churches are managed and governed, which had a ripple effect on church brands failure. Are church brands succeeding as non-profit organisations in terms of growth and continue to create revenue streams for their employees? Had the mismanagement of different activities in the church led to its possible failure? Most churches are not financially focussed businesses or organisations, nonetheless like any other organisation, it was established to focus on both the development and their sustainability over the years (McFate, 2010). Due to this negligence of dissimilar activities and failure to monitor rudimentary management styles,

religious organizations have in recent years been under the publics' scrutiny. This paper sought to highlight these brand governance and management issues that result in misconduct and possible brand failure.

According to Awuku-Gyampoh and Asare (2019), these brands not only have socio-economic responsibilities to the societies they operate within. These church brands have a social together with an economic responsibility to the many individuals subjected to its influence. Furthermore, these religious organizations responsibility is to ensure spiritual fulfilment, job creation and social interaction to its members and society (Tanui, Omare & Bitange, 2016). Nevertheless, as viewed by this paper, most importantly, the responsibility to be a well-managed brand ensures continuous financial growth for its employees and members (Tanui et al., 2016). If the different church brands fail in their fundamental duties regarding the congregants due to rudiments of governance and management skills, they are at a greater risk of mislaying their moral scope. At the same time, the church risks its doors closing (SACC, 2020).

The absence of prominent brand management styles that advocate for growth makes these brands prone to demise. In early 2014, the protestant church brand as a whole was in the public's eye; subsequently, pastors of certain religious churches instructed its members to consume grass as a way of being drawn closer to God (Reilly, 2014). In 2016, again, another issue made the public's eye. Different pastors instructed their members to use a home detergent (Doom) closer to God (Timeslive, 2018). These occurrences lead to the supposition that the different church brands are under managed/regulated. This assumes that the distinct brands lack public relation management skills. Brands, which have regulatory bodies and professionally managed boards, have set guidelines in managing daily activities, their organizations, and basic public relations (PR) protocols for any fallout (Kent & Li, 2020). Set communication tools and strategies should assist and limit any damage to the brands avoid such associations (Luxton, Reid & Mavondo, 2015). As a result, this forms one of the hypotheses to be investigated in the study. Does the management of communication in church brands play a role in the church's failure?

For this study, the term “church brands” shall be utilized to reference all protestant churches in a South African context, excluding the Catholic Church, Anglican; Evangelicals; Methodist; Islamic; Muslims and the Baptist church. The management of these organisations image is important; thus, bodies of regulations/management need to be set up to protect the church's image. However, to ensure that churches do not inflict harm on individuals (Kgatle, 2018). In this context, the terms management, management of regulations is the organisation or controlling of people together with set ethical business standards (Fowler & Crystal, 2010).

The South African Council of Churches serves as one of the main regulatory bodies of religious organisations. It regulates and looks after 36 churches brands currently. Such a body should manage all South African church brands' governance and approved brand management styles (SACC, 2020). In managing and being a regulatory body for the church, the South African Council of churches can then assist in ensuring that there is synergy across churches and less room for any form of mismanagement and corruption (SACC, 2020). As businesses adhere to different bodies that regulate their operations, these brands should too. Businesses are regulated and looked after by entities such as the competition commission, Chamber of commerce and South African Revenue Services (SARS). These church organizations need to adhere to set rules that ensure that adequate growth can be realised. This is a core function of the church, which leads to exploring the Stewardship theory of management (McFate, 2010). According to McFate (2010), this theory links Discipleship to Stewardship; as the church aims to do right by individuals in a spiritual form, the church needs individuals employed to have proper management over financial activities for its continued growth and survival. The study investigated the need for regulatory bodies in a non-profit organisation as a brand management tool. Do stakeholders such as the employees and congregants know the management structures of their churches, or are pastors making unilateral decisions (Fowler & Crystal, 2010)?

## *1.4 Problem Statement*

Poor brand management styles within NPO brands, specifically church brands, have resulted in the mismanagement of the funds, poor CRM, and poor communication, which can lead to a possible failure of the church.

### *1.4.1 Main problem*

Poor brand management styles within church brands have resulted in poor brand perceptions and limited growth. The disregard of adopting a befitting management style preferably a democratic management style which speaks to how certain protestant church brands can be run, remains a problem. With an incorrect management styles comes an increased number of dissatisfied stakeholders, stemming not only from customers however employees as well. The inability to adopt the correct styles creates shifting consumer behaviours which is not beneficial to the brand (Chung & Byrom, 2020). Furthermore, the incorrectly adopted management style often affects how customers receive and understand communique issues to them, it often affects the core stewardship role the church and its leaders are called for (McFate, 2010). It lastly affects they relationship between the leaders and the customers as it shifts gratification and bottom lines to no longer benefit the served customers however, benefiting the agents and their agendas. While opening room for corruption, fraud, mistreatment of individuals and loss of trust (Chung & Byrom, 2020). This problem filters from the brands through to customers of these church brands. All brands seek growth and customer loyalty (Somerfield, Mortimer, & Evans, 2018). In order to achieve such, brands now need to ensure that their management styles speak to their growth plans and strategies (Roe, 2020). Many protestant church brands are failing in their management style efforts, which sees their brands almost failing. Failing in managing and adopt the correct management styles suited for these brands has put them in difficult positions. Some of these positions could be avoided if brands start applying strategies to mitigate poor management. Treating the church brand as a profit-making entity with clear financials would be a fair starting point.

### *1.4.2 Sub-problems*

- **Sub problem 1-** To investigate if the mismanagement of churches has a negative impact on customer brand trust
- **Sub-problem 2**- To investigate the extent of which communication in protestant church brands positively influences customer relationship management that then affects consumer interactions with brands.
- **Sub-problem 3-** To investigate if poor brand management negatively impacts church member loyalty.
- **Sub-problem 4-** To test if customer relationship management positively impacts church member behaviours.

## *1.5 Significance of the study*

The study sought to explore how individuals feel about the governance of churches and how church brands manage the public's perceptions of their brands. Are church customers aware of the powers they exude in the brand's growth? Do they then identify as consumers of the protestant church brand? Does the assumed persuasive management style affect how individuals interact with the protestant church brands? The study was an exploration into whether poor management tools and styles of the brands are reasons for disaffiliations with the churches and why. The study sought to understand the importance of church funds and how they are utilized and recorded, which had a ripple effect on the brand and its supporters. Lastly, the study explored whether the communication in churches is sufficient for its stakeholders. Whether or not customer relationship management (CRM) tools are in place for the church's customers in understanding the basic principles of accounting and how it can better position and build your brand. These protestant brands can now survive longer. These brands could potentially grow beyond the theological business but venture into other businesses under the church's brand. It is important to note that growth is the one visible measure at a glance of the eye. Disclosing the brand's financials through integrated reports or ways accessible to the church members might increase trust and lobby a few members from

other congregations. This could be achieved especially for disgruntled church members who do not trust and believe their tithes and offerings are utilised correctly. A persuasive management style usually has the ability to sway decisions in the leader's favour, justifying the need for such a choice (Wu, Peng, Wang & Da, 2022). The key in such a style is to ensure customers of the brand feel in-control while asking "relevant questions" the advantages are of course elevated levels or trust and loyalty, however some brand customers become disgruntled and feel they may not be heard or seen. Is this indeed the case or are there other factors that affect consumer behaviours in these brands. In persuading the congregations the church stewards and agents are able to make unilateral decisions and later justify whilst lobbying for support. These protestant brands push for their agenda points similar to the Omontso case report by authors (Nkosi, 2018). They key traits of such a styles ensured that the pastor got away with gruesome crimes while masking it in broad day light.

The church is a non-profit service provider, while customers are the congregants and other primary stakeholders (Erasmus & Mans, 2005). The study aimed to provide a view to both the church and individuals regarding church brands and how brand management impacts brand perceptions. The study sought significance in adding to the literature on the importance of church governance and what good governance is? How the church would benefit from good governance and management of activities. Furthermore, the research shared insights on how upcoming and new churches of any denominations should avoid a unilateral decision approach where pastors would decide on operations that affect the brand without any prior disclosure. Affiliation with bodies such as the South African Council of Churches is not compulsory but keeps a clean accountable brand afloat. Affiliations with recognised regulatory bodies could increase trust towards the institution, resulting in anticipated growth (Murray, 2019).

## *1.6 Delimitations of the study*

This study included individuals from the Midvaal-Sedibeng district. However, there were provisions for respondents not residing within the district who were members of the identified protestant church brands. Not all protestant church brands were be included in the study, only the identified ones. Visitors to the identified protestant church brands were considered part of the study only if they were a part of the protestant churches consistent chain of communication (Church WhatsApp group, Facebook). Then these individuals took part in the study. The study references terms such as church brands, which only translate to protestant church brands. This study delimited the study to only the Midvaal district. The data is not a national representation of churches in Southern Africa.

The study focused on all individuals, who wished to take the survey as the survey, was at the respondent's discretion. Furthermore, the study focused on only the protestant church denominations, excluding Catholics and Muslims. Protestant church brands can be defined as the churches brands that protested the Catholic Church/ Church of Rome in the 16$^{th}$ century to form various brands. Definition of protestant church brands can further be seen as any church where the church is situated in South Africa.

## *1.7 Definition of terms*

- **Failure**: the sense of closing the protestant church brand down or individuals moving to other church brands
- **Management**: All forms of management efforts, whether poor or good/ how poorly or great church brands work closely with their direct stakeholders
- **Stakeholders**: Junior pastors/ church board/ church members/ employees of the brand
- **Church brands**: All identified protestant churches
- **Protestant church:** Brands that identify as protestant and are led by a pastor/ Reverend / religious leader/ church board.

- **Management style:** Persuasive Management – leaders/managers make final decisions, however, use persuasion skills to ensure their interests are fulfilled.
- **Pastor / Reverend/ religious leader**: anyone who identifies as an individual who teaches religious scriptures with/without formal education.

## *1.8 Assumptions*

It was presumed that all respondents were church members of the protestant church brand. It was also assumed that respondents would have encountered poor management and fully understood how a church brand should run and what constitutes a reliable brand. The assumption once again is that these results, of poor management and brand decline are due to a persuasive (Charismatic) management style. A persuasive management style where leaders have the final decision on all factors which affect the church brand and its operations

## *1.9 Structure of the research*

The research is structured in five chapters. Chapter 1 gave a background and context to the study. It sets the scene by ensuring that the reader fully understands the title and its relevance in today's age. Chapter 2 presents an exploratory literature chapter, where the different variables are justified and observed. Chapter 2 highlights the different theories which sustained the research. Chapter 3 takes the reader through the study's methodology, identifying and underlying which methodology worked best for the study and the justification. The chapter further elaborates on which key metrics understand the hypothesized relationships in the last two chapters, thus serving as the data analysis and interpretation. Chapter 4 would then be the data presentation from what was survived, an analysis and a discussion of what the data presented means. Finally, the last chapter. Chapter 5 is then the conclusion of the study together with set recommendations for future studies and explorations on the topic.

## *1.10 Chapter Summary*

This Chapter has given a brief synopsis of the research by highlighting previous research on poor brand management, management styles, and brand failure. This chapter stated how the study could contribute to management literature on NPO brand management and growth strategies in Southern Africa. This chapter leads to the next chapter (Chapter 2), where theories and frameworks are identified and elaborated.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## *2.1 Introduction*

Church attendance and membership are fundamental for individuals (O'connor & Alexander, 2002). This statement alone sheds light on the importance of running a church as a well-managed business with ethics. Many marketplace principles apply in a protestant church brand context (Duggin, 2017). A protestant church is thus defined as any western church which does not follow any catholic church or eastern orthodox teachings and rules. The term protestant is derived from the actual act of protesting against practices and beliefs the Roman Catholic Church followed (Bryan, Choi & Karlan, 2021).

Furthermore, what leads to this study is the urge to understand the power of Protestant churches as brands possess over consumer behaviours (Kopiec, 2020). Together with the exploration on whether these churchgoers view themselves as consumers. Do the brand's management styles affect customer loyalty? These questions aimed to open room for further studies looking at how churches can satisfy consumer needs through simple tasks such as consistent communication from a management perspective.

This study aimed to understand how the proposed hypotheses led to the church brands' failure due to misconstrued perceptions. The study explores the different church brands under one study, assuming that the church or religious institutions are one thing from the viewpoint of unknowing individuals. The core focus of this study is to view the church as a business that runs many activities with high proficiency in operations management and business management skills (Duggin, 2017). Operations management is viewed as how entities maximise their profits while ensuring that their goods and services are not compromised (Grosby, 2016). According to Grosby (2016), operations management deals with how resources are managed, controlled, utilised, and reported on. Reporting

is thus a factor of communication that looks at how information was shared with primary stakeholders and the public (Bravo, Cambra, Centeno & Melero, 2017).

This chapter presents an overview, which indicates what the study is about and how the literature would be observed. The chapter gives a brief context to the study and highlights key terms, which fall under the different variables. The different variables are further discussed with their linkages to other variables, telling the reader the proposed hypothesis to understand the conceptual framework and how they relate to one another. The chapter further described the theories that guided the study.

## *2.2 Contextualising the study*

Many protestant church brands are seeing the need to position their brands in a more marketable way. The power of branding correctly can ensure that distinct brands stand out more than others (Harjanto, Ellitan & Muljani, 2021). Brand owners now value and understand how effective ways of marketing can help reposition a brand, and it is, however, important to note that before a brand can implement marketing and branding strategies. Brands first need to have identified management styles, which ultimately guides and centres all brand-related activities in the wake of more informed and knowledgeable customers (Essays UK, 2018). The study-explored literature, which could then help highlight and identify how brands rely on proper management tools and styles to 1-succeed in internally managing their activities 2- to increase brand trust and awareness/reliability.

### *2.2.1 Church and Church brands*

A church is then defined as a religious non-profit setup or place where individuals gather to worship or fellowshipping together (Pingel & Bauermeister, 2018). The number of hours spent in these organizations in a week can indicate whether employees and other stakeholders are aware of the management styles of different activities and the consequences. These hours indicate how much of a consumer; everyone is (Kopiec, 2020). However, questions such as “do church brands practise brand/ operation

management in efforts of ensuring that their image and brands continue seeing growth and support" (Filistrucchi & Prüfer, 2019) still need confronting. However, church brands were defined as the different unique brands found under the term church (Shirley, 2018). All these entities have similar operations and were positioned as religious organizations. However, it is vital to note that the differences in the church brands would be items such as symbols and logos used to identify a protestant church (Shirley, 2018). Even though the church was a brand, it was important to break down and highlight the different protestant church brands. Church brands vary through noticeable and small items such as colours, fonts, and background (Harjanto et al., 2021). Below listed are a few unavoidable problems which had been identified. These problems highlight how everything that may cause these brands to fail was linked to poor management. With reference to Chapter 1 section 1.7, "definition of terms", all identified problems are used in the context of protestant church brands. In efforts of explaining how management plays or has played a role in moulding the cultures and behaviours exhibited by stakeholders. Poor/good management was thus be measured only using variables in the study. These variables assisted in the identification of how management plays a role in these brands and their success.

- **Sub problem 1-** Does the mismanagement of churches have a negative impact on customer brand trust?
- **Sub-problem 2**- Does the extent of communication in protestant church brands positively influence customer relationship management affecting consumer interactions with brands?
- **Sub-problem 3-** Does poor brand management negatively impacts church member loyalty?
- **Sub-problem 4-** Can customer relationship management positively impact church member behaviours?

### *2.2.2 Church governance and management styles*

Management is at the centre of any establishment in helping that organization achieve its set objectives and goals (Toapanta, Gallegos & Trejo, 2016). It incorporates how brands bring about their abilities together with strategies and efforts set in motion to maximise all efficiencies and resources (Essays UK, 2018).

The Protestant Church is thus like any other organization and needs robust management tools and strategies to control its resources to maintain good relations with customers. According to Birkinshaw, Hamel and Mol (2008), religious organizations are made up of different departments, which are interdependent. How all these departments work together could improve or decrease positive consumer behaviours.

The different subdivisions control the dissimilar undertakings that forward the core objectives of an entity, such as growth and inclusion for its people (Essays UK, 2018). For this reason, the paper looked to adopt the theory of stewardship. A theory highlights the importance of managing and representing consumer rights within church brands, affecting customer behaviours. Added to the theory of stewardship that is defined later in the text.

The study aimed fulfilling partial requirements of the strategic management framework by Grobler, Van de Walt and De Klerk (2012). The framework comprises 5 phases starting with developing a strategic vision for the protestant church brand. In all 5 phases, the brand owners would need to assess the brand's performance and changing conditions, incorporating them to the next phase for optimized customer experiences. Once the relationship of the different variables of the study is understood, all phases of the framework can be fulfilled, for example, creating a strategic approach to improving customer loyalty and consumer behaviours.

### *2.2.3 The difference in brands*

Brand management styles differ based of different objectives and how different organisations are made up. Adopting a brand management style for a telco company or

a fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company might not necessarily be the same however, the bottom lines would be identical in the sense that they both corporations would aspire for increased profits (Zavattaro, Marland & Eshuis, 2021). Understanding what branding is in the different contexts is thus important. Branding is defined as the creation of a companies, products, or services perception. However, combining these with logo, designs colours and other unique identifiers. These perceptions may be received as positive or negative over time depending on how well they are managed (Zavattaro, Marland & Eshuis, 2021).

Branding further has the ability of assisting in increasing brand equity especially in brands that are similar. According to authors, branding or a brand is the actual identity of a company, product or services as well as selling the attractiveness of the item (Andersson, Solitander & Ekman, 2019). In brand management of clusters, one needs to be weary of "how clusters manage its reputations and the achievement of a distinct position based on its identity" (Andersson, Solitander & Ekman, 2019). With different clusters comes different parameters of identity based off what the clusters do differently, how you brand and position one would be different for the next.

Big corporates brand by distinguishing themselves from competitors, this is achieved through value creations the brand promises and elements which assists in creating brand equity and uniqueness (Zavattaro, Marland & Eshuis, 2021). This is especially important in brands that have comparable products and services. Brands further need to become recognizable as this increase's customer trust. Coca-Cola is a splendid example of this, as in 2016 they launched a "one brand" strategy which aimed to house all their Coca-Cola soft drink lines under one umbrella "taste the feeling" (Geiregat, 2022). In creating one umbrella for the different lines of soft drinks they were able to show customers that these are from one brand. Increasing attraction and desirability by virtue of that one identifiable trait which stretches across brands (Geiregat, 2022). Branding of brands is important as it gives customers perceptions and a preconceived ideas of what to expect when engaging with set brands. However, noting the contrary allows the study to fully understand the extent of branding in the context of protestant churches (Moberg, 2020). Authors believe branding is a myth logo symbols and even positioning of a brand is not

important. The argument lies in understanding that a brand is an emotions that customers have towards your services as a church. Do these services make the feel good; better or gratified by their consumption (Moberg, 2020).

Once customers see no perceived value in the consumption of your services no level of branding can resuscitate the brand (Zavattaro, Marland & Eshuis, 2021). It is however important to note that even in such cases customers may still consume by virtue of dire need convenience or lack of options. Understanding these notions and nuances is what drives the study to further investigate the proposed relationships between brand management and the “dependent” variables. Arguably branding can assist in brand recognition, resonance and a certain rush of emotions however noting that with brands such as churches, religion, and spiritual wellness (Moberg, 2020). These brands have been built over centuries which in effect has given them “good” strong brands (Geiregat, 2022). Inheriting good strong brands, one needs to investigate whether indeed these strong brands are meeting the needs of their customers. Consequently, if they lack in doing so, to investigate and understand why these brands are not living up to their inherited statues.

Contextualizing even further we look at APPLE vs Protestant church brands. Apple over the years has been a brand that customers globally resonate and feel good about having. Apple is not rated a high-quality brand by virtue of its symbols and logo however by how customers rave and overlook other brands for it (Mao, Lai, Luo, Liu, Du, Zhou, & Bonaiuto, 2020). Similarly with the church, it may not be seen or identified as a marketable brand primarily because of how it has been positioned. A place for spiritual warfare and fulfilment, getting the preached sermon and giving offerings which in return makes customers feel whole. However similar to Apple, which is not what makes the brand a good brand. What would make these brands great is if they catered for the ever-changing needs of customers in the way that continues to make them feel good with their consumption. (Mao et al., 2020) This study seeks to investigate whether or not customers see these brands as brands, and if so, are these good strong brands?

Branding a NPO on the other hand is no different than branding for the profit sector as requires the same sort of attention. However, a little more innovation than usual as these brand identities, are built on social impacts and organizational cohesion. NPO's are built off a few pillars such as ethics; brand integrity and democracy. Leveraging social impacts, societal issues, and boarders, as this is what helps build their identities. In the context of church brands, the need for a religious affiliations in consumers are what then would drive and builds churches brand identities. How then these brands create uniqueness is how they would win over trust and increased membership (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote & Couwenberg, 2018). Uniqueness can be driven through how NPOs then position their daily activities and executions differently from their competitors. Even in doing so, because of the nature of NPOs all these need to be done in a manner that allows for serving their mission (Kylander & Stone, 2012).

In NPOs, their brands become more powerful when internal identity and external perceptions are aligned as well as with their value missions. While in profit sectors brands are more powerful based of external features and how their customers view them (Kylander & Stone, 2012).

In the context of consumer behaviours, it is important that NPOs understand motivations, cultures, and perceptions of their customers, as this then aids in how to connect better. Consumer behaviours are characterised by the abovementioned as these factors determine the make up and thought process of customers (Sama, 2019). These factors might further shape perceptions on engagement and decoding communique from brands. When looking at the culture construct on behaviours, this speaks to religion and how consumers reach to certain stimuli based of what their surroundings have dictated (Sama, 2019). Church brands thus have the responsibility to understand fully the positions they hold and powers in regard to their customers. As an NPO that is driven by social impacts and social issues, Church brands could be seen as a place through which one seeks refuge. In how refugees are treated in the first encounter with custodians and stewards of they place, that is how it will for ever be remembered in the minds of the consumers (Shirley,2018). With such encounters NPOs needs to understand that branding happens instantly. While one individual's experience is great at first in counter even at the stages

of detriment and complete poor brand management. These customers could remain loyal and advocates of the brands. It is thus important to note such in the study as to avoid assumptions that all members/ customers are brand loyal (Shirley,2018).

As social warriors church brands need to look beyond what other profit generating corporates do in absentia of ethics, and good governance. Protestant church brands need to consider motivations and cognitive elements which shift behaviours, loyalty, and perceptions (Shirley,2018).

Motivations then looks at the cognition elements together with the emotional components. According to authors, this then speaks to immediate environment and influence on how customers feel or would feel. Lastly perceptions speak to how overtime as influenced by motivations; these customers view the distinct brands (Qazzafi, 2020). Perceptions can either be negative or positive however dependent on current and previous engagements with said brands. Hypotheses are then drawn up to indicate how simple motivations based on brand management styles can sway consumer motivations and perceptions loyalty and trust. Do brand consumers perceive these brand as beneficial and gratifying to their needs?

## *2.3 Theoretical and conceptual framework*

In the following literature review, the study listed the identified variables and linked them to relevant theories. Lastly, the aim was to ensure that the variables were explained to warrant the study within protestant church brands.

### *2.3.1 Theoretical framework*

The study focused only on three theories to understand the relationship dynamics between church management styles and brand perceptions through the customers' eyes. The theories are Agency theory, stewardship theory, and communication theory. These three theories were further elaborated on under the different variables they cater to as they are key in understanding consumers and their reactions to brand activities. The Agency theory highlighted the importance of a management style that fits a set brand.

The communications theory's contribution to the study was to ensure that the mode of communication and mediums are better understood. In better understanding communication and its role, the theory helped identify flaws in current communication styles.

Two additional theories were used in conjunction with the abovementioned three theories. However, it is important to note that the additional two theories were explored to ensure a more vivid picture could be drawn relating to how customers/consumers view and perceive brands: The theory of reasoned action, this philosophy aids as a dais to sustenance and validate this study. The theory relevant highlighted that consumers' actions and opinions are driven and steered by their existing perceptions plus attitudes (Albarracin, Johnson & Muellerleile, 2001).

#### *2.3.1.1 Theory of planned behaviours and reasoned action*

This theory gave weight study by giving an overview of how consumers plan their actions guided by knowledge and experiences. The overview was that customer brands should ensure all their efforts and ventures were communicated well to their targeted audiences. An example would be how protestant church brands needed to notify their members of arising issues that might affect those providing promised services to their members (Ajzen, 2002). This theory aided in exploring the agency theory and the communication theory; the theory of planned behaviour thus made it easier to understand consumers and how they act on their awareness owing to them recognizing and being loyal to a protestant church (Ajzen, 2002).

The theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour give way to observe underlying variables in this study, such as communication, perceptions/positioning, attitudes, and beliefs of consumers surrounding the protestant church brand (Conner, 2020). Brand positioning is thus how consumers perceive the protestant church brand. What were the benefits they were attained from the following brand? Brand positioning in the context of this study becomes the total value consumers want to perceive when correlating with a protestant church brand (Sujan & Bettman, 1989).

#### *2.3.1.2 The communication theory*

The communication theory aims to break down and explain the interpretation of communication. Communication is significant and indispensable as it pursues to advise consumers about the protestant church brands and any perceived benefits (Luxton, Reid & Mavondo, 2015). Both communication and positioning of a brand thus speak to how important it is for brands to manage their communication to avoid brand failure. Both protestant church brands and church members rely on the perceptions and reactions in making informed decisions about brands (Luxton et al., 2015). The study thus wanted to understand whether church members remain in churches under a spiritual obligation to their religions or due to a biased preconceived perception of what a protestant church is.

Customer loyalty and brand acknowledgement are heirs to a well-placed brand; these, in turn, have the power to shape behaviours and perceptions about a brand (Alden & Nariswari, 2017). When a protestant church brand or any other brand manages their communication well, consumer brand attitudes can thus change as behaviours become altered and customer loyalty could be observed (Kanchan, Kumar & Gupta, 2015). Were consumers of the different protestant church brands aware that they were loyal consumers, and the different churches were actual marketable brands?

The moment customers identify the different churches as brands and themselves as customers, customers need to be more aware of the daily transactions between the two parties. Brand knowledge and identification thus offer a nation of benefits for the protestant church brand (Keller, 2008). Brand awareness and knowledge often change consumer behaviours. This variable could create trust between brands and consumers, directly influencing decision-making. A precise brand that a client knows, and trusts is likely to be fused within a customer's observation and remembrance (MacDonald & Sharp, 2000). Hence, we can conclude that brand awareness may shift consumer behaviours, increasing the brand sooq overall performance.

#### *2.3.1.3 The Agency theory*

The agency theory is often used to describe relationships between business and their direct dependence/principles. The theory highlights how entities are agents to their dependents and should at all times act in the best interest of their dependents (Poletti-Hughes, 2019). In the context of the study, all stakeholders who are not part of the leadership or pastoral teams become the principles of the church whilst the church brand leaders and pastors become their agents. The theory was implemented to ensure that the church delivers all transactions that benefit the principle. The theory further dictates that the principles can delegate and decide how church brands are run (Schillemans & Bjurstrøm, 2019). However, it could be assumed that most principles do not understand the power and roles they play in protestant church brands.

#### *2.3.1.4 The Stewardship theory*

According to McFate (2010), the Stewardship theory links Discipleship to Stewardship because the theory is limited to realism and relevance. The theory is befitting as it gives a realistic view of what is expected from pastors and the church as it is they act on behalf of the real brand owners- (consumers) of the brand (McFate, 2010). The theory of stewardship highlights that the brand owners employ pastors and their boards to ensure they can use consumer products and services their church provides. From the employment thereof, the governance and management styles become the onus of the employee as they now act in the full interest of the consumers. The pastor and the board decide upon whatever governance and management styles the church brands adopt, which will be in their benefit and interest (Chrisman, 2019; Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997). Even though the consumers have employed the pastors, they indirectly succumb their powers to the church's leadership. Understanding this notion is vital as it draws connections to how important it is for church brands to have proper management and governance styles that propel growth as the consumers are no longer piloting and driving the brand (Chrisman, 2019).

Integrating these theories creates the ability to ensure that consumers are understood together with the relationship between them and the brands. This is achieved through investigating the roles linked to these theories and their successes. For example, the use

of the communication theory to understand how to avoid clutter and noise in communicating to brand customers. Pairing the communication model to the agency theory where brand agency communicates at the right level to reach their desired customers. These theories further ensure aid in ensuring that concepts are understood. Understanding the interlinked relationships between customers, their behaviours, brands, and roles. The common thread between the agency and the stewardship theories would be how both theories aim to ensure that the brands act accountably and responsibly. Propelling growth can only be seen when a brand adopts and practises proper management styles (Chrisman, 2019).

Furthermore, according to McFate (2010), these theories show how brand custodians are indeed the face of the brand, who should always act in the best interest of both brand and customers. It is also key to note that communications tie together these relationships. Communication remains a pivotal player in any relationship; however, how communication is sent, received, and understood by all involved parties determines the success of that relationship (Luxton et al., 2015).

### *2.3.2 Conceptual Framework*

The below conceptual model represents the observed relationships in the study. It highlighted which variables affected the other and the causal effect relationship. Four hypotheses were linked to five variables in this study.

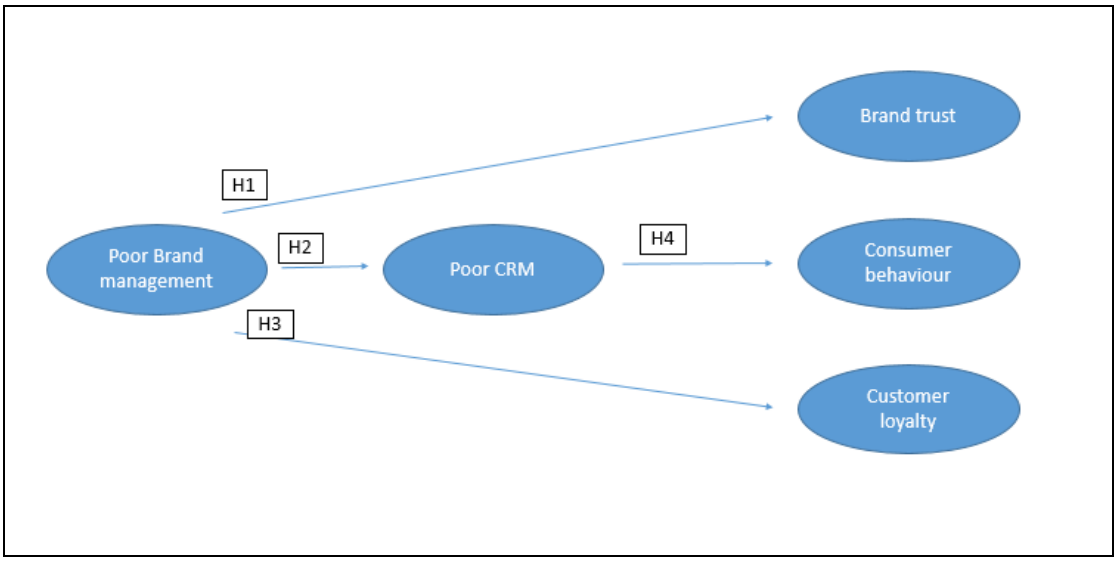



*Figure 1: Conceptual framework*

*Source: Author's own construct*

### *2.3.2.1 Brand management and Brand trust*

Financial development/growth is important for the long-term triumph of all organizations. Like any organisation, the church is in business, and it seeks to see itself successful for a prolonged period. This can be achieved through transcendent and management science approaches (Ershova & Hermelink, 2013). The poise amid management approaches and spirituality also ensures that the protestant church manages normativity views of the management of the church. Hence, church brands should be run as profit-seeking business entities (Ershova & Hermelink, 2013).

This means that individuals have set norms, views and standards of how different churches operate and should continue operating (Rainer, 2020). This knowledge makes it simpler for individuals to notice these mishandled churches. The scientific management approach thus helps the church assist with financial literacy and management, making space for transparency and customer trust (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2008).

Non-trust, corruption, fraud, and money laundering are some of the huge issues that can lead to the failure of churches, and this is due to the loss of trust individuals may have

with these brands (Iwasokun, Akinyede & Fadamiro, 2018). Not much is recorded regarding churches, money laundering and corruption since churches are not required to report on their financial activities (Obidike et al., 2015). A research paper in Nigeria showed that church brands engage in such unethical activities. When they were not, these funds were disclosed as donations (Kingston, 2020).

Many church brands engage in the mismanagement of funds, as they do not run the church as a profit-generating business (Rainer, 2020). Churches that engage in such activities act unethically. However, they put the church brand, and its employees at risk should such news become public knowledge of all unethical behaviours and detract customer brand trust (Harvey, 2020).

This creates a tarnished brand, which leads to the loss of trust and failure of that brand. Were churches engaging in the mismanagement of funds knowingly, or is it an issue of financial illiteracy and the lack thereof of a regulatory business such as SARS? Such probing questions result in the below-stated hypotheses to ensure customers do not lose trust in protestant church brands. If its board and religious leaders conduct the church appropriately, organizational growth is guaranteed (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2008).

Identifying the elements of brand trust is one of the variables which carry out the study. According to Delgado-Ballester, and Munuera-Alemán (2005), the brand trust had in the past been owed to experience individuals have succumbed to together with how the brand appeared and positioned itself to that customer. For brands and churches to continue benefiting from growing markets and congregations, they need to build brand trust (Delgado-Ballester, & Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

The spectrum of unethical behaviours is broad and can sometimes be difficult to navigate; however, the same best practice principles should be applied (Harvey, 2020). Often brands, which engage in unethical behaviours, risk the brand of its reputation and how the public perceive the brands become negative. Protestant church brands and other NPOs were no different as they are in the public domain to serve. Unethical behaviours range from corruption and money laundering to distrusting and transparency on how funds or resources are utilised (Obidike et al., 2015).

Unethical behaviours have the power to detract and decrease brand trust, which relatively affects brand growth (Harvey, 2020). Brands must have management tools to manage risks that might endanger the brands. These management styles often have measures and guides on how to better mitigate and curb arising threats to business (Gössling et al., 2012).

The relationship between brands and customers tends to be fragile; this assumes that customers see themselves in brands they support. Ethical behaviour and values of whom customers believe themselves to often lead to such reflections of themselves in brands, a failure on each end to uphold their end results in customers swaying away from the brand (Harvey, 2020). This led to the following hypothesis.

> ***H1****. The mismanagement of churches has a negative impact on customer brand trust.*

#### *2.3.2.2 Brand management and Customer relationship management*

Efficiency only comes into play when the brands look at how better to implement or respond to customer feedback. In refuting, some parts of what previous authors have said, the paper then highlights how personalised messaging in a church context may be irrelevant. Does personalized messaging work when complaints and feedback are submitted anonymously? Personalised communication and messaging could only be effective if the brand were tirelessly working to respond to a customer's actual point of frustration. This current approach on CRM by Richards and Jones (2008) also works if organizations often know where the response is directed and to whom.

Erasmus and Mans (2005) noted that the church is a service provider while the employees and congregants were the primary customers. It is then important to note the importance of customer relationship management (CRM) in managing a fruitful relationship between these partnerships. CRM allows for improved service quality customers from other industries; however, to employees and church members, what is the role. CRM also ensures that businesses seek and maintain continuous growth within various industries. Not much is published about CRM in the church construct; however, reflections from

Nyadzayo and Khajehzadeh (2016) assume that different church brands continue to see growth if CRM is implemented well.

It can then be argued that churches, as NPOs, thus need to follow the theory of non-profit organizations that states that institutions and entities need to benefit their beneficiaries (Reich, 2014). Because of this theory, the paper was thus able to emphasise the importance of implementing CRM tools within Church brands. However, the theory of NPOs may not be the most relevant to this study. Theories such as the theory of reason action would be better suited for the study. The theory highlights that consumers' actions and opinions could be driven and steered by their existing perceptions and attitudes (Albarracin, Johnson & Muellerleile, 2001).

Such a theory leads for the exploration of the definition of the term church to fully understand how to better customer relationship management to prevent the church's failure and negative brand perceptions (Reich, 2014). According to the oxford dictionary, the church is defined as a building used for public Christian worship (Oxford, 2020). According to the holy bible, the definition of church is a public assembly of people (Challoner, 2019). However, these could not be the only definitions that lead to a specific definition for this study. In defining the assembly of people, readers can then assume that a church would be made up of individuals. These individuals could be gathered for any reason whatsoever but with a common goal in mind (Assembly, 2020).

However, according to the text from "The Bride of Christ" – (United Faith Church, 2019), the church is thus then denoted as a religious congregation or an organization that assembles at a particular location in a particular time to fellowship together for spiritual fulfilment. The Bride of Christ – (United Faith Church, 2019) says that the church is the bride of Christ. For this study, we go by the definition of by (Assembly, 2020) and define the church as a public assembly of Christian and non-Christians, Muslims and Jews who seek spiritual fulfilment together, in any space they take up. For this study, understanding the term church allows us to note that CRM users' customer data for specialised superior customer services and improved customer satisfaction (Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016). Customer relationship management looked at how customers were prioritised and

listened to. It highlights the importance and benefits of having fruitful relations with customers for the benefit of the brand. Positive or negative relationships can shift consumer behaviours (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

#### *2.3.2.2.1 Communication affects consumer behaviours.*

Customer relationship management pose that the drivers of CRM should have personalised customer messaging and improved quality and efficiency (Richards & Jones, 2008). How then do churches implement the same in their fields? The paper then highlights how CRM focuses on improved services quality, efficiency, effectiveness, and relationship equity. However, CRM in these protestant church brands needs to look at how the church listens to their customers. How do they improve the relationship by acting on feedback received from the customers? Communication remains a strong hold for many relationships (Reich, 2014). Communication often changes and moulds customer perceptions (Reich, 2014). Communication is thus a crucial tool used to ensure customers' expectations of brands and brand knowledge is. This leads to the following hypothesis:

> ***H2.*** *The extent of communication in protestant church brands positively influences customer relationship management that affects consumer interactions with brands.*

#### *2.3.2.3 Brand Management (communication) and Customer loyalty*

Communication is an especially crucial tool in business. It is a daily function consisting of direct and indirect methods of communication (Genç, 2017). Within the term, communication lies different elements and modes, of which we find public relations (PR). PR plays a huge role in communication, ensuring that relevant information is shared. Either sharing communication through this mode can advertise brand successes or minimise the damage of any controversial scandals businesses might face (Avidar, 2017).

PR is used as a tool to manage knowledge for core stakeholders and transparency (Jelen-Sanchez, 2017). Church brands tend to avoid scandals they might be involved in and avoid sharing PR statements. This, like any other business, is not the smart play as it tarnishes the reputation of the brand. Managing communication with customers assists businesses, consequently being the storytellers, and shutting down all clutter from the media (Polić & Salopek, 2020).

According to Nkosi (2018), in an article written for TimesLive, a protestant church, “Jesus Dominion International”, had to shut its doors due to an alleged sexual misconduct case against the pastor. If the church had employed proper PR management tools and the church took ownership of the story, protestors would not have gathered to have the church closed, finding an amicable way of dealing with the pastor. The failure of the church in communicating and rebuilding the community's trust resulted in the church being closed (Polić & Salopek, 2020). Open transparent communication results in trusted and supported brands (Coombs, 2000). Communication is a vital tool in information sharing, supported by the communication theory. The communication theory uses a transition model that depicts how communication phenomena could or were received (Zerfass, Verčič, Nothhaft & Werder, 2018). This assists in shedding light on the importance of communication the effectiveness of how the right tool can result in a correctly received decoded message by the public and users of communication (Van Ruler, 2018). The study highlights the importance of this theory in showing that the management of communication can minimise the failure of brands (Van Ruler, 2018).

The two most relevant theories, as mentioned in the paper, were thus the agency theory as well as the stewardship management theories. Based on the above discussion and the intent of the study. These theories further highlight the importance of good governance (Schillemans & Bjurstrøm, 2019). Good governance and management from an individual level to an institutional/protestant church brand level. Church brands and custodians of these brands act as an agent that needs to ensure the NPO's growth and growth and benefit of its primary stakeholders (congregants plus employees). The Agency emphasizes the roles brands need to take up, which includes robust brand management tactics and tools (Poletti-Hughes, 2019)

The stewardship management theory investigates the definition of stewardship and how the church brand needs to ensure customer satisfaction is the prime goal (Chrisman, 2019). Church development paired with revenue growth become the theories' prime goal. The theory highlighted the importance of effective communication between stakeholders, customer relationship management, and prominent monetary management skills (Chrisman, 2019).

#### *2.3.2.3.1 Communication leads to brand trust influencing customer loyalty.*

Intentions of measuring communication credible communication, according to Greyser (2009), increases trust and may rescue a brand in a crisis. Communication is a key tool in brands' success and using the right tools to send a message is essential.

According to Shih (2009), the communication on branding in shared social networking platforms is more contentious, captivating, and inducing among the user communities. Jothi, Neelamalar and Prasad (2011) further attested to the study by Shih (2009). The authors suggested based on the findings that according to their respondents, about 67% of their user base agreed that communication strategies utilised in brand communication often fashioned an impression on the brands meritoriously and also could assist the respondents in being loyal to the brand, in this case, consumers recall the brands that are encouraging of positive interactions. On the other hand, 24% of the customers said that the bearing and trafficking of communiqué are usually confused (Jothi et al., 2011).

#### *2.3.2.3.2 Factors of clear communication*

Typically, brand communication is dependent on components such as Clarity 2. Credibility 3. Content four. Context 5. Continuity 6. Capability 7. Channels (Praccreditation.org, 2018). Clarity is defined as the quality of being lucid and comprehensible (Thompson, 2000) credibility –the quality of being trusted.

If intended communication is direct and meets these seven factors, the messaging is often seen as sufficient and can be equated to messaging customers perceive as trusted (Praccreditation.org, 2018). It is important to note that certain communication mediums play a role in how these seven factors were perceived. Hence, the paring of a good

messaging and a good medium is vital in creating the brand trust (Praccreditation.org, 2018). Customer loyalty plays a huge role in brand growth and advocacy. If brands can keep their current consumers satisfied, this means a long and fruitful relationship between the two (Gössling et al., 2012). However, a failure from the brand side to maintain its promise and manage its operations can be detrimental. This leads to hypothesis 3:

***H3**. Poor brand management negatively impacts church member loyalty.*

#### *2.3.2.4 Poor customer relationship management and Consumer behaviours*

How can NPO brands increase positive consumer behaviours? What drives consumers to stay loyal to these NPO brands is not many physically tangible goods they can weigh and measure.

The paper sought to identify how consumer behaviours were driven to position the brand in a marketable way in the context of theology. However, other authors note that these variables were not congruent to one another (Rana & Paul, 2017). It is then imperative to note this in the study to understand congruency levels. To what extent are these variables congruent? A consumer of a protestant church brand might have negative perceptions and no trust in the brand yet continue supporting the brand (Rana & Paul, 2017). What then is a remedy for such a consumer? What are the drivers of such behaviour? Is a change in management style a remedy to manage consumer behaviours?

The paper sought to explore how protestant church brands apply management in different scenarios, e.g., managing/ limiting the transmission rates of COVID-19 within the borders of the church. Considering the current world pandemic, religious entities have needed to comply with new standards to ensure their members' gathering is less than 50 per church session (South African Government, 2020). Failure to comply with such regulations could potentially shift consumer behaviours.

Regulations/management styles apply to any business/NPO operating in South Africa (Sundström, 2012). It can then be argued that a change in regulations and business operations often affects how consumers interact with brands, which directly affects their set behaviours and interactions with brands. This simply means that in addition to these standard business regulations of good governance, these brands need to comply with in order to ensure customer/employee satisfaction (Sundström, 2012). How do protestant brands now ensure that they continue to satisfy their customers in a manner that positively increases consumer behaviours with set governmental changes? Do consumer behaviours change?

The national regulations that are currently imposed have resulted in a shift in consumer behaviours and how consumer needs can now be met (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Regulations need to be complied with to keep functioning and generating revenues for these brands, nevertheless, with the notion and understanding that their consumers come first. For this point, the lack of management in regulations can detract consumer behaviours, which is causally linked with customer loyalty.

Owing because when a protestant church brand does not follow and comply with regulations according to patterns (Gössling et al., 2012). This detracting customer loyalty results from the shift in behaviours and consumption patterns (Gössling et al., 2012). Another example, which attests to shifting consumer behaviours because of consumption patterns, would be the relationship between consumers and restaurants. Due to the pandemic, restaurants and fast-food franchises had halted sit-in orders, limiting sit-in gratifications opportunities for the customer, and allowing customers to still experience their meals through an ordering and collection process.

All these changes in the management regulations put in place by the government as these organisations seek to generate growth and revenue (South African Government, 2020). All these changes simply spell out that protestant church brands too need to implement management tools that are robust and easily modifiable to ensure brand flexibility and growth, something that can be assumed to be lacking in church brands/NPOs (Legal Resource Centre. 2016).

For these reasons, brands would fail if attention to consumer behaviours is not attended to or monitored attentively. Moreover, brands that fail to manage basic regulations put their people at risk and risk their failure. It is important to understand that it is trying for the entity to function successfully without adhering to standard business practices (SABS, 2020).

A subsect of management of regulations is thus governance. Governance defines who in organizational setups had power and how activities are set into motion (Bevir, 2011). Governance has five forms: monarchy, democracy, oligarchy, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism. This paper explores a democratic form of governance (Governance Pro, 2017). According to Van Wyk (2017), the management of regulations thus references the agency theory. This is due to daily brand operations appointed by the stakeholders that are the principles.

The denomination leaders and pastors are the agents that should be focused on brand growth and incentives. Should protestant church brands fail at being custodians put in place by the brand principles, the leaders may be dismissed as power is decentralised (Van Wyk, 2017). This assists in understanding how religious leaders are driven to follow regulations and sound doctrine teaching to avoid their dismissal and failure of the brands they represent (Zech, 2007). As ambassadors of brands, religious leaders of different protestant denominations were the faces of these brands and thus needed to make decisions aimed at benefiting everyone while complying with standard regulations (Zech, 2001).

Management/Governance is a method of individuals and brands working together to achieve challenging goals (Governance Pro, 2017). It also considers power; power logically involves munificent individuals who convey fresh old/innovative ideas. Preferences composed with other human strong points and shortages to a policy-making table in an organization to promote growth (Governance Pro, 2017). In this context, based on the above definitions, church leaders and leaders within protestant church brands are custodians of good governance. They need to prioritise customer satisfaction at all level patterns (Gössling et al., 2012).

Good governance could be achieved through ongoing addresses that attempt to capture and record the different thoughts and considerations individuals bring about. This ensures and assures stakeholders of their interests addressed and showcased in all the brand initiatives (Zhang et al., 2010). According to Zhang (2010), governance looked at how the different establishments (the church) work successfully and competently. Working competently to attain advancement and growth, ensuring a positive shift on consumer behaviours. Within these church denominations, domination is thus the supremacy of deciding and how it is dispersed amid accountable actors (Zhang et al., 2010). Usually, customer loyalty and consumers behaviours are linked to credibility communication and messaging those customers were exposed to. The 'theory of communication' avows that when basis trustworthiness is high, the decoder of the decoded communication can be vastly convinced by a message. When the source of information trustworthiness is low, the decoder could have doubts regarding the messaging received (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

This means that customer loyalty may stem from customers receiving credible information from the brand paired with satisfactory goods and services. However, customers also form their actions and attitudes towards brands based on how they have decoded messaging directed to them (Ling & Liu, 2008). The study investigated the length to how true and to what extent the brand communication can steer customers towards a brand or away from protestant church brands. What is then the relationship between brand trust, customer loyalty and communication?

#### *2.3.2.4.1 Consumer behaviours versus brand growth*

The intention of measuring consumer behaviours is to measure brand growth, driven by actual behaviours, attitudes, and price sensitivity. As soon as consumers shift their behaviour by supporting/ not supporting the brand, the brand suffers or benefits (Friese, Hofmann & Wänke, 2009). Consumer behaviours are affected by the slightest changes in their normal consumer cycles. There are then direct implications to attitude shifts and brand performance (Friese et al., 2009). Consumer behaviours are fickle. Behaviours in consumption change quickly (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Such changes would be

caused by how consumers feel towards a brand, culture and past expeirances. The knowledge they have regarding the brand as well as how they believe the brand should be treating them versus the action service, they receive hypothesis:

> ***H4****. Customer relationship management positively impacts church member behaviours.*

## *2.4 Chapter summary*

This chapter explored theories and variables supporting the statements and hypotheses regarding the church's brand failures, mismanagement, and primary activities. Furthermore, it displayed the proposed relationship between the variables, gauging them and observing past notions to substantiate these relationships. The next chapter looks into the actual research methodology used in the study.

*Table 1: Consistency table*

| **Sub-problem** | **Literature Review** | **Hypotheses or Propositions or Research questions** | **Source of data** | **Type of data** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| That the mismanagement of church funds and brand trust | Ershova, M., & Hermelink, J. (2013). Spirituality, administration, and normativity in current church organization. *International journal of practical theology, 16*(2), 221-242.<br><br>Kingston, K. G. (2020). Concealment of Illegally Obtained Assets in Nigeria: Revisiting the Role of the Churches in Money Laundering. *African Journal of International and Comparative Law, 28*(1), 106-121. | H1: The mismanagement of churches has a negative impact on customer brand trust. | Questionnaire | Ordinal |
| Poor management of communication in church brands | Jelen-Sanchez, A. (2017). Engagement in public relations discipline: Themes, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. *Public Relations Review, 43*(5), 934-944.<br><br>Nkosi, N. (2018). *Omotoso's church in Port Elizabeth shuts its doors.* Retrieved 27 June 2020, from https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-10-21-omotosos-church-in-port-elizabeth-shuts-its-doors/ | H2: The extent of communication in protestant church brands positively influences customer relationship management that affects consumer interactions with brands. | Questionnaire | Ordinal |
| failing to manage and comply with set regulations is a result of poor brand management | South African Government. (2020) *Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma on Coronavirus COVID-19 Alert Level 3 religious' gatherings* |. Retrieved 27 June 2020, from https://www.gov.za/speeches/statement-minister-cogta-directions-religious-gatherings-29-may-2020-0000<br><br>SABS. (2020). *Standards - About standards in general* Retrieved 27 June 2020, from https://www.sabs.co.za/Standardss/standards_about.asp<br><br>Van Wyk, M. M. (2017). Exploring the church's role as a 'reformation agency 'in enhancing a socially transformative agenda in South Africa. *HTS Theologise Studies/Theological Studies, 73*(3), 10-22. | H3: Poor brand management negatively impacts church member loyalty. | Questionnaire | Ordinal |

| Sub-problem | Literature Review | Hypotheses or Propositions or Research questions | Source of data | Type of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| inadequate customer relationship management | Erasmus, J. C., & Mans, G. G. (2005). Churches as service providers for victims of sexual and/or violent crimes. A case study from the Paarl community. Acta Criminological*: Southern African Journal of Criminology, 18*(1), 140-163.<br><br>Nyadzayo, M. W., & Khajehzadeh, S. (2016). The antecedents of customer loyalty: A moderated mediation model of customer relationship management quality and brand image. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 30*, 262-270. | H4: Customer relationship management positively impacts church member behaviours. | Questionnaire | Ordinal |

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## *3.1 Introduction*

The previous chapters gave a view of what the research was about. Chapter 2 further indulged the readers with a vast amount of literature that helped develop the conceptual model. The research methodology chapter often gives readers a view of the methodology the researcher chose and the justification. Different studies follow different methods based on key objectives and assumptions, which are at the core of the research. This chapter aimed at giving a detailed account of how research questions and objectives were answered.

## *3.2 Research methodology*

The study followed a positivism approach based on understanding the relationships between the study variables through observation and reasoning. Further justification for a positivism research study was the ability to justify quantifiable and observable data. A positivism approach further paves the way for a quantitative study, which follows a numerical arrangement rather than the use of words, expressed thoughts, and emotions/feelings. In using a quantitative study, the aim was thus to measure the degree of causal and effect among the observed variables regarding the possible failure of the protestant church brands (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The study further adopted a deductive approach which aided in understanding the different theories such as the agency theory. The theory in this context aided the quantitative approach where church brand management versus customer relationship management would be examined to explore the principle and agent associations between the church brands, pastors, and primary stakeholders. The agency theory supported this study as it signified that the

agents should act in the principal's best interest and not in the interest of benefiting themselves as the agent (Morris, 1987).

The protestant brands and pastors were thus the agent whilst the employees and congregants, together with any other customers of the church brand, are the principals (Morris, 1987). Agency theory was befitting to the project as it represents how in the real world, the actual members and stakeholders of the church are the ones who envoy and place brands in a position of power to deliver the products and services while enhancing inclusion of all (Caselli & Negri, 2018). The inclusion of all is achieved by the different activities and campaigns these church brands run and manage.

The stewardship principle stated that stewards of any establishment are there to protect and maximise the profits levels together with anticipated organisational growth (Derakhshan, Turner & Mancini, 2019). The assorted brands seek to upturn their growth levels. Growth could entail more revenue generation and membership expansion, which was these church brands core aim (Nkosi, 2018). In a Christian theological context, the shareholders would be the phenomenon is known as God (Jesus Christ); however, this was an unmeasurable construct that would be ignored in the study. Other stakeholders would be the church brand board of directors (where applicable). The leadership and board members were thus the stewards (Tyari, 2018).

## *3.3 Research Design*

This study used a descriptive approach and a questionnaire to test the causal effect/relationship placed on the outcome variables because of the tested variables (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). A descriptive approach aided the study to give a comprehensive view of how protestant church brands and church members felt about how their relationships were managed. However, the view was further objective as the data was collected from different protestant church brands with the same questions. Due to the large sample size, other benefits of adopting a descriptive and logical survey were drawing common patterns and associations of different observed variables.

This study followed a descriptive research design which falls under experimental research design (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive research focused on the studies subjects: protestant church brand members and the actual protestant church brands. The church members and church brands were only studied to examine the perceived relationship between the variables. A descriptive approach further allowed for a Likert scale questionnaire, which would have respondents respond from a scale of yes, maybe, not sure, I do not know, and no. Such enabled the valuation of different probing questions that had been asked to give sight of how each variable relates to the next in the study.

## *3.4 Population and sample*

### *3.4.1 Population*

According to Prorok (2014), population is the total pool from which a targeted population can be drawn. The population of this study was drawn from the different church brand members in the Midvaal municipality, specifically the Sedibeng district. Furthermore, 4 protestant church brands were identified as subjects for the study. StatsSA (2017) reported that Midvaal had a population of 111000 individuals. This allowed for a minimum target research population of 2000 church members within the region. Either target population respondents were full-time members of the identified protestant church brands or visitors. Respondents were all above the legal age of participating in the survey, which is 18 years and above.

### *3.4.2 Sample and sampling method*

The study used a total research population of 2000 church members within the Sedibeng district. The area comprises different religious organizations and backgrounds as it hosts these borders. This assisted in ensuring that there was a variety of results, which aided in understanding the relationship between variables. Using Prorok (2014) guidance, to achieve a 95% confidence level, an excel sample size calculator was utilized. A 95%

confidence level informed the study's ability to validate with a random selection sample of 170 respondents.

## *3.5 The research instrument*

The research instrument for this project was a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 31 questions and 5 measured constructs. The focus of the questionnaire was demographics together with religious affiliations. All questions were closed questions which aided in avoiding confusion and ambiguity. The last focus was on constructs from the four identified research project problems. The demographics assisted in investigating the ages and the genders of the participating respondents.

This aimed to identify how different age groups and genders dealt with and felt about the mismanagement of activities in the church brands. The research instrument was adapted from Freifeld et al. (2019) and investigated all the variables and relationships between mismanagements. The different observed constructs were mismanagement of funds, communication, poor brand management, customer relationship management.

Using questionnaire-based research, the questionnaire was organized with closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was self-administered through a link provided to the church administration. Freifeld et al. (2019) denote that Likert scales are the best measure for challenging responses in measuring respondents' attitudes and behaviours. With 5 response options, respondents can fully express their responses. The instrument followed a 5-point Likert scale where: 1=Yes 2= Maybe 3=No 4= Not sure 5= I do not know

The questionnaire took 5-10 minutes to complete, and the liker scale was later used to ration the variable outcomes.

## *3.6 Procedure for data collection*

The researcher first randomly selected four protestant church brands within the Sedibeng Midvaal district. The researcher approached the churches requesting permission to conduct the study. After getting approvals for the four protestant churches, the researcher sought to get ethics clearance from the Wits Ethics Committee by submitting a request accompanied by consent from the churches. Because of COVID-19 and the limitations in conducting a physical self-administered survey, the researcher created a Qualtrics link, which was shared with the churches to distribute within their networks through social media. The link was left active for 6 weeks to allow respondents to participate. Due to technology and a digital link, the respondent's data was exported and transcribed into an excel spreadsheet used to analyse data.

## *3.7 Data analysis and interpretation*

The raw data were exported from Qualtrics into an excel coded spreadsheet, and the sheet was cleaned and assessed for any data error and possible outliers. Errors were minimised because the study was run through a digital link where strict guides and measures were built into the questionnaire. For example, once all responses per section were completed, respondents could go to the next page/ section to complete the questionnaire. Data collected was analysed using Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) version 27 software. The use of this statistical software's was to measure the different variables, measuring regression levels and the descriptiveness of the observed data.

As guided by Cai and Zhu (2015) studies, the study followed a descriptive multivariate indicator approach. This method further measured the levels of correlation among the identified independent and dependent variables. Further measuring the extent of causality to the extent of which amidst the multiple variables were influenced by poor brand management. The SPSS software, which facilitates statistical analysis, tests such as the T-tests and the ANOVA tests ad factor analysis aided in the comprehensive testing of the

correlation and the relationship between the observed variables, which further gave weight to the recommended recommendations. SPSS further allowed for easier identification and testing of relationships between variables (Cai & Zhu, 2015). The data was then put forward in graphs and tables using descriptive stats to lookout for the variables and the hypothesised relationships.

## *3.8 Validity and reliability*

For the purpose of this study, validity was measured by means of ensuring that should the same set of questions be re-analysed, the same output would be received. The Pearson correlations were used to test the strength between the study variables where the item-total correlations were 1. According to Cai and Zhu (2015), the Pearson's correlation would be over t-values= 1.976 as the study has a sample size of 171. The data yielded the same results on countless occasions. Validity could be repeatable and accurate upon repeating the same steps and methods to analyse data (Cai & Zhu, 2015).

Reliability was identified as the study being logical, factual, and observable. Reliability was measured by observing the correlation between the variables. A Cronbach Alpha with a range between 0-1 helped identify the reliability of the study. The closer to 1 the results were, the more reliable the questionnaire was. According to findings, Cronbach's alpha for all observed variables ranged between 0.601 and 0.844. These variables emphasize the proposed causal and effect relationship between the observed constructs (Cai & Zhu, 2015).

### *3.8.1 External validity*

The external validity of this study was assumed to be high. No pre-testing of the questionnaire with a small group of participants was conducted. This way, all participants saw the questions for the first time when they responded to the questionnaire. The same set of questions could be asked with another selection of randomly selected protestant

churches, and the responses would be similar as there was no selection bias with no selection bias and allowing all members within the protestant church brands to partake in the survey. This resulted in a common thread of information. This study did not focus on one religious denomination but different denominations within Protestant Christian churches. External validity was then observed due to this study's broad definition of “protestant church “.

### *3.8.2 Internal validity*

The random selection of data and participation assisted with maintaining the internal validity. Another way the paper ensured there was internal validity was through the randomization process. The protestant church brand shared the survey link to groups within their reach, meaning participants did not know who had responded to the questionnaire nor if others responded to the survey, together with who might be interested in responding to the questionnaire. For this research, it was assumed that internal validity would be low. Internal validity observes the different constructs and the proposed hypotheses (Kayes, 2005). However, the paper showcased the casual relationship thereof. The study used a statistical measure (Pearsons Correlation) to prove internal validity. The internal validity is realised when the Pearson correlation showcases items with values with a t-value above 1.976 at a significant level of 0.05 in this study.

### *3.8.3 Reliability*

Related questions were be phrased and asked in unusual ways throughout the research instrument. As guided by Starkstein et al. (1992), different questions such as ‘are you a customer to the brand’ were asked Apart from statistical tests such as expert judgement tests and index tests. The repetition of alike questions throughout the research instrument ensured consistency and reliability in the study (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). The Cronbach’s Alpha was used to assess reliability with a threshold being greater or equal to 0.7.

## *3.9 Research Ethics*

Before collecting data from prospective participants who are 18 years and older from the 4 identified protestant church brands, namely: Kononia Bible Church, Trinity Community Church, Word of life family church and Kopanong Praise and Worship Church, an application to secure an ethical clearance certificate & number was submitted and approved. This then permitted the researcher to conduct research under the banners of the university. There was a need to circulate consent forms to the protestant churches and attain signed approval from these brands to conduct the study within their church doors; however, in instances where respondents did not fall under the identified churches, the protestant church brand names were not revealed in this study. The consent form gave consent for the research to further mention the protestant church brands name in the presentation of the final research report. However, no individual names of approvers nor questionnaire participants were mentioned at any point in the report. The research was strictly confidential, and only the research supervisors and the relevant people had access to participants completed questionnaire. As the questionnaire link was distributed on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, the church administration shared and distributed the questionnaire link.

Also devoted on the first page of the questionnaire was a write-up summary of the study and its objectives. Objectives that clearly stated the purpose of the study together with details specifying that the paper is voluntarily and is for a Master of Management degree research paper. All data was be kept confidential, and identities, as mentioned above, and remain confidential. All master data was kept on Qualtrics. Only a coded copy (coded numerically) was downloaded from the Qualtrics in excel format for analysis purposes. The one copy was then stored in a locked password-protected personal computer throughout the analysis process. Since the data has been analysed, the coded copy would be kept for three months post the submission date, after which all copies would be deleted, inclusive of the Qualtrics link.

Individual confidentiality was maintained through the churches and the research administering the distribution of the survey in their church groups and various social platforms; all participants reserved the right to reject the participation in the survey.

Participants' rejection of participating ranged from refusing to participate in the survey or refusing to fully complete the survey, leaving out three or more uncompleted items, and lastly, refusing to use the distributed link. No questionnaire was transcribed and analysed where a participant had not consented to participate in the study. Individual participants were guaranteed confidentiality because they were the only ones who completed the questionnaire and indicated consent. No personal questions were asked, revealing the participants' identities. The only personal question allowed was their church organization; however, selecting “other” was given. Responses were used to identify the number of church participants and not individuals.

## *3.10 Chapter Summary*

The main purpose of this chapter was to discuss the research methodology and approaches. It sets out the differences between the tests observed in the study to prove the validity and reliability of the research. The next chapter, Chapter 4, gives insights into the collected and analysed data.

# CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

## *4.1 Introduction*

The previous chapters gave a view of the research methodology. Chapter 3 further indulged the readers with a breakdown of which measures (T-tests, regressions, and correlation) were key in the study. Understanding what methods were used ensured that the reader fully understands the responses and interpretations in chapter 4. Chapter 4 is a complete data analysis, analysing and interpreting the results. Graphs and tables of data are used to further explain the data findings.

## *4.2 Sample portfolio*

In this section, questions asked were around demographics. This was to ensure that we understood the mix of respondents from 171 respondents.

### *4.2.1 Gender*

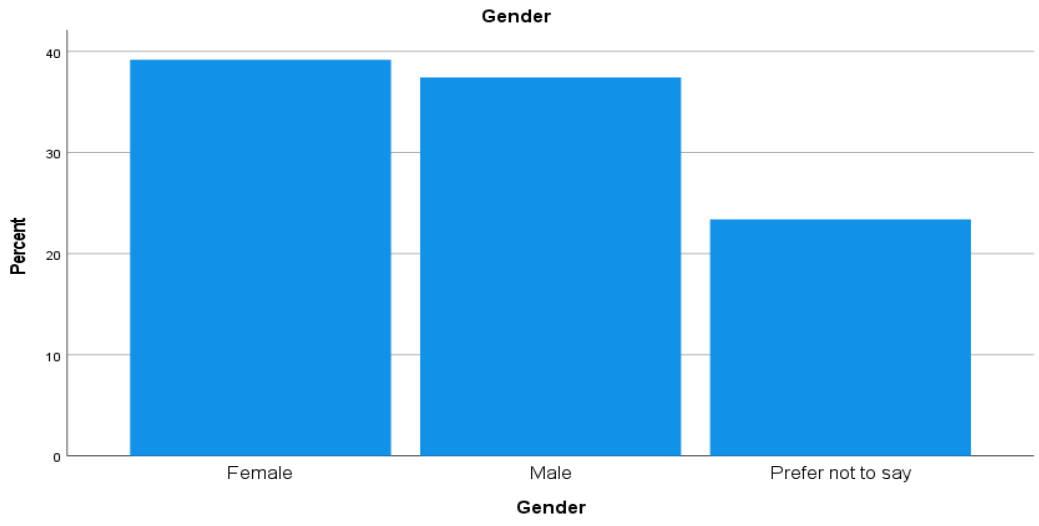



*Figure 2: Gender of respondents*

Based on the data collected, the Female respondents were 39.2%, followed by male respondents with 37.4% and respondents who preferred not to have their identity disclosed were at a 23.4%. The mixture of respondents was diverse, allowing for many assumptions that aid in how customers feel towards church brands, the gender spilt indicates that these protestant church brands allow for all genders. This further gives insights in terms of understanding how different genders feel about brand management and power dynamics as church brands are primarily driven in a patriarchal manner. All identified protestant church brands had only senior male pastors with a few females in their leadership boards.

### *4.2.2 Membership tenure*

*Table 2: Membership tenure table*

**Membership**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 1-2years | 50 | 29.2 | 29.2 | 29.2 |
| | 3-4 years | 16 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 38.6 |
| | 5 years + | 53 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 69.6 |
| | Less than 6 months | 12 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 76.6 |
| | Other | 40 | 23.4 | 23.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 171 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Membership tenure primarily speaks to how long individuals' respondents have been a part of a said protestant church brand. With higher tenures, it can be assumed that these individuals have more insights and "experience" being in the brand. The tenure splits in Table 2 indicate that 31% of the respondents were with the protestant church brand members for 5+ years. This gives weight to their responses as they have more in-depth knowledge of the brand's operations and brand management styles. 29.2% of the respondents were individuals who had been members of these brands for 1-2years. These respondents also had a somewhat clear view of how the brands' operations and management styles were conducted. 23.4% of the respondents were "others" this could

have been individuals who visited the church brands once or twice or were simply regulars to the assorted brands. However, they did not identify as “members.”

9.4% of the respondents were members of the assorted brands for more than a year with a tenure of 3-4years. These individuals could also be assumed to have better insights into the church brands management. Lastly, the results showed a 7% response rate for members of brands for less than 6 months. These individuals’ feedback could be rich in fresh insights and non-bias, and this is primarily based on how less loyal to the brand they could be, as they have not been engaging with the brand for long, the higher the tenure, the higher the knowledge of the church brand however the higher the loyalty (whether good or bad). Many factors could have been at play with high loyalty in responding to the questionnaire. Factors such as the benefit of living within proximity to the brands and social benefits for churches' activities. Another factor could have been how members could have been oblivious to certain church operations as they have become a “norm.”

### *4.2.3 Hours spent with the brand*

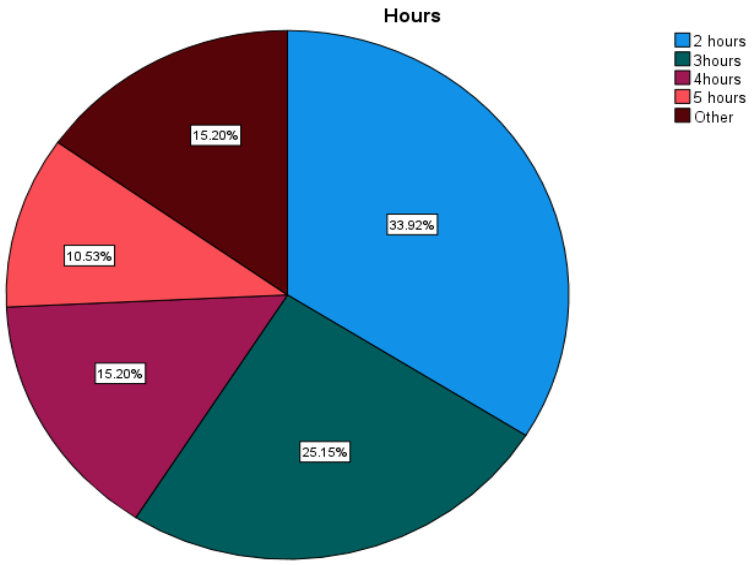



*Figure 3: Hours spent with the brand*

The hours spent in or with a brand gave a view on how much information individuals were exposed to; it further gave weight to the tenure of these customers with the church brands. It was assumed that the more time these respondents spent with the different protestant brands, the better they were exposed to management flaws. Times spent with these brands could also indicate consumer behaviours. For example, because the brand is so good to me, I spend more time with it as I feel valued. To justify and understand why certain respondents stay longer with protestant church brands or leave with the brands, you also need to assess the number of hours spent with the brand. This is owed to the fact that these variables are measured on the same scale, which is time. It is highly likely that spending more time in a venue could reveal the brand management styles and whether or not it is promoting the right growth behaviours.

Based on figure 3, we could denote that 33.9% of the respondents spent about 2 hours a week with the brands or in the church brand. 22.5% spent about 3 hours with the church brands while 10.5% spent 5hours. The results further show that both respondents who selected ‘other’ and those who spent 4 hours were 15.2%.

### *4.2.4 Church brand mix*

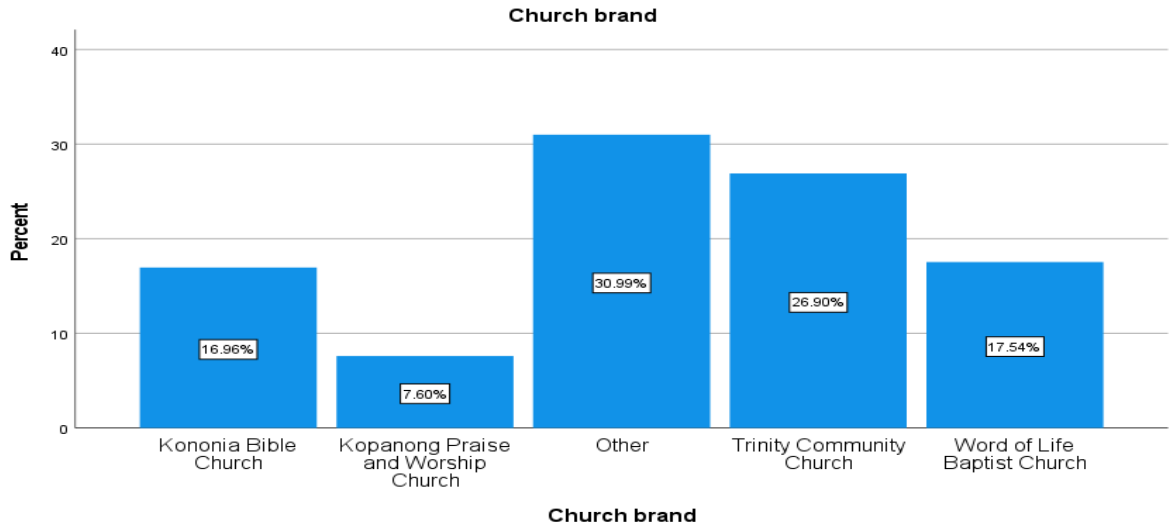



*Figure 4: Church brand mix*

The Church brand mix was key in highlighting whether the observed hypotheses were in general a trend across protestant churches or are the hypotheses only applicable to specific protestant church brands of the churches. 30.9% of respondents were from unidentified protestant church brands. These could also be respondents who have had access to the other mentioned protestant brands but do not identify as members. 26.9% of respondents represented Trinity Community Church, whilst 17.5% represented Word of Life Baptist Church. 16.9% of the participants were from Kononia Bible church, and the lowest brand represented by the data was Kopanong Praise and Worship Church.

## *4.3 Descriptive statistics analysis*

Factor analysis is primarily used to measure the relationship of the variables by looking at perceptions. It reduces items so that the analyser can be at liberty to interpret presented results by focusing on the present factors. The items' reduction is done to group comparable items into similar themes. For the purpose of this study, the factor analysis was conducted on the brand management variable, which consisted of 5 items.

### 4.3.1 Descriptive statistics (Brand management)

*Table 3: Brand management*

| | Mean | SD | Yes | Not Sure | No | Maybe | I Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communicate upcoming structural changes? | 2.25 | 1.406 | 47.4% | 14.6% | 10.5% | 20.5% | 7% |
| Communicate internal issues and scandals with you as a member? | 2.15 | 1.061 | 37.4% | 19.9% | 36.3% | 3.5% | 2.9% |
| Partake in public relations efforts such as engaging on social media? | 1.80 | 1.068 | 56.7% | 17.5% | 17.0% | 7% | 1.8% |
| Share consistent communication via digital platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook)? | 2.40 | 1.551 | 48% | 7.6% | 17.5% | 10.5% | 16.4% |
| Is the church a brand? | 2.33 | 1.314 | 41.5% | 12.9% | 21.6% | 19.3% | 4.7% |
| **Overall brand management** | **2.18** | **1.28** | | | | | |

The responses point out that most of the respondents agree “yes” with most of the items. This is seen through 47.4% for how the different protestant church brands communicate structural changes. This alone suggests that brands are not poorly managing their communication efforts as Hypothesis 2 implies. However, it can be noted that 20.5% of the respondents are unsure whether the brand communicates structural changes. 36.3 % of the respondents also responded to whether the protestant church brand communicated internal issues (the mean was 2.15 with a standard deviation of 1.061).

While 37.4% of the respondents responded “yes” to being informed of internal issues within the distinct brands, this alone suggests that certain individuals ranking in certain positions could be privy to information whereas others are not. Another assumption based on the findings would be that information was not distributed on platforms accessible to all members/ visors of the brand.

### *4.3.2. Descriptive statistics (Brand trust)*

*Table 4: Brand trust*

| | Mean | SD | YES | NOT SURE | NO | MAYBE | I DON'T KNOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Share financial reports with the congregation when requested to | 2.60 | 1.596 | 37.4% | 18.1% | 15.2% | 5.3% | 24% |
| Ensure that you are happy with your church | 1.74 | 1.092 | 60.2% | 18.1% | 11.1% | 8.2% | 2.3% |
| Ensure you would recommend your church to other individuals | 2.06 | 1.366 | 57.3% | 9.4% | 6.4% | 24.% | 2.9% |
| Communicate how different funds are received (such as donations) | 2.56 | 1.583 | 40.9% | 14% | 13.5% | 11.7% | 19.9% |
| Do you trust the leadership? | 2.22 | 1.258 | 40.9% | 19.3% | 23.4% | 9.9% | 6.4% |
| **Overall brand trust** | **2.24** | **1.38** | | | | | |

As illustrated in Table 4 above, 57.3%of the respondents noted that their respective brands ensured that they would recommend the brand to other individuals, which speaks

to word of mouth. While 24% said maybe the brands act in a way that ensures they recommend the brand. 40.9% of the respondents further noted that they trusted their protestant church brands, while 23.4% noted that they did not trust the leadership. By virtue of 40.9 % of respondents saying “yes,” churches disclose how funds are received. It is then important to probe and understand why 59.1% (jointly) are not knowledgeable about how these organisations' funds are received. This could raise assumptions surrounding these brands' corruption, fraud, or unethical activities. The moment there is no transparency with sensitive issues such as funds, you see how relationships start to decay; this is further supported by the notion that only 40.9% of respondents trusted their leadership. Why is the number so low within protestant church brands?

In this construct, the church's leadership represents the church brand, as noted by the agency theory. It can then be assumed that a larger portion of the respondents does not trust their protestant church brands. This could be problematic in the future, and these individuals could support other brands.

### *4.3.3. Descriptive statistics (Customer relationship Management)*

*Table 5: Customer relationship management*

| | Mean | SD | Yes | Not Sure | No | Maybe | I Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Create a safe space for members and non-members? | 2.35 | 1.632 | 53.8% | 5.8% | 11.7% | 9.4 | 19.3 |
| Create activities and services which promote fruitful fellowship? | 1.79 | 1.184 | 62.0% | 13.5% | 12.3% | 8.2% | 4.1% |
| Accept constructive criticism and apply changes? | 2.71 | 1.473 | 30.4% | 18.7% | 16.4% | 18.1% | 16.4% |
| Cater for specialized member needs (e.g., wheelchair ramps)? | 2.61 | 1.577 | 39.8% | 12.3% | 13.5% | 15.8% | 18.7% |
| Feedback to individuals regarding issues and problems raised? | 2.43 | 1.278 | 35.1% | 15.8% | 25.7% | 18.1% | 5.3% |
| **Overall customer relationship management** | **2.38** | **1.43** | | | | | |

Customer relationship management plays a huge role in how customers perceive a brand and engage with it. Based on the above items, the paper wanted to understand whether

or not these protestant church brands applied any CRM strategies to improve their customer relations in this construct. The overall mean was 2.38, with a standard deviation overall of 1.43. 53.8% of the respondents responded “yes” when asked if the brands create a safe space for them. 62% further said that the church brands create activities that promote fruitful fellowship with the brands.

While many respondents had positive responses, it is also important to note that 18.7% said these brands do not consider any of their criticism to apply changes needed. Based on the data, 30.4% of the respondents said “yes” church brands apply their changes. It can then be assumed that such feedback is not filtered through correctly to management. Hence a sizeable percentage of respondents responded, “not sure/ no/ maybe.” A further 25.7% stated that the brands did not give feedback to them on issues and problems raised, while 35.1% indicated that yes, the brands do feedback. This was a concern, as respondents appreciate brands that communicate openly and effectively to resolve their tension points.

### *4.3.4. Descriptive statistics (Customer Loyalty)*

*Table 6: Customer Loyalty*

| | Mean | SD | YES | NOT SURE | NO | MAYBE | I DON'T KNOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treating each member with respect? | 1.96 | 1.250 | 52.0% | 21.6% | 9.4% | 11.7% | 5.3% |
| Acting ethically in all interactions with members? | 1.98 | 1.135 | 42.1% | 35.7% | 8.8% | 8.8% | 4.7% |
| Helping you say positive things about the church? | 1.92 | 1.260 | 59.6% | 8.2% | 15.8% | 12.9% | 3.5% |
| Understanding your changing needs? | 2.42 | 1.167 | 30.4% | 19.3% | 31.0% | 16.4% | 2.9% |
| Would you recommend the church to someone? | 1.91 | 1.382 | 63.2% | 10.5% | 8.2% | 8.8% | 9.4% |
| **Overall customer loyalty** | **2.03** | **1.24** | | | | | |

Customer loyalty had an overall 42.1% of respondents indicating that these brands act ethically in interactions with them, whilst 35.7 % were not sure this was the case. This

raises a concern that these brands need to ensure transparency and act ethically in all dealings with their customers.

59.6% indicated that the brands helped them say positive things about them. This is quite high, meaning that the brands understood that customer loyalty goes a long way in good brand management styles. 63.2% would also recommend the brand to other individuals, pushing positive word-of-mouth and reflecting well on these brands. It is also important to note that 30.4% indicated that in all the brands' efforts to push loyalty, the brand understood their changing needs. Contrary to the 30.4%, 31% of the respondents suggested that the brands do not understand their needs and cater to them. This, too, raised a concern as these loyal customers could end up being detractors to the brands.

### *4.3.5. Descriptive statistics (Consumer behaviours)*

This construct has 8 items that were measured. Consumer behaviours play a huge role in the success and growth of brands. The construct was to identify and understand whether brands had any efforts in place to try to encourage positive consumer behaviours. The measure looked and the relationship between itself and customer relationship management. Table 7 below summarises the results.

When respondents were asked whether brands complied with health and safety regulations, 58.5% indicated that “yes” the brands complied. 68.4% of the respondents responded that further to complied with health and safety regulations, these brands continued to create a safe space for them. It was also noted that 38% of the respondents were not aware they were customers of the church brands. A further 42.7% highlighted that they supported the brands because of the social benefits.

*Table 7: Consumer behaviour*

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | YES | NOT SURE | NO | MAYBE | I DON'T KNOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does the church comply to health and safety rules (e.g., no overcrowded plugs? sanitizers) | 2.19 | 1.612 | 58.5% | 9.4% | 5.3% | 8.8% | 18.1% |
| Do you attend church for the music? | 2.08 | 1.065 | 38.6% | 27.5% | 22.2% | 10.5% | 1.2% |
| Do you attend church for social benefits? | 2.22 | 1.172 | 42.7% | 6.4% | 39.8% | 8.2% | 2.9% |
| Are you a customer of the church? | 2.69 | 1.195 | 25.7% | 9.9% | 38.0% | 22.2% | 4.1% |
| Does the church create safe environments for members/non-members? | 1.74 | 1.252 | 68.4% | 9.4% | 7% | 9.9% | 5.3% |
| Is your church part of a regulatory body? | 2.32 | 1.276 | 30.4% | 36.8% | 14% | 8.2% | 10.5% |
| Do changes in the church affect how you interact with the church? | 2.02 | 1.244 | 52% | 12.3% | 23.4% | 6.4% | 5.8% |
| Do you think it is important for your church to be a member of a regulated body such as the South African Council of churches? | 2.02 | 1.122 | 47.4% | 14.6% | 28.7% | 7% | 2.3% |
| **Overall consumer behaviour** | **2.16** | **1.24** | | | | | |

## *4.4 Reliability analysis*

The reliability analysis for the observed constructs in the study was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. Since consistency is key in a reliability measure, the extent to which the items correlate together within a factor was observed through Cronbach's Alpha. The results are presented in Table 8 below:

*Table 8: Reliability of constructs*

| Scale | Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Brand management | 5 | 0.601 |
| Brand trust | 5 | 0.755 |
| Customer relationship management | 5 | 0.801 |
| Customer loyalty | 5 | 0.844 |
| Consumer behaviour | 7 | 0.696 |

Overall, the measure of constructs demonstrated good internal reliability. For Cronbach's Alpha to be acceptable, it can be noted that it needs to be 0.7- 0.9 (Bujang, Omar & Baharum, 2018). The two constructs, consumer behaviour and brand management, were

considered acceptable; however, these constructs remain poor as the items are assumed to be unrelated.

Brand trust was considered a good, acceptable construct, while CRM and customer loyalty construct were considered seen to be excellent measures that are not redundant as they presented a high internal consistency value for Cronbach's Alpha. This further demonstrated a good/ excellent distribution of the data.

## *4.5 Factor analysis*

Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the data is presented in Table 9 below to showcase related variables. It can be noted that all relationships between the observed variables are significant. This is based on all sig values being less than the 0.05 threshold (Cai & Zhu, 2015).

*Table 9: Correlation matrix of constructs*

**Correlation Matrix**

| | | Brand trust | Brand Management | Consumer Behaviour | Customer Relationship Man | Customer loyalty |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Correlation | Brand trust | 1.000 | | | | |
| | Brand Management | .711 | 1.000 | | | |
| | Consumer Behaviour | .334 | .541 | 1.000 | | |
| | Customer Relationship Man | .668 | .718 | .558 | 1.000 | |
| | Customer loyalty | .334 | .509 | .643 | .599 | 1.000 |

We could then denote good positive relationships between the observed variables based on the above table. To quantify a relationship using the correlation matrix, the Pearson correlation coefficient is usually valued between -1 and 1. For a positive relationship between the measured variables, the observed values should be greater than 0. The

larger the coefficient is than 0, the more we can observe a positive linear correlation. The closer it gets to 1, the stronger is the positive relationship between the observed variables. We could further denote a positive linear relationship between the measured variables of the study.

There was a positive correlation between brand trust and brand management (r=0.711, p=0.000). There was further a positive correlation between brand management and consumer behaviours (r=0.541, p=0.000), as well as with CRM (r=0.718. p=0.000) and Customer loyalty (r=0.509. p=0.000) as in this case, all other correlations in the measure of the constructs are positive and significant in correlation.

A KMO test was done to measure the extent to which the sample size for the factor analysis was adequate. It attested to the adequacy of conduction factor analysis. The results are presented in Table 10.

*Table 10: KMO and Bartlett's test*

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .796 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 455.038 |
| | df | 10 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Out of a threshold of 0.6, the KMO was 0.796, which gave good confidence to run a factor analysis on the observed factors of the study. Bartlett's test of Sphericity which is denoted as the p-value, should be less than 0.05; in this study, the p-value is 0.000.

The total variance explained is presented in table 11. Table 11 tried to explain the relationship to all items based on the administered questionnaires by respondents. According to the literature, factors are only used when they present an eigenvalue with a

minimum value < 1 (Bujang, Omar & Baharum, 2018). Factor 1 was then utilized as it makes up the most information of the 5 identified factors of the study. Factor 1 has an output of 31.7% of the variances, making up an overall cumulative percentage of 64.87% for all the factors with eigenvalues above 1.

*Table 11: Total variance explained*

| | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total |
| BT1 | 8.889 | 31.745 | 31.745 | 8.412 | 30.043 | 30.043 | 7.851 |
| BT2 | 5.134 | 18.335 | 50.080 | 4.768 | 17.030 | 47.073 | 4.939 |
| BT3 | 1.746 | 6.236 | 56.316 | 1.208 | 4.316 | 51.388 | 4.699 |
| BT4 | 1.310 | 4.680 | 60.996 | .861 | 3.075 | 54.463 | 1.737 |
| BT5 | 1.086 | 3.880 | 64.875 | .674 | 2.408 | 56.872 | 2.157 |
| BM1 | .832 | 2.970 | 67.845 | | | | |
| BM2 | .809 | 2.890 | 70.735 | | | | |
| BM3 | .762 | 2.722 | 73.456 | | | | |
| BM4 | .720 | 2.572 | 76.028 | | | | |
| BM5 | .695 | 2.482 | 78.510 | | | | |
| CB1 | .621 | 2.219 | 80.729 | | | | |
| CB2 | .563 | 2.009 | 82.738 | | | | |
| CB3 | .504 | 1.799 | 84.538 | | | | |
| CB4 | .468 | 1.673 | 86.210 | | | | |
| CB5 | .452 | 1.616 | 87.826 | | | | |
| CB6 | .441 | 1.574 | 89.400 | | | | |
| CB7 | .398 | 1.422 | 90.822 | | | | |
| CB8 | .335 | 1.196 | 92.018 | | | | |
| CRM1 | .320 | 1.144 | 93.161 | | | | |
| CRM2 | .299 | 1.068 | 94.229 | | | | |
| CRM3 | .286 | 1.023 | 95.252 | | | | |
| CRM4 | .248 | .887 | 96.139 | | | | |
| CRM5 | .224 | .799 | 96.938 | | | | |
| CL1 | .219 | .782 | 97.721 | | | | |
| CL2 | .199 | .710 | 98.431 | | | | |
| CL3 | .190 | .679 | 99.110 | | | | |
| CL4 | .144 | .513 | 99.623 | | | | |
| CL5 | .106 | .377 | 100.000 | | | | |

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

The pattern matrix showcased that the 13 items were loading under factor 1, meaning that respondents interpreted these items as one factor, whilst 4 out of the 5 items measured for brand trust fell under factor 1. Item BT2 was identified as a separate factor with BM2 under factor 4. In summary, factors that were assumed to be relating to BT were

a mixture with other factors. No factor observed in this study was held under the same variable for all items relating to it.

*Table 12: Pattern matrix*

**Pattern Matrix[a]**

| | Factor | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| BT1 | .858 | | | | |
| BT2 | | | | .641 | |
| BT3 | .813 | | | | |
| BT4 | .833 | | | | |
| BT5 | .557 | | | | |
| BM1 | .798 | | | | |
| BM2 | | .416 | | .466 | |
| BM3 | | .525 | | | |
| BM4 | .818 | | | | |
| BM5 | .677 | | | | |
| CB1 | .790 | | | | |
| CB2 | | | | | |
| CB3 | | | | | .740 |
| CB4 | .531 | | | | .423 |
| CB5 | | .682 | | | |
| CB6 | | .587 | | | |
| CB7 | | .690 | | | |
| CB8 | .482 | | | | |
| CRM1 | .783 | | | | |
| CRM2 | | .652 | | | |
| CRM3 | .608 | | | | |
| CRM4 | .580 | | | | |
| CRM5 | | | .517 | | |
| CL1 | | .488 | | | |
| CL2 | | | .720 | | |
| CL3 | | | .484 | | |
| CL4 | | | | | |
| CL5 | | .555 | | | |

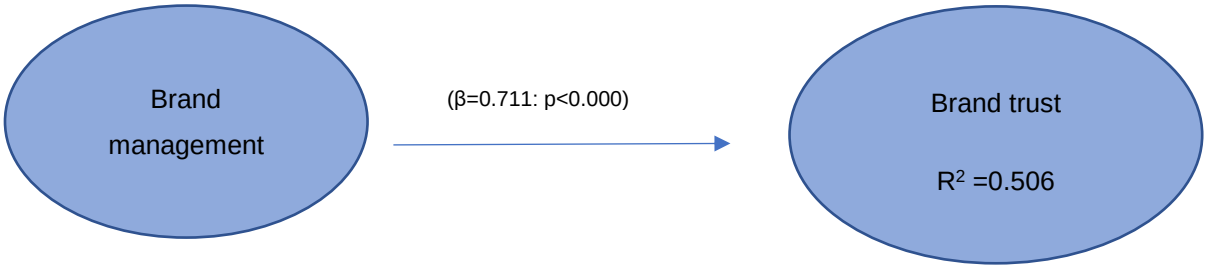
Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]
a. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

## *4.6 Regression analysis*

The results were computed to rule out the effect of multi-collinearity among the independent constructs in the regression model. The multicollinearity assessment was done using the variance infliction factors; thus, the results show that the VIF factors are 1. These were less than the threshold of 5, meaning that the regression model results

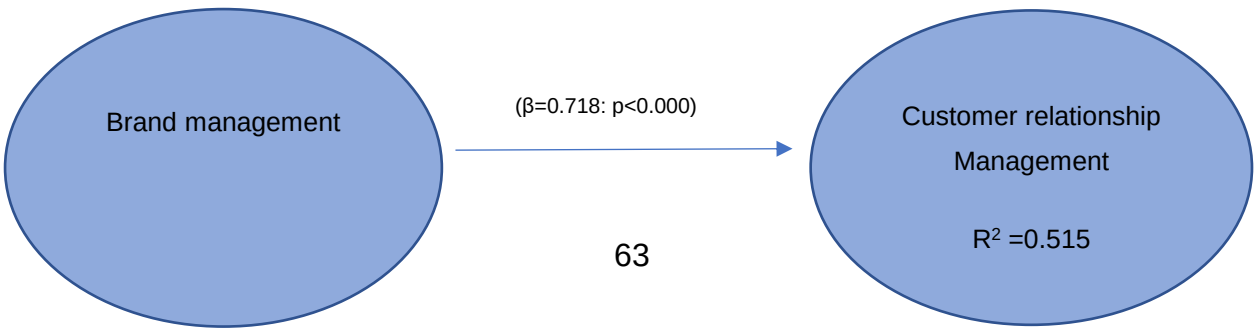
could be interpreted with confidence. The standardized beta shows the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This speaks to the strongest relationship between the variables.

### *4.6.1 Testing H1: The mismanagement of churches has a negative impact on customer brand trust*



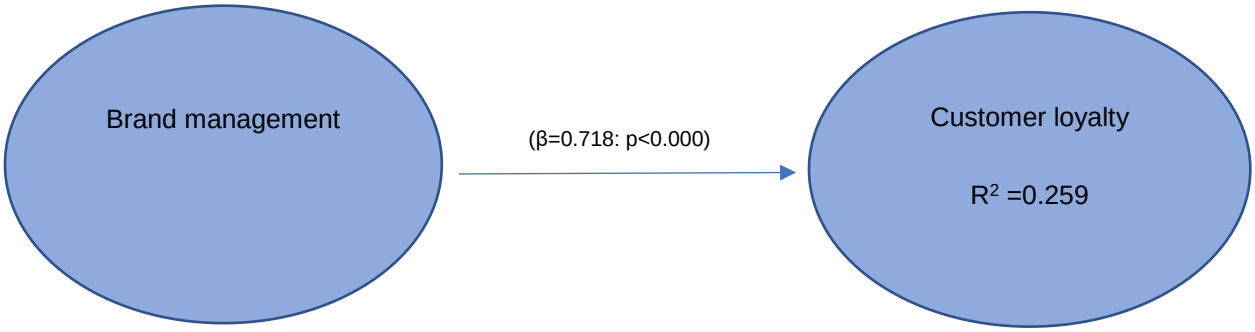

The relationship between brand management was positive and significant, with p<0.000 and the t-value being 13.154, thus reflecting a strong relationship between the variables and the H1 relationship is supported statistically. As supported by Ershova & Hermelink, 2013, Brand management played a huge role in how brand trust is swayed. When protestant church brands are not managed well, the customers witness the ripple effects. The moment customer's witness the crack in their leader's management styles, it results in a loss of trust as basic elements such as communication breakdown. Brand trust, in this case, could include the church entering into unethical business transactions such as corruption and fraud. These activities sway customers away from these brands by fear of associating with such together with possibilities of being victims too (Obidike et al., 2015).

### *4.6.2 Testing H2: The extent of communication in protestant church brands positively influences customer relationship management that affects consumer interactions with brands*



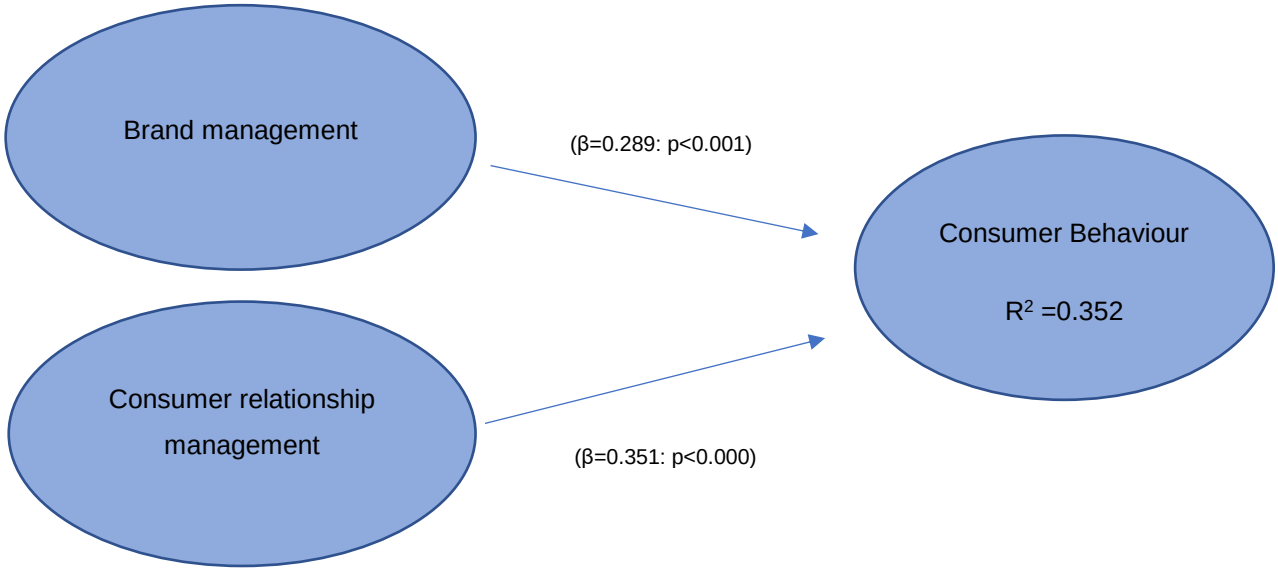
The relationship between brand management and customer relationship management was positive and significant, with p<0.000 and the t-value being 13.409, thus reflecting a strong relationship between the variables and the H2 relationship is supported statistically. The literature further supported this relationship by highlighting the importance of communication, a focus point in brand management. Communication often changes and moulds customer perceptions (Reich, 2014). Communication was thus a valuable tool used to ensure customers' expectations of brands are met and actioned (Reich, 2014).

### *4.6.3 Testing H3: Poor brand management negatively impacts church member loyalty*




The relationship between brand management and customer loyalty was positive and significant, with p<0.000 and the t-value 7.694, thus reflecting a strong relationship between the variables and the H1 relationship is supported statistically. Intentions of measuring and looking out for brand management and credible communication, according to Greyser (2009), increased trust and would likely rescue a brand in a crisis. Customer loyalty is dependent on brand trust, which simply outlines that with limited or no trust, the relationship between brand management and customer loyalty remains compromised.

### *4.6.4 Testing H4: Customer relationship management positively impacts church member behaviours*




The relationship tested for H4 was significant and positive. The p=0.001, which was less than the threshold of 0,05. The standardised coefficients beta was 0.289. The t-value = 3.241 meaning that the respondents were similar in their beliefs regarding the observed variables. According to the literature, the closer the t-value is to 0, the more likely the responding groups are. The further the t-value is from 0, the more different the respondents are. Consumer behaviours are affected by the slightest changes in their normal consumer cycles (Friese et al., 2009).

Table 13 shows that the ANOVA test was run to support the significance of the statistical differences among the observed variables. The relationship observed in H2 is significant as p=0.000.

*Table 13: ANOVA Test results*

**ANOVA[a]**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 30.029 | 2 | 15.015 | 45.672 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 55.229 | 168 | .329 | | |
| | Total | 85.258 | 170 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: ConsumerBehaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), CustomerRelationshipMan, BrandMana

## *4.7 Chapter summary*

This Chapter discussed the hypothesized relationships between the variables. The discussions were centred around interpreting the relationships statistically. Furthermore, this chapter highlighted the correlations levels of the relationships using different statistical analyses which support. The next chapter discusses the findings from chapter 4.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

## *5.1 Introduction*

The previous chapter was on data presentation. The presentation interpreted the causal effect in the relationships between the study's variables. It further looked at the strength of these relationships. Chapter 5 is now formed to discuss the findings presented in chapter 4.

## *5.2 Discussion of findings*

The study consisted of 5 variables, with the main independent variable being Brand management. Brand management is the independent variable as it was the main reason the study aimed to prove as a critical piece in the success of organizations. The findings from chapter four showed strong positive relationships between the independent brand management and the dependent variables.

When exploring the first relationship between brand management and brand trust, different questions were asked to understand how this relationship exists. A few of the questions included, as noted below, were the items measured.

- Do church brands communicate upcoming structural changes?
- Do you know the church is a brand?
- Do they share consistent communication via digital platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook)?

Using the correlation matrix, it could be noted that all the study variables had relationships with one another. These relationships whether strong as seen with the relationship between brand trust and brand management with a 0.711 coefficient. Alternatively, a weak relationship is seen between customer loyalty and brand trust with a 0.334 coefficient. Independents of department and effect played a huge role in the success of the brands. This highlights that indeed all departments, as different as they are, have a similar mandate to ensure customer satisfaction (Birkinshaw, Hamel & Mol, 2008).

31% of respondents were with the same church brand for 5+ years, which could be a result of two things: 1 being their loyalty for these brands and 2 being the consumer behaviour phenomenon by Rana and Paul (2017), Looking at consumer behaviours and how respondents responded to questions regarding certain factors that were assumed to change behaviours. It was noted that 42.7% of these respondents followed certain brands because of the social benefits of being part of the brand. This was a shocking response as most of these individuals did not trust the brand leadership, translating to poor loyalty. This, however, attested to observations by Rana and Paul (2017) that individuals continue supporting brands even when they have negative perceptions and have no loyalty towards the brand. It is then important to know how one can change these customers' negative perceptions and mistrust to a positive opportunity for the brand. Changing these customers' perceptions poses an opportunity for brand advocates, increasing advocacy at 57.3%.

The tenure of these customers gave great insights into their knowledge of how the management styles in these brands worked. The high or low tenure ensured that the hypotheses could be proven significant. For example, high tenure means you have more experience with the brand and have seen it evolve. A lower tenure means you are open to a different view that older individuals may have become oblivious to. For example, communication. Communication remains the foundation of all relationships as it has the power to affect consumer behaviours (Kanchan, Kumar & Gupta, 2015). 46.7% of the responses identified that their protestant church brands communicated with them sufficiently. Meaning that they knew what was happening in the church and what needed to be done. This percentage is a holistic view of the entire sample size regardless of

tenure. Showing that communication is lacking in these brands and would need to improve to grow the brands. This view is thus also supported by Alden and Nariswari (2017), as communication and good PR indeed shapes behaviours and perceptions about a brand.

Looking at the tenure construct, individuals with 5 years + tenure are the highest, followed by 1-2 years tenure with 29.2%, followed by 23,4% for others. This construct was linked to the relationship between customer loyalty and brand trust through a correlation coefficient of 0.334. Tenure was important in the study as it was assumed to be an important construct that would aid in identifying whether or not individuals were loyal to brands. This assumption was disproved as individuals had no/little trust in the brands, yet church attendance continued to peak. This proves statements by Rana and Paul (2017) as correct. Granted, the relationship between the variables exists; however, this insight could be the main contributor to the weak relationship.

### *5.2.1 Hypothesis 1 testing*

**Hypothesis 1**: *The management of church funds has an impact on customer brand trust*

Using linear regression analysis, the relationship was tested, the results displayed that the relationship is positive and significant with ($\beta$=0.711: $p<0.000$). The relationship was seen to be stronger as the t-value was 13.154. $\beta$ represents how strong or weak the relationship and 0.711 proved stronger. The relationship was thus valid and highly supported, these results were further supported by literature stating that: corruption, fraud, and money laundering is a huge issue that can lead to the failure of churches; this is due to the loss of trust individuals may have with these brands (Iwasokun, Akinyede & Fadamiro, 2018). Indeed, poor brand management affects how customers view and interact with the brand, which speaks to poor brand trust. Many respondents were indeed aware that protestant church brands were actual brands and needed to communicate with them to keep the relationship between them and the protestant church brands. The hypothesis is supported.

### *5.2.2 Hypothesis 2 testing*

**Hypothesis 2**: *The extent of communication in protestant church brands positively influences customer relationship management and affects consumer behaviours.*

Using linear regression analysis, the relationship between brand management, customer relationship management and consumer behaviours. The relationship was positive and significant, the $\beta=0.289$ with $p<0.001$, between brand management and customer behaviour. This significant level was accepted as the threshold was $p<0.05$.

The relationship between customer relationship management and consumer behaviour was also positive and significant ($\beta=0.351$: $p<0.000$). These two relationships, the relationship between brand management and CRM, were weak, as showcased by the standardized beta ($\beta=0.351$). This is identified through the standardized beta being low and nowhere close to 1. This relationship was, however, supported by the literature. Rana and Paul (2017) state that a consumer of a protestant church brand might have negative perceptions and no trust in the brand yet continue supporting the brand. Meaning that behaviours are not entirely affected by CRM. However, according to the observed data, poor brand management changed how consumers behaved with the brands but did not limit attendance. In this case, communication as a factor of CRM affects consumer behaviours directly, not CRM. In communicating and heeding consumer feedback, a sense of inclusivity and recognition is observed. This, in return, shifts consumers' behaviours in a way that is more beneficial to the brand. The levels of communication observed in the variables gave insights into how the brands treated their church members.

Furthermore, the analysis of the results noted that many protestant church members felt there was communication in these brands; however, it was limited. Depending on the ranking/ where applicable, church members would be privy to certain knowledge, whether regarding funds, structural changes, or any public relations communication. Engagement and communication were said to be high on digital platforms, which kept respondents happy with brands. The level of communication of certain dilemmas could be questioned; however, the current levels of open and feedback to respondents on their issues with the brands helped support the hypothesis

It was noted that most of these respondents' behaviours would change should the brand not treat them right, as these members attended the various protestant church brands for social benefits and music. Respondents understood that churches were actual brands. They also understood that they were consuming a service provided by the brand and that they were customers to the church brands.

### *5.2.3 Hypothesis 3 testing*

**Hypothesis 3**; *Poor brand management negatively impacts church member loyalty*

The relationship between brand management and customer loyalty was tested using regression analysis and ANOVA. The relationship between brand management and customer loyalty is positive and significant, with $p<0.000$ and the t-value 7.694, thus reflecting a strong relationship between the variables and the H3 relationship is supported statistically. The standardized beta showed that the relationship between these two variables was strong as $\beta=0.718$.

The relationship between these two variables was also supported by literature as a lack of communication, or clear communication affects how brands and customers interact. According to Greyser (2009), communications increase trust and loyalty; no customer can be loyal to a brand if they do not know much about it. This is supported by 56.7% of respondents saying church brands indeed partake in persuasive communication tools to ensure all customers stay informed. Up to 60% of the respondents noted that they would recommend their church brands to other individuals as these brands helped them say positive things about them. The positive relationship between the variables is supported, as poor brand management would not allow the member to say positive things about the brands or promote it to friends, meaning that overall management styles are not poor.

### *5.2.4 Hypothesis 4 testing*

**Hypothesis 4;** *Customer relationship management positively impacts church member behaviours.*

Brands remain marketable, and customer relationship management plays a role in how consumer behaviours are impacted. CRM can positively or negatively impact consumer behaviours. However, in this study, the focus was to prove that CRM can change customer perceptions and consumer behaviours to benefit the brands. Respondents were asked whether protestant church brands “create a safe space for members and non-members?” 53.8% responded that indeed these brands do create such spaces. 62% claimed that these brands create activities and services which promote fruitful fellowship. This effectively attests to CRM positively affecting behaviours. Using regression analysis and ANOVA test. The relationship is significant and positive ($\beta=0.351$: $p<0.000$). However, there is a weaker relationship between these two variables compared to other observed variables in the study as the standardised beta coefficient is low.

## *5.4 Chapter Summary*

This Chapter was a full discussion on findings from the earlier chapter. The finding did indeed show that the study's hypotheses were accepted based on the analysis in chapter 4. This chapter further discussed how brand management could influence corruption in these brands. The nature of this chapter aimed at justifying the statistic obtained through interrogating and analysing the findings presented in chapter 4. The next chapter concludes the study and provides recommendations based on the conclusions.

# CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## *6.1 Introduction*

The previous chapter discussed hypotheses and proved them false or true. The data was analysed, interpreted, and aided in supporting the hypotheses, thus proving positive relationships between the observed variables. The causal effect in the relationships between the study variables indeed existed and brand management played a huge role. It further looked at the strength of these relationships. Chapter 6 aids in giving a summary of findings and a conclusion, and future recommendations and suggestions to future studies around Brand management and protestant church brands.

## *6.2 Summary of findings*

A total of 171 respondents' responses were used to analyse this project. From 171, 39.2% were female, with 37.4 being male. There was a fair distribution in gender in terms of responses. Identifying the genders was driven by the premise that upon randomly selecting these protestant church brands. It was further discovered that all these brands had male leaders, with some brands having a few females on their boards or positions of power. In the understanding which led and was seen as the leadership of these brands, it could be easier to open room for further questions in further research.

Gender in this instance further aids in giving a view of what the mixture is in churches. This serves as a background for readers to understand what the church is made up of; further studies could look at the role patriarchy plays in protestant church brands if any. Looking at customer loyalty, 31% of respondents were part of a select protestant church brand, which meant we could further test whether customer loyalty was affected by how brands were managed. At face value, it seems that 31% of the 59.6 % of customers who

said their protestant church brands helped them say positive things about the brand and responded “Yes”. This means that a higher number of respondents were loyal to the protestant church and were staying willingly by virtue of good service delivery. These customers would be the ones who invite new members and spread positive news about the brand. When customers are loyal, they easily forget transgressions by brands. Customers often overlook these too. In this instance, loyal customers believed that the brands were helping them keep a positive outlook on the brand. In the same way, these loyal customers could be assumed to believe the church gave feedback to them and noted their critics while heeding their feedback on issues that bothered them in the churches.

It was also important to note that 29.2% of respondents had a 1-2year tenure, which could mean these customers left other brands for whatever reason, however, relating to brand management, whether good or poor. Such a young tenure usually means you have not yet been exposed to the brand fully, and your loyalty can be questioned. Such a young tenure indicated that the brands were open to accepting new members, which aided their growth.

Of the 171 analysed responses, 33.92% noted that they spent up to 2 hours weekly with the selected protestant church brand. This aided in giving weight to questions like “is the church a brand” and “does the church help you say positive things about it.” In spending substantial amounts of time in a venue or a place, you as a customer can notice traits and behaviours which help shape your perceptions, consumer behaviours and further engagements with a brand. Spending more time further enables loyalty and positively changes behaviours. Protestant church brands are no different from other marketable brands and be weary of how petty things such as time spent with brand and tenure can positively or negatively influence customers. Many respondents noted that they were not aware that the church brand was providing a service and customers. In customers not being aware that they are customers to brands, further opportunities arise for further studies to probe how these individuals in protestant churches and non-protestant churches identify themselves.

Based on the findings in the study, it could be noted that brand management as a variable measured against other variables had positive and significant relationships. The relationship between brand management and trust was positive and significant, brand management and customer loyalty, brand management and consumer behaviours. Even though some relationships were weaker than others were. It remains that brand management plays a huge role in the success of brands. How well funds, communication, transparency, and customers are managed plays a huge role in how customers and other brands will perceive a brand. Adopting progressive and inclusive brand management styles remains key for the success of these protestant church brands. Owing because CRM activities rely on key roles such as communication, trust, managing customers, feedback, and managing satisfaction of customers to ensure that these brands grow.

## *6.3 Conclusions*

Based on the findings in the study, it could be noted that all the observed variables had positive and significant relationships. Even though some relationships were weaker than others were, brand management plays a huge role in the success of brands. How well funds, communication, transparency, and customers are managed plays a huge role in how customers and other brands will perceive a brand. Many respondents to the study supported brands yet were not aware that even protestant church brands were brands and customers. This was a view that indicated that a lack of knowledge existed. Together with a view that these respondents were not fully aware of roles they play as customers to these brands

The relationship between brand management and brand trust was strong, as observed in chapter 4 ($\beta=0.711$: $p<0.000$). These two variables played a huge role in the success of brands. With proper and clear fitting management styles, trust was built and maintained. The causal effect between these relationships predominantly lies on brand management and its pillars, such as transparency. This meant that, indeed, the mismanagement of church funds had a negative impact on customer brand trust. Better ways of managing

funds and transparency were needed to continue improving the trust customers had in their leadership. The view of whether or not gender roles impact brands could not be identified. This was due to limitations of the study and fully unpacking terms such as consumerism in the paper's context.

Hypothesis 2 tested an interlinked relationship between brand management, communication and consumer behaviours; the extent of communication in protestant church brands positively influenced customer relationship management and directly affected consumer behaviours. Poor communications paired with much clutter within the modes and mediums of communications were the reasons for a shift in consumer behaviours. With proper CRM tools at play, consumer's behaviours benefited the protestant church brands as consumer behaviours were altered positively. However, you could note that these behaviours detracted from brand growth with poor CRM activities. Anomalies were present, especially in cases where customers to these brands seemed unhappy with the level of service received, yet they continued to support these church brands, leaving room for further studies in this respect. The role of regulators seemed to be a contested issue, and this was because a number of respondents agreed (some disagree) that these brands needed a regulatory body. 47.4% of the respondents agreed that there is a need for a regulatory body, yet the bulk was either "No," "Not sure," or "Maybe" responses. 36.8% of these responses showed that individuals were unsure if their churches were regulated. This then speaks to the need for transparency and deceleration of affiliations, if any, by these brands

It was noted that brand management also affected customer loyalty, which implied that a relationship between brand trust and customer loyalty existed and could not be ignored when analysing the data. As observed in chapter 4, there was a linkage between these two variables. Loyalty existed due to a certain level of trust. Removing trust from the equation would result in little to no growth in these protestant church brands. Supposing that customer loyalty was restored or built through proper brand management styles, which inevitably built brand trust.

## *6.4 Recommendations*

### *6.4.1 Educating brand customers on brands vs customers*

Many respondents noted that they were aware they were customers of the church brands. A lack of understanding or education surrounding customer service industries such as religious entities could be why some individuals remain unheard of by church brand leaders. This could be why individuals have a low tenure with brands and continue moving from one brand to another. Church leadership should look at identifying customers in such service industries and their brands. Researching and looking at what type of consumerism this is and understanding at what level customers become a customer to these types of brands. Investigating at what point are they consuming a service provided by the service providers. Scholars should assist in helping understand the role of consumerism and how it continues to affect brands and consumers. Scholars adding more insights to the definition of consumerism in the contexts of brands can further assist theologians in better positions these brands.

### *6.4.2 Adopting new policies*

Another recommendation would be adopting and creating stringent policies around protestant church management styles. Policies that speak to management and disclosure of all funds and the mode in which they are received. Considering that the South African constitution caters for these NPO brands, a recommendation would be to have national policies that overlook the overall governance of protestant churches. With national policies overlooking these brands, certain customers' human rights remain protected, and church brands continue to exercise their rights of being a brand. Such a recommendation would be directed at governance and policy makers, including the Council of churches. In implementing such policy from a general governance and council level, church brands can comply and act accountably as juristic individuals. Member’s trust maintains at an optimal level while the church brands continue to meet their bottom line.

### *6.4.3 Adopting church brand management templates*

There is a need to have and investigate the feasibility of an outlined management style that acts as a template that can be applied to all church brands. A singular management style outline considers business acumen such as growth, profit generation, sustainability, and customer and management satisfaction. Such an outline, which can act as a basis on which policy makers outsides the doors of the churches, can still regulate and help brands account for their actions. Such an outline could be brought about, monitored, altered, and proposed by institutions that understand church governance, such as the South African Council of Churches.

### *6.4.1 Recommendations for further research*

Future studies could focus on understanding gender roles in protestant church brands. Studies should look at the actual relationship between brand management and male dominance in positions of power. It can be assumed that where male dominance and patriarchy are at play, South Africa has such a strong patriarchal African background. An assumption that a unilateral management style was adopted is noted. This is through the view that there was little trust in church brand leaders. Another indicator was that little communication was shared whenever these brands had structural changes. This paired with the limited access to church accounting books given to members plus avoidance of feedback to church members and customers on their concerns. Unilateral management styles, as the study has indicated, do not aid in the brand's growth as no feedback from others is heeded. This recommendation should be handled by future scholars who aim to see whether or not patriarchy plays a role in swaying decisions in brands. Future studies and research can then aid in literature bodies ensuring that individuals are aware of patriarchy and monarchy roles in brands. This view further can assist in ensuring that befitting management styles are applied robustly.

## *6.5 Chapter Summary*

This chapter fully discussed the conclusion and recommendation from the earlier chapter. The conclusion shows that the study's hypotheses were accepted based on the analysis in chapter 4. This chapter further gave recommendations for further studies in brand management overly. The nature of this chapter aimed at justifying the statistic obtained through interrogating and analysing the findings presented in chapter 4. Marking this as the concluding chapter of the study.

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# APPENDIX A

## Actual Research Instrument

Questionnaire

## *Consent*

| **Do you consent to partake in this study with the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality?** | |
|---|---|
| Yes | No |

Section A

| **A1** | **Please indicate your gender** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Other |

| **A2** | **Please indicate your age** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 18-24 years | 25-29 years | 30-39 years | 40-49 years | 50 + years |

| **A3** | **Please indicate how long you have been a member/ a part of the church** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less than 6 months | 1-2years | 3-4 years | 5 Years + | other |

| A4 | Please indicate which religious Protestant you follow (if any) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Trinity community church | Kopanong Praise and Worship centre | Word of life Baptist church | Kononia Bible church | Other |

| A5 | Please indicate how many hours you spend in this religious building a week (7day cycle) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 hours | 3hours | 4hours | 5 hours | Other |

## SECTION B

## Brand trust

Below are statements about the impact of brand trust with the focus on management of funds. You can indicate the extent to which you know and do not know about the management of funds with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1=YES 2= NO 3= MAYBE 4= NOT SURE 5= I DON'T KNOW

*Please tick only one number for each statement*

**Based on the protestant church you follow regarding various funds, offering and donations. Do they.**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BT1 | Share financial reports with the congregation when requested to | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| BT2 | Ensure that you are happy with your church | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| BT3 | Ensure would you recommend your church to other individuals | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| BT4 | Communicate how different funds are received (such as donations) | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BT5 | Pay their employees and staff | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

## SECTION C

## Brand Management

Below are statements about the impact on Brand trust with the focus on the management of communication. You can indicate the extent to which you know and do not know about the management of communication with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1=YES 2= NO 3= MAYBE 4= NOT SURE 5= I DON'T KNOW

*Tick only one number for each statement.*

**Does the religious entity communicate information? Do they.**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MC1 | Communicate upcoming structural changes | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| MC2 | Communicate internal issues and scandals with the you as the member? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| MC3 | Partake in public relations efforts such as engage on social media? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| MC4 | Share consistent communication via digital platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook) | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| BPR5 | Do you know the church is a brand | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

## SECTION D

## Consumer behaviours

Below are statements about the impact of consumer behaviours. You can indicate the extent to which you know and do not know about the management of regulations with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1=YES 2= NO 3= MAYBE 4= NOT SURE 5= I DON'T KNOW

Tick only one number for each statement.

**With regards to Consumer behaviours**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CB1 | Does the church comply to health and safety rules (e.g., no overcrowded plugs? sanitizers) | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB2 | Do you attend church for the music? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB3 | Do you attend church for the social benefits? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB4 | Are you a customer to the church? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB5 | Does the church create safe environments for members/non-members? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB6 | Is your church part of a regulatory body? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB7 | Do you think it is important for your religious organization to be a member of a regulated body such as South African Council of churches | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CB8 | Do you think it is important for your church to be a member of a regulated body such as South African Council of churches? | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

## SECTION E

## Customer relationship management

Below are statements about the impact of customer relationship management. You can indicate the extent to which you know and do not know about customer relationship management with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1=YES 2= NO 3= MAYBE 4= NOT SURE 5= I DON'T KNOW

Tick only one number for each statement.

**How well are relationship managed?**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CRM1 | Create a safe space for members and non-members | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CRM2 | Create activities and services which promote fruitful fellowship | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CRM3 | Accept constructive criticism and apply changes | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CRM4 | Cater for specialized member needs (e.g., wheelchair ramps) | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| CRM5 | Feedback to individuals regarding issues and problems | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

## Section F

## Customer loyalty

Below are statements about the management of customer loyalty. You can indicate the extent to which you know and do not know about the management of the bran with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1=YES 2= NO 3= MAYBE 4= NOT SURE 5= I DON'T KNOW.

*Please tick only one number for each statement*

**Does the brand advocate for growth?**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BD1 | Treat each member with respect | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BD2 | Act ethically in all dealing with members | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| BD3 | Share the churches financial standing with members | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |
| BD4 | Listen to members contributions and suggestions on issues | YES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I DON'T KNOW |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

# APPENDIX B

## Ethics approval

**Graduate School of Business Administration**
**University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg**

Wits Business School

**Wits Business School Ethics Committee**
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

### Ethics Clearance Certificate

**Ethics protocol number:** WBS/SM1262849/130
*This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project title** | Church brands and management styles: the case of South African Protestant churches |
| **Investigator / Researcher** | Mr Thando Juqu |
| **Nature of Project** | MM (Strategic Marketing) |
| **Decision of the Committee** | Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentialty. |
| **Issue Date of Certificate** | 2021-04-15 |
| **Expiry date** | Date of submission of the project report |
| **Chairperson** | Prof Anthony Stacey<br>☎ +27 11 717 3587<br>+27 82 880 4531<br>anthony.stacey@wits.ac.za |

**Declaration by Researcher**

*One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.*

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

04/17/2021
Date:

# APPENDIX C

## Consent letters/approvals



To whom it may concern.

Dear: Sir/Madam

My name is Thando Buhle Juqu and I am a Master of Management in Strategic Marketing student at Wits Business School, Johannesburg. I am conducting research on **"Church brands and management styles: The case of South African Protestant churches"**. The purpose of this survey is to find out the extent to which protestant church brands identify themselves as brands, if so, to what extent does the current management styles put in place assist in growing the church together with brand trust. Do the church members of the protestant church brand recognize or identify themselves as a customer to the protestant church brand? If so, what factors influence their behaviors and views regarding the brand.

The research paper is a non-medical research paper which will be aided by the administering and distribution of questionnaires to collect data. The research paper will be used for educational purposes such as obtaining the degree, publishing of the research paper (should the university see fit). The research paper will be approved by the university's ethic committee.

The request is that I, Thando Buhle Juqu obtain permissions from you, the church to run and conduct my research, research questionnaires on the church brand and its congregation/ members. The questionnaire will be administered through digital platforms where I will provide a link to the church and its administration, to distribute the survey link to the church members. The link will be distributed via WhatsApp, Facebook and other digital tools which allow participation into the survey. The consent given by the church includes:

- Mentioning the church in the research paper, however keeping the identities of all respondents anonymous
- Conducting research within the church (using the church as a targeted population, etc.)
- Administering + distributing the research questionnaire (link) with the church members above the age of 18 years

Please do note that sharing the link to a said group of qualifying participants does not mean that whomever who distributed the link will gain access to the confidential information. The questionnaire guarantees anonymity of all respondents, neither I nor the church will be privy to the participates personal information such as names, numbers, home address etc. Participants need to be **18 years** and older. No underage participation will be allowed/ such participants information will be disregarded in the final presentation of the data.

B.M.

Participation in the questionnaire is voluntary and church members may withdraw from the questionnaire at any point. No gifts, incentives will be given/ rewarded for completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire has approximately 31 questions. The entire survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The raw data from the questionnaire which will be coded in alpha numeric and will be kept for 1 year, thereafter it will be destroyed.

I Byron Mans from Word of Life Family Church give consent to Thando Buhle Juqu to administer and conduct his research questionnaire within the church and its members.

Signed at Vereniging Date 18/3/2021

Designation Senior Pastor

Signature

**My contact details:**

Thando Buhle Juqu

Cell: 0747214532

email: 1262849@students.wits.ac.za

**My supervisor's name and email are:**

Fanny Saruchera: 0117173787

email; fanny.saruchera@wits.ac.za

Kind regards

Thando Buhle Juqu

Master of Management: Strategic Marketing




To whom it may concern.

Dear: Sir/Madam

My name is Thando Buhle Juqu and I am a Master of Management in Strategic Marketing student at Wits Business School, Johannesburg. I am conducting research on **"Church brands and management styles: The case of South African Protestant churches"**. The purpose of this survey is to find out the extent to which protestant church brands identify themselves as brands, if so, to what extent does the current management styles put in place assist in growing the church together with brand trust. Do the church members of the protestant church brand recognize or identify themselves as a customer to the protestant church brand? If so, what factors influence their behaviors and views regarding the brand.

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- Conducting research within the church (using the church as a targeted population, etc.)
- Administering + distributing the research questionnaire (link) with the church members above the age of 18 years

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Participation in the questionnaire is voluntary and church members may withdraw from the questionnaire at any point. No gifts, incentives will be given/ rewarded for completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire has approximately 31 questions. The entire survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The raw data from the questionnaire which will be coded in alpha numeric and will be kept for 1 year, thereafter it will be destroyed.

I Bishop V. Jones from Trinity Comm. Church give consent to Thando Buhle Juqu to administer and conduct his research questionnaire within the church and its members.

Signed at Waldrift Date 29th March 2021

Designation Presiding Bishop

Signature

**My contact details:**

Thando Buhle Juqu

Cell: 0747214532

email: 1262849@students.wits.ac.za

**My supervisor's name and email are:**

Fanny Saruchera: 0117173787

email; fanny.saruchera@wits.ac.za

Kind regards

Thando Buhle Juqu

Master of Management: Strategic Marketing

To whom it may concern.

Dear: Sir/Madam

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The request is that I, Thando Buhle Juqu obtain permissions from you, the church to run and conduct my research, research questionnaires on the church brand and its congregation/ members. The questionnaire will be administered through digital platforms where I will provide a link to the church and its administration, to distribute the survey link to the church members. The link will be distributed via WhatsApp, Facebook and other digital tools which allow participation into the survey. The consent given by the church includes:

- Mentioning the church in the research paper, however keeping the identities of all respondents anonymous
- Conducting research within the church (using the church as a targeted population, etc.)
- Administering + distributing the research questionnaire (link) with the church members above the age of 18 years

Please do note that sharing the link to a said group of qualifying participants does not mean that whomever who distributed the link will gain access to the confidential information. The questionnaire guarantees anonymity of all respondents, neither I nor the church will be privy to the participates personal information such as names, numbers, home address etc. Participants need to be **18 years** and older. No underage participation will be allowed/ such participants information will be disregarded in the final presentation of the data.

Participation in the questionnaire is voluntary and church members may withdraw from the questionnaire at any point. No gifts, incentives will be given/ rewarded for completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire has approximately 31 questions. The entire survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The raw data from the questionnaire which will be coded in alpha numeric and will be kept for 1 year, thereafter it will be destroyed.

I Nhlabathi J.M from KPWC give consent to Thando Buhle Juqu to administer and conduct his research questionnaire within the church and its members.

Signed at Vereeniging Date 14/03/2021

Designation Secretary

**My contact details:**

Thando Buhle Juqu

Cell: 0747214532

email: 1262849@students.wits.ac.za

**My supervisor's name and email are:**

Fanny Saruchera: 0117173787

email; fanny.saruchera@wits.ac.za

Kind regards

Thando Buhle Juqu

Master of Management: Strategic Marketing

To whom it may concern.

Dear: Sir/Madam

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The research paper is a non-medical research paper which will be aided by the administering and distribution of questionnaires to collect data. The research paper will be used for educational purposes such as obtaining the degree, publishing of the research paper (should the university see fit). The research paper will be approved by the university's ethic committee.

The request is that I, Thando Buhle Juqu obtain permissions from you, the church to run and conduct my research, research questionnaires on the church brand and its congregation/ members. The questionnaire will be administered through digital platforms where I will provide a link to the church and its administration, to distribute the survey link to the church members. The link will be distributed via WhatsApp, Facebook and other digital tools which allow participation into the survey. The consent given by the church includes:

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- Administering + distributing the research questionnaire (link) with the church members above the age of 18 years

Please do note that sharing the link to a said group of qualifying participants does not mean that whomever who distributed the link will gain access to the confidential information. The questionnaire guarantees anonymity of all respondents, neither I nor the church will be privy to the participates personal information such as names, numbers, home address etc. Participants need to be 18 years and older. No underage participation will be allowed/ such participants information will be disregarded in the final presentation of the data.

Participation in the questionnaire is voluntary and church members may withdraw from the questionnaire at any point. No gifts, incentives will be given/ rewarded for completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire has approximately 31 questions. The entire survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The raw data from the questionnaire which will be coded in alpha numeric and will be kept for 1 year, thereafter it will be destroyed.

I, Walter Maqoma from Koinonia Bible Church give consent to Thando Buhle Juqu to administer and conduct his research questionnaire within the church and its members.

Signed at Koinonia Bible Church Date 2021/03/27

Designation Associate Pastor

Signature 

My contact details:

Thando Buhle Juqu

Cell: 0747214532

email: 1262849@students.wits.ac.za

My supervisor's name and email are:

Fanny Saruchera: 0117173787

email; fanny.saruchera@wits.ac.za

Kind regards

Thando Buhle Juqu

Master of Management: Strategic Marketing

## APPENDIX E: Confirmation of Proof-editing

# EDITING CONFIRMATION

To whom it may concern:

This memo serves to confirm that the manuscript/research project detailed below has been language-edited and/or proof-read.

Regards,

*-IETS-*

IET Innocent *(Cert. Lang. Ed.)*
*Language Editor*

**********

**Manuscript Title:**

Church brands and management styles: The case of South African Protestant churches

**Author:**

Thando Buhle Juqu

**Issued on:**

February 20, 2022

Disclaimer:
The editor/proofreader makes no claim as to the accuracy of the manuscript contents nor the objectives of the author. While all possible efforts have been made to ensure the text as edited is readable and grammatically correct, the author(s) have the option to accept or reject suggestions and trackable changes made to the document before submission.

*** Professional Editors ***

sarchcot@gmail.com

# Buhle-Chapter 1-5- 10February 22.docx

*by* Thando Juqu

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